

Where Is Your Mind At?

Romans 8:1-17

INTRODUCTION

Have everyone write down the top 3 things they want right now.

Talk about what I want - specifically a smoker

TENSION

I can't say for sure what each of you wrote down on your paper, but I do know that most people, when you ask what they want right now they typically think of things. Like I might think of my smoker, you may be thinking of a new car, house, or job. As a matter of fact I posted this very question on Facebook this week, and here are some of the responses I got:

Coffee, strawberry rhubarb pie (although I still will never understand why someone would ruin a perfectly good rhubarb pie by adding strawberries to it), a bigger camper, to get better at poker, the Blackhawks to win the Stanley cup, to meet my future spouse, a shade tree, a clean house, Skyline chili, Reese's peanut butter cup blizzard (those two came from husband and wife), cheese curds, a dog, sleep, and at least 10 people mentioned money in some form. Note how food is a frequent want for people. These were many of the things that were on people's minds when simply asked to name 3 three things they want right now. And I bet if I looked at many of your lists you would have things similar things to it on your list.

However, these were not everyone's responses. Here are some of the other responses I received:

A hug from my spouse, to be healthier, peace of mind, respect, for my children to know love, for people to be as content in retirement as I am, more peace in the world, a hug from my husband, to play with my kids.

You see there are a lot of things we want, some are very selfish and food related, and some are very selfless. I believe looking at the things we want tells us a lot about who we are and where our mind is at. Maybe you are hungry and ready to get out of here, so there is food on your list, maybe you have a lot of health problems in your family right now, and so that is what is on your list. Our wants and desires tell us a lot about what is on our mind. This morning I want us to take a look at where our mind is at. Not just in the temporary, but in the overall scheme of our life. What is our mind focused on, and where should it be focused? So if you would, get out your Bible app, the pew Bible, your Bible, or whatever Bible you can find and go to Romans 8.

TRUTH

Read Romans 8:1-4

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

What awesome news. I don't know about you, but I break even our government's laws on a regular basis. I've been known to look at Facebook at a stoplight or two. I've been known to drive over the speed limit a time or two. And then to think about God's laws. I struggle with pride on a daily basis. I get angry with that guy who just cut me off in traffic. I am constantly guilty of breaking the law - be it man's law or God's law. I praise God that He sent Jesus to take my place

Tell story of camp and Art taking the place of Britney at stoning.

God has done the same for us through Jesus Christ - He has been a substitution for us. He took our place. You know we have become a country where we think we deserve just about everything we want. But I will tell you what - I am so glad I do not get what I deserve. As a man who has lusted after women - I deserve hell. As a man who has been prideful with a swollen head - I deserve hell. As a man who once as a child took money he had collected for UNICEF and bought chocolate chip cookies with it - I deserve hell. I deserve hell. You deserve hell. We all deserve hell. So I for one am grateful I don't get what I deserve, but I have a God who loves me enough who sent His one and only Son, that instead of death, instead of hell, I can have life and life to the fullest.

But did you catch what Paul had to say there. You may have missed it, so let me read it again for you: "*And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us,*" NOW GET THIS! "*who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*" Paul goes on to say this about those who live in the flesh and live in the Spirit

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

Paul tells us that those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires. And you know what is great about Paul, in his letter to the church in Galatia tells us the acts of the flesh - the things the flesh desires:

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

I actually love the way Eugene Peterson in The Message paraphrases this - I think it hits home with us a little bit more:

It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or

be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on.

This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom.

Does that phrasing start to resonate with your own life? I mean you may not have a drug or alcohol addiction. But what about your brutal temper, flying off the handle at your wife and kids because you had a bad day at work. To have a divided home, or a divided life. I'll tell you what I have known more than one person like that in churches, that all they wanted to do is stir up division in the lives of everyone around them. And you may not have a tiny little statue that you bow down and worship, but do you have anything that is taking the importance over God in your life. I mean I've joked that I would love this shirt - but how many people would put their favorite sports team, or their kids sports or activities before God..... When we live a life characterized by these things....when our minds are located here in the presence of fleshly desires. Paul tells us that such people will not inherit God's kingdom. They have failed to really have Christ in their life and to live by the Spirit. They have allowed these things to be lord of their life rather than the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Again Paul continues: (Romans 8:9-17)

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Quick show of hands: How many of you wish you could be a kid again? I mean isn't it great to be a child? To have someone else take care of you, to make your meals, provide for your needs, oh to just be a child again. Get this, Paul says that when you led by the Spirit of God, you are His child. And not only that you are an adopted kid. [Explain the love of an adopted child, compared to a born child.] A child who can approach Him and call Him "Abba, Father", or simply "Daddy." But again the key to all of this is being led by the Spirit, having your mind on the things of the Spirit. And what is even more awesome, in that same passage where Paul

tells the Galatians what the desires of the flesh are, he also tells them what a life led by the Spirit looks like:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Are you living a faithful life? Are you faithful to your wife or husband? Are you faithful to your kids? Are you faithful to God? Do you live a life of joy? Do you praise God for the very breath He has given you every day? Are you joyful that you have a job to provide for your family (even though you may hate it right now)? Are you joyful that while you are laid off (and you may not be making any money) you get to spend some extra time with your kids? Do you live a life of love? You see when you are led by the Spirit, your mind is going to be on the things of God. Your heart is going to go after the things God's heart is after, and the more you let yourself be led by the Spirit, the more the desires of the flesh will become less and less. When your mind with the things of God, the things of this world start to fade.

APPLICATION

When we chase after what the world desires, we are dead.

When we chase after what God desires, we are made alive.

How do we do this, how do we start to put our mind on the things of God? I want to encourage you to start with these three things:

- 1) **BE ACTIVE IN YOUR THINKING:** When you get up in the morning, when you start thinking about your day, make it a point to ask God: what do you want me to do today God? How can I serve you better? How can I be more patient? I think so many of us go through each day without actively thinking what we are going to do. We just go through the motions of each day, we complete our to-do list. We know we have things we have to get done, so we just do them. What if we were more active in our thinking each day, and we sought out what God would want us to do.
- 2) **BE HUMBLE:** One of the best definitions I have ever heard of being humble is this: Being humble is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less. Let me say that one more time because the difference is subtle, but it is a huge different. Being humble is not thinking less of yourself (its not about tearing yourself down or beating yourself up), it is thinking of yourself less. It is about thinking about others first. It is about making a priority for God and for others before your own personal priority.
- 3) **PRAISE GOD IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES:** So many of the worldly desires have to do with discontentment. I'm not content with my wife, so I'm going to look for affection elsewhere. I'm not content with my house, so I'm going to do everything I can to make more money, no matter if it means neglecting my family. I'm not content with God is doing in my life right now, so I am going to seek out another god for my life, be it another religion or sports, books, or myself. But in his letter to the Philippians, again Paul gives great insight into how to be content: *I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in*

plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:10-13)
Paul learned that God can get him through anything, no matter the circumstance, God was the one to be praised because He is the one who would strengthen him. When we praise God no matter our circumstances, we become more dependent on Him, and we will look to Him to lead us.

LANDING

So the question really is, where is your mind at? Or maybe the question is, where do you want your mind to be? Is it chasing after the things of this world, of the flesh? Or is chasing after the things of God? Are you being led by the world's desires? Or God's desires?

You know here were my favorite responses from my Facebook question:
To learn more about the Bible, an even closer walk with God, for all my family to know Christ, and for the world to know the peace of Christ.

So I ask you again where's your mind at?