

MESSAGE CONTENT:

Series: **Conquering Toxicity**

Title: **Eliminating Toxic Positions**

Text: **Deut. 30:19; 2 Cor. 10:5; Phil. 4:8**

ROH 11/01/2020

Last week we spoke on releasing toxic pasts

Today we will look at eliminating toxic positions

Next week we will look at removing toxic practices

And finally we will be speaking on dislodging toxic people

Introduction

How was everyone's Reformation Day?

On Oct. 31st, 1517 a German Monk named Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of The Castle Church in Wittenburg. A basic summary of the theses:

- SCRIPTURE ALONE
- CHRIST ALONE
- GRACE ALONE
- FAITH ALONE
- GLORY OF GOD ALONE

One major theme that was pronounced was the biblical truth that **"THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."**

- This life we live in Christ is a life live by Faith in Christ.
- Not works, not deeds, not the church, not religion but FAITH
- The struggle we have in this life is an absence of faith
 - We do not have faith that God is bigger than our problems
 - Not bigger than our financial needs
 - Not bigger than our health problems
 - Not bigger than our marriage problems

"God is not big enough."

This has become the thrust of our thinking and our positions on all matters.

Our positions are the framework of our lives – they are the house that is built upon the foundation of our thoughts.

- We look at situations and we make choices as to what our position is on that topic.
- Each choice creates the process by which we make decisions and how our lives are lived out in society, in our homes and jobs....yet even more so in the inner workings of our self.
- Who we are!

In America today there are clear distinctions on thoughts and positions in the political arena and it is causing division.

The shift in recent days has been from the former:

- We can think differently and still function and live together in some fashion of peace.
- The thinking today is that if you have any other position than the one I have – you are the problem and your thoughts are toxic to my very existence.

“I Choose Kindness”

- The horrible things written in light of this sign have revealed the toxic thinking that even such a phrase is slammed as uncaring.
- Seen as a dismissal of struggles some are going through

So many people's problems are rooted in their way of thinking, which can actually produce a lot of the problems they experience.

How does this happen?

Well, a negative mind produces negative words and, consequently, a negative life.

Our words, spoken or unspoken, can actually become traps that cause us to continue our cycle of negative thoughts and actions.

People's thoughts drive the way they think of themselves and how they think of others as well.

It is our thoughts that determine who we are!

We make assessments of who we are and who others are all the time by their thoughts

Today as we think about breaking through the negatives and toxic positions of our life built upon the thoughts we hold I am asking us to:

1. Make an assessment of ourselves
2. Be in agreement with God on His Thoughts
3. Take Action against those thoughts
4. And choose an alternative to those thoughts

AN ASSESSMENT OF YOURSELF

Proverbs 23:7 KJV -- ”7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: “

English Standard – “as he calculates in his soul, so is he.”

Good news - What he thinks is what he really is.

As you think – you will behave.

- It is your philosophy.
- If you calculate your soul - you will find yourself.
- This is true for those who are in Christ, and those who have other faiths, and those who hold to no faiths.

What you think is who you are.

- Do a personal assessment.
 - What is the status of your thinking?
 - How toxic is your thinking?
 - How toxic are your thoughts and positions about yourself
 - How toxic are your thoughts about others?

Joyce Meyers calls it “stinkin thinkin.”

The car that cut you off:

- I used to honk very loud
- I used to say a few words that the person would never hear...but I heard. I felt justified to call the person a few choice words
- I worked through this – Now I shake my head. Choose to smile. Now I say, “It’s a race and he’s winning”

- That seems pretty tame now in these days where toxic thinking and words are all around us.

Does negativity fill your mind?

- Negativity about yourself, about others, about life in general?
- Does criticism fill your mind
- Do internal thinking and external words of negativity and accusations come from you?
- Are you looking for evil where evil does not exist?

God says that what you are thinking is what you are!

- We have to change the way we think.

Not only do we have to take an assessment of our thinking

We need to choose to be in agreement with God

AN AGREEMENT WITH GOD

Deut. 30:15-19

¹⁵ See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. ¹⁶ For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, ¹⁸ I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

- Verses 11-14 state that God is giving a command that is not difficult to understand.
 - It is not hidden in heaven but it is made clear to you. It is close at hand and on your lips.
 - Life is a blessing that comes with obedience
 - Death comes with cursing when you are drawn away toward other gods
 - The heavens are witness against you
 - What will you choose?
- This is a message to God's people. Not to the nations

- That same message comes to God's people, HIS Church. Not to the Nations and not to the Nation
- This message for the Church
- If you are not in Christ.... I trust you gain something from the message on arranging your thoughts for yourself and those around you.
- Yet God calls HIS people to make the Choice!
- Tim Keller speaks of four major themes in Scripture that are called upon God's people in relation to others
- First we must acknowledge that all these are grounded in Loving God and loving people
 - We love God by being obedient
 - We love God by loving others
 - Both truths are necessary
- Those four categories are:
 - Care for the orphan, widow and underprivileged in Society
 - Care for the refugees and the strangers in your land
 - Care for the Sanctity of all life
 - Care concerning morality and immorality in your midst
- Take note that Christians are divided in the two parties over these four matters and the priority they place on these measures.
 - Even the White Evangelical and Black Protestants, who all love God and are faithful to him divide over these four themes
 - All care for all four, but prioritize these in different ways
 - Neither party addresses all four evenly and with the same energy.
 - You may be making choices based on immigration and care for those who are in poverty. You may be more of a globalist because you see a responsibility as the richest nation in the world should play a part in bringing people around the world out of poverty. – you do not see it as a movement toward a one world government but one of Christian responsibility to care for the poor.
 - You may be making choices based upon the sanctity of the unborn and concerns that this secular world is promoting and legalizing morality that is not rooted in God's Word.
 - We should not condemn one another for how we see these choices.
 - We can disagree on the priorities.
 - Just know that your Party is not Christian
 - This nation is not Israel and it is not Christian.
 - But [this nation] is you are you are to abide by all of these themes.

- The orphan, the widow, the prisoner, the refugee, the stranger, the unborn and the morality that is rooted in Scripture.

Not only do we have to take an assessment of our thinking and choose to be in agreement with God

We must take action against the toxic thoughts that come to mind

AN ACTION YOU MUST DO

2 Cor. 10:5 – “⁵**We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**”

- There is a willing intentional action you, and you alone, must do
- Demolish the argument
- Demolish the pretensions
- “Demolish” means:
 - **Casting down imaginations.**
 - In the Greek word rendered “imagination,” we have the noun derived from the verb rendered “think,” or reckon
 - It would be better, perhaps, to carry on the continuity by rendering it **thoughts, or even reckonings.**
 - Cast down the thought
 - Cast down the reckoning
 - **Pulling them down**
 - and every exalted thing (rampart, castle, tower,)
 - it is a stronghold and tower
 - It must come down
 - This is not a call to pull down the thoughts and reckonings of others but to do so to **YOUR thoughts!**
 - Demolish is not passive
 - You cannot wish them away

- You must actively, even verbally stand against those thoughts.
- Throwing them from your person.

Snake or spider

- If a snake was thrown onto you
- Or a spider jumped on you
 - What would your response be?
- How do I cast it down?
 - Take hold of God's Truth
 - You must verbalize God's promises and His teaching
- Capture the thought – do not avoid or succumb to it
- Make it obedient – Shake it into obedience
 - Shake it!
 - You will not take hold of my thoughts!
 - My god is stronger than you
 - He has called me His child
 - He has adopted me
 - He has forgiven me
 - He has made Me his own

Not only do we have to take an assessment of our thinking, choose to be in agreement with God and take action against the toxic thoughts that come to mind

We must choose an alternative to those toxic thoughts!

AN ALTERNATIVE TO YOUR THOUGHTS

Phil. 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.

What Paul is NOT teaching: the “power of positive thinking.”

- The positive thinking heresy has further spread through the so-called “Positive Confession” heresy, also called the “Health and Wealth” or “Name it and Claim it” teaching, that whatever you confess positively by faith, God must do it. This heresy attributes power to faith itself, and says that even if you are sick, you must not give a negative confession by admitting it, but must claim your healing by affirming, “I am well!”
- The idea of “positive thinking” has crept into the American church, that it is wrong ever to be negative or critical. This has resulted in the loss of discernment.

What Paul IS teaching: the Christian’s thought life should be focused on the great truths of scripture.

- Nothing in the universe will tolerate a vacuum..... something holds that space in your mind
- You must actively replace those toxic thoughts with better thoughts
- No one can do this for you.
- You hold the key! Use the following acrostic (T-H-O-U-G-H-T)
- **THINK ABOUT THINGS THAT ARE:**

T – TRUE (True)

- John 3:33 attests, “God is true” (see also, John 8:26; Rom. 3:4).
- As Paul writes to Titus, who was in Crete (the Cretans were notorious liars), “God ... cannot lie,” and He made known His truth by “His word” (Titus 1:1-3).
- Jesus also claimed for Himself that He is true (John 7:18; also 5:31-32).
- Opposed to God and Christ, Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44).

H – HONORABLE (Noble)

- The word means “that which inspires reverence or awe; dignified, worthy of respect.”
- All Christians should “lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Tim. 2:2).

O -- ON POINT - (Right)

- On point deals with alignment. Are we aligned to god and in right relationship.
- That relationship is founded in the righteousness that has been given to us because of His righteousness.

- John writes, “Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil” (1 John 3:7-8).
- To think on what is right means to think on the holy nature of God, especially as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, and to model our behavior after Him.

U – UNSULLIED (Pure)

- The word refers to ceremonial purity, but also to the moral purity that is pictured by the ceremonial. It especially means keeping our bodies undefiled by abstaining from sexual sins
- In Ephesians 5:3-5 Paul warns, “But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

G –GOOD (Lovely)

- This word occurs only here in the New Testament.
- It means what is pleasing, agreeable, and attractive, Lovely.

H – HIGHLY REGARDED (admirable)

- Good repute
- This comes from a compound word meaning to speak well of something.
- Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, love believes the best about another person, it refuses to believe an evil report about a brother or sister until there is certain evidence to establish it.

T – TREMENDOUS (excellent/ praiseworthy)

- The word “excellence” (NASB, NIV) means moral virtue.
- Although it is common in Greek literature, this is the only time Paul uses the word.
- Peter uses it as a quality of God and thus as the first quality that we are to add to our faith (2 Pet. 1:3, 5).
- Praiseworthy in God and praiseworthy in people

THOUGHT -- True, honorable, on point, unsullied, good, highly regarded, and tremendous

IN SUMMARY:

Assess yourself - The way you think is the way you are

Agree with God - Choose life and not death

Actively throw down the strongholds of lies against you

Alter your thoughts by filling the vacuum with the beauty of God.

God's part:

“³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” 2 Peter 1:3-4 (ESV)

Your part:

“⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:5-8 (ESV)

Let's Pray