

How to Think as a Christian - Part 2

by A.W. Tozer

To think like God, we must seek the help of the Holy Spirit and cultivate our minds through prayer, meditation, and scripture reading.

Duration: 22:52

Scripture: Matthew 16:21

Topics: "Thinking"

Description

In this sermon, Billy emphasizes the difference between the mentality of the world and the mentality of heaven. He highlights that while the world relies on techniques, literature, and communication methods like radio and television, the mindset of heaven is focused on the work of the Holy Spirit and interests in heavenly matters. Billy uses a personal anecdote about fishing in the dark to illustrate the need for illumination in our minds. He emphasizes that revelation and illumination are necessary to escape the darkness of reason and to think like God. Billy also mentions the importance of the Holy Spirit's presence in creating the mind of Christ within us. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to seek a heavenly mindset and rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance and understanding.

Transcript

Now in the 16th chapter of the book of Matthew, the second of two talks on that, where Jesus began to show how he must go into Jerusalem, unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed. Then the third day, and Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, thou shalt not see thyself, Lord. This shall not be unto thee.

But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, unto me. For thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. The most invariable method is to consult anywhere from five to a dozen or more translations, in order that I may be sure I know just what the man said, or what Christ said, or the Prophet said, or the Apostle.

What Jesus said here was this, You're not thinking like God, you're thinking like a man. He talked about that and showed that human sympathies and affections can and make us think like human beings down on the earth, instead of spiritual beings born from another world. And I question how shall we escape the world's influences and think the thoughts of God? For you see, the world has all of the techniques of brainwashing.

The world has all the techniques. They have literature, schools, the general accepted mori, they have history and tradition, they have every kind of sort of communication, now the two new methods, radio and television. And they have all this, and so the world creates.

But it is not the mentality of heaven, it is the mentality of earth. And the work of the Holy Ghost on earth, a mentality of heaven, in the hearts of people who are on earth, interests are in heaven. Now how shall we escape the debauchery of our minds? And how shall we gain the mind of Christ so that we think like God? Well, there are, I said three, I said four last week, but I want to give you a fourth one.

The first is revelation, the scriptures of truth. You see, there are two kinds of theology abroad. There is the theology of the world, which is simply paganism, that's all, nothing else, just paganism.

They may name the name Jesus, or God, or the Bible, have some biblical words, but their theology is that of the world. It's been influenced, but not controlled by it. So that while it is not Greek or Oriental, it is, it's pagan nevertheless, American paganism.

And we must, then there's a second, we must correct that. There's a, never be able to correct the world's theology. But there is a second, and that is the world, the church's theology.

And the church's theology is a, of badly, infrequently read and badly understood scriptures. What has been called chimney-corner scripture, and what Paul called old wives tales. And when you shake this off, you have a strange and corrupt mixture, which is neither one nor the other, Christian nor totally heathen, but it's a mixture in between.

Well, how are we going to get to the truth? The word of God, behold in my hand is the word of God. And we correct misconceptions, and cleanse our minds, and deliver ourselves from wrong thoughts about God, and ourselves, and the world, and sin, sure, by reading the scriptures themselves. There never was a time when so many Bibles were printed.

It's the world's bestseller every, and I read just this week, this last week, that the librarian down at the main library down in the city, Bible was the most asked for, and the most read book that they have down there. That is true, and that's good. But it's not good enough.

In going to the scriptures, we are not to go to them, to criticize them, nor to bring them, but to find out what they teach about all these things. And what they teach about God, and Christ, and creation, and man's relation to himself, and man's relation to God, and man's relation to the future. And these things that we must know, we will have to go to the Bible to find it out.

There is a sentence used, which ought to be true of everybody, that it is the, what do they call it, the source book of faith and practice. The only alone source of faith and practice. What we are to believe, and how we are to live, is given to us by revelation.

And the Spirit breathes upon the word and brings the truth to sight. And we must go to the scriptures themselves, the word of God, and read the word of God. How much Bible reading do we do? That's an important question.

Because I well know how much reading we do. I well know how much reading is done of other things. And remember, whether you know it or not, do not constantly correct your thinking and purify your mentality by the word of God.

You will be thinking like a man and not like God, just as sure as you live. And nothing will change that. There's revelation, that's first.

Then there's inspiration. And what do we mean by inspiration? We mean impulses within the mind to correct any wild notions that we might have. Job taught us, quote, the untamed wild creature given over to its impulses that puts its nostrils in the air and snorts and bays and races across the land.

Untamed and uncorrected. And so with the impulses of the human heart, even Christian impulses. And old men used to say, the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit.

You know, when we came under a nation of the imaginationless, inspirationless, beautyless cult, we got afraid to talk about the influence, because they said, well, the Spirit is not a thing, the Spirit is a person. Well, of course, we know it's a person. We can quote the creed that says about it.

We know the Holy Spirit is a person and not an it. Though even the King James Version uses it once or twice. The Spirit is the third person of the Trinity.

But shall we say that because he's a person, he can't have influence? They talked about the influences, and they believed that there was a divine inspiration that came on man, and came through the scriptures and by means of the scriptures, but that it put within the hearts of Christian men impulses to righteousness. The influences of the Spirit, they pulled that all out. Nobody will talk about that now.

But that's one of the things we ought to bring back into the Church again and polish it up and make it mean what it used to mean. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the heart to correct the impulsive Adamic notions and ideas and bring them into line with revelation. Then there is a third, and that is illumination.

It's not quite the same as inspiration. For inspiration has to do with impulse and influence, while illumination has to do with the light that falls upon the scriptures. The Spirit breathes upon the Word and brings the truth to sight.

It was our belief that the Word of God could not be understood unless the Spirit breathed upon it. The Methodists believed that, the early Baptists, the Galatian army believed it, and the Lutherans used to teach it, and it was true taught in the Presbyterians. Protestantism once believed that it took an illumination of the Holy Ghost to make us see truth.

And the Germans said, that is the best theologian, always better than the head, because it's there the illumination falls. So illumination is the third, and we must have the illumination of the Spirit on the scriptures. Saw through the Word of God, saw through it, and yet never have any illumination on it.

It's like walking in the night. But when we have the illumination of the Spirit breathed upon us, then we know, we know. And it saves us from the darkness of reason, for reason is dark.

In the world, they tell us, and this is part of the world's error, they say reason is a lamp. And there is a sense in which that is true, a lamp. When I was a boy, I went fishing with an old fellow named Billy Q, as I recall, an old man, and we fished along a creek or run, we called them there, very dark.

We had no lights, of course, of any sort, and it was very dark. But he had a fire going, and I said, Bill, how are we going to get out of here? We were really in the bushes. And he smiled in front of the fire, the woodsman and an old fisherman, and he knew.

So he picked up a firebrand. And you know, a burning firebrand gives off very, but Billy knew what to do with it. So he just began to swing it.

And swinging it around his head, he walked ahead of me. And as he swung it around his head, the flame went out, but the glow came on. And Billy enlightened our pathway.

Illuminations clear up the path and back onto the road, so we knew where we were out of the bushes. He did it by swinging around a brand that glowed by the wind, in the wind. Now, that is one kind.

There's a better kind, and you know what it is. We have now the electrical lights, various sorts of electric lights, and the artificial lights, which aren't really artificial. They're actually, they go back to the sun, but they're caught and funneled in another way.

And that kind of illumination is infinitely better than swinging a firebrand around. Well now, about all the light that you and I can have by nature is the light of the firebrand we swing around our head. More light than that, and it is the illumination.

Reason is a firebrand, and it's better to have it. And if we do have it, it'll help us to walk right, and stay out of jail, and look after our families, and be decent. We'll do that, and we can, by vigorously swinging the little stick we call reason, we can get enough light to walk.

But we can't get enough to save us from the torch itself. We can't get enough to save us from the world. It takes revelation plus illumination that our minds might be illuminated by that which is above reason.

If you ever fell on these knees before reason, and Paul was Greek taught, don't forget it. Paul was, and knew the Greek, and was taught by the Greek philosophers, and knew about them, and could quote them. And yet if you think that Paul was on these knees before reason, 1 Corinthians 1 and 2, that's all you have to do.

Just read 1 Corinthians 1 and 2, and you'll know better from that time on. For he said, where's the wise man, where's the disputer of this world, and the reasoner? He said, God's made them all foolish, and he has by the Holy Ghost through the gospel given us the real. And then I mention a fourth, and that is the presence of the Holy Spirit himself to create the mind of us.

But I want to issue a little warning right here, and it is that no single act will do for us alone, and with finality, what we want. I picked up a hymnal here, my old 108 year old hymnal. I go to it as a sometimes narration.

Here was a man of God, and they used to sing this in the Methodist church and other churches. Jesus plant the root in me, all that was in thee. Settled peace I then shall find, for Jesus is a quiet mind.

Anger I no more shall ease, even always still. Meekly on my God recline, Jesus is a gentle mind. I shall nothing but Jesus and him crucify.

Perfectly to him be joined, Jesus is a loving mind. I shall triumph evermore, my God adore. God so good, so true, so kind, Jesus is a thankful mind.

Lowly, loving, meek, and pure I endure. Be no more to sin inclined, Jesus is a constant mind. I shall fully be restored to the image of my Lord.

Witness my mind, Jesus is a perfect mind. Now, they used to long for that, and when a young preacher came to be ordained, they said, entering into the experience of this perfect mind, this perfect love, and he said, No, sir, I haven't yet. And they said, Are you? And if he could say yes, sir, vigorously, earnestly seeking, they'd ordain him.

They wanted to know that he either had that experience or was earnestly seeking. Now, I want to warn that no single act of grace, and this was never meant to teach you, will do this alone. The mightiest, overwhelming, anointing of the Holy Ghost that ever came on a man will do this work finally and alone.

We can undo the work of God within our own hearts, baptize us with a spiritual mind, and he will do it, but it requires that we live by the word, that we study the word, that we fill our minds with the word, that we look every moment for illumination, and then there comes our fifth word, cultivation. We must cultivate the Spirit's mind, the mind of Christ. Let this mind be in you, said the man of God.

That's really what he meant rather than intellect, but let this mind be in you. We've got to cultivate. It's a great mistake to think that we can get it, and then because we have it in Christ, we have everything, and from there on we can give little attention to it.

It's a great mistake to think that if we're filled with the Spirit of God, that's the end of it, and that there's nothing nowhere from there. My brethren, when Jesus was fully Spirit anointed, as the word was used by Peter, anointed with the Holy Spirit, do you think he did? What was it? He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. That was the next thing.

So don't think for a second that the anointing of the Holy Ghost, in any degree you may have given it to you, is sufficient. There must be cultivation. And by our minds in the wrong things, we can undo the work of God in making the mind of Christ in us.

I wonder if I could give a kind of grotesque illustration. Suppose that there is a very fine interior decorator. He has consulted the finest, most artistic minds that he could locate, decorating a room.

And he has his various colored paints there, and he's doing it slowly, and this room is evidently going to be a beautiful room, beautifully designed and beautifully done. His quitting time comes, and he goes home. And in the middle of the night, some scoundrelly little vandalish boys, and to have themselves a good time, and I wouldn't have been above it when I was a kid, they pick up and undo everything up to that moment.

And it's repeated the next night. Now, that's exactly what you and I can do, my brethren. The mighty Holy Ghost can bring a thankful mind, a noble mind, a pure mind, and begin to teach us to think the thoughts of God.

And we can walk right out and fall into influences like bad boys that will paint weird pictures and make ugly faces all over the walls. And instead of the walls of Zion standing in their beauty, they'll be defaced by the mischievous devil. So you and I have to cultivate the mind of Christ.

You cannot without the scriptures of Christ, and you cannot know the scriptures without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But even these will not keep your mind heavenly. You cultivate a heavenly mind by prayer, by meditation, by dreaming over the scriptures, by deliberately thinking God's thoughts about things, and by deliberately eliminating the influences that are either impure or worldly.

I sometimes don't care whether I'm a Christian or not. They don't do me any good, and I can't do them much good. For everything from the time you get is the world.

It's the world, the nice part of the world, but it's the world nevertheless. But there are some, thank God. Conversation swings around as a needle in the compass, swings around to the north magnetic, and pretty soon you're talking about wonderful things.

They that loved the Lord met and talked often one with another. And the Lord heard it and wrote, They shall be mine, saith God, in that day. We can be too jocular, we can be too worldly, and we can be interested in too many things and thus scatter our mind.

Jesus talked about a single eye. This is one thing I do. So there must be a unifying of the forces of our minds and a settling of our minds on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Think like Jesus. Do you say that narrows our minds, narrows them terribly? Oh, my friends, just in a small imperfect way that my own heart has had. I want to tell you that it doesn't narrow them at all.

It brings them into a vast world of freedom. Our minds, I mean, into a vast world of freedom. He is not a caged bird who looks heavenward and moves.

He's released. He's in a cage who thinks as man thinks. Peter was in a cage.

His mind was in a prison when he said, Lord, that isn't the way we do it here. Don't go get yourself killed. You don't need to kill yourself, Lord.

He was in a cage. And it was the Lord who was free when he turned on him and said, You're thinking like God. That's not good grammar, but that's the way we say it now.

We're thinking as a man instead of as God thinks. Now, my brethren, these days, don't go home from church this morning or wherever you're going. Status, reader's digest, quip, or the funny thing somebody said, or some worldly thing.

Disregard the influences of the Holy Ghost, but rather go and live in line with them, and then you'll move upward into freedom. And it's the centered mind that is the free mind. It is the scattered mind that is the imprisoned mind.

And the mind of the world is imprisoned, but the mind of the Christian is released upward into God, upward into the vast sea of being we call the Godhead. So that is how we escape the evil influences of the world and get a mind like Christ. Revelation, inspiration, illumination, and the indwelling Holy Ghost, and cultivation.

I hope you'll be back tonight. There'll be a lot more here. Things go as they have been, and I think they will.

Some are coming that I know from out of town. And we'll talk tonight, give the 10th on the series, which I've been following Sunday nights. We'll have one of those gracious, wonderful song services.

I don't ever hear anything like it any place I go. Come and sit and listen and join in with my crack baritone. And when time comes to preach, I could go home and say, well,

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