**Changing the Way We Think (Part Two)**

Learn to See What God Sees

How many of you are aware of God’s love for you this morning, or were aware of it even this past week. Do any you remember the song we sang last week (Jesus love me).

This morning I want to continue to look at this idea of allowing God to change the way we think. As we began our series last week, we saw that many times our belief about God can become swayed by public opinion, by old habits, by learned patterns we learned as a child, by experiences we have gone through, and in the end we can easily believe contrary to what God says about us. We can allow our experience, education, environment and exposure to skew what we believe God’s view is of us. What we believe can have huge implications.

That is why we need a mind overhaul. We need to allow God to change what we believe and allow him to align our thoughts with his. We looked at **Romans 12:2** which tells us:

*2Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

That word “Changing” in other translations is the word “Renewing” which in the Greek means “a renewal, renovation, or complete change for the better.” As one who is in the renovations business, let me ask you “who is your interior decorator?” Who are you allowing to shape the environment in your mind?

We live in a day of information overload. There are some days all I want is to unplug from all the stuff that is posted online, on media, and find some solace and peace from this overload, because if I am not careful, I can allow it all to shape my perspective of life.

* **What I allow to play in my mind, what I allow to redecorate the walls of my mind, can either overwhelm me with fear and anxiety, or lead me to Jesus, the lover and peace-giver of my soul.**

What happens in our thoughts can have a huge impact on our daily living. What we need is help to see what God sees. That only happens when we allow His Word to become the renovator of our minds. We need to replace wrong and inaccurate thoughts with healing thoughts from God.

A great example is found in **Mark 3:1-5**. Jesus goes into a synagogue and notices a man with a deformed hand. He is also surrounded by people who were ready to condemn his healing on the Sabbath. But what was Jesus more focused on? The man with a deformed hand. In verse 5 it tells us:

*5He looked around at them angrily and was deeply saddened by their hard hearts. Then he said to the man, “Hold out your hand.” So the man held out his hand, and it was restored!*

What did Jesus see? Did he see when he looked at the man’s hand? He saw wholeness, healing, an opportunity to change a person’s life. When Jesus sees a disease, or someone trapped in fear, guilt, addiction or sin, he doesn’t see the problem. He sees God’s healing, grace and power abounding in that area of weakness. How would our lives be changed if we began to go through life with this perspective? Paul in **1 Corinthians 12:9** was facing a “thorn in the flesh”. We aren’t quite sure what it was. But he writes that three times he asked God to take this thorn way. What did God see? Paul writes:

*9Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.”*

God sees opportunity for power. How many of us can agree this morning that there are times where we failed to see things from God’s perspective? How many of us know that the thoughts that we play over and over again in our minds may not be the reality of what God declares are desires for us?

Jesus, when speaking of the last days to his disciples spoke of the coming of wars, of famines and plagues, of great persecution, of killings, of environmental and cosmic catastrophes in Luke 21. How did Jesus ask them to respond to these events? **Luke 21:28**:

*28So when all these things begin to happen, stand and look up, for your salvation is near!”*

In the midst of our life circumstances, whether they be times of rejoicing or pain, times of hope or fear, trying times or things are going our way, God wants us to see things from his perspective.

* **God want us to see things from his perspective.**

God’s people, Israel, were led into captivity because of their disobedience before God. They were living in foreign lands, they were serving ungodly people – they had lost the Promised Land that was given to them by God. In the midst of their fear and shame, we read in **Jeremiah 29:11** of God’s words to them:

*11For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.*

Despite what they believed about their circumstances, God still had good plans for the, still had hope for them. How many of us have every questioned what God was doing, questioning his love and his care? There are times I do.

* **Church, we need to find ourselves so rooted in God’s love that no matter what life may look like around us, that we still believe that God sees something else better for us.**

That we don’t invite the day with fear and anxiety wondering what God is up to. But we find ourselves settled in his love for us and because of that, we believe that he is working things out for our good. (Remember, that was last week’s message; that we would believe in God’s love for us) **1 John 4:18-19** tells us:

*8Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. 19We love each other\* because he loved us first.*

* **Any thought that causes me to question God’s love for me and brings fear into my life is not God’s perspective.**

Where there is love there is no fear. Therefore, as I bask in God’s love for me I begin to allow him to change my thoughts and change my perspective; I begin to anticipate his presence and care. **Hebrews 13:5-6** tells us:

*For God has said, “I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.”\* 6So we can say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear.”*

That word “confidence” in the Greek means “to be of a good courage, to be bold.” How many of us are so confident in God’s love for us that fear has no place in our lives? (We all struggle with this). But that is what faith is;

* **Faith is saying what God says about you and seeing what God sees in you and your situation.**

That is why we need God’s truth to replace the distractions and lies that have caused us to live faithless and fearful lives. Paul wrote in **Philippians 4:8-9**:

*8And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.*

Part of our problem church is that we feed our minds with other things.

* **Do we spend just as much time feeding our minds with God’s word, his promises, and his proclamations about us, as we do on other things?**

No. The only way we can change a wrong belief is by opening ourselves up to God’s Word. Isaiah stated in **Isaiah 26:3**:

*3You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!*

The more we think about God and what he has to say, the more our problems will seem smaller and smaller. We need God’s perspective, Amen! We need to see things the way God does and that only happens as we allow his Word, his Truth to sink in and permeate our being. Jesus gave an illustration of how people receive the Word of God in Matthew 13. He explains what each scenario meant in verses18-23 (**Matthew 13:19-23**):

*19The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don’t understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts. 20The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. 21But since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God’s word. 22The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God’s word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced. 23The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God’s word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”*

The first soil: there will always be those who won’t believe God’s Word. The second soil: those who allow persecution, or problems to drown out God’s Word. The third soil: those who allow this earthly life and its riches to drown out God’s Word. The fourth soil: those who receive it and the Word of God has an impact. Our minds are the soil. Are we willing to allow our minds to be good soil for God to plant in? Are we willing to allow his truth to sink in and become truth and life for us. Paul wrote in **Colossians 3:16**:

*16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.* KJV

*16Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.* NLT

*Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives.* MSG

How many of us can agree, that we can give more of our thought life over to God and his Word?

* **The more we have God’s Word in us, the more we will begin to see things from God’s perspective.**

What mental movies are you playing in our head? Are they God’s views or manmade, or man induced, or even views from the enemies perspective? The more we have God’s Word in us, the more we will see what God sees. How many of us desire that? How many of us need that to fix our perspectives of our lives? Let’s ask God to help our minds to be good soil. Let’s pray!