

But You Have the Mind of Christ

Let us pray:

Lord, we are thankful we can be here today. We just want to say once again, Lord, You are the only One. You are the One that we consider this morning. You are the One that we worship and praise, and Lord, You are the One that we look to, to teach us. Fill us with Your Word, Lord, and fill us with Your Spirit. Now as we come today, it is kind of a dreary day, but there is nothing dreary about You. We just want to say we look to You, to Your smiling face this morning. We ask your blessing upon this time. We ask Your anointing that I might share the Word, Lord, in accordance with Your own heart. And Lord, You can open our ears to really hear from You this morning. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Introduction

This morning there was a Scripture that was on my heart in I Corinthians 2:16b. The last part of that says, “.... But we have the mind of Christ.” Now, I do not know what you think about that, but that is an amazing thought if you just consider it for a moment: that you have the mind of Christ, you have God's mind. That is an amazing thing that God Himself, through His Son Jesus Christ, is willing to share His mind with us. We know that His thoughts are far above ours, and His ways which we do not always understand. But He is the perfect God; He is the One, and yet, He wants to share His mind with us. That is the thought that is on my heart.

Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to your own understanding. in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

Trust with all your heart, lean not to your own understanding, and always acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths. He will give you, His mind.

I John 2:27-28: “But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, ...; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is truth ..., you shall abide in Him.”

Philippians 4:6-7: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let all your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Be anxious for nothing.

Romans 8:28: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to purpose.”

Trusting in the Lord with All Your Heart

Personal Testimony

Let me give you a little background as to why this came to me, particularly this saying of the mind of Christ. It is kind of a little bit of a testimony, exposing myself a little bit so you all can pray for me.

Back at the turn of December and January, all my bills come in: my medical insurance, my car insurance, and my long-term healthcare insurance, which almost doubled in price. I was saying, "Wow, what do I do with all of this?" All of this was happening at one time, and there was a lot of pressure because these things are pretty important, and they stay on your mind. At the same time, while I was wrestling with all of this in my mind, the hot water heater started leaking on the floor. Unfortunately, it started leaking on a Friday when we had that first snow and ice storm hit us, so I could not actually get it fixed for almost a week. I was sitting there, water running on my floor, the tiles were beginning to pop up, and I had all these financial issues to deal with. By that time, my blood pressure had increased about twenty points. I was getting pretty anxious before the Lord and saying, "Lord, how am I going to deal with this, particularly this long-term health insurance issue?"

The Mind of Christ Must Be Everything

I read a devotion by Sparks that really helped me. They are going to put that up on the board this morning so you can look at it as I read it because I want you to be able to concentrate on what our brother said. That was very helpful to me, and I think it would be helpful to all of us as we look for the mind of Christ in our lives.

"Our natural mind is a great obstacle in the race which we are running, cropping up all the time with its complexes, its arguments, its interests, and its methods." Of course, he was talking about, we have the mind of Christ. "When the Corinthians were brought into the church, they left behind their obvious sins, but they carried over into their new realm the old natural ways of thinking and reasoning which belong to the world and not to the spirit of God. The apostle remonstrated them. We shall only come to the fullness of Christ as we leave behind the mind of the natural man and move more and more in progress of the mind of Christ on everything. Every judgment, every conclusion, every analysis, every appraisal we must ask the Lord, 'Is that your mind, Lord, or is it mine?' We may sometimes feel that we have the strongest ground for taking up a certain attitude or coming to a certain conclusion. We may feel we have all the evidence, and we may be convinced, and yet we can be wrong. We should always be ready to subject our thinking to the jurisdiction of our crucified Lord. That is the way of spiritual progress. We shall not get very far while we hold to our own opinions and our own conclusions, even though we may have the support of others. We have to learn to conquer our natural mind by submission to the mind of Christ. This is most important if we are concerned about spiritual progress. And spiritual progress is the increase of Christ. There is no other progress."

When I read that, I was wrestling with all this stuff, and it just hit me. In all of these matters, even in the issues you are dealing with right now, Jerry, all the financial issues, the water heater, all of these things, you have the mind of Christ, and I was just kind of hit. I said, "Lord, I just did not realize how much I was depending on my own reasoning, on my own judgments, on my own conclusions," and it was not subjected to You. I was really struck by this. It might not strike you today, but I hope it does because that is the point of the message. Brothers and sisters, as we go along in life, we tend to use our

reasoning, which is okay to reason. But are we reasoning with the Lord, or are we just reasoning with our own mind?

Seek and Depend on the Mind of the Lord

You know, being from an engineering background, I am very analytical about things. I have this scientific way of laying out the problem, laying out the possibilities, and coming to conclusions is what I want to do. I was trained that way. I worked that way for quite a number of years—15 years at Kenny's firm, 28 years with the housing authority, five with the city, and five with Lockheed. Therefore, that is just the way I thought. I did not honestly realize how little I was seeking and depending on the mind of the Lord. That is such an important lesson for us to learn. I hate that it took me 81 years of life to learn that lesson. Maybe some of you younger ones will learn it a little earlier.

A Heart Issue

But what the Lord really brought to my mind at that point was Proverbs 3:5-6:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

It is a wonderful way to live. I have lived the old way for so long, so much, so agitated at times and concerned and worried, and full of anxieties. All of that can go away if we just follow Proverbs 3:5-6. It is a wonderful way to live; it takes away the stress and anxiety.

So, what is the key to this way of life? Well, first of all, it says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart.” Now, what does that mean? That means, brothers and sisters, it is a heart issue, not just a mind issue, but a heart issue. You need to have a heart for the Lord Himself. It means you need to have a heart, not just about your own interesting concerns, but about the Lord and His interests. Most of the time, if you really trust in Him, the things that happen in your life have a purpose to serve His interest.

So, brothers and sisters, it is a heart issue. Our heart is to be for the Lord. If our heart is for the Lord, it allows the Lord into our lives. Think about that. I had to let the Lord into my heart concerning these matters.

Living for His Purpose

And what is the key to all things working together for good? I read that verse. It is by living for His purpose, His eternal purpose, and it says, ‘to those who love God.’ Now we love the Lord, but it goes on to say that we are called according to His purpose, and all things He will work out for good. So, purpose is also a key, but it is not our purpose, it is His purpose. That is the key

What is His purpose? We know, brothers and sisters, that we have heard for many years about the eternal purpose of God. He is to be head over all things, over you and I, personally, over His church. Now, what does it mean that He is to be the head? That means that it is His mind that is to have first place in our lives and in the lives of the assembly. We may have many opinions, many thoughts, but His mind is to have first place. God has

intended that His Son's mind have first place in all of the universe and in the ages to come. So, it is important.

Eventually, we know, brothers and sisters, the more we take on His mind, the more we respond to His mind, the more we grow in Christ and into His fullness. And corporately, brothers and sisters, with His mind leading the church, we come into the fullness of Christ. No one person can know the fullness of Christ; it takes us all jointly. But if one has it, we all have it; that is the way the body works. Eventually, brothers and sisters, we will be His bride because we have His mind.

Trusting Him in All Things

Trusting in the Lord means that you do trust Him in all things, not just a few things. Not just when you are in trouble, but every day you get up, "Lord, my life is in Your hands this day." Take Him at His Word. You know, there is a lot about Him in this Word, and do you believe it? You have to believe that He has your best interest at heart. Even when you do not understand why you are going through certain things, He has your best interest at heart. You have to trust Him in that.

You might say, "What about all these issues and problems?" Well, the Lord has a mind for you, and you can rest that He cares for you. Recently, Ray shared on the Good Shepherd. He is your Good Shepherd, and sometimes you are in green pastures and sometimes by still waters. But at other times, you may be walking through the valley of the shadow of death. But what has He assured us? He is with us. Our brother Kenny shared on that; He is for us; He is with us. We need to be reminded of that many times in our lives that He is with us, that He is our Good Shepherd. We can rest in Him even in the valley of the shadow of death, because He is walking with us through that valley.

Personal Testimony

I will give a very practical example. Once again, unfortunately, it is about me, but I think it might be helpful. When I was dealing with all these financial issues, finally Ann and I came to the conclusion that it would be best for us to go ahead and sell some stock that we have in a Canadian-based company. Now, I will not go into the background on how we ended up getting that, but I guess I will have to. Years ago, we had an insurance policy where you put so much money into it that if you did that, then hopefully that money would grow enough over the years to keep paying the premium on it. Well, it did not quite work out that way, and eventually, the insurance company said, "We are going out of business on that policy. You have an option. You can take so much money, I cannot remember what it was, or you can just let us invest it in this stock." At the time, I did not go to the Lord, and I said, "You know, we have already put the money out; let us just put it in stock." So, we did, and over the years, it has grown significantly, as a matter of fact.

Also, when we received dividends on it, a number of times the dividends got lost in the mail. I remember one day getting a notice that said, "We have this much money in your account that we are going to take if you do not cash those checks." So, of course, I called and said, "We never got the checks." It was about four of them over a two-year

period. So finally, to cure that, we did a bank transfer. So I am getting ready now to sell this stock, which was an agonizing process to go through because I called, and they said, "Well, you need to send us a letter signed by you and your wife to do this transaction." So, I sent it off, and I got back a letter saying, "Well, we cannot find your account." Well, you were able to find it when I originally called and asked, and they said, "We do not have it; send us another letter and use a tracking system like FedEx." I said, "Okay."

After I thought about it, I said, "You know, this does not make sense. The one guy called, found my account, and now they say they cannot find it." So, I called back again and got another person. They told me the same thing, and then I called again, and I got the third person, and he finally said, "Well, I see that this is a trust. You have put it in trust; that is another division. So, you have to mail a letter to that division." I said, "Oh my goodness." Anyway, finally, I sent it by FedEx, by the way. I called a couple of days later and said, "Have you got my letter?" He said, "Well, I cannot find it on the computer." I said, "Oh man."

So anyway, he goes away, and he comes back and says, "Well, if you got all your information, we can do this transaction over the phone." I am saying, "Okay." So, I gathered all my information, and finally, we got it settled, and I sent it off. Then I started really being concerned about whether I was going to get the check or not because they would not do a bank transfer. I said, "Man, Lord, this thing is a mess."

So, we already lost three or four checks over the years. And my wife looked at me, my dear wife, and she said, "Jerry, why are you getting so worked up? I will pray, and the letter will get here." It hit me between the eyes like a shaft. My dear wife trusted in the Lord. I could not trust in the system, but I was not trusting in the Lord. I did not really take it to the Lord and say, "Lord, this thing is in Your hands." Well, I finally did. That was about three weeks ago. Praise the Lord! The Lord is so amazing! Sometimes, it is funny. Of course, we went to the mailbox every day, but it was not there. Yesterday, the day before I was to give this message, the check was there. The Lord is so good.

But anyway, just to make the point, we need to learn to trust Him and be able to just lay these things before Him. Now, I am the kind of person that wants to do it myself. At times I say, "Well, Lord, I know You do not want to fool with this, it is just a little thing in my life," when really, it is big to me. But the Lord says, "No, everything, every little thing in your life I am interested in." That is so encouraging.

Lean Not To Your Own Understanding

Then it says, not only are you to trust the Lord with all your heart, but He says, "Lean not to your own understanding." Now, that may be confusing to some, but it really is not. It does not mean that you just become passive or mindless, just saying, "Okay, the Lord is going to take care of this." No, it is not that kind of attitude. In fact, not using your mind is a danger spiritually. When you are not really using your mind, who then begins to fill your mind? It is the enemy. He fills your mind with all kinds of thoughts, doubts, and issues that are not really issues. He does a number on our mind. Now, that is another whole message,

but we will not go into it today other than to say we are not supposed to have a passive, mind. You know, mediums that are true mediums can touch the spirit world, which is what they do. They make their minds completely blank, and the enemy is able to come in. Just that thought that we are to use our minds.

I think Isaiah 1:18 says it very well, “Come now, and let us reason together,” says the Lord. Let us reason together; it is not reasoning on our own. Do you get it? You reason together with the Lord. You use your mind, and you are seeking the Lord's mind.

The Church in Corinth

Paul told the Corinthian believers, “You have the mind of Christ.” He was admonishing them because they were living their lives in their fellowship together but it was based on their natural way of thinking, their natural reasoning. When they came together, they began to reason together. One said, “I like Paul.” Another one said, “I like Cephas.” Another one said, “I like Apollos. I think we ought to follow Apollos.” Another said, “Well, what of Paul?” They said, “Well, he really was not one of the apostles.”

Natural Reasoning

That kind of reasoning was going on, and Paul had to admonish them. He said, “We are in the body of Christ now, and the body of Christ cannot be divided. Paul, Cephas, Apollos are all yours; they are the Lord's; they are in the body, and you receive from all of them. You cannot divide the body of Christ.”

If you see that, brothers, and sisters, it makes a tremendous difference in your life in the assembly, that we are part of that one body in Christ. It was their natural reasoning that they were using. It says that they had all the gifts, and they were manifesting them. But when they came together, they were almost stumbling over each other trying to share a word of prophecy with one another.

Self-Importance

In other words, what they were doing was saying, “Man, I got something from the Lord; this is so important.” They want to get it out. What is that? It is really self-importance. They were kind of lifting up their own selves. It was a natural man coming out in the church.

Self-Centered

They were going to court with each other. You know, if something got them upset, they went to court instead of humbling themselves before the Lord and even together saying, “Well, this is the way I feel about it before the Lord.” Then saying, “Lord, we want Your mind in this; we want to settle it before You, not before the natural courts of man.” In other words, they were a bit self-centered. They were not God-centered because they did not take it before the Lord. They just went to court. Paul admonished them. He said, “You know, I cannot speak to you deeper things because you are carnal. You are using your natural thinking in the things of the Lord.”

Christ and Him Crucified

He said, "That is why I only preach Christ and Him crucified to you. You need the cross to cut off the natural mind that the mind of the Lord might come into you." It was the cross they were not submitting to. Then he goes on to say, "But you have the Spirit; you have the mind of Christ." He was saying, "If you were really in the Spirit and moving by the Spirit, you would have the mind of Christ. These things would not be happening."

You know, many times in the assemblies, I think of Romans, Corinthians, and Philippians, he kept encouraging the brothers and sisters, "Be of one mind." Now, how can 400, 500, or 600 people be of one mind? There is only one way. It is to seek the mind of Christ together. You can share your thoughts and your opinions, but it is before the Lord that you come to His mind, the mind of Christ. In other words, we do not use our minds to make self-determinations. We use and exercise our minds to determine what the Spirit is saying to us, to determine the mind of Christ. So, we do exercise our minds; we do reason with the Lord. But you are no longer leaning on your self-reasoning, your self-determination, your own understanding. That is why it says, "Lean not to your own understanding, but in all things, subject yourself to the mind of Christ, and He will direct your paths."

The Anointing and Abiding in Christ

I John 2:27-28 reinforces the idea of knowing the mind of Christ and that it is by the Spirit.

"But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him."

But the anointing which you have received of him abides in you. And that is very important, the anointing that you have received. When you accept Christ, this anointing comes in to you and he says, "You do not need any man teach you." It does not mean that you do not need teaching. But at the same time, the anointing teaches you all things. In other words, what is this anointing? It is the Spirit, the Holy Spirit in your spirit, and it is speaking to you. It says it teaches you things, and it is always the truth. There is no lie in it. Then it goes on to say, "You will abide in Him." So that becomes the key. Brothers and sisters, you have the anointing, but are you in a spiritual position to receive the teaching of the anointing, the mind of God? What is so necessary? You need to be abiding in Christ.

Submit to The Anointing Who Speaks Only the Truth

Now, Brother Lenny shared that a few months ago. Abiding in Christ, how important it is to learn to hear the voice of the Lord and know His mind. It only speaks the truth. Now, that is very important to know. The anointing only speaks the truth. It gives you understanding and direction.

Sometimes, we can be so sure of ourselves. We have the Scriptures lining up. Circumstances in our lives are lining up. We think naturally, "Oh, this must be the Lord."

We still have not really taken it to the Lord. We just say, "My natural mind has worked this out; boy, the Scriptures line up, the circumstances line up. It must be the Lord." Brothers and sisters, we need to learn to humble ourselves before the Lord and submit our thinking to Him because in your spirit, there is intuition. You do not necessarily have a direct answer, but there is something, that voice deep inside, and that intuition, even though you think everything appears to be in line here, and your intuition says, "There is a caution," or there may be a "no," or there may be the voice of the Lord saying, "Yes, this is right, but I need to adjust the way you are going about it." Or He might say, "Absolutely, this is My mind for you." That intuition that comes from the Holy Spirit in your spirit is speaking to you, and that is what we need to be relying upon.

The Lord Shall Direct Our Paths

The last part of that Proverb Scripture is so wonderful. He says, "I will direct your paths." There are no ifs or buts. There are no maybes about it. He said, "If you do these things, I will be directing your path; you will have My mind." What a wonderful way to live! Brothers and sisters, I could not think of any better word to use than this is the Lord's guarantee. This is the Lord's guarantee in this promise that we have been given.

God Directed the Path of the Life of Abraham

I would like to share a little example of Abraham's life that I think will help us. Our brother said recently that Abraham is the only one in the Old Testament God says, "Abraham, My friend." He directly says, "Abraham, My friend," the only one.

Brothers and sisters, thank the Lord that in the New Testament, He says, "You are My friends." The brother pointed that out, but he is also known in the Word as the father of faith. Jesus said of Abraham, "He saw my day, and he rejoiced in it." How close a relationship Abraham must have had with the Lord to be His friend, to be the one that the Father designates as the father of faith. Brothers and sisters, what a wonderful man Abraham is. But Abraham had his problems. Abraham did not live a perfect life. The Lord had to show him things and teach him things and come under the Lord's discipline. You remember the story that Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldees. The Lord said, "I am going to take you to a land." He did not tell him where. So, Abraham went out trusting in the Lord. He did not know where he was going. He just knew the Lord had told him to leave. And we are thankful for that. That is faith, isn't it? That is the way of faith. What a man of faith! In Genesis 15, the Lord revealed His mind to Abraham. The Lord had been talking about how a nation would come out of him. Then in Genesis 15, He says to Abraham that He would give him the seed as the stars of heaven. It says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." Thank the Lord, Abraham believed God, and God accounted it to him as righteousness.

That is the way we come to righteousness. The only way we can obtain righteousness is to get it from the Lord and by believing in Him. So this was a very important step in Abraham's life; he had the mind of God. He was going to increase Abraham's family, and

they were going to be as stars of the heavens. But in Genesis 16, we find that Abraham had been in the land for 10 years, and he was still childless.

He had God's mind that he was going to have sons as the stars of heaven. He was going to have many children, but he did not have one yet. The interesting thing is, as you read there, there is no appearance that he went to the Lord about it. He did not go to the Lord and say, "Lord, I have been here 10 years and I still do not have a son." He did not start reasoning with the Lord.

The Danger of Self-Reasoning

Who did he start reasoning with brothers and sisters? His wife. He started reasoning with his wife. He was not reasoning with the Lord. They could have reasoned with the Lord together, not saying anything about women and wives negatively. But they decided they would reason together, and they did not lean on God. In other words, this is the point I was trying to make; they were leaning on their own understanding, their natural reasoning. They did not really acknowledge the Lord in this process. They did not really inquire of the Lord. Together they came up with what they had thought was a very reasonable solution. I mean, after all, Sarah could not have a child, and Abraham knew this. But he was still able to have children, even at 86 years old. So, they came up with this idea, "Okay, you can have a child through the handmaid, Hagar." He was 86 years old, and he had a son, Ishmael, with whom He was thrilled. Things seemed to be going well, except that Hagar and Sarah began to have some problems. Once Hagar had the child, she despised Sarah and thought little of her because she could not have children. She was obviously blessed of God, and Sarah was not.

Well, of course, that was not the Lord's mind. It was not God's way which was the problem. So God, amazingly, for 13 years, was silent to Abraham. That is a long time; for thirteen years, he did not hear the voice of the Lord. This is discipline going on from God. He has not abandoned Abraham; He wants him to trust Him. He loves Abraham.

So, for 13 years, He does not speak to Abraham. He loves him, but He does not speak to him. That becomes a great discipline to Abraham. Abraham believed the Lord, but he was not walking with the Lord. *He was not walking with the Lord.* He was not diligently seeking the Lord. He was not close in his daily fellowship with the Lord. Through his self-reasoning and self-determination, he had come up with a solution that would achieve God's will and mind, and he had become satisfied with Ishmael there, who was growing up. Everything seemed to be fine.

But this was not the Lord's way. What was the result? You know, Ishmael represents the fruit of the natural mind, of natural reasoning. Ishmael represents the fruit of natural reasoning. Abraham had actually become a bit deceived, thinking that the Lord's will and mind had been achieved. He had what I would call a very distant relationship with the Lord which blinded Abraham to his spiritual state; it blinded him to the Lord's mind. It also stunted the spiritual growth in Abraham for 13 years. When Abraham was 99 years old, God appeared to him and spoke to him again. What you need to notice here is that God

takes the initiative. It is not that Abraham finally realized that something was not right and goes to the Lord. No! The Lord takes the initiative. Abraham had not done anything at this point to merit God's intervention. It is all grace, brothers and sisters. God loves Abraham. His silence was not meant for punishment, but for discipline to awaken Abraham, to get him to the place where he could know the mind of God.

The Almighty God

God speaks to him: "I am the Almighty God. Walk before My face and be thou perfect." *I am the Almighty God. Walk before my face and be thou perfect.* Now, what does this tell us? It tells us that God was not pleased with Abraham's walk. God was not pleased with Abraham's walk. It tells us that Abraham was living according to his own mind, and not God's mind. He was leaning to his own understanding. He was basically living out his life based on his own natural mind, his own reasoning. He was basically taking charge of his life. He was in charge, walking by his own reasoning. In a sense, he was walking alone by himself. Now, is God there? Yes, He is. He is still there. But there is no communication. There is a veil on Abraham's heart. That is what has happened.

In II Corinthians it says, "When you turn to the Lord, the veil is lifted." But Abraham had not turned to the Lord. But God, in His love, takes the initiative. Brothers and sisters, thank the Lord, He knows us so well, and He wants to teach us lessons. He is willing to wait for 13 years sometimes, but He takes the initiative to draw us back. Have you ever been drawn back to the Lord? I know you have. If you really think about it, it was the Lord's initiative that drew you back.

"I am the Almighty God, walk before Me." The Lord is basically telling him, "You have Ishmael; you are satisfied, but I am not satisfied. That was not My mind; it was yours. You and Sarah reasoned together, but not with Me." Now, that is not in the Bible. That is just the Lord really getting this point across to him. "You and Sarah reasoned together, but not with Me. You thought because she could not have children, and you still could, you devised this plan of yours. Now, Abraham, at this point, you are 99 years old, and Sarah has never been able to have children, and you are no longer able to have children. In other words, you are no longer sufficient to carry out My mind."

The All-Sufficient God

Great lesson, brothers, and sisters. Sometimes we have the mind of Christ, and we think we are sufficient to carry out the will of God. We are not. We have to depend on Him. It took Abraham 13 years to have his eyes opened. But the Lord made it clear to him. He says, "I am the Almighty God, El Shaddai." What does El Shaddai mean? We know El Shaddai means the all-sufficient God. "Abraham, you are not sufficient to carry out my mind any longer. You are going to have to depend on My sufficiency. I am your sufficiency."

In Genesis 18, He met with Abraham and tells him he will have a child with Sarah. "You will call him Isaac, and I will make my everlasting covenant with him. I am the Almighty God, walk before My face. I am the all-sufficient God, just come before Me." That is what the Lord is looking for, that we walk with Him, and see His face. He says, "Come

before My face” just to see Him and commune with Him, and the problems will be solved. Brothers and sisters, we have the mind of Christ, but it is through the Spirit that He shares His mind with us.

Be Anxious for Nothing

Be anxious for nothing. I have already shared about how anxious I have gotten, but in Philippians 4:6-7 it says: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Boy, that hit me pretty hard because the Lord brought me that verse and said, “Jerry, be anxious for nothing, but in all things, go to Him in prayer. Seek Him, and make my request known to Him, and it will be His peace that comes into my heart.”

Because Abraham was not walking with the Lord, he basically became anxious about his children. He had been there in the land for 10 years, and Sarah could not have children. He became anxious over this thing, and he did not really have any peace in his heart. So that is when he said, “I must do something.” Then his natural mind took over. This is kind of a repeat. His natural mind takes over, and they have the child through Hagar. Now, what is the fruit of those actions? The descendants were of Hagar who had Ishmael. His descendants have been at war with the descendants of Isaac for all of these many years, and it is going on even to this day. That is the fruit of the natural mind.

So, there is a warning to us and a caution to us. When we get anxious, we should heed the warning. The Lord kind of spoke to this man. He says, “You are not heeding my warnings, Jerry, your action should be a warning. It should be an alarm when you become anxious. Something is wrong; you are getting into the danger zone.” It should be like a red light telling you that you need to stop and be still. That is Psalm 46:10: “Be still, and know that I am God; ...”

Lay Ourselves and Our Issues Before the Lord

So, when we find ourselves very anxious, an alarm should go off. We need to turn back to Him, and in prayer, present everything to Him. We need to lay ourselves and our issues before the Lord and put our thoughts before Him. Lay your requests before Him, and look off to Him. When you really go to the Lord with an issue, a problem, or things that you are trying to understand, you go to the Lord. Do not be anxious; you go to the Lord, and you lay it on the altar. You lay yourself on the altar and say, “Lord, not my will, but Thine be done.” If you can, lay it on the altar, brothers, and sisters; what a difference that makes because you will receive the Lord's answer. So lay your thoughts upon the altar, lay yourself on the altar, and leave your thoughts there on the altar. But you do not just leave them, You look unto Him. *You look unto Him.* In other words, “Lord, my eyes are upon You. I will leave this in Your hands.” And His peace fills our hearts. I believe we have all experienced that at various times.

The Experience of Job

When you look off to Him, brothers, and sisters, you may not yet have the answer, but you have the peace, and the problem is solved. One of the great examples is Job. Remember, God challenged Satan with Job and said, "Have you considered My servant Job? There is no one like him in the whole earth. He is perfect, upright, and He fears God and eschews evil."

Satan said, "That is nothing. The only reason he does that is because you put a hedge around him." That is true; the Lord had put a hedge around him. Satan said, "You take away Your hedge, and he will deny You to Your face." So, the Lord said, "Okay, you want to take up the challenge? I will allow you to attack Job, but you cannot take his life." That should be a comfort to us. Many things can happen, but Satan cannot take our life until the Lord says it is time. So anyway, that is another thought. I do not want to confuse you; you remember the story. Job lost all his sons, daughters, and cattle in one day. I mean, they were gone. The enemy began to attack his mind, and he became very anxious. For thirty-seven chapters, he was before the Lord saying, "Why, why, why?" He reasoned with his friends, but he did not get an answer. Brothers and sisters, through 37 chapters of agony and stress and anxiousness, praise the Lord, Job never denied the Lord. Even when his wife said, "Curse God and die." You know, sisters, I do not know if you know, but our husbands really depend a lot more on you than you think we do. That must have gone through his heart like an arrow—his own wife saying, "Give up, curse God."

That was not the mind of the Lord, of course. So, for thirty-eight chapters, he went through this. And in the next four chapters, the Lord began to reveal Himself to Job. In chapter 42:5, he says, and remember this, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You." God had not told Job why he was going through all this, nor had He revealed to Job that He was using him to defeat the enemy. He was using him to overcome the enemy and the enemy's accusations. The enemy had said, "I know that he will disown You, God, if You let me challenge him."

Well, that did not happen. He had overcome the enemy, but only after he saw the Lord. Because it says in 42:5-6, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

You know, all the conflict, the reasoning, the anxiety, the introspection that Job went through was gone. He never got his answer, but he got the Lord. He saw the Lord; he looked off, and he finally saw the Lord.

That is why I am saying, brothers and sisters, it is so imperative that we keep our eyes on Him, that we look off. That means look off from yourself and look unto Him. He had no more questions, but thank the Lord. The Lord rewarded him with a double portion of children and possessions.

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Brothers and sisters, when we become anxious, let us heed the warning. Let us lay it all on the altar. When our brother shared on Jesus is our friend, I remember that song we sang “What a friend we have in Jesus.” I want to share this stanza with you: “Oh, what peace we often forfeit; Oh, what needless pain we bear. All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.”

Next time you sing that song, do not just sing it. Really let it hit your heart. Brothers and sisters, “Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear. All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

His Purpose is Our Purpose

Now, one other thing in Romans 8:28. I will summarize it. It says, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

Brothers and sisters, isn’t that wonderful? We love God, and He says, “All things work together for good,” even things that seem to be bad. But then He goes on to say, “to them who are called according to purpose,” and that becomes the key. Brothers and sisters, He is not talking about those that are called to have a purpose in your life, to fulfill your own purpose; it is to fulfill His purpose. We know that He has an eternal purpose.

Oh, brothers and sisters, this is the mind of the Lord that He has shared with us all through these years. His mind is that one day He will have that precious bride. Is that our mind? He says, “I want to bring many sons to glory. I want to bring you to glory. I want to bring Jerry to glory. That is My highest will to bring you to that fully matured.” That is His mind for us. Is that our mind?

Are we willing to take the cross and follow Him, brothers and sisters? We are called to be His body, the body of Christ, and not just a congregation full of individuals. We are to be the living body of our Lord Jesus Christ, bound together in a way that cannot be unbound. We are called to be His house, His place of rest. We are called to be His priesthood in worship and praise. We are called, brothers and sisters, according to His purpose, and all things will work together. But if His purpose is not in your mind, He will still work with you; He will still discipline you. But to serve Him, we need to serve His purpose and His mind.

Let us close with prayer.

Lord, I know there are a lot of thoughts that have been shared today. I pray that whatever You have shared on any of our hearts today would really stick, that You could bring forth fruitfulness. Lord, I want to thank You that we have Your mind, that we can discern Your mind by the Holy Spirit that You have given to us that dwells in us. Lord, may we learn that lesson of fully trusting You, leaning not upon our natural mind, but upon Yours, seeking You. Lord, when we become anxious about many things, may it be a warning that we need to turn back to You like Martha and Mary. You told Martha,

“Martha, Martha, you have been anxious and busy about many things, but one thing you have missed, but Mary has not. She is just sitting before My feet, listening to Me.” Lord, I pray You use Your word to encourage us all. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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