

Sermon Notes

REFLECTIONS

What Are You
Thinking
About These
Days?



*River Road
Baptist Church
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Reflections

RELIGIOUS?

What do you think about when you have those times where you can let your mind wander? Is your thought life filled with worry, anxiety, fear and dread, or does it focus around positive and uplifting things and ideas? Occasionally we all find ourselves looking at life from the stresses that we face from day to day and the result tends to be a thought life that suffers from defeat. Paul speaks to this type of thinking when he addresses the Philippian Church with a special admonition as he tells them to...*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!*⁵ *Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.*⁶ *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Phi 4:1 NAS)*...He continues his exhortation by assuring them that God's peace would be theirs to guard their hearts and minds. *...And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phi 4:1 NAS)*

So we have the promise that if we rejoice in the Lord always we can expect His peace to rule in our hearts. But, you might say; that may work sometimes but what about today? I'm under pressures that make it difficult if not impossible to rejoice. What then? Let's see what Paul tells the Philippian believers. *...Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. (Phi 4:1 NAS)* If we are to enjoy this type of thought life we will need to apply these principles to our daily practices. This will require that we do a bit of self-analysis.

We begin by assessing our tendencies toward either a positive or negative world view. Do you view the world from the biblical perspective that starts with God as creator or have you bought into an evolutionary way of thinking about creation? Why is this important? Paul explains why this is important in his letter to the Roman church. *...And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; (Rom 1:18 KJV)* When we deny God's self-declared position as our creator we open our thinking to the deceptive explanations that the world system offers and as a result our

thinking becomes reprobate which means that we accept that which does not prove itself to be true.

Do you fill your mind with the Word of God, or do you only read man's thoughts and ideas? It's difficult to think on that which is true, honorable and right if we don't have God's Word in our hearts and minds with which to evaluate the information that comes to us in the form of man's thoughts, assumptions, and foolish theories. If our intake of information does not have the Word implanted in our hearts to filter truth from deception, we may find that our thoughts drift to those things that are not pure and wholesome. Is excellence part of your thought life? Do you measure your plight in life with the standards set forth in Scripture or do you buy into the latest value system that sets material success as the standard? It would seem that Paul's admonition, regarding the thought lives of the Philippian Church, is a very important, and best, way for us today to use in evaluating what we think about and how we view the world around us.

We know from the book of James and from the first letter of Peter, that suffering is part of living in this sin-infected world. They both reflect on the fact, however, that for the Christian suffering for righteousness actually causes us to grow spiritually and that as a result we can still think on the truth of the Word of God. Think on the things that He has made, and rejoice in the Psalms that cause us to think of His glory and the might and power of our Lord. We can think of the many blessings that God has, in His grace, provided for us. The rehearsal of His grace toward us will encompass the pure, the right, the lovely, the honorable and that of good repute just as Paul advised the Philippians to engage in thinking about.

It really is difficult to be pessimistic and doubtful about life while remembering God's blessings of grace, our salvation in Christ, and the promise of eternal life awaiting His disciples. It truly does make a difference in life if we start the day with prayer, thanksgiving, and in meditation on God's Word. To be daily reminded that our suffering in this world cannot diminish the glory that awaits those who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives. So what do you think? Time to just sit and think or time to think and rejoice? **Pastor Doug**