

Tuesday - April 4

*I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.
Romans 7:15 (NRSV)*

Romans 7 and 8 is my favorite part of scripture. Paul the Pharisee apparently was *THE* leading Jewish law enforcer until his conversion, when he became Paul *THE* evangelist and had the law enforced against him. He taught that rules were good, but following rules wasn't the main point; instead, here he uses his own example to help encourage others to follow Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to turn us from our sinful nature. I remember sitting in a graduate class taught by a professor who had been a post doctoral researcher of Sir Hans Krebs, the famous Nobel scientist who is credited for putting the pieces together in how mitochondria create cellular energy in the "Krebs cycle." Perhaps because of this authority, my professor felt he could emphasize the role of mitochondria in evolution. I was still trying to figure out my own faith as I learned more science, and mitochondria became a knife's edge for me. If I believed in the power of science to create the foundation for my academic path, did that mean I couldn't believe in the power of the Holy Spirit as I tried to follow God's path? Some 40 years later and after serving on dozens of Ph.D. committees, I still say that most students reach what I call an "ahah moment" when they realize how much science they do *NOT* know. I recently watched a segment on TV about scientists at my alma mater trying to improve the efficiency of photosynthesis from sunlight in chloroplasts (scientific relatives of mitochondria) to increase crop production. My first thought was how could the basis of life, photosynthesis, be only 3% efficient? Shortly thereafter, I had another "ahah" moment thinking about the lyrics from the old Elvis song, *I Believe*: "every time I...touch a leaf or see the sky, then I know why I believe". I never got to talk with my dad about such matters because he died when I was only 19, but I'll always remember hearing him sing that song above the tractor at full throttle. Reading Romans years ago was God's way of inviting me to realize how much I don't know and to believe, anyway. And if I don't always do what I want to do, but still I cling to my belief, as did Paul, then "nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:39)

Jeff

Prayer: Holy God, thank you for revealing Your incredible love to us through Your risen Son and for opening us to the Holy Spirit's "ahah moments." Thank you for Your patience and for forgiving us over and over. Please help us to understand that it is ok to question and be satisfied that answers will come in Your good time. Amen.