

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

True repentance begins with knowledge of sin. The eyes of the repentant person are opened. He sees the length and breadth of God's holy law with distress and confusion. He sees the extent, the enormous extent, of his own transgressions. To his surprise, he discovers that he has been under a huge delusion by thinking of himself as a good person with a good heart. He learns that in reality he is wicked, guilty, corrupt, and evil in God's sight. His pride breaks down. His high thoughts melt away. He sees that he is a great sinner. This is the first step in true repentance.

Ryle, J. C.. Repentance - What it Means to Repent and Why We Must Do So (pp. 3-5). Aneko Press. Kindle Edition.

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com (blog)

www.lightfordarktimes.com (blog)

Christ Reformation Church – YouTube Channel (Light for Dark Times)

The Sinner's BIOS is Corrupted

September 1st, 2024

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 2:14
& Ephesians 4:23

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 29

1Co 2:14 **The natural person does not accept the things of the**

Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Eph 4:20-24 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— (21) assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, (22) to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is

corrupt through deceitful desires, (23) **and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds**, (24) and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Those of you who have been following our mid-week (Wednesday) online study through Ephesians will find the subject for this morning a review of our last lesson which targeted particularly Ephesians 4:23.

This is such an important subject, and because it relates directly to the first few chapters of First Corinthians, I am going to turn your attention to that 23rd verse of Ephesians 4. We are going to see how Paul's words there shed much light on this matter of *the natural man not accepting the things of the Spirit of God...they are foolishness to him...he has no ability to grasp them*.

I will begin with a helpful illustration to help us grasp what this means – *to be renewed in the spirit of our mind*. Virtually

everyone has a computer today – and in fact multiple computers. Your cell phone is a computer, as is your Kindle or your iPad.

Now, computers have what is called BIOS. I of course googled it and here is what I found:

- What is BIOS? As your PC's most important startup program, BIOS, or Basic Input/Output System, is the built-in core processor software responsible for booting up your system. Typically embedded into your computer as a motherboard chip, the BIOS functions as a catalyst for PC functionality action.
- BIOS instructs the computer on how to perform basic functions such as booting and keyboard control. BIOS is also used to identify and configure the hardware in a computer such as the hard drive, floppy drive, optical drive, CPU, memory, and related equipment. The BIOS is accessed and

configured through the BIOS Setup Utility.

Several of you understand this far better than me, I am sure. But if I am reading these statements correctly, BIOS is in the processor chip (or some chip on the motherboard) and when you turn your computer on, it is this BIOS system that makes things happen upon startup – such as making your keyboard work, bringing up the home screen, and much more.

If BIOS were not present, nothing would happen when you turned things on. Or in ways worse, if BIOS is somehow corrupted, things are just not going to work properly. You can input data all you want, if BIOS is gone wrong, that data is not going to be processed properly.

Now, one more google search found this:

“BIOS memory is stored on the ROM chip on your motherboard. It is difficult to infect such memories, but the viruses like rootkits virus may infect the BIOS and

your computer’s framework. In addition, the malicious code present in the BIOS can allow attackers to remotely control your computer.

This then is just an illustration of what we are going to see here in this matter of being renewed *in the spirit of your mind*. Just an illustration, but you will find that it helps us greatly in understanding what Paul is saying.

Eph 4:23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,

NOTE: There are printouts in the back of Martyn Lloyd-Jones’ sermon on this verse and I very much encourage you to get one and read his sermon carefully. I will be quoting him at several points here. I cannot express to you too much how vital it is for you to get hold of what this 23rd verse means.

Put Off, Put On

You will notice that verse 23 comes right between verse 22 and verse 24 – DUH! You say? The

point is that if we are going to put off the old man (who is who we used to be, but who is now dead if you are born again through faith in Christ) and then put on the new man, whom God has created, then *this being renewed in the spirit of your mind* is key. IF your idea of being a Christian is mere morality – do these things, stop doing those things – then you are what Jesus called a whitewashed tomb. You’ve slapped on a coat of white paint, but the rottenness of your inner man remains. The gospel is a matter of the heart, of the inner man.

So What is the “spirit” of the mind?

First of all, we notice that whatever the spirit of the mind is, *something must have gone wrong with it because Paul is telling us that it needs to be re-newed. Re-made.* And since Paul tells us this in what is called the passive voice – BE RENEWED, *it is evident that this is not something we can do ourselves.* It is a work of the Spirit of God in the Christian. What we ARE capable of doing is *interfering with*

this work of the Spirit. That is why we have these scriptures:

Eph 4:30 And do not **grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

1Th 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit.

We will not go into this “grieving” and “quenching” of the Spirit this morning except to say that when we fail to walk in the Spirit and instead yield to the stains and muck of the old man that remains in our flesh, we are interfering with the Spirit’s renewing work in the spirit of our mind.

We return then to our question – *what is the spirit of the mind?* It is not the Holy Spirit. He needs no renewing. No, the spirit of the mind is like that BIOS in a computer (though I am sure the illustration is imperfect) *which enables the mind to properly process the data coming into it via our senses.* The Lord Jesus may have had this spirit of the mind in His thoughts when He said:

Mat 6:22-23 “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, (23) but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

In this case the “eye” would correspond to the spirit of the mind. Jesus is saying that if our “eye” which lets in light is bad, the person will be full of great darkness. If our BIOS system is corrupted, if it has been taken over by an alien entity (like Satan) then the mind will not and cannot operate properly.

Here is Lloyd-Jones’ definition of the spirit of the mind –

“It is the interior principle that really governs and controls and operates the mind itself. By this I mean that, in addition to our faculties and our powers and our intellectual abilities, there is a sort of spirit of the mind that controls the whole working of the mind....We are obviously dealing

with something very profound here, something to enjoy and revel in. What a wonderful book this Bible is!...The spirit of the mind is that which really governs and controls your mind. Being renewed in the spirit of the mind is essential to Christian progress.” [Darkness and Light, Sermons on Ephesians, Banner of Truth]

At the Fall, Man’s BIOS was Corrupted and Taken Over

Do you begin to understand now with greater clarity *how utterly impossible it is for the sinner to be justified before God? To contribute in even the slightest way to his justification? The very spirit of his mind is corrupt. He is absolutely incapable of seeing or hearing God’s truth and processing that information correctly so that he humbles himself and believes God’s Word.*

The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

But the sinner will not and cannot. He sees the creation around him, he

knows full well (see Romans 1) that God is God and that he owes God thanksgiving and glory. But what does he do with this data? His corrupted spirit of his mind corrupts God's truth and rejects it.

“The Apostle Paul indicates what sin and the fall of man have really done to us. This word ‘re-new’ tells us. What the Christian needs, he says, is to be brought back to where he was with respect to his mind. His mind needs to be renovated, renewed, made new again, as it once was, suggesting at once that it had departed from that, which is, of course, exactly what happened when man fell....When man fell, it was not only that he disobeyed God in one particular respect and thereby became a transgressor. At the same time and as a direct result of his fall he began to feel miserable and unhappy....the spirit of man's mind went wrong. When man listened to the devil, he put himself under the power of the devil, and passed under the dominion of Satan. His mind is under an alien domination.

Our essential trouble is not so much that we do things that are wrong – of course that is bad enough – but the real trouble with us all is that as we are by nature, our whole outlook is wrong. It is the spirit of the mind that is wrong; our fundamental way of thinking and of reasoning has become twisted and perverted.” [ibid]

The Natural Man sees the Wisdom of God as Foolishness

Here then is the horrible result of a corrupted spirit of the mind. The natural man, that is, man in his sin, in his unregenerate state, is totally depraved, totally corrupted in the very deepest depth of his being. When God's truth and wisdom are presented to him, when his mind and faculties receive this divine data, this interior principle which controls how that data is processed, twists God's wisdom into foolishness. This is the root cause of spiritual blindness. And Satan is right in the middle of this corruption. He is an usurper. A trespassing alien residing and controlling. Truth is received by

the senses, but it is morphed into a lie. Instead of glorifying God, the sinner:

Rom 1:22-23 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, (23) and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

And behind this evil exchange is this corrupt, enslaved spirit of the mind.

Rom 1:28-32 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. (29) They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, (30) slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, (31) foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (32) Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do

them but give approval to those who practice them.

Once again, we ask – *do you see clearly then that any attempt at self-reformation, self-repair, is impossible?*

If you are not living a life whose chief object is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, do you see that something is gone terribly, terribly wrong in the deepest recess of your being? You are a slave to the devil, you are hostile to God, and if that inner spirit of you mind is left unchanged, you will end in hell.

What is the remedy? *You must be born again. There must be a divine, powerful “re-boot” or rather “re-formatting” of the spirit of your mind, and nothing nor no one in this world can do it. Only the Holy Spirit, using the Sword of the Spirit can correct your mind:*

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the

division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Listen to Lloyd Jones once more explain the problem:

“Is Paul saying that the natural man is not a Christian because he does not have a brain? He is not. He is saying that his brain is no use to him because the spirit that controls it prevents his grasping the truth. It is the *spirit* of the mind that is wrong, not the mind as an instrument. If we grasp this we shall never be surprised to find that certain great people are not Christians. Some of them are familiar to us through radio and television and others of them are writers. In consequence, some weak Christians tremble in their shoes, and say – ‘Well, after all, may I be wrong? These great men do not believe in Christ and the Gospel.’

But we should not be surprised. They are great men; and we grant that they possess greater brains

than we have, better instruments as such. But it is not the instrument that matters, it is the spirit of the mind that matters.” [Ibid, p 159]

Rom 8:6-8 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. (7) For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. (8) Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

What, then, Does the New Birth do?

Lloyd-Jones points us to George Robinson, who, back in the 1800's, wrote a hymn expressing the great change when we are born again:

Loved with everlasting love,
Led by grace that love to know;
Spirit, breathing from above,
Thou hast taught me it is so.
Oh, this full and perfect peace!
Oh, this transport all divine!
In a love which cannot cease,
I am His, and He is mine.

Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green;
Something lives in every hue
Christless eyes have never seen:
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flow'rs with deeper beauties shine,
Since I know, as now I know,
I am His, and He is mine.

When the spirit of the mind is renewed, put back into the original state in which God created man, back to Eden we might say, the man is enabled to declare:

Psalm 19:1-14 To the choirmaster.
A Psalm of David.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. (2) Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. (3) There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.

(4) Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, (5) which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man,

runs its course with joy. (6) Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

(7) The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; (8) the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; (9) the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.

(10) More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

(11) Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

(12) Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. (13) Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion

over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression. (14) Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Can you in sincerity of heart and mind pray that prayer? Is the Lord and His Word more precious to you than “much fine gold?” Does your life and do your priorities demonstrate it? Is His Word sweet to you? Is it wisdom like this:

Psalm 8:1-9 To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. (2) Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. (3) When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, (4) what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? (5) Yet you have made him a little lower than the

heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. (6) You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, (7) all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, (8) the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. (9) O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Apart from being made a new creation, without this making new the spirit of your mind, you may be a church member, you may claim to be a Christian, you may have been baptized, you may have learned to talk “God-talk,” (which even a parrot can learn to do),

...but you will still only be a temporary believer, an almost Christian, a gospel hypocrite, on Broadway traveling to hell.

May none of us depart this life in such a condition.

...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.