

Sermon preached by Bishop Hamish Jamieson at the Healing Service at St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney on
Wednesday 18th October 2006. Reading: Isaiah 55:8-9 & Romans 12:1-5
Topic: The Healing of the Mind.

1. The Use of the Mind.

a) William Temple, the famous World War 2 Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote: "Christians do not think about different things to non-Christians. We think about the same things differently."ⁱ We think about living and working, eating and relaxing, health and sickness, politics and world issues, family and grandchildren, West Coast beating the Swans - "a time to lose and a time to win!" Christians have a different attitude, a different approach, a different way of seeing, of perceiving – of seeing the same things differently! "Remember, (call to mind) the wondrous works that (the Lord) has done, his miracles and the judgements he uttered."ⁱⁱ

In the Garden of Eden, we stepped outside God's way of operating, of seeing, of thinking - things went wrong. We fell away from living within that gracious relationship with Father God. Paul put the consequences of that fall, in this way: since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind (a debased way of thinking, of operating, of seeing)."ⁱⁱⁱ

Ever since sin entered our world, we have not only lived crookedly, behaved crookedly, but also thought crookedly. There is within all of us that inner desire for self-righteousness, self-justification, self-protection and for approval from our peers. When we do that we are caught, because we want to excuse ourselves, blame others, and we end up in a double minded position. That is not God's way! Jesus was silent before His unjust accusers!

The reason behind such reactive behaviour is the attitude, and apparent need, to protect ourselves, to cover ourselves, to escape consequences, to look better than we really are. We end up with a distorted picture not only of ourselves, but of the God whom we worship.

Peter had a problem. After strongly declaring that Jesus is "the Christ the Son of the living God"^{iv} he, in a naturally human attempt to protect Jesus, speaks out against what God wants to do, in the salvation of the world. Jesus "turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me...you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."^v Now for the self justification - "Far be it from you Lord - I don't want you on a cross". That was the problem – Peter didn't, Father God did! Peter was outside the will of the Father.

b) We know that we make mistakes, that we think wrongly, but do we ever question the way that we think? Do we ever consider that we might be wrong?

Isaiah would say "Yes" – we need to. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways...For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."^{vi} God thinks differently. We are to think differently – "do not be conformed to this world!"^{vii} Rather "be conformed to the image of his son."^{viii}

2. The Mind of Christ.

a) God designed us to have "the mind of Christ".^{ix} Hence: "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."^x When the Holy Spirit ministers into our minds, we are transformed, we think differently, we begin to get some idea of what God is on about.

Why is this necessary?

- So that we can face the realities in our lives with clear and wise thinking that results in right decisions being made.
- So that we confess, forgive, repent, straightforwardly, clearly, decisively and thoroughly, then enemy can get no foothold.
- So that we can be set free from all addiction – from alcoholism to chocolates, from compulsive behaviour and destructive reactions.
- So that we move from being self-centred to Jesus-centred.
- So that we can remember clearly, call to mind the "wondrous works that God has done", in our lives, and the lives of His people.
- So that our rational thinking is open to the work of the Holy Spirit to convict us, to change minds, old attitudes, and positions held, that are not in conformity with His will.
- So that, as the Lord requires of us, we "do justice...love kindness and...walk humbly with our God."^{xi}

b) What is the main purpose of the mind?

- Is it, in this Information Age, to acquire as much knowledge, as we can?
- Is it to argue rationally, put two and two together, come up with the right answer, and put down your opponent?
- Is it to have a computer-like memory, to win all the quiz shows, pass all the examinations, acquire an extra degree?

None of these are the main purpose for our minds. Rather we use our renewed minds, so “that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

3. How the Holy Spirit Renews the Mind.

We need to “take every thought captive to obey Christ.^{xii}”, for we have so many wild ones.

In Christ we can be set free, healed from having to conform to the pressures of this world and accept the put downs, the blasphemy, and the rejection of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our thinking gets into thought patterns, deep ruts, from which, seemingly, we cannot escape (Oh, I have always thought that way) – it is just like an addiction, from which we need to be set free, and we can be set free.

Be set free, now. Follow me prayerfully.

1. Jesus died to set us free, to heal us. This is the work of the Cross – to break the power of the world, the flesh and the devil over our minds; to redeem the past and to bring us into resurrection life as a new creation.^{xiii}
 2. We renounce these old patterns, these old ways of thinking and hand over our old mind to the crucified, risen Jesus, and
 3. we take hold of the new mind which He gives to us as a gift. Receive this new mind in the love and the power of the Holy Spirit.
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ⁱ Temple, William, Readings, 25/2 No 169, p 42

ⁱⁱ Psalm 105:5 (ESV)

ⁱⁱⁱ Romans 1:28 (ESV)

^{iv} Matthew 16:16 (ESV)

^v Matthew 16:23 (ESV)

^{vi} Isaiah 55:8-9 (ESV)

^{vii} Romans 12:2a (ESV)

^{viii} Romans 8:29 (ESV)

^{ix} Cf 1 Corinthians 2:10

^x Romans 12:2 (ESV)

^{xi} Cf Micah 6:8

^{xii} 2 Corinthians 10:5b (ESV)

^{xiii} Cf 2 Corinthians 5:17