

THE CROSS: A DOORWAY TO A NEW MIND



Art: Chris Hopkins

***Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.***

***Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no guile.***

***When I kept silence, my bones waxed old
through my roaring all the day long.***

***For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me:
my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.***

Selah.

***I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.
I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord;
and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.***

Selah.

***For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee
in a time when thou mayest be found:
surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.***

***Thou art my hiding place;
thou shalt preserve me from trouble;
thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.***

Selah.

***I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go:
I will guide thee with mine eye.***

***Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding:
whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle,
lest they come near unto thee.***

***Many sorrows shall be to the wicked:
but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.***

***Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous:
and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.***

The Importance Of The Mind

To accomplish the work which God has called us to do we have to live lives that are truly Spirit-led. We need to know that we are in the place where God wants us to be, doing the work God calls us to do.

But what does it take to be really Spirit-led? Many of us still seem to think that to be guided by the Spirit of God we have to blank our minds and become like puppets on a string. "Here I am Lord. Press the buttons, pull the strings. I'm your puppet." But the Lord says,

***"Be not as the horse, or as the mule,
which have no understanding:
whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle...."***

"And how can I instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go, how can I guide you with my eye unless you think?"

To be guided by the Spirit is to be taught by the Spirit, in-structed. He can't instruct a robot or a puppet. He can only instruct a thinking mind. Our Lord was guided by the Spirit of his Father and he was far from a puppet on a string, mechanically responding to im-pulses sent to him from above.

He was a son, a thinking man. He had a mind and he used it to bring the instruction of his Father and the needs of men together.

And that's where the problem lies. Our minds don't seem to be able to receive instruction. We're confused about what's coming from God and what's coming from self and what's coming from Satan. We're seldom sure about our guidance. And sometimes when we think we're sure, we find out later that we were misled.

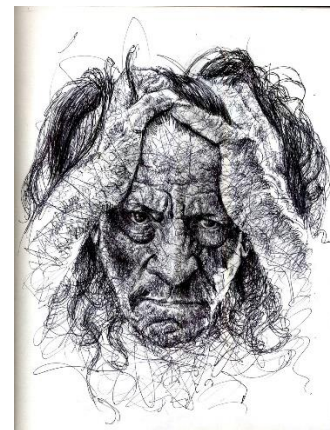
The Misdirected Mind

The reason for this confusion is that our minds are no longer aimed at heaven as they were created to be, but are turned in upon themselves.

It's as if we have a magnificent telescope capable of scanning the heavens and beholding untold wonders. But one night when nobody was around, an enemy installed a weird elbow on the telescope which, with a system of mirrors, bent its field of vision to the earth. Now when you look into the telescope, instead of seeing blazing stars and distant galaxies, you see only bugs, dirt, spiders and cockroaches crawling in the shadows, magnified to absurd sizes.

Our minds, through the corruption of sin, have been twisted away from the glory of the living God and bent earthward, self-ward. All we seem to be able to think about is self.

Guidance from above can only come to us when our minds are cleansed from the sin that warped them --- straightened out so that we can see heavenward once more.



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This is why Psalm 32, which promises guidance, begins with:

***Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputed not iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no guile.***

(Blessed is the man, the woman, who has been to the cross.)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

Romans 8:1-6

It is possible to get that elbow off the telescope so it can scan the heavens again. It is possible, by the power of the cross, to get the twist out of our minds so that they can truly receive instruction from the Spirit. But don't try to be instructed by the Spirit until your mind is straightened out, until you've been to the cross.

For instance, our vanity cannot be taught by the Spirit of God any more than a horse can learn to use a computer. Yet many of us are desiring to be guided by the Spirit without first bringing our vanity to the cross. What can the heavens declare to a telescope that only sees cockroaches and magnifies them a thousand times? Our ego can no more be taught the ways of God than a mule can be taught to build a house. Yet many of us are trying to be guided without first bringing our ego to the cross. What can we see of God's glory when we're all wrapped up in our own ego problems? And how can our lust, envy, greed and anger submit themselves to God's goodness when our minds are filled with these things they are incapable of receiving guidance from the Spirit because they are chained to the earth, saturated with false hopes and false promises?

A New Mind Through Death and Resurrection

First this vain, covetous, lusting mind must pass through the door of death in order that it may be replaced with a mind which is alive to God. That's what the cross of Jesus is for. It is the place where not only Jesus dies, but our old mind which was incapable of receiving instruction dies with him. The cross of Jesus is literally the doorway to a new understanding which is able to grasp the things of God, where the mind of flesh, the mind of self-seeking is replaced with the mind of the Son. A teachable, open, God-seeing, God-trusting, God-loving, God-worshipping mind.

***Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.***



The man or woman who has come to the cross of Jesus—and keeps coming---has put away the things which have blocked the Spirit from entering and has now set the mind on the things of the Spirit.

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Colossians 3:1-4

You have died. You have been to the cross. Now the guidance of the Spirit begins. The Spirit begins, literally, to instruct us and teach us in the way that we should go and guides us with his eye. But this guidance of the Spirit requires continuous cooperation from us in two areas:

1. The continuous putting to death of those things in us that interfere with the operation of the Spirit of God in us.

So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Romans 8:12-14

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices....

Colossians: 3:5-9

Why should I keep that grudge if keeping it causes my telescope to see giant cockroaches instead of the glory of the heavens? Why should I continue walking around in those fantasies when I know they cloud my vision of God? Why should I go on coveting things I don't need when I know how covetousness warps my mind?

There was a time when I had no place to go with these grudges and fantasies. I didn't know what to do with them. They came in and took over my life like troops of an occupying army. But now I know where to go to put these things to death --- to the cross of Jesus. "Lord, here's another load of self and flesh. I drop it at your feet and leave it."

2. To maintain a mind which is teachable by the Spirit we need to continuously enter by faith into the goodness of the Lord, not just as mercy received, but as a life lived.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and be-loved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.

Colossians 3:12-15

Enter into the goodness God has shown to you by living it. Jesus forgives us so we forgive. Jesus gives so generously to us so we give. Jesus intercedes for us so we intercede. Jesus shows compassion to us so we show compassion.



The Hug

Chris Hopkins

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Romans 8:14-17

We can live this life.

There was a time when we couldn't, but now we can. The promise is very, very clear that we will be guided by the Lord himself.

"Lo, I am with you always...."

***"I will not leave you desolate
I will come to you."***

***"I will instruct you and teach you in the way
that you should go"***

"I will guide you with my eye."

We will be guided. Not by hearing voices. Not by having buttons pressed in our reflexes and emotions, but by our freely and gladly entering into the goodness of the Lord which has come to meet us at the cross.



A Helping Hand

Chris Hopkins

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

***Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.***

That man, that woman, will be led by the Spirit of God.

Prayer- Lord help us to continue to keep coming to your cross, to keep laying our sin before you, to keep setting our minds on your Spirit. Remove the iniquity from our souls. Free our minds, draw us into your forgiving embrace so we can enter in your goodness and live it.

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THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN

