

The mind of Christ. Revd. Mike Loader Assistant Priest.

Have you ever read a verse in scripture and thought, ‘just what could that mean? And how is it possible to apply that to my life?’

Well, if you have, here is another one, what do you make of Philippians 2 verse 5? ...

What can it possibly mean to ‘Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus’? It would seem to be an impossible situation to realise in this fallen world, but what did Paul think? In 1 Corinthians 2 verse 16 Paul says very clearly, ‘But we have the mind of Christ’. So Paul seemed to think that it was possible, what do you think?

So let us explore how we may go about establishing the ‘mind of Christ’ in us as believers.

Perhaps a pointer is given to us by Paul in Colossians, read chapter 3 verses 1-4. In verse 2 Paul tells us most emphatically what as Christians we are to do, it is to do what? It is to ‘Set our minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth’. To put it another way, Pete Rowan said “Look up not down!” I do not believe that means we are to be, ‘so heavenly minded that we are of no earthly use’, to coin an old phrase. But it does mean we are to engage in a process Paul describes in Romans 12 verses 1-2. During our Christian life, and as part of our pilgrimage towards heaven, we are to take care to what? ‘We are not to be conformed to this world but we are to be transformed by the renewal of our minds’. A real change should, and must, take over our minds if we believers are to become true disciples.

So how can that ‘renewal of our minds’ take place? What would be your idea?

That renewal takes place through the working of God’s Holy Spirit in us, and especially as we read, study and ‘inwardly digest’ the scriptures. You can see now why I believe it is so important for each one of us to become part of some bible study course, and why we in the Benefice offer the opportunity to join a home group.

So are we allowing that transformation to take place in the way we practice our faith in our daily lives?

St Peter describes this practice in a lovely way, read 1 Peter 1 and verses 13-16. What does Peter here tell us to do? In verse 13 Peter tells us that we should, ‘Therefore gird up your minds’. The way we can develop as disciples is to take a proactive part in the transformation of our minds that God wishes to accomplish in us, and that means we have to ‘gird up our minds’ through discipline. Not too popular a path for some of us to follow.

But was this transformation something new to the New Testament and only to be expected of us who follow the Lord Jesus today? Let us take a look at what advice King David gave to his son Solomon who was to build the Temple in Jerusalem. In 1 Chronicles 22 verse 19 David says, ‘Now set your mind and heart to seek the Lord your God’. The question for us to ask of ourselves is, ‘do we set our hearts and minds to seek God who is our Lord and King’? To put it another way, are we seeking to do God’s will and follow His purposes?

But even before David's time God had given clear advice to Moses how the people were expected to live out their lives, and I would suggest much of it is true for us also. In Deuteronomy 4 verses 9-10, we read, "Only take heed, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart (mind) all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children".

Some translations say 'heart' and others-NRSV-say mind. It is in the mind, which we figuratively often refer to as the 'heart', where our emotions, intellect and wills actually reside. So what is God saying here to Moses? That we should not let slip from our minds the things of God, and further more that we should teach them to our children. Perhaps one of the contributors to the ills of our time is that we, and our schools, no longer teach the things of God, His laws-commandments, and His statutes, but it is those that provide the way for humankind to live and prosper as God intended.

Supremely, of course, we see the ways of God displayed in the life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus, who delighted to do God's will, and that was the 'mind of Christ', and as a result, it was in Jesus in whom God was 'well pleased'.

Let us also strive to do the same, and thereby bring delight to our one true and living God.

Blessings to you all, and have a very happy Easter. Revd. Mike

Based on a St Eustachius group zoom bible study of 16th February 2021.