THE POWER SHIFT - SERMON 3

THE MIND OF THE MASTER / THE WAR OF THE MIND

RECOGNIZE • RENEW • RESPOND

INTRODUCTION: THE BATTLE BEFORE THE BATTLE

December 1776. The American Revolution stood near disaster. George Washington's Continental Army had endured defeat after defeat. Men were exhausted, supplies were scarce, enlistments were expiring, and confidence in the cause was collapsing. On Christmas night, Washington led approximately 2,400 soldiers across the ice-filled Delaware River. The following morning, they surprised Hessian forces at Trenton and won a victory that helped revive the revolutionary cause. The army had become accustomed to retreat. At Trenton, they discovered that they could advance.

Church, Jesus has already won the victory. So where am I still thinking and living as though the outcome is undecided? You can be forgiven and still think like you're condemned. You can belong

to the Father and still live as though you've been abandoned.

THE CROSS SETTLED OUR REDEMPTION. OUR MINDS MUST CONTINUALLY BE RENEWED IN THE TRUTH OF THAT REDEMPTION!

Paul brings that question right down to the way we think. He calls us to bring every thought into obedience to Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5 - THE WAR OF THE MIND

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NKJV) - 3 FOR THOUGH WE WALK IN THE FLESH, WE DO NOT WAR ACCORDING TO THE FLESH. 4 FOR THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT CARNAL BUT MIGHTY IN GOD FOR PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLDS, 5 CASTING DOWN ARGUMENTS AND EVERY HIGH THING THAT EXALTS ITSELF AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, BRINGING EVERY THOUGHT INTO CAPTIVITY TO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST,

Paul declares that although we walk in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down

arguments and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Paul is addressing opposition to the truth of God and the integrity of his apostolic ministry.

But the principle extends into our daily discipleship. There are arguments, assumptions, and patterns of thinking that must be brought under the lordship of Jesus.

THE ENEMY DOES NOT ALWAYS NEED TO OVERPOWER YOU IF HE CAN PERSUADE YOU TO BELIEVE A LIE!

He does not always need to change your circumstances if he can distort your interpretation of them. And a lie entertained long enough can become so familiar that we begin treating it as truth.

THE MOST DANGEROUS LIE IS NOT ALWAYS THE ONE YOU HEAR. IT IS THE ONE YOU HAVE BELIEVED SO LONG THAT YOU NO LONGER RECOGNIZE IT AS A LIE!

MARK 13:34 - AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Mark 13:34 (NKJV) describes a man who leaves his house, gives authority to his servants, assigns each his work, and commands the doorkeeper to watch. Notice what Jesus says. The master gave his servants authority. The Greek word is exousia, meaning authority, the right or authorization to act. But the passage does not stop with authority. It says the master gave authority to his servants AND TO EACH HIS WORK.

The Greek word ergon refers to work, a task, or responsibility. The master entrusted authority, but he still expected faithfulness.

AUTHORITY WAS GIVEN TO ENABLE FAITHFUL SERVICE, NOT TO ELIMINATE THE NECESSITY OF SERVICE!

The servants did not own the house. They were entrusted with responsibility within a house that belonged to their master. And while the immediate context of Mark 13 concerns watchfulness for the master's return, the principle is important for our discipleship. Authority is not permission to become passive. Authority is not an invitation to

entitlement. Authority is not independence from the master.

AUTHORITY DOES NOT ELIMINATE RESPONSIBILITY. IT ESTABLISHES THE NEED FOR FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP!

And I wonder if we have sometimes misunderstood spiritual authority in the Church. We have taught people to declare their position, but have we taught them to renew their minds? We have taught people to resist the enemy, but have we taught them to recognize the lies they've accepted as truth? We have taught people about the promises of God, but have we taught them the responsibility of following Jesus?

BEING GIVEN AUTHORITY DOES NOT MEAN WE HAVE FINISHED BEING TRANSFORMED!

Authority is entrusted through Christ. Maturity is developed through surrender. Renewal is the ongoing process of learning to live in agreement with Him. That gives us three ways to put this into practice. RECOGNIZE. RENEW. RESPOND.

1. RECOGNIZE: EXPOSE THE LIE

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

YOU CANNOT OVERCOME WHAT YOU CONTINUE TO AGREE WITH!

Before we can address how we think, we must learn to recognize what we have allowed ourselves to believe. Paul uses the Greek word logismos, meaning reasoning, argument, or calculation. He also uses ochyrōma, meaning fortress or stronghold. In context, Paul describes arguments and claims that oppose the knowledge of God. A stronghold is not necessarily a demon hiding behind every thought. Paul's imagery describes opposition that God's truth has the power to demolish.

A FALSE BELIEF CAN BECOME SO ESTABLISHED IN YOUR THINKING THAT YOU BEGIN DEFENDING THE VERY THING THAT IS KEEPING YOU IN BONDAGE!

Consider the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:1-6. The serpent did not begin by physically overpowering Adam and Eve. He began by questioning what God had spoken. "Has God indeed said...?"

Before disobedience occurred, the serpent attacked their confidence in God's Word. The deception invited Eve to interpret God's command through suspicion rather than trust.

THE FIRST BATTLE WAS NOT OVER THE FRUIT. IT WAS OVER WHAT THEY BELIEVED ABOUT GOD!

And the same pattern can appear in our thinking. Condemnation says, "God could never forgive someone like me." But Romans 8:1 declares there is no condemnation in Christ. Fear says, "God has abandoned me." But Hebrews 13:5 reminds us of God's faithfulness to His people. Pride says, "I don't need anyone telling me what to do." But James 4:6 teaches that God gives grace to the humble.

A THOUGHT IS NOT TRUE SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS LOUD, FAMILIAR, EMOTIONAL, OR PERSISTENT!

Our feelings are real, but they are not infallible interpreters of truth. Our experiences matter, but they do not possess greater authority than God's Word. And not every unwanted thought represents a chosen belief or spiritual failure. The

responsibility of the believer is to learn discernment.

THE SPIES AND THE PROMISE

Numbers 13:25-33. Twelve spies entered the same land. They saw the same giants. They witnessed the same obstacles. But they did not reach the same conclusions. Ten spies interpreted the land through their fear. Joshua and Caleb interpreted the challenge through God's promise. Numbers 13:33 records the spies describing themselves as grasshoppers in their own sight. Notice the language.

"IN OUR OWN SIGHT."

The giants were real. But their interpretation of themselves became distorted by the size of the opposition.

THE PROBLEM WAS NOT THAT THEY SAW THE GIANTS. THE PROBLEM WAS THAT THEY ALLOWED THE GIANTS TO BECOME GREATER THAN THE PROMISE!

Faith does not require us to deny reality. It requires us to refuse to give our circumstances final authority over what God has spoken.

RECOGNIZE ANSWERS THE QUESTION: WHAT HAVE I BELIEVED THAT GOD NEVER SAID?

2. RENEW: REPLACE THE LIE WITH TRUTH

ROMANS 12:2; EPHESIANS 4:23

YOU CANNOT LIVE IN A NEW REALITY WHILE CONTINUING TO THINK ACCORDING TO AN OLD IDENTITY!

Romans 12:2 tells believers not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds.

Notice that Paul is speaking to people who already belong to Christ. He is not telling unbelievers how to earn salvation. He is teaching believers how to live transformed lives. The Greek word anakainōsis refers to renewal. The verb translated "be transformed," metamorphousthe, calls for an ongoing pattern of transformation. This is not a one-time spiritual accomplishment. It is a continuing work of God in the believer.

SALVATION IS NOT THE FINISH LINE OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION. IT IS THE BEGINNING OF A LIFE BEING TRANSFORMED BY CHRIST!

And I believe this is where we have sometimes created confusion in the Church. We have made spiritual maturity appear to be something we can finally achieve. As though there is a level of authority we can reach where we no longer need correction. As though we can become so spiritually developed that surrender is no longer necessary. But the Christian life is not a journey toward independence from God.

It is a journey of growing dependence upon Him.

THE RENEWED MIND IS NOT THE SOURCE OF OUR AUTHORITY. CHRIST IS THE SOURCE OF OUR AUTHORITY!

Our minds are renewed so that our thoughts, attitudes, and decisions increasingly reflect His truth.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POSITION AND FORMATION

2 Corinthians 3:4-5. Paul declares that our confidence is through Christ toward God and that our sufficiency is from God. Our confidence does not come from ourselves. It comes from Him. There is a difference between what Christ has accomplished for us and what the Holy Spirit continues to accomplish in us.

- **REDEMPTION ESTABLISHES OUR BELONGING. Renewal teaches us to live as people who belong to Christ.**
- **RIGHTEOUSNESS ESTABLISHES OUR STANDING. Renewal teaches us to reject condemnation and walk in obedience.**
- **RESISTANCE ESTABLISHES OUR RESPONSE TO OPPOSITION. Renewal teaches us to discern what is true and stand in faith.**

We do not renew our minds to earn our position in Christ. We renew our minds because Christ has already brought us into a new life.

THE CROSS CHANGED WHO WE BELONG TO. THE RENEWING OF OUR MINDS CHANGES HOW WE LEARN TO LIVE AS THOSE WHO BELONG TO HIM!

THE MIND OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians 2:16 - Paul declares that we have the mind of Christ.

Philippians 2:5 - Paul calls believers to adopt the mindset of Christ Jesus.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul emphasizes spiritual discernment through the Holy Spirit. In Philippians, he emphasizes the humility and obedience of Jesus. And notice what follows in Philippians 2. Jesus humbled Himself. He took the form of a servant. He became obedient to the point of death. The mind of Christ is not a mind obsessed with demonstrating its own importance. It is a mind surrendered to the will of the Father.

THE MIND OF CHRIST IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF PRESSURE. IT IS A MIND GOVERNED BY OBEDIENCE TO THE FATHER EVEN UNDER PRESSURE!

We have been given authority, but we must never confuse delegated authority with personal self-sufficiency. Jesus did not give us authority so we could become independent of Him. He entrusted us with authority so we could faithfully represent Him.

TRUE MATURITY IS NOT REACHING A PLACE WHERE WE NO LONGER NEED SURRENDER. IT IS LEARNING TO LIVE IN CONTINUAL DEPENDENCE UPON CHRIST!

HOW DO WE RENEW OUR MINDS?

Renewal requires us to continually return our thinking to the truth of God. Through Scripture, we learn what God has revealed. Through prayer, we bring our concerns and desires before the Father. Through obedience, we learn to live according to His Word. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, our attitudes and desires are transformed.

WE ARE NOT TRYING TO THINK OUR WAY INTO VICTORY. WE ARE LEARNING TO THINK FROM THE VICTORY CHRIST HAS ALREADY WON!

RENEW ANSWERS THE QUESTION: WHAT DOES GOD SAY IS TRUE?

3. RESPOND: LIVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE

MARK 13:34; JAMES 1:22; PHILIPPIANS 4:6-8

THE TRUTH GOVERNING YOUR MIND WILL EVENTUALLY SHAPE THE WAY YOU LIVE!

This brings us back to the Scripture Pastor Shane has been using throughout this series. Mark 13:34. The master gave his servants authority. But he also gave each servant work. The authority was entrusted. The responsibility remained. And church, there is a difference between knowing the truth and allowing that truth to govern your life. You can know God is faithful and still wrestle with fear.

You can know you are forgiven and still struggle with condemnation. You can know Christ has given you authority and still respond through insecurity or pride. The presence of a struggle does not mean you have no faith. But how we respond to those struggles reveals where we are learning to place our trust.

THE EVIDENCE OF A RENEWED MIND IS NOT SIMPLY WHAT YOU KNOW. IT IS HOW YOU BEGIN TO LIVE!

James 1:22 calls us to be doers of the Word and not hearers only. Truth is not simply information we collect. It is revelation that calls for obedience. And our responses matter. When someone offends you, will your response be governed by pride or by the humility of Christ? When circumstances become uncertain, will your response be governed by fear or by faith? When you fail, will you surrender to condemnation or return to the grace of God through repentance?

When you experience success, will you become self-sufficient or remain dependent upon the Father?

SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY IS NOT PERMISSION TO STOP DEPENDING ON GOD. IT IS A RESPONSIBILITY TO LIVE FAITHFULLY UNDER HIS LORDSHIP!

THE PEACE THAT GUARDS THE MIND

Philippians 4:6-8. Paul instructs believers to bring their concerns to God through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. He then describes the peace of God guarding their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. The Greek word phroureō, translated "guard," carries the picture of keeping watch or protecting. And this is beautiful. In 2 Corinthians 10, Paul speaks of bringing thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

In Philippians 4, he speaks of God's peace guarding our hearts and minds.

THE MIND THAT SUBMITS ITS THINKING TO CHRIST IS NOT LEFT DEFENSELESS. THE PEACE OF GOD STANDS GUARD OVER THE INNER LIFE!

This does not mean faithful believers will never experience anxiety, grief, unwanted thoughts, or emotional struggles. It means those experiences do not have to become the final authority over our lives. We are invited to bring our burdens to the Father and continue trusting Him. And then Paul tells us what to dwell upon. Whatever is true. Whatever is noble. Whatever is just. Whatever is pure.

Whatever is lovely. Whatever is of good report. Our minds need more than the rejection of falsehood. They need to be continually directed toward what is true and worthy.

YOU MAY NOT CONTROL EVERY THOUGHT THAT ENTERS YOUR MIND, BUT YOU DO NOT HAVE TO GIVE EVERY THOUGHT PERMISSION TO GOVERN YOUR LIFE!

We are not called to manufacture peace through perfect mental control. We are called to bring our minds and burdens before the God who gives peace.

RESPOND ANSWERS THE QUESTION: WILL I ALLOW GOD'S TRUTH TO GOVERN HOW I LIVE?

CONCLUSION: THE WAR FOR YOUR AGREEMENT

Church, I want to bring us back to where we started. Pastor Shane has been teaching us that the power has shifted through the finished work of Jesus Christ. We have been redeemed. We have been made righteous through Him. And we have been called to resist the enemy. But I want to ask you something tonight.

WHAT GOOD IS KNOWING THAT YOU HAVE AUTHORITY IF YOU CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THE LIES THAT KEEP YOU FROM WALKING IN IT?

What good is knowing you are forgiven if you continually allow condemnation to define you? What good is knowing you belong to the Father if you continue to live as though He has abandoned you? And what good is declaring the lordship of Jesus if we refuse to bring our own thinking into obedience to Him? The authority of Christ is not something we spend our lives trying to achieve.

It is something we receive through Him and spend our lives learning to steward.

AUTHORITY IS GIVEN THROUGH CHRIST. MATURITY IS DEVELOPED THROUGH SURRENDER. RENEWAL IS THE ONGOING PROCESS OF LEARNING TO LIVE IN AGREEMENT WITH HIM.

And this is why the war of the mind matters. Because what we continually agree with influences how we respond. And how we respond influences how we live.

RECOGNIZE THE LIE.

Identify the thoughts, arguments, and beliefs that contradict the truth of God.

RENEW YOUR MIND.

Allow the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to continually transform your understanding.

RESPOND IN OBEDIENCE.

Live in agreement with the truth of Christ rather than allowing fear, condemnation, or pride to govern your life.