

Tuesday, October 4, 2011 - Christ is the Mind of My Life

God's desire is that all men be saved. In **1 Timothy 2:3-4**, Paul tells Timothy, "**This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.**" Peter continues this thought when in **2 Peter 3:9** he states, "**The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**" In order to accomplish this, God sent Christ to provide salvation to those who would obediently follow him.

Salvation is obtained when man, through faith, accesses God's grace through Jesus Christ. Is faith really important? The Hebrew writer says in chapter 11 verse 6, "...**without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing [unto him]; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and[that] he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.**" Paul writes in **Romans 5:1-2**, "**Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**" It is impossible to please God without faith.

From where are we to derive our faith? Are we to rely on the Holy Spirit to "touch" our heart or is there some other means? Paul, in **Romans 10:17**, states, "**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**" Our faith is to be found in hearing (listening to THE WORD through our heart as we read the sacred pages) the Word of God. Faith, man's part in salvation, includes a recognition and conviction of the authority of God's word. In **Romans 1:16-17**, Paul asserts that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: "**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'**"

The reason that he is not ashamed of the gospel is that it is the power of God unto salvation. No man's wisdom, knowledge or message can save mankind, but the gospel can. It is the only thing that can. It is God's only way to salvation. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation because the righteousness from God is revealed in it. Christ, in **John 17:17**, tells us there is only one religious truth and that is the word of God. Every teaching and doctrine must be measured by the word of God. When men add to the word of God, like the Pharisees, it becomes a perverted truth (**Matthew 15:8-9**). When men take away from the word of God, like the Sadducees, it becomes a perverted truth. Every doctrine or teaching must be measured by the Word of God. If it differs from the Word of God, it is untruth.

In order for men to be saved, we must come to a knowledge of THE TRUTH. We must believe the truth and obey it. The truth is the gospel (**Galatians 2:5; Galatians 5:7; 2 Corinthians 4:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; Colossians 1:5; Ephesians 1:13**). Men cannot be saved separate and apart from the truth. The truth must be preached. Men must come to know it, believe it and obey it.

Salvation, which includes both continual as well as initial obedience, does not come easy to mankind because of our desire to "control" our own lives. Christ states, in **Matthew 7:13-14**, "**Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.**" No one follows Jesus accidentally. He must make a conscious decision to follow Jesus. In order to enter the narrow gate, he has to believe in Jesus and obey the gospel. In doing this he denies himself and takes up his cross to follow Jesus (**Matthew 16:24**). The follower of Jesus must live a life of faith and obedience. As he travels the straitened way, there are many pitfalls; however, with God's help, he can overcome. At the end of the road there is eternal life with God, Christ and the redeemed in heaven. In relation to the population of the

earth only a few make this choice. There is only one way to heaven and that is through Jesus Christ (**John 14:6; Acts 4:12**).

We must change our own stubborn will so that we have the mind of Christ. The extent of the minds involvement is shown in Romans 12:2 when we are told, **“And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, and ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

Why is the mind of Christ so important? Consider the following:

The Importance of the Mind

1. The mind of man is very much involved in the process of salvation
 - 1.1. It determines our perception of the gospel message (hearing).
 - 1.2. We use it to evaluation and analyze the message.
 - 1.3. It determines whether we accept or reject the gospel.
 - 1.4. It helps us build a trust, commitment, and dedication made to Christ as a result of the faith produced by the gospel message.
 - 1.5. It is involved in obedience to Christ produced by adherence to the gospel.
 - 1.6. It continues to be involved in the process of walking the Christian life.
2. Christianity is a mental exercise that is a discipline of the mind
 - 2.1. Our thoughts, speech and actions as Christians are all mental activities
 - 2.2. Every aspect of Christian faith and practice emanates from the mind
 - 2.3. Our attention should be directed toward the mind of man

The Mind: Influence for God, Influence for Evil

1. **Proverbs 23:7 – For as he thinks in his heart, so is he...**
 - 1.1. This simple statement affirms that our thoughts (mind) affect the way we live.
2. **Romans 8:5-7 – 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, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be**
 - 2.1. The mind, whether it is focused on good or bad, is involved in determining our salvation or condemnation
 - 2.2. This passage makes it abundantly clear that the way one thinks is intimately related to the way one lives
 - 2.2.1. Whether in Christ, in the spirit and by faith
 - 2.2.2. Whether in the flesh, in sin, and in spiritual death
 - 2.3. A man’s thinking and strivings in life cannot be looked upon in isolation from the overall direction of his life.
3. The Bible teaches:
 - 3.1. Possessing the wrong mind leads to condemnation
 - 3.1.1. The right mind and its benefits
 - 3.1.1.1. **1 Pet. 4:1 (Mind of Christ) – Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin**
 - 3.1.1.2. **2 Tim. 1:7 (Sound mind) – For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.**
 - 3.1.1.3. **Col. 3:12 (Humbleness) – Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do**

- 3.1.1.4. **2 Cor. 9:1-2** (Forwardness of mind) – **Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority**
- 3.1.1.5. **Heb. 10:16** (God's will) – **This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them**
- 3.1.1.6. **2 Pet. 3:1** (Pure minds) – **Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior**
- 3.1.2. **Matt. 22:37** (Loving God) - **Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."**
- 3.2. Possessing the right mind leads to salvation
 - 3.2.1. The wrong mind and its consequences
 - 3.2.1.1. **Romans 1:28** (Reprobate mind) – **And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting**
 - 3.2.1.2. **2 Cor. 4:4** (Blinded minds) – **whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them**
 - 3.2.1.3. **Col. 1:21** (Hostile minds) – **And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled**
 - 3.2.1.4. **2 Tim. 3:4** (Haughty minds) – **traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**
 - 3.2.1.5. **Titus 1:15** (Defiled minds) – **To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.**
 - 3.2.1.6. **Matthew 12:34-35** – **Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things**
 - 3.2.1.7. **Matthew 15:19-20** – **For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man**

Developing the Mind of Christ

- 1. We are to have the mind of Christ
 - 1.1. **2 Cor. 10:5** – **casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ**
 - 1.2. **Phil. 2:5** - **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross**
 - 1.3. To have the mind of Christ is to involve every aspect of the human mind in service to Christ.
 - 1.3.1. Emotions
 - 1.3.1.1. Every emotion of man is mental in origin
 - 1.3.1.1.1. Hate, love, jealousy, anger, joy, compassion, envy, etc
 - 1.3.1.1.2. All of these must cultivated and practiced, overcome and discarded as Christ would have us to do.
 - 1.3.2. Intellect

- 1.3.2.1. The intellect of man must also be Christlike
 - 1.3.2.1.1. Thought, reason, meditation, trust, faith, and memory must be centered on spiritual things.
- 1.3.3. Will
 - 1.3.3.1. The will of man, the most difficult aspect of the mind to tame must surrender to the will of Christ.
 - 1.3.3.2. Our commitment, dedication, hope, humility, justice, mercy, forgiveness, gentleness, self-control, holiness, and righteousness must all reflect the nature of Christ in our lives.
- 2. Having the mind of Christ in us is to:
 - 2.1. Set our mind above; **Col. 3:1 – If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God**
 - 2.2. Think pure things; **Phil. 4:8 – Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things**
 - 2.3. Hope for spiritual things; **Heb. 11:1-6**
 - 2.4. Speak of spiritual things; **1 Peter 3:15 – But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed**
 - 2.5. Implement spiritual practices; **James 1:22 – But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves**

Every aspect of becoming a Christian and living faithfully as a Christian entails the mind of man.

The more we strive to develop the mind of Christ in us, the more we will be like Jesus and the greater our hope of eternity will be through him.