

THOUGHTS

Life Giving Or Death Dealing

8-13

But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? Matt. 9:4 RSV

*But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
Matt. 6:33 NEB*

But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. MATT 5:28 RSV

A woman suffering hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the tassel on his cloak. 21 She said to herself, "If only I can touch his cloak, I shall be cured." 22 Jesus turned around and saw her, and said, "Courage, daughter! Your faith has saved you." And from that hour the woman was cured. MATT. 9:20-22 NAB

Indeed, God's word is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword. It penetrates and divides soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the reflections and thoughts of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 NAB

Thoughts to a person are like wind to a boat's sail. Thoughts are very real and alive. Thoughts determine the destiny of your life and all humanity, and the Scriptures have much to say on how we are to monitor and steward what we allow to fill our minds.

According to the thoughts you ponder you may prosper and enjoy life, or you fail and experience death prematurely. Ideas and emotions are formed through mental activity. This does not mean that the conclusions are always accurate. Thoughts have an objective in forming an idea or coming to a conclusion.

Perhaps the thinking person does not recognize that thoughts are spiritual realities coming upon him from without and within, through the gate of his mind. You should be aware of the origin and objective of thoughts which enter your mind. You are a temple of the Holy Spirit. You do not belong to yourself, you were bought at a price.² You are to be a faithful steward of your life because you belong to God.

Every decision you have made, or will make, had its origin in the invisible spiritual realm. Why is this so essential to recognize? Scripture says that the accuser of the brethren accuses us night and day (cf. Revelation 12:11), and all of us must deal with thoughts every waking moment of our lives.

Most often when an evil or unclean thought engages our mind we condemn ourselves as evil or unclean simply because the thought presented itself. As we grow in the knowledge of God, and the life of Jesus Christ our Lord, we recognize more and more quickly evil thoughts and temptations and reject them, which we are indeed called to do, but often we assume that we must be evil simply because an evil thought tempted us. That is the issue here. Temptation is not yet sin. Jesus was tempted in every way yet never sinned!³ The sin is committed when we accept the evil thought as one we would like to carry out. Jesus said that the sin is already committed in our hearts⁴ and now only needs the right oppor-

tunity to be experienced. As we see that thoughts as spiritual realities that come upon us from without or within, we can then choose what we want to do with them.

Their Origin, Where?

There are two invisible spiritual forces in this world in which we live, God and Satan. You and I are the vessel through which they operate. Each one desires to have our bodies for their habitation. Both God and Satan have their lesser emissaries doing their work for them, carrying out their per-determined purposes. One of the ways that these lesser emissaries come to us is in the form of thoughts. Let's look at each of these more closely.

Satan: Author of Death

Jesus said that the Prince of this world is Satan,⁵ the "author of death."⁶ Whether consciously or unconsciously, our lives are affected by the "powers" of this world, Satan and his emissaries.

Every human being is born into this world with a depraved nature (character), influenced by Satan, the prince and power of the air.

"Time was when you were dead in your sins and wickedness, when you followed the evil ways of this present age, when you obeyed the commander of the spiritual powers of the air, the spirit now at work among God's rebel subjects."⁷

Satan's emissaries are known as fallen angels or demons. The New Testament refers to demons as unclean spirits which possess and afflicts a person. They are tormenting forces which can take control of the mind and then the body. St. Paul exhorts us to let our minds be renewed and thereby our whole nature will be transformed.⁸

Interiorly these demon spirits come to us in the form of thoughts, bringing with them the nature or characteristics of their leader, Satan. From Romans 1:29-31 let us list some of the characteristics accompanying Satan and his spirits:

"...wickedness, maliciousness, greed, ill will, envy, murder, bickering, deceit, craftiness,gossip, slander, hateful toward God, insolent, haughty, boastful, without pity, without loyalty," Individually these spiritual characteristics carry with them an air of death and can only lead to destruction.

Search your mind! Stop and think! Are some of your thoughts carrying these characteristics? If so; then you know that they come from Satan and his emissaries, and **you did not originate them. You did not choose for them to come, but the issue is, do you choose for them to stay?** God has given each of His children the responsibility to choose what we want, and what we will believe. If you allow them to remain in your mind, they will form habits, build strongholds of attitudes, and eventually control your words and behavior, and you will increase in the nature of Satan in your thoughts, words and deeds.

Listen as you speak to others. Your words are influenced by the thoughts bombarding your mind. If you will listen to your words you can begin to allow the Holy Spirit to show you where your heart is captured by emotions and thoughts that do not belong there, and then you can choose to let Jesus conquer these areas in your mind and heart.

God: Author of Life

As we have discussed Satan is the Prince and power that rules the earth until Jesus comes again, now let us look at the character of God and Jesus who is our life, and compare. God is the Spirit of Truth. All may know Him Jesus Christ. "To all who did receive him, (Jesus) to those who have yielded him their allegiance, he gave

the right to become children of God, not born of any human stock, nor by the fleshly desire of a human father, but the offspring of God himself.”⁹

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”¹⁰ The nature of God is always life-giving, creative, and reproductive. Jesus learned and lived this nature perfectly, and He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. As we have received Jesus to be our Lord and our life, the same Holy Spirit that enabled the human person Jesus, is sent to enable the life of Jesus to live in each child of God. We are a “new creation”; we have received a new nature from our new Father, the nature of God! Dare we believe that the Holy Spirit can do in us what God sent him to do? Do we dare to believe?

God has lesser emissaries also. Scripture says that God has twice as many angels as Satan has! Then what is the problem? The problem usually rests with our ignorance of the kingdom of God. Remember what Jesus said as He was about to be arrested, that He could appeal to His Father who would send twelve legions of angels to save and protect Him. That’s 72,000 angels that would immediately be dispatched. God’s angels can also work through our thought-life. That is why we have both evil and good thoughts. Let us list some of the characteristics of the thoughts that the angels of God bring us. The fruit of the spirit is the principle description of the nature God wants to work in us through the Life of Jesus Christ.

“...love, joy (gladness), peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, humility, self control...”¹¹ These characteristics fulfill individual needs to bring life, up-build, bless, and help us in our relationship with others. Measure your thoughts with these virtues. Are your thoughts God-like?

Try Your Thoughts

“Beloved, do not trust every spirit (thought), but put the spirits (thoughts) to the test to see if they belong to God.”¹²

What is your normal frame of mind? Are you discovering wrongness in your thoughts and actions? Think now, are your thoughts creative and life-giving, or are they depressive, flustered, uncertain, or even destructive? You are what you are because of what you have been thinking. You have been entertaining thoughts (spirits) which had an origin from another source than God.

“All the ways of a man may be pure in his own eyes, but it is the Lord who proves the spirit (thought).”¹³ The weapons we wield are not merely human, but divinely potent to demolish strongholds (habits and attitudes established by evil, spirits); we demolish sophistries and all (thoughts) that rear its proud head against the knowledge of God; we compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ;¹⁴

Choose to Center Your Mind on God

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.”¹⁵

“Were you not raised to life with Christ? Then aspire to the realm above. Where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. And let your thoughts dwell on that higher realm, not on this earthly life.”¹⁶

God Has Given the Christian Ability to Walk in His Spirit

“The Spirit we have received is not the world’s spirit but God’s Spirit, helping us to recognize the gifts he has given us.”¹⁷

“I mean this: if you are guided by the Spirit you will not fulfill the desires of your lower nature.”¹⁸

“For the rest, brethren, whatever (thought) is true, whatever (thought) is worthy of reverence and is honorable and seemly, whatever (thought) is just, whatever (thought) is pure, whatever (thought) is lovely and lovable, whatever (thought) is kind and

winsome and gracious, if there is any virtue and excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on and weigh and take account of these things - fix your minds on them.”¹⁹

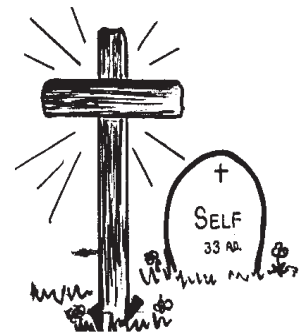
Let This Mind be in you Which was also in Christ Jesus

You are what you allow you thoughts to cause you to be! You can ward off evil thoughts by reading proper literature, fellowshiping with Godly people, singing spiritual Gospel songs, submitting to God and resisting the devil.

“Let the Holy Spirit fill you; speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and songs; sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord; and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ give thanks **everyday** for **everything** to our God and Father.”²⁰

Therefore submit to God; resist the devil and he will flee. Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.”²¹

The work is God’s. The initiative is God’s. The power is God’s. And the result is to be God’s glory as the Holy Spirit gains control of every spirit that seeks to enter into the holy temple that you are.²² But the choice is always ours. God has made His choice. He has chosen to love us and became a man to prove irrevocably the commitment He has to each person that will let the Holy Spirit do the job of bringing us to wholeness, in and through Christ Jesus our Savior, Jesus The Lord! Let us pray



Heavenly Father, with all we understand we submit to You, with all that we understand we ask the Lord Jesus to conquer us in every thought and with all we understand we submit to You, with all that we understand we ask the Lord Jesus to conquer us in every thought and emotion, and with all that we understand we ask the Holy Spirit to fill us new and afresh each day. Father, we know we are so small and inept at all of this, but our trust is in You and the power and wisdom of Your Holy Spirit that the work You have begun, You will complete. Do it Lord, in whatever You need to do to cause Jesus to be glorified in my life. Thank You Father. Thank You Jesus. Thank You Holy Spirit In Jesus precious name we pray. Amen

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| 1. Hebrews 4:12 | 12.1 John 4:1 NAB |
| 2. 1 Corinthians 7:19-20 | 13. Proverbs 16:2 NAB |
| 3. Hebrews 4:15 | 14. 2 Cor. 10:4-5 NEB |
| 4. Matthew 5:28 | 15. Isaiah 26:3 KJV |
| 5. 1 John 5:19 | 16. Colossians 3:1-2NEB |
| 6. Hebrews 2:14-15 | 17. I Corinthians 2:12 |
| 7. Ephesians 2:1-2 | 18. Galatians 5:16 NAB |
| 8. cf. Romans 12:2 | 19. Philippians 4:8 Amp. |
| 9. John 1:12-13 NEB | 20. Ephesians 5:19-20 NEB |
| 10. Genesis 1:1 | 21. James 4:7-8 NAB |
| 11. Galatians 5:22-23 Amp. | 22. cf. I John 4:17 |

