

Let Us Be Thus Minded

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a renewed mind and a committed heart in the pursuit of spiritual maturity as demonstrated by the Apostle Paul in Philippians 3.

Duration: 1:09:23

Scripture: Matthew 18:20, Romans 12:1-2, Romans 12:11, Philippians 3:7-8, Philippians 3:16

Topics: "Consecration", "Renewed Mind"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher recounts the story of Saul's encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Saul, who later became the apostle Paul, was persecuting Christians when he heard a voice asking why he was persecuting Jesus. Jesus revealed himself to Saul and told him that he had a purpose for his life. Saul, now recognizing Jesus as Lord, asked what he should do. The preacher emphasizes the importance of consecration and presenting oneself as a living sacrifice to God, as well as the need for a renewed mind.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the letter to the Philippians. Philippians chapter 3 we read from verse 7 through verse 16. Philippians chapter 3 verse 7. But what things were gained to me, these I counted on account of Christ's loss.

But surely I count also all things to be lost, on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all, and count them to be filled, that I may gain Christ, and that I may be found in Him, not having my righteousness, which would be on the principle of law, but that which is by faith of Christ, the righteousness that is of God through faith, to know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if any way I arrive at the out resurrection from among the dead, not that I have already obtained, or am already perfected, but I pursue, if also I may get possession of it, seeing that also I have been taken possessing of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count to have got possession myself, but one thing, for getting the things behind and stretching out to the things before, I pursue, looking towards the goal for the prize of the calling of high of God in Christ Jesus. Verse 15.

As many, therefore, as are perfect, let us be thus minded, and if you are any otherwise minded, this also God shall reveal to you. Verse 16. But whereto we have attained, let us walk in the same steps.

May we commit His word back to Him. Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee for Thy precious promise, that where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them. By faith we know that Thou art here with us, and we do praise and thank Thee that Thou art one who delights to reveal Thyself, to speak Thy word to us.

So Lord, we are all here, waiting to hear from Thee what Thou hast to say to us. We do look to Thy Holy Spirit to bring Thy word into our heart, and make Thy words life and spirit to us, that Thou mayst be glorified. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

The burden that the Lord has put upon my heart is in verse 15 and verse 16. Actually only two phrases. In verse 15, as many therefore as are perfect, let us be thus minded.

And if you are otherwise minded, this also God shall reveal to you. And I want to underline just two words. Thus minded.

And then verse 16. But where unto we have attained, let us walk in the same steps. And just underline walk in the same steps.

Brothers and sisters, here you find two things. Mind and walk. And due to these two things are joined together.

You cannot and you should not separate these two things. Mind determines walk. And walk expresses mind.

In our Christian life, in our Christian growth, these two things are very vital. What is in our mind? What does our mind set upon? And how about our walk? Do we walk according to what we mind for? You remember in Romans chapter 8, verse 5 through verse 8, it is said, they that walk according to the flesh, mind the things of the flesh. And they that walk according to the spirit, mind the things of the spirit.

The minding of the flesh is death. And the minding of the spirit is life and peace. So you find here, what do we set our mind on? We'll decide how do we walk.

It is very important to have the right mind. Because that will determine how do we walk and where do we walk towards. This morning we will focus our attention on thus minded.

The apostle Paul said, anyone who is perfect, or anyone who aims to be perfect. Now the word perfect in the scripture, I believe we all know it does not mean sinless perfection. Because there is no one except our Lord Jesus who is seamless perfect.

But the word perfect in the Bible means mature, full grown, growing up. Now if anyone desires to grow up spiritually, now if you are contented to be just babes in Christ throughout your life, then these words are not for you. But if you really desire to grow up spiritually, and I wonder if there is any baby who does not want to grow up.

I remember many years ago, when my little sister and a little cousin, they were maybe four or five at that time, and I still remember they sat on the step of the stairway, and I overheard they talked to each other. And they feel sorry for themselves because they find the grown up brothers and sisters can do many things that they cannot do. So I believe every young child wants to grow up.

Maybe the grown up wants to be young, but all the young children, they want to grow up. And spiritually speaking this is the right aspiration. We want to grow up spiritually.

We want to grow up to be perfect. If anyone desires to be perfect, the Apostle Paul said he needs to be thus minded. That is to say he must have the same mind that Apostle Paul is describing in Philippians chapter three.

Now if you are otherwise minded, then the Lord will remind you, this is the kind of mind that you must have. So brothers and sisters, our mind is very, very important. Now when we believe in the Lord Jesus, do you realize what happens? Now according to Ezekiel chapter thirty-six, verse twenty-six, the Lord said I will put a new heart into you.

And I will put a new spirit in you. I will take away your stony heart and put in you a heart of flesh. In other words, here you'll find when we believe in the Lord Jesus, he gave us a new heart.

Now formerly our heart is a stony heart. Now it means that our heart is hard, insensitive towards God, towards spiritual things. But now he replaces it with a heart of flesh, tender, sensitive, and pure.

And now in the Old Testament, you do not find the word conscience, but you find the word heart. So in the Old Testament, the heart here actually is what we will call in the New Testament terms conscience. You remember once David, he cut off one of his fingers a piece of the skirt of Saul, and the Bible said his heart smote him.

In other words, his conscience was so sensitive because of his communion with God, that even when he was doing that thing, his conscience bothers him. He felt uneasy. He shouldn't do that.

So in the Old Testament, the heart really speaks of our conscience. Now when we believe in the Lord Jesus, he gives us a new heart. A heart that is tender, soft, sensitive to the touch of God.

A heart that begins to love God, and love the things that God has given us. Now this is what happens when we believe in the Lord Jesus. Now how about our mind? You know, as a matter of fact, the very word repentance means a change of mind.

Formally, your mind is set upon the world, the earthly things, unseen, and you go for the pleasure of sin. But now being convicted by the Holy Spirit, you begin to change your mind. You begin to see the sinfulness of sin, the ugliness of sin.

You hate sin, you do not want to sin anymore, and you begin to turn towards things spiritual, eternal. You repent of what you did before, and you turn your heart towards God, towards the Lord. You ask for forgiveness of your sin.

You receive the Lord Jesus by faith as your saviour. A change of mind has happened. Now that's repentance.

And no one can believe in the Lord Jesus without repentance. We repent, we see the need of a saviour, and thus we believe in Jesus Christ, who is the saviour of the world. So as a matter of fact, without repentance, without a change of mind, you won't be able to be saved.

But the thing is, even though repentance is a change of mind, but unfortunately that change is superficial and transient. It is not drastic, thorough, and permanent. But in the beginning days of your Christian life,

you seem to be able to live by your heart, and not by your mind.

In other words, when you first believe in the Lord Jesus, you have such a love relationship with the Lord, that you live your first days in love, by your heart. You do not go by your mind. Formally, you live by your mind.

You think, you consider, you weigh things, you reason, and you decide what you do. But during the first days of your Christian life, it seems as if you have forgotten your mind. You don't reason anymore, you do not calculate, but you just live by your heart.

You live, you love the Lord, and you want to do everything to please Him. Your mind seems to take a back seat, and your heart is driving you onward. Now if this will continue forever, how blessed that will be.

You know, this is the reason why the Lord said, you have to be converted and be like a child, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. A child lives by his heart, but a grown-up, unfortunately, we live by our mind, our reasoning, but not very long. And you'll find your old mind begins to assert its power over your life again.

You will discover that gradually, probably pretty soon, you begin to reason again. You begin to consider, to calculate, whether it's beneficial to you, or whether it will cost too much to you. And you'll find that your old mind has reasserted its power over your life.

An old habit is very hard to break. So brothers and sisters, in order to really live by your heart, you live a Christian life, and to grow spiritually, you need the renewing of your mind. Because when you are first saved, you have a new heart, but you still carry an old mind.

So what you need is, you need a new mind, the renewing of your mind. In other words, you need to see things differently, to weigh things differently. What you consider as precious before, you will look at these things as loss.

But what things you may not count much, value much before, you will begin to value them so very much, that you really desire it after that. A renewing of your mind. A renewing of your mind is an absolute necessity to our Christian growth.

Now brothers and sisters, the question is, has your mind been removed, renewed? Are you still thinking the old way? The way that you used to think, before you were saved? Or do you now think very differently? What does your mind set upon? Our mind set is very very important. If you set your mind on the things of the flesh, then you walk according to the flesh, and that is death, spiritual death. But if you set your mind on the things of the spirit, then you are spiritually alive.

Now just, brothers and sisters, under the light of God, examine yourselves. See whether after you have believed in the Lord Jesus, your mind has been renewed. Are you still thinking in the way that the worldly people are thinking? That you used to think? Or do you see things now very differently? What is your present situation? Now, how can our mind be renewed? You cannot change it yourself.

Somebody else has to do it for you. But there is one condition. And the condition is that unless you present your body as a living sacrifice, which is holy, acceptable to God, and it is your reasonable service, your spiritual worship.

Now, unless you present your body as a living sacrifice to God, the Holy Spirit does not have the liberty to change your mind. And to renew your mind. So what the Lord is working, is waiting for you today is your consecration.

Now brothers and sisters, you must have heard about consecration before, many times probably, but you need to understand that consecration is our first Christian commitment to God. A saved person who has never presented his body as a living sacrifice, has not begun his Christian walk at all. He is a Christian, but he hasn't walked a step.

Consecration is the first Christian experience. That's why you find in Romans chapter 12, from Romans chapter 1 to 11, it is the mercies of God. All that God has done for us in Christ Jesus.

And what a wonderful salvation, wonderful work, complete work, finished work He has done for us. Not only forgiveness of our sins, justification, but sanctification, glorification, you find that everything that God has purposed for us in Christ Jesus, has been done by our Lord Jesus on Calvary's cross. The mercies of God, many fold, mercies of God.

And then, from chapter 12, therefore, let us be moved by the mercies of God. And voluntarily, this is the first thing that we do, voluntarily, everything God has done in Christ Jesus for us. But then, the first thing that we have to respond, and that is, present your bodies and living.

Now, brothers and sisters, have you done that? Have you put your all on the altar, and say, Lord, this is all yours. I give up my right to myself. I give up my right to live for myself.

I give myself completely, the body, that is, that represents my life. Represents the whole being, spirit, soul, and body. I present my whole being to you as a living sacrifice.

That is, it is a sacrifice. Now, when you sacrifice something, it gets out of your hand. You no longer hold on to it.

You lose your right, your possession of it. It belongs to somebody else now. You sacrifice it to God, to the Lord, who so loves you, and redeems you.

You sacrifice, you give yourself to the Lord, and say, now, Lord, it's yours. It's all yours. I have no right over myself.

I do not possess myself anymore. You possess me. You own me.

You have every right over me. You can do anything you like with me. Living sacrifice.

Daily, you live under debt. Now, that is consecration. Now, have you done that? If you have never done it before, may the love of Christ constrain you, that you cannot delay your consecration anymore.

Now, if you have done it, are you still on the altar? Have you climbed down? Are you a living sacrifice? That is to say, you are still living as a sacrifice. Or have you gone back and live for yourself, and possess yourself, and exert your own right over your own life? Now, brothers and sisters, consecration is the first Christian experience, and it is the last Christian experience. In other words, it is a daily.

Now, if this is true with you, then the Holy Spirit will renew your mind. You do not have to do it now. You do not need to worry how to change your mind.

You cannot. Just like you cannot lift yourself up, you cannot do it. But one thing you can do, and you must do, and it is daily as a sacrifice.

That is the way you live. Not yesterday, not tomorrow, but today. And if this is the case, then today your mind is renewed.

And it will be renewed day by day, progressively. And according to your renewed mind, you begin to see very differently. Look at the Apostle Paul.

In chapter 3 of the Philippians, he told us how in the past he set his mind on the things of the flesh. He was proud of his Jewish origin, of his pedigree, of his achievement in Judaism. He set his mind probably to be the rabbi of Israel.

You know he sat under the feet of Gamaliel, and Gamaliel at that time was a great rabbi. He was the grandson of Helio. And we all know that among the Jewish rabbis there are two schools.

And Helio is one of the schools. And Gamaliel is the grandson of Helio. And Saul sat at his feet.

Learned from him. And he was more advanced than his contemporaries. Because he set his mind to be a great rabbi, so he walked after it.

And he achieved to a very high place. He was almost there. And he took pride over it.

That was everything he wanted. That was gain to him. And in order to gain that he was willing to sacrifice all the other things.

Other young people may be playing, but there he was studying at the feet of Gamaliel. That was his mind. His mindset.

And he set his mind on the goal. He persecuted the believers of Jesus Christ. Because he considered Jesus as an imposter of Judaism.

Should be wiped out. And he was so furious, he even went to the Gentile cities to seize those disciples of Jesus. And brought them to Jerusalem to be condemned.

And when Stephen was stoned to death, he washed the clothes of these murderers. Now that was Saul. That was his mindset.

He was almost inhuman. He was such a moral person. He kept all the letters of the law.

And yet he was so inhuman. He went to houses, seize women and children. Put them to prison.

Sentence them. And he was happy when Stephen was stoned to death. Think of that.

The mindset. But the Lord evidently at the martyrdom of Stephen, his conscience was touched. He saw something that was heavenly and real.

A person can die in such a way. Saw the heavens open. The Son of Man standing there, waiting to welcome him home.

And before he died, he asked, Lord forgive them. That must touch Saul very deeply. His conscience was bothered.

But in order to silence his conscience, he doubled his effort to persecute believers. He hardened his heart against it. Because his mindset was to be on the top.

But thank God, the Lord allowed him to go just so far. To the limit. He almost arrived Damascus.

And the light from above, he heard a voice. Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against. I have a purpose for your life.

You are to serve my purpose. It is hard to kick against the Lord. You only hurt yourself.

You cannot overcome me. I am my dear. And Saul said, Lord, you are Lord.

I was Lord before. But now you are Lord. Now who are you? And the voice said, I am Jesus, whom you persecuted.

And the next question he asked was, Lord, what shall I do? I know what to do before. I have set my goal. And I walked towards my goal.

I almost reached there. But now, I am lost. I don't know what to do now.

Tell me. You are the Lord. I give up my right for myself.

My future is yours. I cannot decide what to do. Lord, what do you want me to do? Brothers and sisters, at the very time he was converted, he presented his body of living.

And because of this, he said, there is the renewing. So from what we have heard his testimony in Philippians chapter three, now he said, what things were gained to me, these I counted on account of Christ. Suddenly his inner eyes were opened.

He saw that all the things that he considered as gains, actually was lost. And the reason is, on account of Christ. When he saw Christ, that excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, makes everything in this world not only as lost, but as filthy.

They are filthy. These are no longer lost. They are filthy.

These are gained to him. These are lost to him. Why lost? Because they hinder him from gaining the real thing.

Do you regret that you believe in the Lord too late? I have never heard a person who regrets he believed the Lord too early. That he wants to believe the Lord at the moment of his death. I never heard it.

But I heard many people said, how they regret it, they do not believe in the Lord. Why? Because all these that they consider as gain, were actually lost. How much better if you let these things go earlier, that you may gain him more.

There is nothing that can be compared with the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, what a change of mind. And that is permanent to the apostle Paul.

It is drastic. And that changed the course of his walk completely. He is willing to suffer the loss of all things, in order to gain what he is after.

What his mind is set on. He said, to gain, you remember in Colossians chapter 3, verse 1 through verse 5, Paul said, if you know that you are risen with Christ, then seek the things of the Lord. Seek the things that are above, where Christ is.

Because you are hidden with Christ in God. And Christ is. Brothers and sisters, are you still seeking the things below? Are you still seeking the mind in the things of the flesh? The lust of the eyes? The lust of the flesh? The pride of life? The world? Are you still setting your mind on these things? How can I be successful in this world? How much can I gain in this world? What glory can I have in the eyes of the world? Are these things earthly still attractive? Still seems a gain? Or do you look at these things as a loss? You spend your time, your energy, your life on the things is it worth it? And all the time, you are not seeking Christ, who is eternal, unsearchable.

Seek the things that are above. Now what are the things above? He said, where Christ is. Where is Christ? Christ is now at the right hand of his Father.

The things above, the things below, are the things that concerns. Anything that is not related to Christ, anything that is not of Christ, are not the things. Or to put it in another way, seek, seek all the things.

Anything that is of Christ, are the things above, are the things spiritual. Anything that is not Christ, not of Christ, are things earthly, things of the flesh. Now what are you seeking? Where do you set your mind on? Is your mind set on Christ? I need to ask myself, where do I set my mind on? What do I really seek for? What do I really seek for? Is it self? Me? What about me? What happens to me? What can I gain for myself? Or is it Christ? What can Christ gain in me? What place do I give to him? Is it he who lives in me, or I who lives in me? Is it he magnified in my life, or in my death? Or is it I who is manifested in my living, and even in my death? Now who? Brothers and sisters, it is not a matter of things.

It is a matter of a person. Whom do your mind set on? The person of yourself, or the person? If you read carefully, you will find the apostle Paul says, to know him. It is different.

In the past, he wanted to know all about Judaism, all about the rabbinical teachings, all about the traditions of the fathers, all about the Old Testament, the law, all the letters of the law, and he tried to keep every one of them. According to the righteousness of the law, he was blameless. Such a person.

But he never met God. Now, he is not looking for just some teaching, some doctrine of Christianity. He wanted to know.

It is experiential knowledge. How much of Christ do you really know, and you really experience him? He is the one that you set your mind on. Brothers and sisters, are you thus? If you want to be perfect, that is the only way, only mind.

And if you are otherwise minded, God will remind you. This is the mind of Paul, and this ought to be our mind. Are we thus? Formerly he sought for the righteousness according to law, but now he said, that is a loss to have the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ.

Christ is my righteousness. I have no righteousness of my own, but Christ is my righteousness, and he experienced it. Brothers and sisters, I believe it is true with all of us.

But is that all? Is that all you know about Christ? Justification by faith. Now, thank God for that. That is great.

So far as the word is concerned, nothing greater than that. But so far as God is concerned, that is the beginning, to know him. Because he has justified me.

Because he has closed me with his righteousness. Because he enables me to go to God, the Father. Therefore, to know the power of his resurrection.

Brothers and sisters, we are surrounded by death. We are not only surrounded by death, but death is even in us. We are facing death every moment of our life.

The wages of sin is death. We are tempted to sin, that death may come into our life. The world, the things of the flesh, is death, stealth, is death, unclean.

We are literally living among death, and with death even within us. Do you feel the deadening power over your daily life? The outside forces pulling you to death, and even the inside, that fifth columnist, is there trying to bring you to death. That is why we need to know the power of his resurrection.

Christ is your life, and his life is resurrection life. And you find that things you cannot overcome, he overcomes in you. Because resurrection is life out of death.

He goes into death, rob death of his power, and come out in glory. And brothers and sisters, that should be our daily experience. We are daily experiencing the power of his resurrection, and that is knowing Christ.

It is not teaching, it is not doctrine, it is not Christianity. It is life. It is a person living daily in you.

And if you allow him to live out from you, that is resurrection. But if you live by yourself, that is death. So Romans 8 again said, if we live according to the flesh, then we die.

But if we live by the resurrection power of Christ, we live. Because it is Christ who lives, it is a daily experience, knowing Christ. And then he said, being conformed to his death.

Now when I read this, I think, well, this should be the reverse. Conformed to his death first, and then the power of his resurrection. How can you not experience death before you experience resurrection? Now that is our human logic.

But the spiritual logic is, knowing the power of his resurrection, then be conformed to his death. Because if you don't know the power of his resurrection, when you go to death, you are finished. Nothing comes out on the other side.

And when nothing comes out on the other side, well, experience one death is enough. You dare not be conformed to his death. Now conformed, what is conformed? In Romans 12 verse 2 it says, do not be conformed to this age.

Now formerly we were conformed to this age. You know this age, the current, the fashion, the present way of life, we were conformed to it. We belong, we want to be what they are.

Now formerly we were conformed to this age, but now we are to be conformed to his death. What a difference! Now we are to be conformed to his death. What is his death? His death is dead to everything, anything that is not of God.

All inclusive death. When Christ died, he not only died to sin, to the power of sin, to the world, to the flesh, to the enemy, to anything that is not of God, death. Died to all these things, so what remains is God alone.

Christ all in all. Now that's being conformed to his death. And you won't dare to be conformed to his death if you do not know the power of his resurrection.

And to Paul this is gain. This is everything. And with this, that he may arrive at the out-resurrection from among the dead.

In other words, that he will have a part in the first resurrection, which means one day he will reign with Christ. Brothers and sisters, this is the mind of Paul. And he said, they who are born again are perfect.

Now does it mean that because of this Paul has arrived? He said no. He said, I haven't arrived yet. Why? Because I want to possess all that I have been possessed by Christ.

In other words, our Lord Jesus has a purpose in each of our lives. He wants to possess us fully according to his purpose. And Paul said, I want to possess.

I do not want to possess a little less than what I have been possessed of by Christ. Now that is his mindset. Not because I have possessed a little bit of what he has possessed me for, I am satisfied.

He said, no. The Lord of Glory has such a glorious purpose for me. I want to possess it all.

Therefore, I do not consider myself as arrived already. I am pursuing. I am running.

I am walking towards it. For the on high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Brothers and sisters, we have a high calling.

And that on high calling is our goal. Now what is that on high calling? The on high calling is to be like him. You know God said, it is not good for man to be alone.

Let us make him a help mate. His life. Now that is what God's purpose for all of us.

That we may be like Christ. Just like him. Just like him.

His character becomes our character. It is he living in us. Expressed through us.

And that is the body. The fullness of him who fills all and in all. It is a glorious church to be an eternal bride of the Lamb of the throne.

Brothers and sisters, this is the goal. You know there is a hymn. My goal is God, not joy, nor peace, nor his blessing, but himself.

It is his to lead me there. Not mine, but his. At any cost, dear Lord, by any road.

And that is the right mindset. And what is the price? Christ is the goal. And the price is gaining Christ.

That is the price. You gain him. You gain him by losing yourself.

You gain him by allowing him to be your hope. That is the price. And it is a price.

Do you think it is worth to pay any cost by any road? The Apostle Paul thought it is worth it. And how about you? May the Lord have mercy upon us. Dear Lord, we thank thee for thy servant Paul.

Thou hast so attracted him. Thou hast so revealed thyself to him that he counted all things as few. And he minded only to gain thee.

And how much thou hast rewarded him with thyself. Lord, we feel ashamed. We come to thee this morning exposing ourselves.

Oh examine, see if there is any evil. Pray that thou will turn our mind completely to thee. There is nothing more precious.

All things will pass away. But Lord thou are eternal. Thou are the only real living.

Oh how we praise and thank thee that I want to give myself to thee. And yet Lord, we are seeking thee now. Do pray thy Holy Spirit will touch our hearts.

We pray that there will be a drastic, a permanent change, a renewing. The spirit of our mind be renewed. That we may become for to the image.

Lord we trust thee to do this work in each one of us. Do not let us go. Lord, clear our mind.

Let us be in the presence of the Lord. That we may really see your value. That we may devalue all the things that we value.

And to thee be all the glory. In the name of our Lord Jesus.

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