



21 DAYS PRAYER & FASTING

Day 20 (28 January 2023)

Theme:

“The blessing of Abraham in Christ” (Galatians 3v13-14)

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” ¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.”

MENTAL HEALTH

- “Minds can be the library of the laws of God engraved in my mind by the Holy Spirit” by Apostle Nzo

Hebrews 8v10

NIV – “This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

NLT – “But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the LORD: I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

ESV – “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

- “Minds can be the movie house, where movies of sin, defeat, death and failure feature.”

Romans 1v28-31 ESV – “²⁸ And 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. ²⁹ They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

CSB – “corrupt mind”

HSB – “worthless mind”

CEV – “useless minds”

GWT – “immoral minds”

Why Pray and Fast for the Mind? / Why study the Word about the Mind?

1. According to Romans 8v6-7 the mind of the flesh lives by principle of sin and death

“... the mind of the flesh is death [both now and forever—because it pursues sin] ... the mind of the flesh [with its sinful pursuits] is actively hostile to God...”

- a) Hostile minds are a stumbling block to a strong relationship with God in the life of a Christian.

Hostile is defined as – not easily tamed

prone to enmity without a cause

difficult to cooperate with

- b) The mind if not subjected to the Word of God can stand between a Christian desire to live for God and God who wants us to live a holy, fulfilled, and successful life.
- c) A mind that is not subjected to the Word is quick to see death in every area of our lives (where death is interpreted as loss, shortfall, failure, things taken away from you, forfeiting a blessing, rejection, disappointment, enemies winning over you, demotion and losing favor with God and other important people)
- d) In this context defeat is a product of a mind.
- e) When the devil wants to defeat a believer, he sows thoughts of defeat in your mind.
- f) When the devil wants to destroy you he sows thoughts of destruction in your mind.
- g) When the devil wants to limit your potential he sows thoughts of fear in your life.

2. The Bible commands us on the specific thoughts we should think about all the time.

Philippians 4v8

NIV – “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.”

AMP – “Finally, believers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable and worthy of respect, whatever is right and confirmed by God’s word, whatever is pure and wholesome, whatever is lovely and brings peace, whatever is admirable and of good repute; if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think continually on these things [center your mind on them, and implant them in your heart].”

- a) As believers we are advised and instructed to think in a specific way.
- b) This specific way of thinking enjoys its full description in Philippians 4v8 (AMP).
- c) The details of a Christian thought life should reflect the principles of thought pattern enshrined in Philippians 4v8, and these are:
 - whatever is honorable and worthy of respect,
 - whatever is right and confirmed by God’s word,
 - whatever is pure and wholesome,
 - whatever is lovely and brings peace,
 - whatever is admirable and of good repute;
 - whatever is excellent,
 - whatever is worthy of praise,
 - **think continually on these things [center your mind on them, and implant them in your heart].**

d) The Bible is encouraging us to do a continual work of prayer, devotion, fasting and meditation to make sure we arrive at the 3 key aspects of Phil 4v8 which are:

(1) Think continually on these things

- The Word of God is concerned about what you continually think about. You eventually become what you think.
- “Think negative thoughts, you become a negative person.”
- “Sow a thought you reap an action. Sow an action you reap a lifestyle. Sow a lifestyle you reap destiny (where you end up in life)”
- I can tell where you will end up in life by examining the thoughts that continually fill your mind.

(2) Center your mind

- A centre is the main line of focus characterised by staying clear from right extremes or left extremes.
- It's okay to take few “short lefts” or few “short rights” but you are not allowed to move from the centre.
- Centering your mind requires a continual dedication to improve your mindset, thought patterns and quality of your thoughts to reflect Christ and His attributes.
- It's a situation where Christ and His Word do not only live in your heart but also live in your mind as well.

(3) Implant them in your heart

- The perfect situation for a Christian is to have an alignment where what's in your mind it's in your heart and what's in your heart is in your mind.
- **Psalm 119v9-11 MSG** – “⁹ How can a young person live a clean life? By carefully reading the map of your Word. ¹⁰ I'm single-minded in pursuit of you; don't let me miss the road signs you've posted. ¹¹ I've banked your promises in the vault of my heart so I won't sin myself bankrupt.”

3. A worried mind is seen by its level of anxiety.

a) Anxiety defines a mind not centered on the word, faith, trust, hope and prayer.

Philippians 4v6-7

NAB – “⁶ Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. ⁷ Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

NIV – “⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

NLT – ⁶ Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

b) A brief discussion on anxiety is very critical

- Everyone in the world is surrounded by anxiety. In fact, today's age is called the "anxiety age". We have lots of books on topic of anxiety with a cover photo of a person holding her head in his/her hands, lost in deep thought. An anxiety can affect our world, our health and our happiness.
- Anxiety does not need an unfamiliar environment or terrorising darkness to befall us. It can strike us anywhere at any time, even in our most familiar environment. It is an uncanny feeling.
- Charlie Wardle defines anxiety as "A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome."
- The English word anxiety—"originates from the ancient Greek *angh*, which can be found in ancient Greek meaning 'to press tight,' 'to strangle,'... 'load,' 'burden; 'trouble.' It's easy to detect the echoes of these feelings in the generally unpleasant experience we call anxiety." Often people consider anxiety to be an aspect of fear.

- However, Martin Heidegger makes a clear distinction between anxiety and fear. According to him, what we fear is a detrimental entity within the world, which comes from some definite region. Fear is essentially fear of something; it is a fleeing from "something" in the world. Hence, fear has a definite object. In anxiety the world collapses.
- Since anxiety is objectless, there is no definite or specific region from where it comes.
- As Heidegger writes, 'That in the face of which one has anxiety is characterized by the fact that what threatens is nowhere. In anxiety there is no object. In fact, anxiety is caused by the utter insignificance of the entities within the world.
- Anxiety is futural. It is about what is to come than what is. In it one thinks negatively—that is, what may happen and harm than what may not happen.
- Theologian Paul Tillich speaks of three types of anxiety according to the three directions in which nonbeing threatens being: Nonbeing threatens man's ontic self-affirmation, spiritual self-affirmation and moral self-affirmation. Hence, the awareness of a threefold threat is anxiety appearing in three forms, viz.
 - i) that of fate and death [the anxiety of death];
 - ii) that of emptiness and loss of meaning [anxiety of meaninglessness];
and
 - iii) that of guilt and condemnation [anxiety of condemnation].
- In all these forms, anxiety is existential and not neurotic anxiety. They do not exclude each other, but are immanent in each other.
- When we look at Abraham's' ordeal we feel sympathy for him. He stands before us as a helpless hundred-year-old man, facing agonising moments. God called him to go to an unknown land. He had to leave three things behind: his country, his family members and his father's home. The first command created anxiety, as it left Abraham with nothing to hang on to for the future. However, his only hope and heir to his dynasty that is – his nephew – Lot, he took with him, to continue his dynasty. But that only hope, Lot, decides to settle down at Sodom, apart from Abraham.

- And so the anxious moments continued for him. Abraham and Sarah faced the anguish of infertility. Children were considered the family, assets and guarantee of future security. Barrenness was a curse and Sarah had to bear with its stigma. Sarah in order to overcome her anxiety took a bold decision to allow Abraham to have a son from Hagar. But this decision of Sarah created more anxiety for her and for Abraham. He was caught in the conflict between Sarah, his wife, and Hagar, the maidservant.
- c) In psychology certain degrees (intensity) of anxiety is regarded as a form of mental illness and is associated with other illnesses associated with the mind which are:
- Sick mind
 - Jammed mind
 - Depressed mind
 - Mental disorder
 - Anxiety disorder
 - Bipolar disorder
 - Clinical depression
 - Anxiety and panic attacks
 - Borderline personality disorder
 - Hearing voices
 - Hoarding
 - Personality disorders
 - Phobias
 - Post-traumatic stress disorder
 - Psychosis
 - Alcohol and addiction
 - Schizophrenia
 - Schizo-effective disorder
 - Self-esteem
 - Self-harm
 - Suicidal feeling
 - Stress
 - Trauma
 - Anger

Scripture promises us that with prayer taking its proper place in our lives we can overcome these mental illnesses overtime (Phil 4v6)

4. Romans 12v2

NLT – “Don’t copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”

BSB – “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.”

a) God saves us but we are responsible on how we shape our minds through what we allow to

- come into our minds,
- stay in our minds,
- build in our minds,
- shape our minds,

and produce a story in our minds.

b) The greatest areas of hard-work in our minds

- Cleaning (erasing, deleting) the past in our minds
- Take off pressure in our minds
- Thinking straight (1 Peter 1v13 CEV)
- Thinking creatively and constructively
- Thinking clean thoughts
- Thinking positive according to the Word of God
- Thinking solutions
- Refusing to think outside of Christ

c) God’s design, God’s will, and God’s desire is to transform our minds.

Mental transformation is a divine reprogramming of the spirit of our minds so that our minds are able to be in alignment with the will and the purposes of God in our lives.

d) Products of mental transformation

- Courageous mindset

Paul Tillich defines courage: “Courage is strength of mind, capable of conquering whatever threatens the attainment of the highest good.” Not everyone is capable of having courage. Only a few who are ready to make certain sacrifices and face pain are capable of courage. Aristotle writes in *Nicomachean Ethics*, “it is for facing what is painful ... that men are called brave. Hence ...courage involves pain, and is justly praised; for it is harder to face what is painful than to abstain from what is pleasant.” Aristotle characterizes a brave person as follows: “The one who is undisturbed in face of these and bears himself as he should towards these is more truly brave than the man who does so towards the things that inspire confidence.”

- Fearless mindset (2 Timothy 1v7)

- Reproductive mindset (1 Peter 1v13 KJ).

Loins are the centre of procreative power where rare and godly strategies, designs, plans, and tactics are birthed by the grace of God.

- Solution orientated mindset able to tackle tough mental assignments

- Romans 12v2

NLT – learning mind

NIV – able mind

ESV – discerning mind

BSB – a mind that tests all things

LSB – a mind that approves the right and disapproves the wrong

AMP – a focussed mind

ABPE – a distinguishing mind (distinguishing between good and bad)

GWT – a determined mind

GNT – a knowledgeable mind

The steps required to arrive at these forms of minds include regular fasting, praying, meditating on the Word of God, and reading the Word of God regularly.

5. Sound mind

2 Timothy 1v7 NKJV – “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

1 Peter 1v13

ESV – “Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

NIV – “Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.”

CEV – “Be alert and think straight. Put all your hope in how God will treat you with undeserved grace when Jesus Christ appears.”

ISV – “Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep a clear head, and set your hope completely on the grace to be given you when Jesus, the Messiah, is revealed.”

a) In this portion of the scriptures (2 Timothy 1v7) sound mind is compared with the

KJ – spirit of fear (a fearful mind),

BSB – spirit of cowardice,

NAB – spirit of timidity,

ASV – spirit of fearfulness,

GWT – cowardly spirit,

b) Biblical teaching (2 Timothy 1v7) warns us that different spirits want to make our minds their home so that they can turn our minds into a haven, a breeding place for a life of being a coward, driven by a timid attitude, always being afraid and being on the lookout for the worst to happen.

c) Cowards by nature are people who avoid tough assignments, difficult projects, impossible situations and jealousy infested environments.

d) Cowards lack the courage to think beyond their fears, lack the courage to think above their threats, lack the courage to think solutions beyond their problems, lack the courage to expose their life to danger in order to gain new ground and step into new territories.

- e) That's why cowards never achieve anything.
- f) Cowards have a common phrase that says "I regret why I did not take the step... I wish if I had listened...I'm angry with myself why I did not do it then."
- g) The Bible tells us that the cure for the spirit of cowardice is a sound mind.
- h) The sound mind is able to see the good in the bad, rays of hope in the impossible, to render tough assignments the common stock of life, and the sound mind does not waiver or be side-tracked from its goal.
- i) To maintain a sober and a sound mind a believer must do the following five things:
 - (1) Constantly sanctify your mind by declaring that your mind is God's property and only reserved for Godly thoughts.
 - (2) Anytime when you sense the spirit of fear pulling you back from your God given goal rebuke the spirit of fear.
 - (3) Allow the scriptures to be your food for thoughts on daily basis. (Joshua 1v8)
 - (4) Train your mind to think like Christ because you have the mind of Christ (Philippians 2v5)
 - (5) Conduct a thought checking analysis on your mind daily and every thought that is against your values, the Word of God, the will of God, use 2 Corinthians 10v5 against it.

Prayer Items

- Lord I pray for my mental health according to Philippians 4v7.
- I ask that my mind be sober, anxiety free, worry free and disorder free.
- I pray that the peace of God, the grace of God and my faith in God's Word be the guard and security of my mind.
- I therefore stand against any forces of darkness that would seek to confuse, misdirect and subdue my mind.
- I speak against anxiety and its effects that would try to strangle my mind, press my mind tight, load my mind with negative thoughts, burden my mind with fears and trouble my mind with a tendency of making small things bigger in the name of Jesus.
- Lord teach me to use your Word, to welcome the Holy Spirit, to transform my mind according to Romans 12v2 so that I might not miss your perfect will and do what I like in this life instead of doing what you want me to do.
- Lord grant me a strong mind so that I might take on the hard and tough assignments of life.

Confessions

- I'm not a coward.
- I stand against the spirit of cowardice.
- I finish what I start and I don't leave things half-way.
- I am blessed with the finishing spirit able to survive the worst and be resilient in tough times until I reach my goals.
- Fear is not my portion for I have the mind of Christ.
- My mind is not hijacked and captured by anxiety, worry, suicide and gross negligent.
- My mind is productive and surrounded by the peace of God.
- I have a sober mind and I am a clear thinker able to produce much needed solution at work, in life, and at home by the grace of God in the name of Jesus.