

Thinking Correctly – Sunday 1st February, 2015

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Colossians 3:1-2).

Beloved in The Lord,

In order to live our life in a way that honours God, we must set our mind on things above. It is of utmost importance that we think correctly at all times. Our thoughts are very important, as they determine our actions. Correct thinking leads to a blessed and fulfilled life, whereas corrupt thinking leads to failure, sin and condemnation. We could say that our thoughts are the steering wheel or rudder that guides our life. This is why Paul writes:

“Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Col.2:2).

To set your mind on things above, simply means to focus your thinking on God and His Holy Word. When our focus is God and His Word, then our thinking is correct. David wrote:

“How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand.

When I awake, I am still with You” (Psalm 139:17-18).

David held God in high esteem, and he strove to put God first in all his thoughts and actions. He knew only too well, from bitter experience the consequences of corrupt thinking. When his focus was God, he did well and was blessed, but when his focus was his own lusts and desires he sinned and displeased God. David knew how quickly bad thinking led to sin.

I know this in my own life. I know how important it is for me to think correctly, to keep my mind focused on things above. When I lose that focus, I begin to stray, and I lose my joy and peace and miss out on God’s very best for my life. When God is not my focus, my light grows dim, and the salt loses its saltiness.

We must always remain alert and be aware that we have a cunning and powerful enemy, who ceaselessly strives to get our attention off God and onto ourselves. Satan’s main battlefield is our mind. All sins begins in the mind, it starts with a thought. This is why we must guard our minds and train them to think correctly.

A good way to tune our thoughts is to pray the Lord’s Prayer. We must do this thoughtfully and slowly, not just rattle off the words. When we weigh up every statement and really apply it to our hearts and mind then we are truly blessed. We must let every petition rest deep in our soul. The first words set our mind in the right direction. “Our Father in Heaven.” This lifts our eyes, our thoughts to Heaven and sets us on the right path.

We need to regularly remind ourselves that God, who is in Heaven, is our Father if we are in Christ Jesus. He is not a mean, cruel despot, waiting to mete out punishment, no He is a loving Father, who loves each one of His children. He is a Father who cares and provides and protects. He meets all of our needs. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He loves us with an indescribable, unchanging, unending love. He is a Father who knows all; is all powerful and is everywhere. He is a Father who never leaves or forsakes His children.

It is so important that we remind ourselves of these truths on a regular basis. When something bad happens, one of the first thoughts Satan puts in our mind is “God has abandoned you, God is punishing you, God does not love you.”

These are lies, they are fiery darts the devil shoots at us, with the aim of distancing us from God. When these thoughts assail us, we need to fight them off with the truth. The truth is that we have a loving Heavenly Father who is in control, who loves us, who is working for our ultimate good in every situation.

The truth is stated in God’s Word: **“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).**

How many things work together for good? All things. All means all! Yes, even the difficult things, the things we simply do not understand. All things work together for our good. When we experience negative or difficult situations, it is important that we handle them with correct thinking. The correct response is to look to God our Father. We can say to Him something like: “Father, I don’t understand what is happening, I don’t understand why You allow this to happen, but I believe that You love me, and that ultimately even these things will work together for my good, because my life belongs to You.” Such a response will strengthen our faith, strengthen our bond with God The Father. This type of prayer will bless us.

It is not easy to respond to heartaches and hardships in this way, but it is what we must do. We must not give in to wrong thinking. We not only harm ourselves when we think wrongly, we harm our witness for God.

When we have correct thinking about our situations, then we have a powerful testimony or witness, that brings glory to our Father in Heaven. When those who know us, and who know our circumstances, see that we have joy and peace in the midst of trials and troubles, when they see that we trust in God, that gives a powerful witness.

The way that we can ensure that we have a powerful testimony, that our thinking stays on the right track is to train our minds and hearts to be thankful always in all things. To live a life of praise and thanksgiving. This does not mean that we have to be thankful for our problems as such, but that we can thank God that we have Him to lean upon, to rely on as we go through the difficulties. We thank God that we trust in Him knowing that He will never leave nor forsake us.

The more we set our minds on God, the greater our thanksgiving, and along with that the greater our faith and trust in Him. The more we thank and praise Him, the quicker our faith grows.

Paul writes to the Thessalonians: ***“in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1.Thes.5:18).***

In the Lord’s Prayer we pray for God’s Kingdom to come and for His will to be done. Paul clearly tells us that God’s will for us is that we give thanks to God in everything. This thanksgiving in everything is what keeps us close to our Father. Thanksgiving is a sweet aroma in the nostrils of God.

We know in our own lives, what a great feeling it is when people are grateful and thank us for something that we have done for them. A bit of gratitude goes a long way. When we are thankful to God in everything, then we are really confessing our faith. As I said we are strengthening our relationship, drawing ever closer to Him. We make our Father glad. There is no greater thing in life than to know that God our Father is pleased with us.

When we are ungrateful, when we complain and whine, then we dishonour God, and we hurt His feelings. That is never a good thing. That generation of Israelites that came out of Egypt under the mighty hand of God, led by Moses, did not make it to the promised land. God made them wander around in the desert for forty years until everyone of them, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, had died. It was their children that went into the promised land. Why did God not let them in? Because of their constant whinging and complaining and lack of gratitude. They were constantly moaning and grumbling against God, even though God had freed them from slavery, sustained them and led them in a visible and present way through the Red Sea and beyond. God daily gave them Manna from Heaven to eat and yet they were not grateful.

Let us beware that we do not become like them. God, through Christ Jesus The Lord has led us out of Egypt, out of slavery to the Devil, and He has adopted us into His own family as dear children. He daily cares and provides for our every need. We lack nothing. He loves us with eternal love and He holds us by His gracious hand.

May we commit to a life of correct thinking, a life of thanksgiving and praise. May a song of gratitude be our daily attitude.

May God help us.

Amen.

Pastor Colvin MacPherson Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sydney.
All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.