

DAY 1 - (week beginning Mon 28 Jan 2019)**Read - Colossians 1:25-29**

"...His energy, which so powerfully works in me" vs 29.

Our theme for this week is "Thinking like Jesus". What a wonderful goal! What a great challenge it would be to get to the point where we constantly "thought like Jesus"! It should be possible - last week we learnt that Wesley taught about Christian perfection - our thinking can become Christlike.

We cannot try, in our own strength, to think like Jesus, however. We cannot study His ways and, by force of will, copy His ways. Jesus taught us that we need to allow Him to work through us. In John 15:4 He says: "Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself, it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me." We need to discover the miracle of the indwelling Christ: the 'mystery' "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" Col 3:27.

What a relief! What joy, to realise that Jesus intends to work through us! He loves through us, He forgives through us, He blesses and includes the estranged through us. Our task is only to ask for openness - to surrender to Him.

Lloyd John Ogilvie writes that the Christian was meant to be "the dwelling place of Christ; the glorious riverbed of the flowing streams of the living Lord!"

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, Help me to be open to you. Help me to realise that you accept and love me. Show me that Your Holy Spirit wants to relieve me of the pressure and responsibility of being a "good Christian." Help me to allow Him to work in me.*

DAY 2**Read - Philippians 3:7-16**

"... I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...." vs 8

Stuart Briscoe tells how when the little boy fell out of bed and his mother asked how it happened, he replied, "I stayed too close to where I got in." Briscoe goes on to say "That's exactly how it is with many people in their spiritual experience." They are satisfied with a superficial belief system. There is so much more! There is "surpassing greatness" in knowing Christ.

When we read the Gospels to learn about how Jesus thinks, we see the altruistic nature of His mind-set. His love has very little to do with emotion. It has almost everything to do with attitude and action. 'Altruism' is not allowing self in any way to rule our lives. It is surrendering our privileges so that these privileges can be shared by all. We live by the acronym: J O Y - Jesus first, Others next and Yourself last. That is in reality the mind of Christ.

To get to the mind of Jesus, we need to acknowledge the deeds of Jesus. There was no disparity between what He said, and what He did. When He says that becoming a disciple of His involves taking up the cross, His willingness to accept the sacrifice of His life shows indeed what He preached. When He says "Love one another", He adds to it, "As I have loved you". The example is there in His life.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I pray that You will give me the desire to be like You and to think like You. Show me the way of selflessness and surrender.*

DAY 3**Read - Philippians 4:8-9**

*"Finally brothers, 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" vs 8.*

True and noble thoughts:

In a society where values and standards seem to be upside-down, it is sometimes difficult to know what is true. We read and hear "fake news" all the time. Sometimes the news might be accurate, but opinions and interpretations are warped. We are becoming disillusioned and negative. Christians are called to a higher thought process. We are called to look for the work of the Holy Spirit in our society, to see the beauty in people and to find the good. We do not deny the evil around us, we work against it, and we do not give in to the pressure to be cynical and negative. The only pressure we subject ourselves to is the pressure of the Holy Spirit as He guides us to think with the mind of Christ.

The well-known verse in Micah 6:8 puts in a 'nutshell' what it means to have "true and noble" thoughts - "He has shown you what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God". When our thoughts are selfless and full of mercy, then we know that we are beginning to think the way Jesus thinks and our actions and behaviours should mirror these thoughts.

Prayer: *Change my heart, Oh God, make it ever true, Change my heart, Oh God, may I be like You. You are the Potter, I am the clay, Mould me and make me, this is what I pray.*

DAY 4

Read - Philippians 2:5-11

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus". vs 5

Another translations of this verse is: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus".

There is only one way for Christians to learn to think like Jesus: They must have the mind of Christ. What is the mind of Christ? The mind of Christ is this, that if I humble myself, God will exalt me. The hardest thing for any Christian is to reject our selfish way of thinking and to accept Jesus' attitude of humility and selflessness.

*"Finally brothers ... whatever is **right**, whatever is **pure**, ... admirable - think about such things" Philippians 4:8.*

Right and pure thoughts:

We cannot begin to think thoughts which are "right" and "pure" while we continue to centre our lives on our own desires and needs. We have a deep-seated longing to be comfortable and if we don't grow past this, we cannot grow closer to Jesus. Stuart Briscoe writes this challenge: "It takes exercise of mind and devotion of life to get into the habit of wanting what is right."

Perhaps you immediately think of avoiding pornography when you consider thoughts which are pure and this is correct, but it is more than that. Examine your life in the light of Christ's purity, be honest about that which needs to be "cleaned up" in your thought life.

Prayer: Pray with the Psalmist:
"Create in me a pure heart, O God and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Ps 51:10

DAY 5

Read - Isaiah 52:6-12

"How beautiful (lovely) are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" vs 7

*"Finally brothers ... whatever is **lovely**, whatever is **admirable** ... think about such things" vs Philippians 4:8.*

Lovely and admirable thoughts:

The above verse from Isaiah sprang to my mind when I thought about "whatever is lovely". How wonderful to be that person with the "beautiful feet" who is a breath of fresh air. The person who uplifts everyone with whom they come into contact. The one who makes you smile with the joy of life and the awesomeness of God. The person who makes your heart beat a little faster as you realise how blessed you are and how the "good news" of Jesus is far greater than the bad news of this world.

It is our job as Christians to be peacemakers, to build bridges, not barriers; to encourage, not break down. Look for helpful things to say.

How devastating it is when a non-Christian sees a Christian running his business in a dishonest way! So often, we are called hypocrites because our 'talk' does not match our 'walk'. If our thoughts and our life-style were truly "lovely and admirable" and honest, Jesus would be honoured. Instead, these sloppy values bring Him dishonour.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I pray that You will fill me with your transforming power. I cannot think like Jesus does unless You change my heart and my mind. Give me the courage to be Your person.

DAY 6

Read - 1 John 4:7-21

"No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us". vs 12

*"Finally brothers ... if anything is **excellent** or **praiseworthy** - think about such things" vs 8.*

Excellent and praiseworthy thoughts:

In my younger days I was profoundly influenced by a little book called: "The Practice of the Presence of God" by Brother Lawrence. This monk taught people to bring God's presence into every aspect of their lives - the good and the bad. He spoke to God about everything that happened to him as he scrubbed pots in the monastery and He, literally, lived in God's presence continually.

John tells us that our love for others shows that God lives in us. In verse 13, he says: "We know that we live in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit".

We are not called to live "excellent or praiseworthy" lives nor to think "excellent or praiseworthy" thoughts in our own strength! We live in God and He lives in us. His perfect and loving Spirit flows through us as we live in Him.

If we truly desire to think like Jesus, we need to learn to 'practice His presence'. We need to pray earnestly that the Holy Spirit will overflow in our hearts and minds. We cannot be Christlike unless the Holy Spirit has filled and renewed us.

Prayer: Oh Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee, Send a revival, start the work in me, Thy Word declares Thou will supply our need, For blessing now, Oh Lord, I humbly plead.