

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: The Good Life
October 16, 2022

Life in Our Minds

Psalm 139:1-18; 23-24

1 You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. 2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 4 Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. 5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. 7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. 11 If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” 12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. 13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.

23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Well, I’ve got no idea if this is normal. I don’t know if other schools do this, but whenever I graduated from high school, my high school had a senior party. So what that was is we essentially just had like an all night lock-in at the school. So everyone from my graduating class was there and I really don’t remember a whole lot about it. I know there was food, I know there was games, I know there was like a dance party. Really the only thing that I actually remember was the moment when everyone in my graduating class was packed into the auditorium. It was an auditorium similar to this. I graduated with a class of about 800. And this was the one part of the night where all of us were together. We were in this auditorium because our school had brought in a mentalist. A mentalist is someone who claims they can like control your thoughts through hypnotism and I was just sitting in the auditorium going “This is ridiculous!” Like all I want to do right now is just be eating Dippin’ Dots with my friends. Like get me out of this room so I can actually go have some fun. He starts his program, he’s like, “Can I have any volunteers?”, and one of my friends next to me, she raises her hand and she’s like “I want to be a

volunteer.” She gets picked and she’s a nice girl, a kind girl who loves Jesus, and she walks up to the stage and he starts doing his whole routine. He looks her in the eyes, says a couple of things to her, and then has her close her eyes. And then he says, “Okay, Abby as your eyes are closed you are now James Bond. And there is someone in this room who is trying to take you out, who is a threat to you. So as James Bond you need to make sure that you do not get taken out by this threat. So in 3, 2, 1, James Bond, open your eyes.” As soon as she opens her eyes she immediately just goes like this (Nate takes a James Bond stance), and then she runs across the stage, does a somersault - which I can’t do - and then runs into the audience and starts crawling around. She gets up, is running around doing twists and turns because she thought she was James Bond! It was crazy! Have you guys ever seen anything like that before? It’s real. Like, it actually works. It was just fascinating to me because I was like man this guy is in her head. He’s actually like in the control seat of her life. And since he’s getting her to think a certain way, he’s getting her to live a certain way. Since she actually thought she was James Bond, she began to live like she was James Bond. And I just remember thinking in that moment, “Man we are highly programmable beings!”

So how many of you - this is truly not a trick question - but how many of you would allow your thoughts to be influenced like that? You’re like, man that’s fun. I think I would want to do that. (waits for show of hands) It’s not a trick question. Yeah, it’s okay. How many of you are like I would never allow my thoughts to be influenced like that? (waits for a show of hands) Here’s what you’ve got to understand. The question is not would you allow your thoughts to be influenced or not. The question is what is influencing your thoughts. You don’t get to make the decision. It’s not am I being influenced. The question is WHAT is influencing me, because we are highly programmable beings. And we’ve got to understand this because your thoughts determine the course of your life. We need to make sure we’re being influenced by the right things. And it’s really, really easy to influence you. If you don’t believe me, let me prove it to you. Check out this number: \$602 billion. \$602 billion, well what is that? \$602 billion is the amount of money that companies will spend just this year on digital advertising. They wouldn’t spend it if it didn’t work. And what are they doing with that money? Are they just throwing billions and billions and billions and billions of dollars away? No, they’ve got a purpose with that. What are companies doing with advertising? The primary thing they are trying to accomplish is they are trying to influence your thoughts. They’re trying to change the way you think. Because if they can change the way you think, they can change the way you live and they can change the way you spend your money. Because the way you think, determines the course of your life.

And this is important for us. Because as we’re in week two of our brand new sermon series called The Good Life, we want all of us to experience the best life possible. Jesus said in **John 10:10 I have come that you might have life to the full.** I want to make sure that all of us have the opportunity of an abundant life, of a good life. And last week we talked about what it means to honor God with our bodies. Because if we do not treat our body well, our life will not go well. And this week what we’re going to do is we’re not just going to talk about our body, we’re going to talk about stewarding our mind. This mind that God has given us and this is so important because the thoughts that you think determine the course of your life and you cannot live the good life if you are consumed with a bad thought life. The thoughts you think determine the course of your life and the good life begins with good thinking, or more accurately, the good life begins with godly thinking.

The problem is so many of us, we are missing out on the good life because things are not going well for us in our thoughts. One of the most common phrases in today's day and age is mental health. Mental health, we've heard about that a lot these days and it's because we are mentally unhealthy. Things are not going well in our thought life. Things like anxiety are on the rise. Suicidal thoughts are on the rise. Depression is on the rise. I know many of you here today, you struggle with those things. And I have deep empathy for you, because your thoughts deeply affect your life. Maybe those thoughts have marked your life. But maybe you are here today and you are like "Man, I don't think I struggle with any of those thoughts." Maybe your thoughts just look a little different. Thoughts like man I will never be pretty enough. Or thoughts like man she is a whole lot prettier than my wife. Or thoughts like if I just had more money I would be happier. Or thoughts like I wasn't good enough for my dad, and therefore I'll probably never be good enough for anyone else. Those thoughts mark your life. Because the way you think determines the way you live. Because think about this: there has never ever been an affair that didn't first start with a thought. A bad financial decision always starts with a thought. Because the thoughts you think determines the life you live. And you've got two options. There is a way of thinking that leads to a life of pain, and there is a way of thinking that leads to a life of goodness and godliness. And I want to make sure that we are on that path today.

So here's what we are going to do, we're going to get in scripture and we are going to get into a book of the Bible that is the most honest about our thoughts. And that's the book of Psalms. If you don't know much about the book of Psalms, the book of Psalms is 150 chapters. But it's really 150 prayers. 150 prayers of people who love God, and they're just honest with their thoughts. Like brutally honest. Sometimes surprisingly honest with their thoughts. And one of the lessons we can learn from the book of Psalms is that God is not afraid of our thoughts. He can handle them. Wherever your thoughts take you, He can handle them. And today what we're going to do is we're going to read Psalms 139. Psalms 139 is written by a guy named David, maybe you've heard of him. He's the guy from David and Goliath. He's the guy who would become the king over Israel. He's the guy from David and Bathsheba. But he's also the guy who scripture says was a man after God's own heart. So we're going to read Psalms 139 and we're going to read about David's thoughts on our thoughts. We're going to read about our thoughts. We're going to read about God's thoughts. We're going to read about how we can change our thoughts. So that's where we're going this morning. Psalms 139. Let's read verses 1-6.

David writes this: **1 You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. 2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 4 Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. 5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.**

You know before this week, if you'd have asked me what my biggest fear would be I would tell you snakes. I can't stand snakes. I'm terrified of snakes. I don't even like seeing snakes at the zoo. Like I avoid them. I just kind of look at the frog section instead. I don't like snakes! Or maybe I would have told you heights. Because I will never ever, for the rest of my life, ever skydive. For those of you people in this room who skydive, who want to skydive, I don't understand you. I think you've got some screws loose. I don't understand it at all. So maybe I would've told you snakes or maybe heights, but today I've got a different answer for you. What's my biggest fear? I think my biggest fear is similar to your biggest fear. Because I think our

biggest fear is if everyone else knew our thoughts. Can you imagine that? Even like for the rest of this message, what if our thoughts were just broadcast on this screen? Like every thought you think. Man it would be terrifying! Because I don't want anyone else in my thoughts, because I know what they are! And many times I don't like what they are. And what this scripture says is your thoughts are fully known. God knows all of them. He knows what you are going to say, because he knows what you're thinking about saying. He knows where you're going to go, because he knows where you're thinking about going. He knows all of your thoughts. This is the first thing we can learn from this passage. Point number one: Your thoughts are not hidden from God.

1. Your Thoughts Are Not Hidden From God

Now why is this? Because He's got a lot of stuff on His plate. Like He's got to make sure the fish are swimming, the trees are growing, and the sun is rising. Like He's got a lot of stuff to think about. Why is He involved in our thoughts? Like why does he care so much about our thoughts? It's because He knows our thoughts take us places. He knows that our thoughts determine the course of our steps. Even in this passage it says once you think about saying something, that's what you say. Once you think about getting up and moving, then you get up and move. The way you think determines the way you live. Which is why God cares so deeply about our thoughts. He's not going to leave us alone in our thoughts. Our thoughts are not hidden from Him, because He cares deeply for them.

Now there's really two ways of responding to hearing this. The first is, man, that's really creepy. Like why is God in my thoughts? This is my safe space. I kind of just wish He would go do something else. Why is He in my thoughts? It's either creepy or you read this and you're just amazed. Because think about this: He knows everything you think about and yet He doesn't leave you. Think about that. Who else would do that? He knows how angry you are. How anxious you are. How lustful you are. How judgmental you are. How self-conscious you are. He knows all your thoughts and yet He doesn't leave you! I don't know anyone else who would do that. If you knew all of my thoughts, you wouldn't want me to be your pastor, because our thoughts are not good and oftentimes they are flat out embarrassing. If you knew my thoughts, you wouldn't really want to be around me and yet God knows all of our thoughts and He stays. How much must He love you to do that? See there's not a single place where you can go, even your thought life, where He won't leave you alone. No matter where your thoughts lead you. Whether they lead you to joy or to anxiety. To depression or to peace. Wherever your thoughts lead you, He will not leave you. David says this next in this passage. Verse 7: **Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.**

Have you ever thought you were alone, only to realize you weren't? I specifically remember this time early on, once we had our daughter. I was putting her to sleep one night, and I was just holding her. I was in a rocking chair in the corner of her room and I was singing to her and praying over her. We were just having a sweet time one-on-one. We were all alone in her room but then all of a sudden I look up and the baby monitor is no longer aimed at the bed, but directly at me. So I pick up Jacy. I run outside and Adalee is holding the baby monitor and she goes, "I'm

sorry. I just like watching you guys.” This is who your God is. He’s going my son, my daughter, I just like watching you. And I love you too much to leave you alone, even in your thoughts. Because I know your thoughts will take you places and I want to make sure they’re taking you to the good life. And I want to make sure the most important thing in your life, I want to make sure that my presence with you is the greatest influence on you, specifically with your thoughts. Because this matters. God’s presence with us, in our thoughts, matters. Because His presence with us changes the way we think.

David shows us this next in verse 11. He says **11 If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,”** David’s thinking, my situation is dark. There’s no light at the end of the tunnel. And honestly what I just want to do is I just want to sit in this sadness. This is what’s going through his head. But then as he’s thinking that he’s going, man but I’m remembering that even here God is with me and if God is with me here this is what it means: verse 12: **12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.** See this is an important truth for you. It was an important truth for David. Here’s what you’ve got to understand: your first thought is not always the right thought. Because for David here he’s going man my first thought is my situation is dark. My situation feels hopeless. But on second thought, I’m remembering that my God is here. He’s in it with me. So even though I think it’s dark, I know the light of the world is with me. Even though I think it’s hopeless, I know the hope of the world is with me. And so I can change the way I think, because I know my God is with me. My thoughts don’t have to be determined by my situation. They get to be determined by my Savior, because He is in it with me. And if my God is with me, I get to change the way I think. Friend, God has never once left you alone. He loves you too much to leave you, even in your thoughts because He knows that your thoughts take you places. So the first thing we can learn from this passage is this: Point #1 Your thoughts are not hidden from God.

And that first section is about how God is with us in our thoughts. This next section is about how we are in God’s thoughts. Check this out. Verse 13: **13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.** Some of you just need to be reminded this morning that you are thought of. You are not an accident. You are not just this cluster of cells that’s one day going to die and be put in a box and be forgotten. You were thought of before you even existed. When you were in your mother’s womb, you were on God’s mind. And God created you thoughtfully, because he wanted to create you wonderfully. And in the midst of everything else that God could be thinking about, scripture tells us what He thinks about and it says He thinks about you. He thinks about us. Which is the second thing we can learn from this passage: God’s thoughts are not hidden from you.

2. God’s Thoughts Are Not Hidden From You

He tells us plain and clear in scripture what He thinks about. He thinks about you and me. And He tells us plain and clear in scripture what he thinks about us. Which is such a relief, because one of the ways I can get into my head the most is whenever I leave a conversation with someone and I'm just going "Man, what do they think of me?" I replay every word in that conversation and go "Man, did that go well?" Like what do they think of me? What does my boss think of me? What does he think of me? What does she think of me? It's really easy to get in your head when you're just wondering what someone thinks of you. God has made it clear. You don't have to wonder what He thinks of you. Here's what He thinks of you. I just want to remind you of this this morning. When He thinks of you he thinks this:

You are valuable (Matthew 10:30)

You are crowned with glory and honor (Psalm 8:5)

You are his child (1 John 3:2)

You are a co-heir with Christ (Romans 8:17)

You are loved (John 3:16)

You are not defined by your past (2 Corinthians 5:17)

You are forgiven (1 John 1:9)

You are never left alone (Hebrews 13:5)

That's not just happy go-lucky preacher language. I got all of those directly from scripture. This is what God says He thinks about you. You've got to know this. Some of you just need to be reminded of this. This is what God thinks about when He thinks about you. But what do you do when your thoughts are, man, I think I'm forgettable? What do you do when your thoughts are, I think I'm unlovable? What do you do when your thoughts are, I'm afraid about my future because I don't think anyone really cares about my future? What do you do when your thoughts are in direct opposition to God's thoughts? Well somebody's right and somebody's wrong. Let me tell you who's wrong. **Isaiah 55: 8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. 9 As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.** In other words, God's right. You're wrong. And God's thoughts matter most, because God's thoughts are the only ones that are true. And we need to understand this, because so often the majority of the time our wrong thinking comes down to our wrong theology. When we don't have the right view of who God is, and what He thinks about, we will begin to think the incorrect thoughts. So we need to know who our God is. We need to know what He thinks about, because we want to think about the thoughts that are true and trustworthy and pure. I want to think rightly. And if I want to think rightly, I need to know God's thoughts. Which is why David writes this verse 17: **17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God!** Your thoughts are like gold to me. I hold them tightly, like a pearl of great price. I don't let them out of my sight, because I care deeply for your thoughts. Because your thoughts are precious to me.

Before I proposed to my wife, I got the ring and I was kind of waiting for the day in which I was going to propose. And what I did was I kept the ring in a cowboy boot in my closet. And so every single night whenever I'd come home from work, the very first thing I'd do is I would go in my closet, empty out the boot, open up the box and make sure that the ring was still there. I just wanted to make sure my roommates hadn't touched it. And every single morning whenever I woke up I would go in the closet, take down the boot, empty out the boot, open up the box and

make sure it was still there. Day after day after day after day I went back and checked it again and again and again and again and again, because it was precious to me. This is how David is saying we need to treat God's thoughts. We need to go back to them again and again and again and again and again and again. We need to know them. We need to learn them. We need to make sure they are in our brain. They need to be precious to us. But how do you begin to know God's thoughts? Well, I've been married to my wife now for four years. Which I know for some of you, you're like that's not a long time. It's felt like a long time - in a good way! It's been great! But four years feels like a long time. (I'm going to pay for that later - I didn't mean that!) Now here's the deal, there will be certain situations, when I'm with my wife, and I will just look over at her and I'll already know what she's thinking. Why is that? I've spent a lot of time with her. So I know her thoughts before she even says it, because I've been around her. I know what she thinks about certain situations, because I know who she is.

This is why it is so important to spend time with God every single day. This is why it's so important to get in the word of God every single day. We don't do this to just check off a box. We don't do this to make ourselves feel good. We do this to get to know our God. So that no matter what situation may arise, we already know what He thinks about it. Because we know who He is, because we have spent time with Him. And we need to make sure we know what His thoughts are, because His thoughts are the only thoughts that are true. We need to be influenced by His thoughts. But I hope you know this, and I bet you've lived this, on your own you do not drift toward God's thoughts. On your own, without the power of the Holy Spirit, your mind is like a vulture. It's just looking for dead things to feast on. On your own you'll think thoughts like "Man my wife has just made so many mistakes." On your own you'll think judgmental thoughts about your neighbor. On your own your thoughts begin to be anxious about the future. It's just looking for dead things to feast on, which is why we have to feed it good and godly thoughts. We have to train it to think godly thoughts. It won't do it on its own. So we have to hold God's thoughts precious to us. We have to go back to it over and over and over again. So that we can begin to think, not just good, but in a godly way. So point #2, the second thing we can learn from this passage is, God's thoughts are not hidden from you.

So David takes a turn, honestly, in this passage even if you've read ahead. It just takes a little bit of a turn, and I'm not going to read those verses. It's not because I don't think they're helpful. It's not because I don't think they're true. I just think they can be distracting. And it's what I said before. In the book of Psalms, Psalms is incredibly honest, like gut level honest. The writers of the Psalms say what they're thinking. And what David says in the next couple of verses is God I hate your enemies. I hate your enemies. But after saying that, he finishes the passage by saying but God, if those thoughts are not your thoughts, would you change my thoughts? He says this in 23 and 24: **23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.**

Here that word "offensive" could also be translated as painful. And that word "everlasting" is like eternal life, or for our purposes the good life. What David's saying is God I know there are two ways of thinking. There is a way of thinking that will lead to a painful life. But I know there's also a way of thinking that will lead to the good life. And I want to be thinking everlasting thoughts. I want to be thinking thoughts that are your thoughts. So God I'm getting on the operating table. Would you search me, test me? Would you remove and replace any

thoughts that are not your thoughts? Which is the third thing we can learn from this passage. We can learn this from David's life. We must surrender your thoughts to God.

3. *Surrender Your Thoughts to God*

David is saying here, "God here are all my thoughts. But if they are not thoughts of You, I want you to change my thoughts." The problem is changing your thoughts is really, really difficult. Maybe you've lived it, but it's just also scientifically proven. It's really hard to change the way you think. And it's because whenever you think a thought, your brain tries to make it easier for you to think that thought again and again and again. So let's just say a thought that frequently comes to mind for you is I'm just not good at my job. When you think that thought, what happens is your brain is creating neurological pathways in your brain so it's easy for you to think that thought again. It's essentially mowing down a path so it's easy for you to continue to think the way you've always thought. So if you want to change the way you think, it's going to be really, really hard. It's going to take the power of the Holy Spirit giving you some new brain terrain. That's what we need. We need the Holy Spirit to rewire and reorganize the way we think. And although it's really, really difficult, He really, really does it.

And I've learned that God does it in three different ways. Which, this is kind of like a preacher's dream. I've got three points within a point. This is like Inception here. This is like next-level preaching. This is great! There are three ways in which God changes your thoughts. If you want your thoughts to change, here's how God is going to do it. The first is this: Compare your thoughts to God's word.

1. Compare Your Thoughts to God's Word

If you want to change your thoughts, you need to compare your thoughts to God's word. Here's how you do it. If you have a thought that you just continually think, I was talking to someone this morning and it was a thought about I'm just so afraid someone in my family is going to die. Like there's nothing actually going on. It's just a thought that I continually think. If you have a thought like that that just continually comes to mind what you need to do is you need to write it down. Put it on paper. Look at that thought, and then research that thought in comparison to scripture. What does God's word have to say about that thought?

Here's an example of what one of them might be. A thought might be: I will always fall into temptation. That's a thought. Here's the truth: **1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.** That's the truth. And if that's your thought, what you need to do is you need to memorize this scripture. Like, write it on your hand. Write it down in your journal. Make it the background on your phone. Make sure you get it in your heart and your mind, so that when that untruthful thought pops up you can fight back against the truth.

Here's another example of what it might look like. A thought you might think is I don't have enough money to be happy. That's the thought. Here's the truth: **Psalms 16:5-6: 5 Lord, you**

alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure. 6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. The thing is, this happened to me this last week. Just being honest with my thoughts. Sometimes we just think crazy thoughts. I was driving down the road, and I just saw this Mercedes and it was awesome. And I just had this thought of, my life would be so much better if I drove that. That's what I thought. But in that moment I just had to remind myself: No Nate, the boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. I have more than enough. God is my portion and my cup. I don't need more. I have all that I need. This happens to me. It's going to happen to you. You need to fight back with the truth.

Here's another one: God is angry with me because of my past. **Psalm 86:15: 15 But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.**

Here's another one: My future is in danger. **Matthew 6: 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?** We could go on and on and on. Whatever thoughts you might be struggling with, I bet there is a scripture to combat it with. But the thing is, this takes work. It takes work. Even just reading that verse, unless the power of the Holy Spirit just moved in your life, it's not just changing the way you think off the bat. What you have to do is, you have to wrestle that thought to the ground with the truth until it's got no more air to breathe. You've got to memorize God's word. You need to memorize scripture so you can combat untruthful thoughts with the truth of God's word. So if you want to change your thinking, the first thing you have to do is, you have to compare your thoughts to God's word. But I've realized that God doesn't just use God's word to change your thoughts, he changes your thoughts through God's people. So the second thing you can do to change your thoughts is: Confess your thoughts to God's people.

2. Confess Your Thoughts to God's People

And this can be really uncomfortable. Like, we don't like doing it. When we have thoughts that we don't want anyone else to know, we don't want to tell anyone else. But when you have thoughts that you don't want anyone else to know, that should be the red light that you've got to tell someone about it. And here's what it looks like: You have a thought come to mind and you just immediately call someone in your life group. And you just say, man I was just looking in the mirror and I didn't like what I saw. And I just had a thought of, I think I'm going to skip lunch today. And here's what you do. You bring that to your friend and you just allow your friend, who knows and loves Jesus, to remind you of who you are. To speak truth over you. To remind you of how God sees you. And how God sees you is more true than how you see you. You just bring it to the light. You tell your friend and allow your friend to minister to you.

Maybe that's not your thought. Maybe your thought is man, there's this girl in my class and I just continually allow myself to wander and think lustful thoughts about her. Or maybe it's man, I was on Instagram and I saw this family and they're on vacation and meanwhile I know they're in a bunch of debt. And I was just thinking really judgmental thoughts about them. You bring those thoughts to the light, because if those thoughts are in isolation those thoughts will continue to grow. Because on your own, you don't think godly thoughts. You think worldly thoughts. We

confess our thoughts to other people, to God's people, so they can remind us of who we are and who our God is. So if you want to change your thoughts first you compare your thoughts to God's word. Secondly you confess your thoughts to God's people. And then thirdly you consider what you consume.

3. Consider What you Consume

And I am excited about this one. Because I think the Holy Spirit has been prompting you on this one for a while and you've just been flat out disobedient. You've been disobedient. And what's funny is you're confused about the way you think. You're confused why you don't think godly thoughts. Let me just tell you why. It's because you're consuming the world. You can't consistently consume the worldly things and think godly thoughts. It doesn't work. Because here's what it might look like for you. You might stay up late at night watching dark shows. Like dark shows with murder and bad language, and it's just like dark shows. And then you wake up the next morning and you are confused about why you don't have the joy of the Lord in your heart. It's not confusing. You're just thinking how you fed your brain. You can only think about what you've been consuming.

Or maybe for you, you just listen to music that's just filled with sex. All it does is talk about sex. And then your mind is always wandering to sex. Why is that? It's because you've been feeding your brain with sex! Maybe for some of you, you only listen to news that's consistently critical of people in leadership. And then you're confused why you're always critical of your boss, you're always critical of pastors, you're always critical of people in leadership. It's because it's what you fed your brain! Maybe some of you, you just spent hours on TikTok and you look at model after model after model. It's no wonder why you're insecure about how you look, because it's how you've fed your brain. And the thing is you really, really want God to change your thoughts. You just don't want Him to change what you listen to, what you watch, what you consume. If you continue to consume the same things, you will continue to have the same thoughts. You see we are highly influential beings. Our minds are easily influenced.

I've even really learned this recently. Our daughter is 1 ½, and that just means we've really tried to manage what we watch and what we listen to around her. So we've changed the music that we listen to at our house. And recently we've just been listening to Ellie Holcomb's kids worship album like over and over and over again. And what happens is, I've learned this even just this week, I'll be driving down the road or I'll just be sitting at work writing emails and I will just start singing (sings) "Fear not! For I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine." - How about that Drew! Come on! Let's go! Add me to the team! Why is that in my thoughts? It's because it's been jammed in my brain over and over and over again. I'm telling you what you consume matters. And if you are consuming worldly things, you will not have godly thoughts. We are highly influenced beings. It is easy to be influenced. Allow that to move you to be influenced to the things of God. If you want to change your thoughts, 1) Compare your thoughts to the word of God, 2) Confess your thoughts to God's people, 3) Consider what you consume.

Those are just the three points of my third point. Let me summarize all my points. 1) Your thoughts are not hidden from God, 2) God's thoughts are not hidden from you, and 3) Surrender your thoughts to God.

I just want to close with this image. This is my phone (picks up a phone). My phone runs my life. This is my phone. My phone tells me what to do. It tells me when all my meetings are. It allows me to have access to my friends and my family. It gives me access to my emails. Like, this phone runs my life. Since it runs my life, I want to protect it. I want to make sure nothing ever happens to it. This phone is so important to me because it decides what I do. It runs my life. Which is why I would never do this with it (puts it in a dish of water). Oh my gosh! It's an old phone. It's fine. Why would I never do this? Because I want to protect my phone and I know how my phone works. I know that if I allow water to get in my phone, it will not function the way it's supposed to. I would never do this. I want to protect my phone from anything getting inside of it that would harm its software that would keep it from running how it's supposed to. I would never do this. The truth is, my phone doesn't run my life. It may feel like it does. It doesn't. My phone does not run my life.

My thoughts run my life. Everything I do, think, or say, everywhere I go, is determined by how I think. My thoughts run my life. If that's true, man I want to protect my thoughts. I want to keep out anything that might keep it from functioning in the way it's supposed to function. I want to protect it from malfunction. The good thing is scripture has told us, God has told us, how our brain is meant to function. This is what he says in **Philippians 4:8: 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.** The problem is we allow a lot of things that are not defined by those words into our brain. We allow a lot of thoughts to creep in because we're not protecting the thing that runs our life. That's why our brains and our minds aren't functioning well. You know there's really only one thing I know that covers the bases of all those things in this verse. There's only one thing that I know that is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy. It's not Baylor football. It's not your job. It's not the economy. It's not Instagram. It's not whatever it is you might think about. It's this. Here's the only thing I know that covers all those bases. You turned your back on God. He didn't turn His back on you.

While you were still a long way off, God in His love for you, sent his Son to live the perfect life. And then He died the death that you deserved, but He didn't stay dead. Three days later He rose from the dead so that death no longer has mastery over you. And then one day He's either coming back or He's going to take us home so that we can live with Him forever. That's the only thing I know that is good, true, pure, excellent or praiseworthy. So if you want your mind to function the way it's supposed to, you need to meditate on that. You need to fill your mind with the gospel. You need to fill your mind with the good news, if you want to live a good life. You want to continually remind yourself every single day that you are seen, loved, forgiven, redeemed, and you've got a hope and a future because your God loves you. That's what we're meant to think about. It's just going to be a fight to think about it, because there are so many forces in this world that are trying to control your thoughts and influence your thoughts. But I hope that you know that if you allow them to influence your thoughts, they'll also influence your life. And above all else, I want God to be the primary influence on your life. And if that's going

to be true, we need to make sure He's the primary influence on our thoughts. Let me pray that would be true of us today.

Father, would you give us a sound mind? What a gift that would be. I know there're so many people in this room, or watching online, and they've just been tormented with their thoughts. Thoughts of anxiety, thoughts of depression, or just thoughts of anger or comparison, whatever our thoughts may be. God would you just free us from thoughts that are not pure, good, noble, true or excellent? Instead would you fill our mind with good thoughts of the good news so that we might live a good and godly life? God, I know so many of us have been struggling with this for years, and it just feels like we're always going to think this way. Father, would you just remind us that as Christians, as believers in Jesus, we reject that thought of it's always going to be this way. Because we believe in a God who died and didn't stay dead. We believe in lepers who didn't die of leprosy. We believe in a murderer who became an apostle. We believe that things don't always have to be this way. You can change things. You can change lives. You can change souls. And you can change our thoughts. You have the authority to do so. So Father, we submit our lives to you. We surrender our thoughts to you. Would you change them? Search us, God, test us and remove and replace anything that is not of you so we can think good thoughts and then live a good life. So Father, thank you that we have reason for hope. We have reason for living, because Jesus is alive and with us and for us. And it's in His name we pray. Amen.