

VAIN THOUGHTS

Jer. 4:14

Sermon by Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION

1. Jeremiah tells the people of God to "*wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved*".
2. He asked the question: "*How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?*"
3. As long as their thinking was wrong they would be wrong -- to be saved they had to change their thinking.
 - (1) Their vain thoughts were defiling.
 - (2) "Vain" here means "wicked" or "immoral" thoughts.
4. God has always laid great stress upon right thinking because man is defiled from the heart.
 - (1) Mark 7: 20 - 23
5. The "*issues of life*" come out of the HEART -- Prov. 4:23--"*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life*"
6. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he -- Prov. 23: 7 -- "*for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he*".
 - (1) Every thought SEED that is allowed to take ROOT in the heart produces its own sooner or later.
 - (2) It will bear its fruit when it has OPPORTUNITY and right CIRCUMSTANCE.
 - (3) Good thoughts bear good fruit and bad thoughts bad fruits -- Matt. 12:35
 - (4) Circumstances will reveal what a man has been thinking about.
7. A man's mind may be likened to a garden.
 - (1) Good seed and cultivation will produce good fruit.
 - (2) If not cultivated it will "run wild" and useless "weed seed" will take it and produce after their kind.
8. Paul tells the Christian he must think right -- Phil. 4:8
9. Let us notice some VAIN THOUGHTS.

I. PROUD AND HIGH-MINDED THOUGHTS

1. Causes a man to think more highly of himself than he ought to think -- Rom. 12:3; Gal. 6:3
2. This kind of man will stir up strife -- Prov. 28:25
3. He shows his pride by the way he looks and carries himself -- Prov. 6:17; Psa. 101:5
4. The Pharisee -- Luke 18: 9 - 14

II. WORLDLY THOUGHTS

1. Anxiety concerning earthly goods.
 - (1) Taking thought or being filled with anxiety about what we are going to eat, drink or put on -- Matt. 6:25
2. Some only contemplate the material goods of this life.
 - (1) The rich farmer of Luke 12: 16 - 21
 - (2) The rich young ruler -- Matt. 19: 16 - 22
3. The Christian is to have his thoughts on THINGS ABOVE -- Col. 3:1; Matt. 6: 19 - 21

III. ENVIOUS THOUGHTS

1. Many look with pain and dislike on the good of others.

2. They ENVY their:
 - (1) Prosperity
 - (2) Good name
 - (3) Influence
 - (4) Reputation
 - (5) Good works
3. Envy is a work of the flesh -- Gal. 5:21

IV. THOUGHTS OF SPECULATIVE WICKEDNESS

1. When impure and sensual thoughts of LUST are conceived in the heart, it is sin -- Matt. 5:28; James 1: 15
2. These thoughts will bring forth the overt act of sin when the proper circumstances happen.
3. "*Filthy dreamers*" -- Jude 8

V. VAIN THOUGHTS CANNOT BE KEPT SECRET FROM MEN

1. Men imagine that thoughts can be kept secret, but they cannot.
2. Because thought rapidly crystallizes into ACTION -- Mark 7: 20 - 23; Matt. 12:34 - 35; James 1: 13 - 15
 - (1) Think on drunkenness and opportunity will reveal the thought in the overt act.
 - (2) Think on adultery or fornication and opportunity will reveal the thought in the overt act.
 - (3) Think on fear, doubt, and indecision and these thoughts will crystallize into weakness, unmanliness and failure.
 - (4) Think on hateful thoughts and you will be hateful.
 - (5) Selfish thoughts of all kinds crystallize into habits of self-seeking.
 - (6) Good and beautiful thoughts of all kinds crystallize into habits of kindness -- I Cor. 13:5
 - (7) Pure thoughts will produce self-control -- Phil. 4: 8

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