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FAMILY DEVOTIONS

A weekly study to strengthen families

The Place of the Skull

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And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross. And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. MARK 15:17-22

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. PROVERBS 23:7

For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured. And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away. II SAMUEL 18:8-9

The biggest war is not a physical war, but an unseen spiritual one waged in, and through, the mind. In this passage, we see the punishment that Jesus bore for us to conquer that specific battle. A crown of thorns was placed on His head to give us the helmet of salvation, and He also was smitten in the head to give us victory over mental illness. The place where Jesus fought his greatest battle, and won, was called the place of a skull. Golgotha comes from the latin root word *calvaria* which is the source of the word Calvary. The word *calvaria* denotes specifically the top part of the skull, the upper part of the neurocranium and covers the cranial cavity containing the brain (the seat of our thoughts). Our mind is the threshold to gain access to our heart and spirit. Romans 12:2 declares that the way for us to become "new" and "changed" is through the mind.

What we think determines who we are. What we take in through our eyes and ears determines our output. Phillipians 4:8 tells us what to think on because if we do, our life will be a reflection of those thoughts. Our environment must be conducive to a good thought life. In the battle in II Samuel 18, more lives were lost due to the environment than the sword. Absalom's mind was in the wrong environment, wrapped around the wrong tree, leaving his heart exposed for him to be killed. We must get caught up in the cross and allow the Lord to restore our mind.

Application

John 1:14 gives us a picture of what our thoughts do. The "Word" means thought or an expression of a thought. The thought of God became actual flesh. So, too, do our thoughts determine who we become. Along with that, our environment determines whether our "new" thoughts will completely transform us. After he was healed, the demoniac in Mark 5 was told to go home. This signifies that Jesus expects our home to be a place where we can continue to walk in victory. We must make an altar in our home. Our home must be conducive to godly thoughts and living.

Discussion

1. How do we win the battle for our thoughts?
2. Take inventory of what is in your home. Are there things that are making it inhospitable to a godly thought life? Are you surrounding yourself with a godly environment?
3. What are some Scriptures you can memorize to help transform your thoughts?
Hint: II Corinthians 10:5

Prayer Focus

Pray that we would embrace the power of the cross and His victory over our mind.

Pray that we would see the areas in our lives that are hindering the work of the Lord in us from transforming us into His image.

Pray that we would not be overcome by the world's environment and ways of thinking, but that we would be able to overcome the world.