

How to Develop the Mind of Christ I

Fred R. Coulter—July 13, 2013

With everything going on this week and everything that you're not told that's going on, the George Zimmerman/Trayvon Martin case has been going endlessly on television, which then gives everyone who wants to do something and not get in the news plenty of time to do it and not get noticed.

Last time I turned on the television and there it was, now we're having a panel discussion on the judge and the jury and I said enough is enough. So, this Sabbath I thought I would cover the most important thing we need to be doing. Because whenever distractions come along, such as this—whatever other distractions come along—we need to get our minds on why we are here, and that in the final analysis—as we know from the Feast of Tabernacles—God has called us to personally assist Him to straighten out the world. God is doing a tremendous and awesome thing that the world doesn't even know. So what we are going to cover today is: *how do we develop the mind of Christ.*

Let's come to Psalm 66; again, with this Psalm we will see the purpose of God and how God Himself always focuses on the purpose.

Psalm 66:1: "Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth.... [that is a Millennial Psalm as well] ...Sing forth the honor of His name; make His praise glorious. Say to God, 'How awesome are Your works!'" (vs 1-3). As we saw in the sermon *Genesis, Creation and Sand* how fantastic just a grain of sand is. By the way, I got a picture of the black volcanic sand from Hawaii. It is black with red and silver magnified 250 times. So, we'll soon be getting those pictures here and I'm going to put them up on the wall. That certainly teaches us that even what we would consider the least thing can be made glorious by God. Everything in creation has His stamp upon it that He made it.

"...Through the greatness of Your power, Your enemies submit themselves in obedience to You" (v 3). That day is coming. This is why today, nothing political, governmental, economic, education, or religion can change the things in the world. They have to be changed by God because it takes the power of God. Look at how well this nation started out. Look at where we have ended up.

Verse 4: "All the earth shall worship You and shall sing praises to You; they shall sing praises to Your name." Selah." Let's understand something concerning

- why we're here
- where we are going
- how did we get here

Every one of us got here because we were in trouble somewhere along the line. Men and women turn to God in their trouble. God chooses those who turn to Him in sincerity and in Truth. I want you to understand how special you are to God, especially when you see the whole world going crazy.

Psalm 65:4: "Blessed is the one whom You choose... [What did Jesus say? *I have personally chosen you!*] ...and cause to come near You... [we do that with prayer and God's Spirit] ...that he may dwell in Your courts... [the ultimate goal of being in the Kingdom of God] ...we shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, even Your Holy temple. By awesome works in righteousness... [which God does] ...You will answer us, O God of our salvation; You are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of those of the distant sea" (vs 4-5).

This is just like Paul wrote in Rom. 8 that the whole creation groans in travail in pain waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God; we're going to be busy in doing that.

This is the way the world is right now, Psalm 10:2: "The wicked in his pride pursues the poor... [that sounds like the government today] ...let them be taken in the schemes that they have imagined, For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, and blesses the covetous but despises the LORD. Through the pride of his countenance the wicked will not seek God; in all his thoughts there is no place for God" (vs 2-4)—the exact opposite of the mind of Christ.

God has called us to some tremendous things that we need to understand. Let's look and see what Paul wrote concerning the mind of Christ. Let's also understand this, that it's really important to grasp. When Paul wrote Philippians he was in prison. He was writing to the Philippians and notice what he writes here. When he was in prison he had the opportunity to write these, but it also tells you that even in the most dire of circumstances, he was always looking to the purpose, the goal. Now he's writing a letter to them, not knowing when he's going to get out, or if he will get out, or whether he will be alive or dead.

So, he says to them, Philippians 1:2: "Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ." One of the best ways to be encouraged, if you're kind of down and out and a trial is afflicting you, read all the introductions of Paul's epistles. You will see that he is calling you every time to come to God because God has come to you.

Verse 3: “I thank my God on every remembrance of you, always making supplication with joy in my every prayer for you all, for your fellowship in the gospel from *the* first day until now... [notice how he focuses on what needs to be.] ...Being confident of this very thing...” (vs 3-6).

He could say, ‘Oh, God, where are you? I’m here with these chains. I just got off a one-year trip coming from Caesarea to Rome and the ship was destroyed out from underneath us and I was the only one there except for Luke with me’—maybe Timothy was with him, I don’t recall, he didn’t say, but we know that Luke was with him. They were the only ones there, took a whole year to get to Rome. Look at all the things that he went through.

So, what does he do? Verse 6: “Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you...” That awesome good work, as we’re going to see, is the mind of Christ. You say, ‘What, me? Little ole me?’ *Yes, little ole us, every one of us!* The world doesn’t count us as anything. I don’t even know if they want to count us for the census, who knows.

“...He Who began a good work in you will complete *it* until *the* day of Jesus Christ” (v 6). Consider this: God Who created the heavens and the earth, does He know how to start and finish certain things? *Yes!* If He begins it, will He complete it? Did He call us to success or to failure? *He has called us to success!* That success is through His Spirit. That success is through His Word.

Another thing that’s important to understand is this. In a couple of e-mails from Dwight Blevins we were discussing the numbers in Revelation and seven, and all of those different things combined and so forth. We were covering how much the number seven is used in the book of Revelation. I explained in my first e-mail back to him was this. Daniel is like a lock. What did God tell Daniel to do? *Close the book!* So, it’s locked. I said Revelation is like a key. You need Revelation, which is the key, to go into the lock. Here’s the conundrum:

1. for the Jews; they reject the New Testament so they don’t have the key
2. orthodox Christianity rejects the Old Testament so they don’t have the lock.

But you need both!

He also pointed out, which is true, that in the end-time the wise will understand and knowledge will increase and we have all of that combined with the world, but also for the Church and for what we can understand.

We are able to understand things and put things together, not because we are anything, but because God said in the end-time the wise would

understand the ones who are wise are those who love God and serve Him the way that He wants and are called according to His purpose. His purpose is an awesome work. We go look at ourselves in the mirror and we say, ‘Oh, man. What is God going to do with this?’ ***He’s not done!*** *It won’t be finished until the resurrection!*

We all need encouragement all the time, especially today. Watching that Zimmerman thing over and over and over, I know Dolores turned it off and turned on to her westerns and her oldies-but-goodies, because it was just over and over again. All of you right now can probably close your eyes and you can see George Zimmerman in vision, he’s been on television so much. Another reason why we have the Sabbath so we can learn, so we can grow.

Philippians 2:1: “Now then, if *there be* any encouragement **in Christ**, if any comfort of love... [from the Holy Spirit of God] ...if any fellowship of the Spirit... [because our fellowship is with God the Father and Jesus Christ through the Spirit] ...if any *deep* inner affections and compassions, fulfill my joy...” (vs 1-2). Paul is saying, ‘Here I am in prison, way out here and different ones come to me, but I’m still in chains. I don’t know how you’re doing, so I want to encourage you so that you do what you need to do.’

Verse 2: “Fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind... [we’re going to see that’s the mind of Christ, or minding the same thing] ...having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing.”

What is the one thing? What did Jesus say? *Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.* (Matt. 6:33). *Therefore you be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.* (Matt. 5:48). Two great finishing statements of the goal of why we are called.

Verse 3: “*Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself.... [take care of one another] ...Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others” (vs 3-4). That’s what we do. Not only to us here, but in everything that we do.

Consider this: through God’s plan of tithes and offerings and reciprocity, when you give it goes out to serve others. We’re reaching a lot of people now as the July letter will show you. That’s in addition to all of those who gather for fellowship groups.

We’ve had different groups that have gotten together, unknown to us. We didn’t even know that they were getting together. I got an e-mail the other

day from one of them who said, 'We've been getting together for two years and checking out everything.' So, now they want some more things from us. How did that happen? *That happens because*

- *if* we are seeking this
- *if* we are properly preaching the Gospel
- *if* we are warning the world
- *if* we are preaching the things that God can use to call people

things like this will happen. You will see in the statistics for the websites we have increased well over 50% over last year, the first six months of the year; 94% on things downloaded. That shows people are searching, people are seeking. When you send in tithes and offerings, don't think, 'Oh, woe is me,' think this: You are helping someone else.

Verse 5: **"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."**

- Was Jesus thinking of us, instead of Himself?
- Was Jesus thinking on the plan of God, instead of Himself?
- Did He willingly give up everything He had? *Yes, He did!*

Verse 5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." You have to let it come in through the power of God's Spirit through study, through experience, through trials, through all the things that take place.

Verse 6: "Who, although He existed in the form of God... [because He was God] ...did not consider it robbery to be equal with God." That's why the first part of the Gospel of John says, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and nothing came into being except that He created it and brought it into being.'

If every atheist would read just the first three verses of the Gospel of John, first chapter, they would know that nothing came into existence through evolution. I like the little cartoon where this one atheist was talking about the 'big bang' and everything. Then a voice out of heaven came and said, 'Get your own big bang.'

Here's what He did, v 7: "But emptied Himself..." What does that mean? That means:

- He divested Himself of His power and glory
- He gave up 99.9% being #2 in the Godhead
- He came to dwell among men and women
- He came to be born as an infant

All of this so He would experience everything that we go through so that no one can say, 'God, You're up there in heaven. You don't know what it was like

to be born. I'm lucky to be here.' Whatever the situation may be. He did.

Verse 7: "But emptied Himself, *and* was made in the likeness of men... [Men and women are made in the image and likeness of God for the purpose of becoming *as He is*.] ...*and* took the form of a servant." He didn't come down here and say, 'Well now, I wonder what great nation I would like to be king over?' *No!* Te Greek there is 'doulous' — slave. How many people have been slaves in their lives? *A lot of them!* What's the worst kind of slavery? *Addiction to sin, a slave to Satan the devil!*

Verse 8: "And being found in the manner of man..." That means *everything that we have in our bodies He had*: heart, lungs, stomach, digestive, everything like that. It even says that one time when they were in their little ship coming across the Sea of Galilee that Jesus was asleep. We also know from the prophecy in Isa. 50 that God the Father personally taught Him every morning.

"...He humbled Himself... [even further as a man] ...*and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross" (v 8). One-third of all the Gospels have to do with the events from His Passover, from His arrest, and being judged and crucified. You go back to all the prophecies He gave concerning that. He knew what was going to happen. That's why He prayed three times. The last thing He said before He died was, 'It is finished.' He did the work that God sent Him to do, to be the Redeemer of mankind.

Because of this, v 9: "Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, And **every tongue** should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (vs 9-11). *Every tongue*: knowing what we know concerning the Scriptures and the Last Great Day, that means every tongue past, present and future.

- What are we to do?
- How do we develop the mind of Christ?

Verse 12: "So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

One of the keys of developing the mind of Christ is this. ***You let the Spirit of God inspire you and motivate you and you always keep at doing what you need to be doing spiritually regardless of the circumstances around you!*** Regardless!

- Sometimes it's difficult.
- Sometimes it's frustrating.

- Sometimes you wonder, ‘Am I ever going to make it?’

The answer is yes, because God’s going to ensure that you will.

Here’s why, v 13: “For it is God Who works in you both to will...” God gives us the desire. So when you’re all frustrated, don’t know what to do, you go to God, say, ‘God, I’m frustrated. Help me to overcome and help me to have the desire and the will to do what You want me to do.’ He will give it to you.

“...and to do according to *His* good pleasure. Do all things without complaints and disputes... [that’s a challenge] ...so that... [there’s a reason for it] ...you may be blameless and without offense, innocent children of God in *the* midst of a crooked and perverted generation... [my, how that has been multiplied thousands of times over today] ...among whom you shine as lights in *the* world, holding forth the Word of Life... [letting that be your guide] ...that I may rejoice in the day of Christ...” (vs 13-16).

Imagine what it’s going to be like at the resurrection. Christ calls Paul forward and says, ‘Paul, look at all of these who are here because of your epistles and what you wrote.’ I think it’s going to be the greatest time and it’s going to be a fantastic rejoicing to be on that mammoth Sea of Glass with all the saints.

Of course, we’re going to be resurrected and all given a language we can communicate back and forth with each other. He’s not going to send us back as an army in confusion. It’s not going to be a Tower of Babel. We’re going to come back to this earth and undo that Tower of Babel.

“...that I have not run in vain, nor labored in vain.... [He admitted to a little weakness here in his own circumstances]: ...But if I am also poured out on the sacrifice and ministration of your faith, I am glad and rejoice together with you all, and you in the same way also are glad and rejoice together with me” (vs 16-18). Then he says he’s going to send Timothy, so yes, Timothy was there with him. That’s quite a thing!

What is it that we need to develop? We covered the whole chapter 1-Corinthians 13 recently; I just want to touch on something here. This whole chapter is a good chapter of instructions on how to overcome human nature. What do I need to do? Read this and see where you are deficient. Ask God to help you.

1-Corinthians 13:7: “*Love* bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” Didn’t Christ do that? *Yes, He did!*

Verse 8: “Love never fails... [It’s never going to fail. It may look like it temporarily for a little bit of time, but it never fails.] ...But whether *there be* prophecies, they shall cease...” (v 8). We don’t get all excited about prophecies. If God gives us the understanding we need to understand them, that’s fine, but you’re not going to be saved by prophecy and the knowledge of it that you have. You’re going to be saved:

- by God
- by the love of God
- by the Spirit of God
- by your growing and overcoming

“...whether *there be* languages, they shall cease... [We’re going to be given a new one. How’s that going to happen? The best I can answer is this: Did God put in Adam and Eve a language when He created them? *Yes!*] ...whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away” (v 8). Really when you understand it, how much do we know? *A little drop!*

Verse 9: “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect has come...” (vs 9-10). ***Be you perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect***—right? That day’s going to come. Here we are, most of us are all marching toward the end of the line—isn’t that true? *Yes, indeed!*

We’re getting more gray hair. I don’t know if I can get anymore or not, I may lose some. Who knows that? More wrinkles, weaker, all of that. Don’t get discouraged. That’s part of living. Rather grow in grace and knowledge. That’s what God wants.

All of us would like to die like Israel died. Remember what happened? I think he was age 147; he called in Joseph and his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, and he blessed them. He was so old and wrinkled up and bent over that he was leaning on his staff. Then when he got done, he said it’s time to go, hopped in bed, died. If we all went that way, that would be just fine. Kiss your wife goodbye and say, ‘I’m leaving, honey, take care. I’ll see you on the Sea of Glass.’ Don’t let those things worry you. If you have trouble remembering, understand this: it’s still there. What has happened is that your *recall* has worn down a little bit.

Verse 10: “But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside.” We are going to shed this body and this mind and we are going to then have a spiritual body and the mind of Christ.

Verse 11: “When I was a child... [that’s what we are, children of God] ...I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a

child.... [he's drawing an analogy here] ...For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see face to face...*" (vs 11-12). What is that going to be like? That's why we have to spend some time on the Sea of Glass, from Pentecost until Trumpets. There's too much to do.

Wonder what it's going to be like to meet Abel? Abraham? Isaac? Jacob? How about Noah? 'Noah, how did you build that Ark?' *Very carefully, my son!*

"...now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but the greatest of these *is* love" (vs 12-13).

Let's see concerning the mind of Christ. Phil. 2 has the mind of Christ. Notice what he tells them to do in Colossians; this is another letter he wrote close to the same time that he wrote Philipians.

Colossians 3:1: "Therefore, if you have been raised together with Christ... [from the watery grave] ...seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at *the* right hand of God. Set your affection on the things that are above, and not on the things that are on the earth. For you have died... [did that at baptism] ...and your life has been hid together with Christ in God. When Christ, *Who is* our life, is manifested, then you also shall be manifested with Him in glory" (vs 1-4). Again, pointing to the conclusion of the matter.

Now come over here to Colossians 1:26: "*Even* the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been revealed to His saints; to whom **God did will...**" (vs 26-27). Think about that! *The knowledge of God that you know, God has willed that you know it!*

"...did will to make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this **mystery**... [This is the secret of God and the world doesn't know it and the world cannot understand it.] ...among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (v 27). That is by His Holy Spirit, by the very power of God.

Let's see what this requires. Let's see what real conversion requires. This is what we need to put in practice, keep in mind. Also that we need to preach especially on Church at Home [churchathome.org]. Church at Home is designed to reach out to those people who are disaffected with the current Christianity of this world. We don't want to have numbers for numbers. We need to put out a message that God will use for those He is calling.

Isaiah 55:1: "Ho, everyone who thirsts..." We have to be what concerning the Word of God?

- hungering and thirsting for the Word of God
- desiring God's Spirit

- desiring God's plan
- desiring God's resurrection

"...come to the waters... [the waters are *the living waters that come from God, His Holy Spirit*] ...and he who *has* no money, come, buy and eat. Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (v 1). That's allegorical of the Word of God.

Verse 2: "Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread? And your labor for *what* never satisfies? Hearken diligently to Me..." **Listen to God!** That's why we have the Word of God. Isn't it something how easy it is to set something aside.

...and eat *what* is good... [What does the Psalm say? *Come, taste and see, the Lord is good. That's the Word of God!*] ...and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (v 2).

Not that we all get fat, wish that were the case. We'd be in good shape then. I hope that God has an instant weight-reduction plan at the resurrection. We all desire that. Oh, Lord, send it now. That means in the goodness and the richness and the fatness of God's way. We have that today—don't we—with all the Word of God.

Verse 3: "Bow down your ear, and come to Me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an **everlasting covenant** with you... [the covenant of *eternal life*] ...even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given Him *for* a witness to the people, a Prince and Commander of people" (vs 3-4). That's also referring to Christ.

Notice how all of this ties in. I tell you what, the Bible is so full of what God's plan is. When you understand the plan, and then you go back and read the things, it just leaps off the page.

Verse 5: "Behold, you shall call a nation *that* you do not know; a nation that did not know you shall run to you because of the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you."

This is talking about *us* as the Holy nation to operate under Christ to bring the Kingdom of God to the world. This is something!

(go to the next track)

Here's what we need to do. Stop and think about the mind that God is dealing with in the first place—the human mind: deceitful above all things, enmity against the Law of God, etc. That's why we need the Holy Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of Truth.

Here's what God says. Here is the way that you begin to have the mind of Christ. It is a lifetime effort to complete that.

Isaiah 55:6: “Seek the LORD while He may be found...” Remember, what did God tell Jeremiah at one time? He said, ‘Don’t even pray for this people, because I’m not going to listen to you.’ In other words, there is a time when God won’t be found in spite of all the prayers.

I wonder how many when it started raining, when the Flood began; and remember it was very clever the way that God did it. He had all the animals come and Noah and his wife and his sons and their wives all get aboard. The Lord sealed it up and it sat there for seven days. I imagine people gathered around. ‘Let’s go out and watch this event.’

- First day—no rain
- Second day, ‘Noah, ain’t raining.’
- Third day, ‘This has got to be a joke.’
- Fourth day—great crowd shows up
- Fifth day, even bigger
- Sixth day
- Seventh day it got cloudy, big dark clouds and it started to rain. Everybody said, ‘Oh, oh, rain.’

Then there were earthquakes, broke open the fountains of the deep. The rain started coming down. How many were there, ‘Oh, God, we should have listened. Everybody head to high ground.’ Can you imagine the fight and battle over that, beating up and killing. ‘No, I’m ahead of you.’ You get up on the top of the hill and here’s a high tree. You start climbing up that because the water’s coming up, coming up. Then you get up in the tree, ‘ut oh.’ Covers the tree. God, where are you? I’ll listen to you.’ No, **call on the Lord while He may be found.**

“...call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way... [you’ve got to stop going the way that *you think* is right] ...and the unrighteous man his thoughts... [the mind has to be changed] ...and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (vs 6-7).

Then God brings out something very important and this has to do with the mind of Christ, v 8: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts...” How do we get the thoughts of God?

- through the Word of God
- through the Spirit of God
- through living
- through experiencing
- through overcoming

“...nor your ways My ways,’ says the LORD.”

That’s why God says, ‘Remember the seventh day to keep it Holy.’ Think where we would be if we didn’t have the Sabbath to get together and go over the Word of God. Wouldn’t take long, we’d

be just like the rest of the world—right? That’s why God has the best educational system possible—Sabbath every seven days.

They know this; they’ve run tests on it that the best way to learn something is to review and repeat and review and repeat. That’s the best way that you learn. With the Word of God and all that is in there, it’s all layered. There are a lot of things we can learn even out of the same verses that we have read before.

Verse 9: “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth... [What are we reaching for? *The very best!*] ...so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

God’s Word is everywhere. It’s like the rain. I know in the letter that I just wrote I said, ‘As evil as abounded in the world, so has the Word of God.’ Not only are there 6.5-billion Bibles in the world, just physical books, but look at how much is out there digitally. Alone there are 269 websites that have the whole Bible to be downloaded.

When God says that it’s going to be a witness to the world, He’s giving a witness. It’s like the man who received a Bible. He said, ‘This is from grandma. I know what she’s like.’ Put it up on the shelf. At the resurrection God is going to say to that individual, ‘I sent you a Bible.’ *You did, when did you send it?* I had your grandma send it. *Really? I never read it.* God will say, ‘That’s not My fault. That was your job to open it and read it.’

You liken the Word of God; just think how it’s going out. Also there are a lot of people out there preaching many different things of different aspects of the Word of God in whatever degree of Truth that they have. So there’s an awful lot out there.

Verse 10: “For as the rain comes down... [When the rain comes down, it comes down on everything—doesn’t it? *Yes!*] ...and the snow from the heavens, and does not return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater, So shall My Word be which goes out of My mouth...” (vs 10-11).

What do we have recorded here? *The Word of God that came out of His mouth!* All Scripture is God-breathed. Or since the word for breath is ‘pneuma’ —*God-spirited!*

“...it shall not return to Me void... [It’s going to convict unto repentance *or* it’s going to be a witness against, one of the two.] ...but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do” (v 11). That’s how we start.

Psalm 92:1: “It is good to give thanks to the LORD and to sing praises unto Your name, O Most

High, to show forth Your loving kindness in the morning and Your faithfulness every night upon the instrument of ten strings, and upon the harp, with melody of music upon the lyre; for You, LORD, have made me glad with Your work..." (vs 1-4). The greatest work that God is doing is in every one of us is to **bring us to the knowledge and understanding of His Truth and convert us.**

"...I will exult in the works of Your hands." What was the greatest works of His hands? *Making Adam and Eve and for all of human beings made after the likeness and image of God!*

Verse 5: "O LORD, how great are Your works; Your thoughts are very deep." We keep learning and keep learning and keep learning.

The way we keep learning is putting Scripture together; Psalm 40:4: "Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust and does not respect the proud, nor those who turn aside to lies. O LORD my God, many things You have done, Your wonderful works and Your thoughts which are toward us; there is none to compare unto You; if I could declare and speak of them, they would be more than can be told" (vs 4-5). That's God's thoughts toward us. That's why He is righteous and ready to forgive. That's why He is dealing with us.

Have you ever thought about this? How does God think *on* me? What does He think *of* me? That's why we have grace, because we need that. That's why we need the Word of God, so we can understand God does think on us.

Psalm 139:17: "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!... [What is it going to be like to live forever?] ...If I should count them, they are more than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You" (vs 17-18).

Now let's see what God does. Come to Malachi, the last of the Minor Prophets. God takes note, Malachi 3:16: "Then those fearing the LORD spoke together, *each* man to his neighbor. And the LORD listened and heard..." Amazing! Furthermore, every thought we have is registered in our minds and unless all of the sin is erased through the Spirit of God, that's why we have *the washing of the water by the Word.*

"...And a book of remembrance was written before Him... [the book of Life] ...for those who feared the LORD, and for those who thought upon His name. 'And they shall be Mine,' says the LORD of hosts, 'in the day that I will make up My own special jewels.... [Remember, we're all going to receive a crown of eternal life. We're warned back in Rev. 3, 'let no man take your crown.'] ...And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him. Then you shall return... [the day is

going to happen when the world is going to know] ...and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God, and the one who does not serve Him" (vs 16-18). Quite a thing— isn't it? *Yes, indeed!*

Lest we get conceited and think, 'Oh, my, what wonderful things God is doing for us,' remember God has a plan for *all* mankind. John 3:16 is probably one of the most quoted verses in the world. Notice what God did. Remember part of the equation of the mind of Christ is this: *Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect!*

See sermon series on *Hebrews*, specifically #27: *The Covenant Between God the Father and Jesus Christ*, because they had to have a covenant between them for Jesus to do what He did and the Father to do what He did. God is always a covenant God. He does nothing without a covenant. In the Father sending Christ as the sacrifice for the world, He also gave up, as well as did Jesus, so that this could happen:

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him **may not** perish... [the choice ends up being ours] ...but **may have** everlasting life." God not only thinks upon us as individuals, those that He has called, but He also thinks on the whole world and has a plan for the whole world.

Let's see what is to motivate us because God loves the world and God is love. 1-John 4 is quite a chapter on the love of God. We've already covered love is the greatest.

1-John 4:9: "In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us..." Take all that God had to go through to do it. Think about where it says that from the foundation of the world it was already predetermined that Christ would be slain. So, God *knew.*

"...that God sent His only begotten Son into the world..." (v 9). He was the only one begotten the way that He was from the Father. We are begotten with the Spirit of God, but that's a different begettal than what it was with Christ. So He is the only.

"...so that we might live through Him" (v 9). Think about that! After Adam and Eve had sinned, they received the sentence of death. They received human nature, which then always goes to evil and yet He subjected the whole human race in hope, but man has to first learn that he needs God. He cannot do what God wants Him to do without God. Man has to learn the lesson, very clear.

Analyze every single religion and all of them are ways of telling God what men will do for Him. That all began with the offering of Cain. So men

have to learn that lesson. God is the One who did this to save us in spite of everything; *God is love!*

Verse 10: “In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God; rather that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” *Love is the greatest of all!*

Let’s see some other aspects of God that we need to understand and also to realize how we need to do develop the mind of Christ. Psalm 25 is the whole key. Here is a Psalm of repentance with not quite as much remorse as David had in Psa. 51. But notice this because we can always come to God. Think on this! The two that I always remember are King Ahab and then King Manasseh. Elijah was told by God, to go to Ahab, that wicked evil king and tell him because he killed Naboth and took his vineyard because Jezebel desired it. You go down and tell him that he is going to die! Elijah went down there and told him, ‘You’re going to die.’ The unexpected happened.

I bring this up because that’s a serious sin. A lot of people come along and say, ‘I wonder if God will forgive me.’ *Yes, if you repent He will!* What happened with Ahab who God said sold himself to evil? *He repented*, tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes; and he walked tenderly, very gently. So before Elijah got home God says, ‘Elijah, have you seen my servant Ahab?’ I don’t know if Elijah’s eyes crossed or not. ‘Now, because he has humbled himself, you go down and tell him that I’m going to postpone My judgment.’ That’s how merciful God is. We need to understand the mercy of God.

King Manasseh, evil for 55 years, dealt with familiar spirits, set up idols. He even built an idol himself and took it into the temple area and had it on display. God was so angry with him, He sent in the king of Assyria, who at that time was controlling Babylon, and sent him off to prison in Babylon.

Here’s Manasseh and he started I think when he was 12-years-old; 55 years of evil from 12 until 67, sold himself to evil. So here he is in chains in the dungeon, in Babylon, *and he repents*. What did God do? *He caused the king of Assyria to recognize his repentance*, took him out of the dungeon, sent him back to Jerusalem to be vassal king in Jerusalem. The first thing he did was cleanse away all the idols and all the evil that he had perpetrated.

The lesson is this: ***If God can forgive them, God will forgive you!*** They repented. Whatever we do, we need to repent. But we can’t hold that lightly when God forgives us.

Let’s see how David came before God here in Psalm 25:1: “To You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; do not let me be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none

who wait on You be ashamed; let them be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause” (vs 1-3). Notice the repair. You have the four Rs:

1. repentance
2. reconciliation
3. repair
4. redemption

Verse 4: “Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths.... [that’s what we need to do to develop the mind of Christ] ...Lead me in Your Truth and teach me... [God teaches us all the time with His Spirit, with His Word, through circumstances.] ...for You are the God of my salvation; on You do I wait all the day long. Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your loving kindness, for they have been of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Your loving kindness remember me for Your goodness’ sake, O LORD” (vs 4-7).

Let’s stop right here and interject another example. Look at all the rebellions of the children of Israel when they were wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. Just before they were going to go into the ‘promised land’ Balaam came to curse. But he couldn’t curse. There’s one account in the book of Numbers where it says, ‘And these ten times they tempted God.’ Yet when Balaam began He saw no sin in Israel. Think about that! He saw no sin in Israel. Likewise ***let that be said of us!*** That’s why if there is real repentance, there is real forgiveness. What does God do with our sins? *He removes them as far from us as the east is from the west!* You go out into the universe and that’s forever.

Notice what will happen when that takes place: You will notice this; you will experience this. Whenever you repent of sin and get yourself right before God—and through His Spirit He makes you right with Him—notice what happens:

Verse 8: “Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He will teach sinners in **the way**. The meek He will guide in judgment; and the meek He will teach His way. **All the paths of the LORD are mercy and Truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies**” (vs 8-10). That’s how God will deal with us. That’s why these words are here.

We are living in a time that our minds and everything in life we are so assaulted with so many things. You cannot even watch, to get the news, without some advertisement that shows a near-naked woman, over and over again—right? *Yes!* Before television those things never happened that way. This is why we need more and more of the Word of God and more of the Spirit of God because we are

assaulted by more and more things than any time in the history of mankind.

Here is how we do it then. It then becomes with the mind of Christ a *spiritual* mindset. This is why we need to repent every day, not just when you do something that is not right, but our minds are continually bombarded by things that are not right in a way that no other generation in the history of the world has been subjected to. This is why we need God's grace.

Psalm 57:1: "Be gracious unto me, O God, be gracious unto me... [we need, every day, His mercy and His grace] ...for my soul trusts in You; yea, in the shadow of your wings I will make my refuge until these great troubles pass by." You need the protection of God. There are troubles on every side, everywhere.

Verse 2: "I will cry to God Most High, **to God who fulfills His purpose for me**.... [God has a purpose for each one of us and He's going to fulfill it] ...He shall send from heaven and save me; He rebukes him who would swallow me up. Selah... [stop, meditate and think on it] ...God shall send forth His mercy and His Truth" (vs 2-3). That's what we need. The way you overcome the deception of the mind is with Truth. It's easy to deceive yourself, isn't it? *Yes, it is!*

Then David says here, v 4: "My soul is among lions; I lie among those who breathe out fire, the sons of men whose teeth are spears and arrows and their tongue a sharp sword.... [Talk about being assaulted!] ...Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your glory be above all the earth" (vs 4-5).

Remember where it says there concerning Satan the devil in 1-Pet. 5. Satan goes about 'as a roaring lion and seeking whom he may devour.' This is one way of doing it, one way of expressing it here. But we are to resist steadfast in the faith, which is what he's doing.

Verse 6: "They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down; they have dug a pit before me; into the midst of it they have fallen themselves. Selah." God will turn it right back on their heads. When Christ returns, isn't that what's going to happen? God is going to turn it all right back on their heads. He's going to let this world rise to the greatest height of power that has ever been, so much so that they're going to think that they can fight against God and get away with it.

Here's how we have the mind of Christ, v 7: "**My heart is fixed**..." We fix it with:

- the Word of God
- the Truth of God
- the love of God
- the Spirit of God
- ✓ with our heart

- ✓ with our mind
- ✓ with our goals
- ✓ and everything that we do

"**My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed**..." (v 7). There's nothing and no one who can turn you back. Psalm 108 is the same thing; this is the attitude that we need to have. Then we can put all of those things aside. Then we can resist them.

Even though I am technically handicapped, I have figured out a way when I don't like the commercial to pop-up a blue screen with nothing on it. I have two remotes, one for the television—figured this out myself—one for the box that allows the cable to come in. The one for the television is set on channel three, so I push go up one channel to channel four I get a nice blue relaxing screen. This way I can avoid all the ads. That helps me. I hate it when I get an ad and lo and behold during the day this crazy song is going through my head. You ever had that? *Yes!*

Let's read Psalm 108:1 and we will end it here: "**O God, my heart is fixed**..." That's with *faith, trust, love, mercy and hope! That's how we can develop the mind of Christ!*

Scriptural Referenced:

- 1) Psalm 66:1-4
- 2) Psalm 65:4-5
- 3) Psalm 10:2-4
- 4) Philippians 1:2-6
- 5) Philippians 2:1-18
- 6) 1-Corinthians 13:7-13
- 7) Colossians 3:1-4
- 8) Colossians 1:26-27
- 9) Isaiah 55:1-11
- 10) Psalm 92:1-5
- 11) Psalm 40:4-5
- 12) Psalm 139:17-18
- 13) Malachi 3:16-18
- 14) John 3:16
- 15) 1-John 4:9-10
- 16) Psalm 25:1-10
- 17) Psalm 57:1-7
- 18) Psalm 108:1

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 8
- Matthew 6:33; 5:48
- John 1:1-3
- Isaiah 50
- Revelation 3
- Psalm 51
- 1-Peter 5

Also referenced:

- Sermon: *Genesis, Creation and Sand*
- Sermon Series: *Hebrews* (specifically #27: *The Covenant Between God the Father and Jesus Christ*)

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