Week 1 of Stay at Home

Wednesday – Romans 8:5-6

**Setting Your Mind on the Spirit**

Dear Church,

Today I’m going to help us to consider the concept of setting our minds on the Spirit and experiencing the life and peace that comes from it. Many of us find ourselves with time on our hands in these days: time often spent driving, working, or other responsibilities are adjusted due to the quarantine and health crisis. Because of this extra time, our minds have the opportunity to think and to process different thoughts that we don’t ordinarily indulge.

The virus has led to many circumstances that press the mind to anxiety, worry, and depression. Many today are sitting at home with tortured minds filled with agitation. And with the constant updates and bad news from the worldwide pandemic, it seems we can’t get away from it. However, the good from the bad in these days allows believers to determine that **we can set our mind on the Spirit** rather than the trouble around us. It’s this kind of thinking that reminds us that God is working all things for good (Romans 8:28). And when our minds are on the Spirit, we know His life and peace.

**Many today are practicing worldly thinking**. Actually, many have always practiced worldly thinking, but it’s more evident in these anxiety-filled times. But let’s consider these words:

**“For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.” (Romans 8:5-6)**

When we set our minds on something temporal, we practice worldly thinking; it is an obsessed, focused way of thinking. Worldly-thinking minds are focused on fleshly things, as explained in Galatians 5:19-21: “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these…”

**Personal Study Question: Read back through that list from Galatians 5 again; have any of these characteristics marked your own thinking lately?**

**Believers are called to the opposite of worldly thinking; we are called to practice spiritual thinking.** Every Christian has the ability to practice spiritual thinking because we are possessed—or filled with—the Holy Spirit. He lives in us; we have the power to access His thoughts if we so choose. And those who practice spiritual thinking find that their lives reflect those thoughts in their actions: “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control,” (Galatians 5:22-23).

Spiritual thinking is not just the focus of our minds; it also turns our hearts and our attitudes toward the Lord and is outwardly lived. This kind spiritual thinking—which is both inward and outward—brings us life and peace. Oh, consider what a life-giving blessing we receive from spiritual thinking: hope, joy, confidence, and peace in the midst of every storm. Those who set their minds on the Spirit experience peace. You see, Spiritual thinking is peace-giving, and isn’t our world today desperate for peace? David puts this peace-filled, Spirit-focused life into beautiful words for us: “You have put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and new wine abound. In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O Lord, make me to dwell in safety,” (Psalm 4:7-8). David lived in difficult times: he had many enemies, he struggled with wars and children who killed one another and even had a son who tried to kill him. Yet He voiced the confidence and peace found in the person who is focused on the things of God.

So, what can we remember as we focus on spiritual thinking this week?

* The believer must choose to practice spiritual thinking. It’s not going to simply happen *to* us; we must choose to *set* our minds on the things above, not on the things that are on earth (see Colossians 3:2). The distracted mind is set on worry, fear, anger, and selfishness. The disciplined mind is intentionally set on the Spirit and the spiritual things God points us to.
* The pattern of your thinking results in the pattern of your living. Paul gives a wonderful list for us in Philippians 4:8, “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, dwell on these things.” The Greek word translated “dwell” means to calculate or consider carefully. We take care to point our minds toward the things of God.
* Practicing spiritual thinking is essential for life and peace in Jesus Christ. If we don’t guide our thoughts to the Spirit, they will instead be on the things of the world. And worldly thinking offers us no peace.
* Peace comes not from our environment, but from the way we think. Just look at the two men whose words we’ve studied today: David and Paul. These two had more difficulties than we can even imagine, and they spoke over and over about the peace God gives. They understood the practice and the value of Spirit-focused thinking.
* The pressured mind will fret, fear, and worry. It’s almost like anxiety is our default setting. We must be intentional in the focus and faith of our thinking.
* The thoughts that you allow to remain in your mind will either hurt you or bless you. Thoughts are never inert; they pull us toward or away from peace as they pull us toward or away from the Spirit. Throughout every day, we have many thoughts—worldly and spiritual—that rush through our minds; the question we ask ourselves is this: what thoughts are remaining in my mind? What thoughts are bringing me life and peace? Am I dwelling on those?

I’ve used the word “*practice*” several times in my words to you today. We’re not going to make up our minds to be spiritual thinkers; we’ve got to practice! Just like practicing a sport or a craft or a skill, it takes time and repetition to develop our spiritual thinking. So use these ideas for daily use over the coming days as you practice setting your own mind on the things of the Spirit:

* Make it your daily practice to set your mind on spiritual things.
* Maintain spiritual mindedness all day long.
* Think like the Lord Jesus would think and how He would desire for you to think.
* Think about the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ (see 2 Corinthians 3:18)
* Think about the Lord’s death, resurrection, ascension, reign, and return.
* Think about heaven and eternal life.

I pray that your practicing of spiritual thinking will not only transform your attitude and your own faith but will spill over into your relationships. How wonderful to bless our friends, family, and even strangers with the life-giving peace that comes from a mind focused on the Spirit.

May the Lord bless you,

Pastor Mike