

Pentwater Bible Church

Philippians

Philippians Message 16

Philippians 4:8-9 Continued



The Conversion of St. Paul by Caravaggio 1573-1610

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Pentwater Bible Church



Philippians Message Sixteen The Battle for Our Minds Continued

April 7, 2013
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REVIEW:

THE BATTLE FOR OUR MINDS

Philippians 4:8-9

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things ⁹ Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you (KJV).

OUR MINDS ARE THE BATTLEGROUND

The long war is actually between God and His archenemy Lucifer who became Satan when he defiled Heaven and God cast him out of exclusively serving Him in His presence (Ephesians 6:10-12).

We must rely on the truth of God's Word for our direction and walk through this life. It is only found in His Word.

MAN CAN ONLY CHOOSE WHAT IS AVAILABLE TO HIM TO GRASP.

If Satan can keep one's mind blocked from the truth of the Gospel he has been effective in keeping that mind in Spiritual darkness and therefore away from truth.

THE NATURAL MIND IS ALSO NATURALLY DEFILED SINCE THE FALL.

To the unregenerate unbelievers nothing is pure. Both their minds and their consciences are defiled. They might profess to know God but their actions make it apparent that they do not know Him. Titus 1:15-16 says that they are detestable and disobedient and worth less for any good deed. They are phonies who say one thing and do another. They are defiled. Our television sets and the movies we see are primary sources of this corrupt

material. If society were as concerned with the purity of what enters our mind as we supposedly are about the quality of our water, air and general environment we would stop watching most of the television programming.

THE NATURAL MIND IS DEAD.

The natural mind is totally set upon pleasing the flesh. It can be seen in the natural inclinations of those who are unbelievers. Their pursuits tend toward hedonistic activities feeding fleshly desires.

SPIRITUAL PROTECTIVE PRINCIPLES

GODLY PROVIDED ARMOR

As we continue on with the issue of the Battle for our Minds it is important to realize that God has given us the tools to help us in the battle. This is the Christian's armor. It is described in Ephesians chapter six. In Ephesians 6:17 we see the helmet of salvation. It is important to see why God named the helmet of the head, which is a covering of the mind salvation. When we are resting in the safety of our salvation we have the Holy Spirit's protection and can make the proper response to Satan's attacks

SPIRIT FILLING

Ephesians 5:18 tells us "*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit*" The fundamental principle that the apostle is trying to convey to us is that we must allow the Spirit to control our thoughts and therefore our lives.

KNOW GOD'S WORD

This is another principle that is of the utmost importance. We must learn and know the bible well. We know the "Whole Counsel of God" not just a few verses here and there taken out of context. Our brains function similarly to a computer. The only way to do that is to first be fortified with a complete knowledge of Gods Word and secondly to avoid the pollution Satan wants to instill within us. It will make us pure. Psalm 119:9 tells us this in the form of a question and answer:

[Beth] How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word (ESV).

COMPLETELY SURRENDER TO CHRIST

We must be completely sold out to Him and then put what He says into practice. Are we different people when we are away from the Bible or does Christ captivate us? Sometimes it is easy to listen or read the Bible but we don't put it into practice. James 1:22 says:

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves (KJV).

James says that we are *deceiving* ourselves if we don't follow God's Word.

HAVING THE MIND OF CHRIST

When the Holy Spirit came, He was given the mind of Christ to show to the apostles, who in turn were to share directly with the early Church by their actions and through their writings. The result of all of this was the New Testament. The apostle Paul says that Spiritual believers have the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16). This does not mean that we can understand every thought Jesus had, in fact Paul said we would only understand in part the mind of Christ until we are on the other side with Him (I Corinthians 13:12).

A MIND THAT IS HARMONIOUS

Satan easily creates disunity, dissension and discord among Christians who are living according to the flesh. Paul clearly identified this in I Corinthians 3:3: "*For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men (KJV)?*" In other words, he said in the flesh we will have contention with each other but with the mind of Christ we are led to harmony and unity. This is being of one Spirit and one truth, not agreeing to disagree on different interpretations of Scripture (Philippians 1:27). Paul was very clear that the harmony among believers must be a unity in the Spirit of truth. Our minds must be fixed on the same goals and understanding of the Scripture.

THE HUMBLE MIND

The major stumbling blocks to unity are pride and selfishness. Some have a passion to be always correct, but not necessarily correct according to God's Word. Our prideful attitudes can convince us we are right so we can have our own way and control others. One sure way to achieve this was already described earlier in this book. Consider the following:

Philippians 2:3-5

³ Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. ⁴ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. ⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (KJV).

Christ emptied Himself of any attitude regarding His deity so that he could identify with humankind. The Scriptures say he took the form of a bondservant. He gave up all his rights and submitted Himself to the status of a slave. He washed the apostle's feet in complete submission to them to demonstrate humility and they didn't understand it at first. Consider the crucifixion he suffered. It was reserved for the criminals who had

committed the worse crimes that society had ever experienced. Christ did nothing to deserve this but He willingly submitted himself to it, which was a curse. The Bible affirmed that this was shameful and a curse for anyone who died in this manner (Galatians 3:13; Deuteronomy 21:23). Our Lord Jesus voluntarily submitted Himself to this so we could have eternal salvation. He placed our interests above His so He could give us something we could never obtain on our own, our salvation. He demonstrated the humble mind.

Today's Message:

THE MIND SCREEN

In order for us to effectively retain God's Word and deflect Satan's influence we must develop a mind screen. Satan will take every opportunity to remind us of past sins to prevent our spiritual growth. We must combat his attempts to thwart our sanctification by being alert to his activities. When those self-doubting thoughts enter our mind we must immediately say "No" to their attempt to take control of our well being. Once we learn to recognize them for what they are we can change our thoughts by the Holy Spirit's help to bring in thoughts that Paul informs us of in Philippians 4:8-9.

As we remove the inappropriate thoughts we must replace them with wholesome thoughts. When the bad gets ejected we have a spiritual vacuum within our minds waiting to be filled. This is where God's mind screen comes into play. He has given us the formula to fill the vacuum. It is found in Philippians chapter four. The text there says,"⁸ *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*" Carefully reading this verse we can see there is one strong verb. It is "think" on things. It does not say "feel" or "experience" or some such other less strong words. This is a command to cause us to consider, ponder, dwell as well meditate. When we "think" on the proper things we crowd out the Devil's attacks. Furthermore this verb is a present tense indicating continuous action. In other words, "don't give up!" Keep on thinking these good wholesome thoughts.

The Holy Spirit is commanding us to do this. We must remember that it is not simply Paul's opinion that this renewed thought process would be helpful to us. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16) so with God as the energizer here He knows that we can accomplish this. He is not going to give us a burden greater than what we can handle. With His help in giving us the appropriate categories of thoughts to rest our minds upon we can effectively screen out the unwholesome thoughts and preserve our mind's purity.

TRUTH

We must not dwell on speculation or concepts that we know are false. Lies and false ideas corrupt our world view and allow us to begin to embrace them as possibilities. This

brings in doubt and complicates the pure truthful and logical world view God wants us to have. Some want to escape reality and live in a make believe world so they don't have to deal with the difficult situations they face in life. Which then causes the situation to worsen and they cannot cope with it. Some people will do anything to avoid the reality they live with including escaping into excessive amounts of entertainment. When we fill our minds with an excessive amount of fiction we are building a world view that will not help us deal with our problems. Actually they do just the opposite as they sow the seeds of mental distress.

HONORABLE

This concept refers to that which inspires respect. This is the opposite of being flippant and frivolous. We must not pursue those types of thoughts. Instead we must engage our minds in thoughts that are dignified, noble, serious and valuable. This does not preclude any fun. Our fun as Christians is not a desperate attempt to fill the Spiritual void unbelievers experience. We have seriousness of purpose and self-respect. Respect can only be earned, even for ourselves as we evaluate our own self worth. We are children of the living God and as such have great value to Him because He bought us with a huge price (I Corinthians 6:20, 7:23). As we realize this and continue to "think on these things" God lets us know how precious we are to Him. Realizing that we belong to Him as chosen children lets us think on the honorable concept of God's love for us.

RIGHT

This word means upright, righteous and conforming to the principles of God's Word. This means that we must look at things from God's perspective. We regularly are hit with false philosophy through the media, teachers, friends and relatives. Most do not even realize that they are giving us false satanically driven information that is contrary to Scripture. Television and cinema now endorse extra marital affairs, homosexuality and abortion among other ungodly activities. The present firearm debate following mass murders excludes the effect the standard movie and television fare of excessive violence and sinful activities has on the perpetrators. Billions of dollars are spent annually on advertisement to affect the demand for products and services because the purchasers realize that it works. When we fill our minds with things that are not right they become our influencers.

PURITY

Paul speaks to moral purity here which is the absence of anything that stains, blemishes or corrupts us and this is particularly related to sexual matters. If you engage in or think that it is OK to engage in premarital and extramarital sex you are bringing the devil right into your mind to compete with the Holy Spirit. If you take in sexual visuals or read novels that embrace sex of any sort outside of a committed heterosexual marriage you are leading yourself into acceptance of these things. As a Christian you will become riddled with guilt as you try and play act our your Christianity. The more you do this you will begin to hate your spiritual state and never get any real satisfaction in your live. You

must drive these things out by constant exposure to God's Word and avoid any contact with the material that provides you with the impurity, which harms your mind. When we are careless about what we put into our minds our children and loved ones see it as an endorsement for those things. Before you expose yourself to unwholesome things ask yourself, "Is it pure?"

LOVELY

This refers to that which is attractive, pleasing, winsome, amiable or agreeable. Some say it mostly refers to amiability. Satan masquerades as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14) so he can make the sinful seem lovely at first glance. Genuine loveliness represents pleasantness and graciousness, which fosters peace and harmony. When someone makes an inappropriate remark or increases strife and tension within us, we must forgive them so that we do not harbor disagreeable thoughts, which will upset us and take us off God's desire for us to be at peace. If the individual continues to attack us or does not ask for forgiveness we do not need to stay in their presence and allow them to afflict us. Start thinking about things that inspire love and harmony. Test the thought is it lovely or amiable. If not start thinking on lovely things.

GOOD REPORT

This essentially means to be of good repute or speak well of. In other words we are to think and speak good things of other people. Do not gossip. If we know uncomplimentary things about others and dwell on them sooner or later we will begin to gossip. It is so easy to do and we must avoid it. Believer's thoughts should be admirable and not gossipy or condescending. If we think on the bad stuff it will come out and others will know that we are not of good report.

EXCELLENCE

This word rises above the mundane, transitory, or hollow things of this world. We must think on things that are associated with God's glory and power, which have eternal value. We must rid ourselves of thoughts associated with status, power, wealth and material possessions. If we dwell on these things they begin to drive our behavior and it is not toward excellence. It will lead us to the mundane away from the glory of God and a deepening relationship and knowledge of Him. If we fix our attention on an eternal perspective of anything it lets escape Satan's pitfalls.

PRAISEWORTHY

This means to think on things, which have the praise of God. Since we have the mind of Christ available to us we can ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do?" This is a revealing question because it will let us know what the enemy is trying to do. His attack will be subtle so we should let Jesus in to our thoughts to change the enemy's unpraiseworthy thought. Something is not praiseworthy unless it has God's approval.

These characteristics present a formidable challenge to us. It can easily be handled if we stay in God's Word and continue to grow in His grace and love. We can enjoy a healthy mind when we stay close to Him when we think on things that:

1. Are true and real
2. Are worthy of respect
3. Are conforming to the principles of God's Word
4. Are morally pure
5. Foster peace and harmony
6. Speak well of others
7. Rise above the mundane
8. Bring praise from God

NEXT SESSION : THE BATTLE OF THE MIND CONTINUED (THE GODLY MIND)

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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