

“Change Your Mind – Change Your Life” - Ephesians 4:17-24 – May 6th, 2018

- The title I chose for today's teaching is “Change Your Mind – Change Your Life.”
- Perhaps you've heard that saying about how that once we will change our minds, God, in turn, will then also change our hearts.
- This because, God will never force His way, or His will, upon us, rather, the onus is on us to make the decision to choose Him.

- Here in our text the Apostle Paul is describing what our lives will be like and look like once God is allowed to change our hearts.
- Namely, that of no longer living our lives like we did before Christ but instead living the new life in Christ, and because of Christ.
- However, it all starts in the battleground of the mind, which is why Paul is emphasizing the need to change our way of thinking.

- In verses 17-19 he explains why we're to change our thinking and in verses 20-24 he explains how we can change our thinking.
- It's important to understand that knowing the “why” I need to change is the catalyst for motivating the “how” I can really change.
- I would suggest not knowing the “why” is the reason nothing ever changes in our Christian lives, and it starts with how we think.

- In v. 17-19 Paul describes those futile in thinking, darkened in understanding, separated in ignorance, and hardened in heart.
- In so doing, he explains the reason for this as having lost all sensitivity, becoming callous, giving themselves over to impurity.
- As such, they have given themselves license to indulge in every kind of sensuality, impurity, and they also become full of greed.

- When I was in my 20's, as a young Christian someone told me I had stinking thinking and needed a check up from the neck up.
- While I realize this is a clever quip the truth of it cannot be overstated in the sense that we will become and behave as we think.
- This is why Paul in writing to the Philippians chapter 4:8, lists those things that we're to think about for peace of mind and heart.

Philippians 4:8 - Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Proverbs 23:7a - For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

- It's with this understanding that we're now better able to answer the “why” question as it relates to changing our way of thinking.
- Simply put, the reason why we need to change our minds is because of the propensity for our hearts to be hard and minds set.
- Just as we develop a callous on our hands and lose the sensitivity because of it, so too does this happen in our heart and mind.

- In verses 20-24 he goes from the why to the “how” saying it's by our putting off the old self and putting on the new self in Christ.
- It's interesting to note what he says in verse twenty-three about our being made new in the attitude of our minds when we do.
- By way of a computer illustration it's like downloading a new file to overwrite the old corrupted file on the hard drive of our mind.

2 Corinthians 10:5 - We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Romans 12:1–2 - 1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- What Paul is saying here is that both the changing and the transforming of my mind come by way of the renewing of my mind.
- With this renewing of my mind, comes a new way of thinking, which not only changes my mind, but it changes what I believe.
- Not only will this change what I believe, it will also change my behavior and my decisions based on what I believe to be true.

- I'll close by asking two questions, could the reason why nothing changes in your life be that you first need to change your mind?
- Second, what specific changes would you immediately and eventually see by changing, transforming, and renewing your mind?
- My prayer is that all of us, myself included, would take heed to this word in God's Word so as to experience a transformed life.