

Sunday 21.6.20

Session 5 – Adopting the right thinking.

As we saw in the last few verses, Paul has brought us to some rubber-hits-the-road issues now. We have to meet them with the understanding of the call of God that we were talking about last week.

We have a high calling as the body of Christ in this world. This high calling is to represent Jesus in the earth. We do this through our unity and through our holiness (set apart for God). We look, sound and act like him.

The matters that Paul addresses in these chapters, directly affect our ability to fulfil the mission and call of the church, the things that we are going to be looking at deal with certain things that can be obstacles for us to deal with. There are nitty gritty areas of life, he addresses your speaking, work, sex life, work life, giving, attitudes of the heart to name a few. There are all areas that God has designed for blessing but have become warped by sin in this world and have for many become tools of bondage.

God wants them for you to be a springboard into the good things of life for you and the fruitful kingdom life.

Having spent much of the first part of chapter 4 sharing about the body of Christ functioning in unity, he now talks about these matters of personal and corporate holiness.

I want you to bear in mind the call of God we have been talking about I also want you to remember 2 other pictures.

When we moved into our new home three years ago, it was a welcome change and great blessing, but it also became a watershed moment for our children in their developments. For my son it determined the school he would attend (begin his school life at), for my daughter it meant a move from a cot to a bed and consequently the end of using a dummy. She had loved the dummy and was rarely without it, and certainly she always went to bed with at least one. My wife told her on the day that we left our previous home, that she was a big girl now and was going to sleep in a bed now, the cot wouldn't be coming with us and the dummies should be left in the cot, because a big girl doesn't need a dummy. To our surprise and joy, our daughter left the dummies in the cot and never asked for it again. She took an action that was in line with her growing up. In a similar way Paul here describes us growing up. Maturity is the name of the game. We are called to grow to the full measure and we need to ditch any dummies that stop us being able to walk into the life God has called us to.

Paul is stating in these verses, look to fulfil this High calling that's on you, you are going to have to commit yourself to growing up, and you have to not live or walk in a way that is opposite to what you have become in Christ. Put on the new clothes. This involves us working with God, it does involve some effort.

There are three areas that we are faced with – these are **thinking, speaking, and doing**. They are worth looking at in turn and we will probably only have enough time for today to look at **the mind**.

The inner life really matters. Although Christianity has action, it is to be lived and not just thought about, we see from the scriptures that our lifestyle comes as an overflow of our hearts and minds.

Ephesians 4:17-24

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ĀĀ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ĀĀ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ĀĀ But that is not the way you learned Christ!— ĀĀ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ĀĀ to put off your old self,^ε which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ĀĀ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ĀĀ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

1. **The mindset we have been set free from.** Paul referring to those who do not belong to Christ as 'gentiles'. Clearly he means 'spiritual gentiles' – those outside of Christ whatever their natural lineage.

He says that they live according to the futility of their minds –

The word for futility here means perverse and depraved but could also mean purposeless. There is a purposelessness that comes from the wrong kind of thinking.

From this darkened thinking and their hearts are hardened and they are now captive to something else – a continual lust for wrong desires and pleasures.

Paul tells us to think differently, in accordance with how we have learned Jesus, this will cause us to live differently.

2. Mindsets opposed

1 Cor 2:14-16 tells us:

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 16 "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

- Someone who is not born of God by the spirit can't understand the things of God
- The things of God are spiritually discerned
- Those who have received the Holy Spirit, have received the mind of Christ, this means that we can think the thoughts of Jesus.
- We do not have to live in a darkened understanding – we have been born of God, Born of the spirit (John 1, John 3:16-18)

Romans 8:5-8 , *'For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.'*

- The mindset that we adopt will determine the way that we live
- The mindset of the flesh will bring death in an area of our lives
- The mindset of spirit will bring life and peace
- Those living by the way of the Holy Spirit are able to please God.

Psalm 19: 14 - *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.*

3. The largeness of God's purpose for us as His body and being made to be a dwelling place for His spirit, replies on us thinking right. Having the right meditation of heart is going to enable to flow in the life of God to those around us.

4. We are called to put on the new self – being renewed in the spirit of our minds (verses 23&24)

This means, think in a new way, because you have become a new person. We have already seen that this is possible because we have received the mind of Christ from God himself!!

The growing up bit here: The getting rid of the dummy to move from being a baby to a big boy/girl is to decide to renew our mind. For our thinking, our meditation to match the new life we have received in Christ.

Romans 12:1+2

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers,^a by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.^b Do not be conformed to this world,^c but be transformed by the **renewal of your mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.^d*

- The way that we are going to walk into the will of God for our lives is about being transformed by the renewing of our minds
- Transform here = metamorphoo – where we get metamorphosis from.
- Caterpillar to butterfly (same DNA but one is the mature that has gone through metamorphosis. It has come out more beautiful)
- The picture is that we are transformed from being an infant (caterpillar Christian) who is only consuming, to being mature (Butterfly Christian) who is now able to fly in the purpose of God and reveal more fully the beauty of God. We have received when we were born again all that we need for life and godliness.
- Growing up requires that we ditch the dummies in our thinking that hinder us from growing into all that God has called us to and for.
- This transformation is about helping us release the life of Jesus we have received by being born again into the everyday of life
- It is about us more fully representing Jesus in the world, to enable us to be the place that God is building together, to enable us to work in partnership with him as I am agreeing with Him.

5. HOW?

- a. Decision – 1 Peter 1:13 – prepare your minds for action – context of the great salvation we have received, and the disciples being scattered amongst a strange world. Make a quality decision to think right and be ready for the great work God has called you to.
- b. Repentance – change of mind that results in a change of action. When we heard the good news about Jesus, we heard that Jesus is Lord and the He is alive. We were told, to respond to this we need to repent of living for ourselves and turn to Jesus. Repentance then in the life of the believer, is the continued response to Jesus being Lord. It's the ongoing adjustments necessary to change our thinking that will result in a change of behaviour more in keeping with who we are.
- c. What do you look at? We become like what we behold!

2 Cor 3:17-18

Now the Lord^ē is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ^ā And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,^ē are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.^ē For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

If we behold the Lord we become like a mirror to reflect the Lord. We can shine because he shines on Us. (Isaiah 60) We become like the one we behold.

- In Christ we have an unveiled face both to behold him and reflect Him
- Paul prays that the eyes of our heart may be opened to see and know (Ephesians 3:)

Paul mentions that there is a way that we have learned Christ (Verse 20), the truth is in Jesus (verse 21). This is a different way to the way of the world that doesn't receive Jesus.

Look at Jesus – He is the **author and finisher** of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2)

Colossians 2:1-3 For I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me face to face, 2 that they may be encouraged in heart, knit together in love, and filled with the full riches of complete understanding, so that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, a 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Look unto Him. Fix your gaze upon Jesus. He is true theology

We are growing up into Him (Ephesians 4:15)

d. What do you listen to?

We need to hear the word of God and agree with Him. This will help us know what He thinks about something.

Psalms 119:105 – Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path

Joshua 1:8 This Book of the Law must not depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in all you do.

Success will come from the meditating on the word of God.

1 Timothy 4:16 Pay close attention to your life and to your teaching. Persevere in these things, for by so doing you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

Matthew 7 tells us that we build a strong life on the word of Jesus.

What are you thinking on? what is your meditation? what are you beholding? Feed yourself on the word and look to Jesus. He is taking us on into the greater things He has for us.