

Using Your Head

INTRODUCTION.

- A. One gentleman had done quite well in business & had really made a name for himself.
1. A friend asked him how he had done so well in business.
 2. The gentleman said, "I'll tell you. You should eat more fish. Fish is brain food. Give me five dollars, and I'll get you some of the fish my wife gets me. Eat it and then see how you get on."
 3. The man forked over the five dollars, and the fish was duly delivered.
 4. The next day the two friends got together & the businessman asked if his friend had noticed any improvement.
 - a. "Well, no," said the wanna-be entrepreneur. "But tell me, isn't five dollars quite a lot for a small piece of fish?"
 - b. "There, now!" beamed the businessman. "Already your brain is beginning to work!"
- B. We so desperately need to use our heads wisely.
1. How many people get into trouble because they do not stop to think before they act?
 - a. How might this nation's history be different if Richard Nixon had stopped to think about covering up the Watergate burglary?
 - b. How would we think of Tiger Woods if he had stopped to consider the consequences of some of his recent actions?
 2. We must use guard our thoughts, because our actions come from our thoughts.
 - a. "As he thinks within himself, so he is" (Prov 23:7, NASB).
 - b. "You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil" (Matt 12:34-35).
 - c. "What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person" (Matt 15:18-20).
- C. Since our thoughts are so important, we would expect Scripture to give guidelines for our thinking.
1. Indeed, Scripture exhorts us to guard our thoughts:
 - a. "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Phil 4:8).
 - b. Since we need to guard our thoughts, we need to understand what our thoughts need to be.
 2. Tonight, we want to examine some thoughts we need to have.

WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT WHAT GOD HAS DONE

- A. The Israelites were preparing to cross over the Jordan & enter the Promised Land.
1. Great battles lay ahead of them, and it would only be natural to have great fear on the eve of military conflict.
 2. To quell the people's fears, Moses says, "You shall not be afraid of them but you shall remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So will the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid" (Deut 7:18-19).
- B. When we are surrounded by great fear, we need to remember the great things God has done.
1. We need to remember that we were dead in sin, and God gave his Son for our forgiveness.
 2. We need to remember that God established the church for our strength & to aid us in completing his work.
 3. We need to remember that God raised Jesus from the dead that he might raise our bodies too.
 4. We need to remember that God gave us a new life when we met the blood of his Son.
- C. If we forget what God has done, we encounter a host of problems.
- a. Pagans forgot God & suffered greatly for it.
 - 1) "Although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened" (Rom 1:21).
 - 2) These pagans knew who God was & even had the dictates of conscience to guide them (Rom 2:14).
 - a) Yet, they failed to remember God.
 - b) Because they forgot God, God, in essence, forgot them: "Since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done" (Rom 1:28).
 - b. Are you remembering God? Are you remembering what God has done for you?

WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT THE END OF LIFE

- A. Some texts:
1. "If they were wise, they would understand this; they would discern their latter end!" (Deut 32:29).
 2. "Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (Ps 90:12).
- B. We need to give serious thought to the end of our lives.
1. Scripture admonishes us to make preparation for the end of our lives.
 - a. "In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover"' " (2 Ki 20:1).

- b. “You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matt 24:44).
- 2. There is much preparation that needs to be made as one thinks about the end of life.
 - a. There are financial preparation that need to be made –people write wills & make sure that their families will be secure financially.
 - b. We need to make preparations for our family—we need to live in such a way that we leave them pleasant memories.
 - c. But, above all, we need to make spiritual preparations – we need to be certain that we are ready to meet our God.
- C. There was a merchant in Bagdad who sent his servant to the market to buy provisions & in a little while the servant came back, white and trembling, and said, “Master, just now when I was in the marketplace I was jostled by a woman in the crown and when I turned I saw it was Death that jostled me. She looked at me and made a threatening gesture, now, lend me your horse, and I will go away from this city & avoid my fate. I will go to Samarra and there Death will not find me.”
 - 1. The merchant lent him his horse, & the servant mounted it, and he dug his spurs in its flanks and as fast as the horse could gallop he went.
 - 2. Then the merchant went down to the marketplace & saw Death standing in the crowd.
 - a. He went to her & said, “Why did you make a threatening gesture to my servant when you saw him this morning?”
 - b. “That was not a threatening gesture,” said Death, “It was only a start of surprise. I was astonished to see him in Bagdad, for I had an appointment with him tonight in Samarra.”
- D. We all must die.
 - 1. There is no escaping death.
 - 2. Have you made preparations for your death?

WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT GOD’S BLESSINGS

- A. In his farewell address to Israel, Samuel encourages God’s people to think about God’s rich blessings.
 - 1. He says: “Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you” (1 Sam 12:24).
 - 2. Samuel is prayerful that the great blessings God has bestowed upon Israel would prompt the people to obedience.
- B. God has so richly blessed us.
 - 1. The Lord has provided us physical blessings beyond measure.
 - a. “You visit the earth and water it; you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide their grain, for so you have prepared it. You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth. You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with abundance. The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout

- and sing together for joy” (Ps 65:9-13).
- b. “As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy” (1 Tim 6:17).
 - c. Just think about the great physical blessings God has given us:
 - 1) We live in a land of plenty.
 - a) You can go to a website, globalrichlist.com, to learn where your yearly income fits in with the rest of the world.
 - i. With my & Tammy’s salary, with all the people in the world, we rank 47,380,745.
 - ii. That may not sound like we rank near the top, but consider that there are 6.8 billion people in the world.
 - b) Tammy & I are in the top 0.78% in the world!
 - 2) About 3 billion people in the world live on less than \$2 a day.
 - 3) About 1.3 billion people in the world live on less than \$1 a day.
 - d. Brethren, we are rich!!!!
2. God has provided us with spiritual blessings more numerous than we can fathom.
- a. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Eph 1:3).
 - b. Ephesians 1 outlines what those spiritual blessings are: we are holy & blameless before God; we have been adopted as sons; we have redemption through Jesus’ blood; we have been made to know the mystery of God’s will; we have obtained an inheritance; we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit, the guarantee of our inheritance.
- C. We need to give serious attention to these great blessings.
1. These blessings should prompt us to obedience; when we think about all that God has done, what can we do but obey?
 2. These blessings ought to encourage us when times are tough—when we face difficulty, we can face it with certainty, knowing that God is One who richly blesses.

WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT GOD’S INTEREST IN HUMANITY

- A. “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor” (Ps 8:3-5). As David considered how powerful God is & how immense the universe is, he was flabbergasted that God cares about man.
- B. God’s concern for man is absolutely mind-boggling.
 1. We are sinful, dependent upon him for everything, so often ungrateful, but yet he cares immensely

about us. Why does he care? Why does he forgive?

2. Yet, as sinful as we are, the Scriptures repeatedly affirm God's love for us.
 - a. "He, being compassionate, atoned for their iniquity and did not destroy them; he restrained his anger often and did not stir up all his wrath" (Ps 78:38).
 - b. "You have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful" (Js 5:11).
 - c. "He cares for you" (1 Pet 5:7).
- C. Do you think about God's concern for you?
1. Does that concern encourage you as you face difficulties in life?
 2. Does that concern prompt you to stay as far away from sin as possible?

WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT THE MATCHLESS LIFE OF CHRIST

- A. "Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted" (Heb 12:3).
1. The Hebrew Christians were facing great persecution for their faith & the author here encourages the brethren to endure persecution.
 2. To encourage these brethren, the author points to Jesus & his example of handling persecution.
- B. We need to consider the life of Jesus.
1. We're told to look at his example.
 - a. After Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, he says to them, "I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you" (Jn 13:15).
 - b. "Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (1 Jn 2:6).
 2. We need to remember the example of Jesus because:
 - a. That example can encourage us when we face difficulties by remembering the difficulties he faced & how he overcame them.
 - b. We need to emulate his example – we need to be compassionate as he was; we need to be obedient to the Father as he was; we need to be obedient to the civil authorities as he was; etc.
 3. Do you think about the life of Jesus? Does it encourage you? Are you following his example?