

## LENT 2017 – Day 8 – 13<sup>th</sup> March

We are into the second week of lent and now our bodies are getting used to the change of the patterns in the mornings.

**Yesterday we had the servers meeting and Bro. Colin from India spoke at the meeting. He reminded us of something that is really valuable.**

**He spoke about the need to have something called a transformed mind.**

As I was listening to him and praying last night, I was thinking how important it is to remind ourselves of a transformed mind. The scripture speaks to us about a transformed mind as well.

**If you look at our lives,**

- many of us live worried lives,
- some of us are living depressed lives,
- some of us are living suspicious lives. We are suspicious of everyone and everything.

If you talk to people who are going through those things - **for them it is absolute reality**. That's why a person becomes depressed. You don't see any other way except the way that your disturbed mind is seeing things. Sometimes people become suicidal. This happens because they feel there is no other solution.

**Last Friday in Nittambuwa I met a man who told me this horrifying story of his son.** He had returned from abroad and he was angry with his girlfriend. The day before he went, he had Skyped the girlfriend, put himself on the image and then he hung himself while the girlfriend watched and he died. Why did he do that? That person was convinced that that was the only solution to his problem.

**We all have problems in our minds because our minds are connected to our unconscious, sub-conscience, ego. We are all convinced the way we are thinking is the absolute perfect reality.** That's why we get caught up. So, some people are constantly having problems with other people, but if you ask them if they have a problem, they say, "Of course not." But according to them everyone else has a problem other than them. They are unconscious of it.

**The answer for all of us is a renewed mind.** I am a diabetic for many years and I understand what's taking place inside. Yesterday I didn't eat anything in the evening and towards around 9pm, I was feeling all kinds of disturbed thinking just dropping in. I know now that it was taking place because my blood sugar levels were going down. But if I considered that a reality, I would think that life is really hopeless and it's pointless living. These are only disturbances and thank God I know that it's not a reality - *because of a journey with God*. But for many, when changes take place, emotional situations become tight - quietly, your reality is the disturbances in your life. Most of us live that way. So it's important to have a renewed mind. A lot of people think we must have a positive mind - of course you can have a positive mind and end up depressed. After going on and on and on you can fall apart. It has nothing to

do with a positive mind. It is a renewed mind and that is a mind that thinks and feels according to the revelations of God. You have to learn that method and grow into that.

**Just because you have an experience of the Holy Spirit you don't have a renewed mind.** *That's why one person has a wonderful experience of worship today and tomorrow they have a terrible experience of depression.* They don't have a renewed mind. I was listening to Colin yesterday and thinking about just how true this reality is. **We don't realize that the renewed mind is renewed according to God's word on a long term basis.** So if you don't read the scripture and pray with the scripture and keep on changing your thinking patterns with the revelations of scripture - over time, we go back to our old thinking.

So at a place I met this young lady who was very enthusiastic and even made an appointment and came to see me. She was on fire for God and told me, "I really, really want to serve Him - I don't even want a job." I thought what a touch of God is upon her life. The last time I went to that place where she was serving this lady wasn't there. I asked the person in charge what happened to her and he said, "She has run off from the group." Later I met her and I asked her what happened. She said, "Something is wrong inside of me. I'm in love with the Lord and I want to serve Him. But suddenly something happens inside of me, there is a shift and I want to run off."

**We believe in what is happening inside us.** *That is the reality for all of us;* while actually these are only shifting sands of thought.

In actual fact – a renewed mind is that we no longer believe what is happening inside us but we are learning to transform our thinking according to the word of God.

**That's why you need to pray daily.** If you don't pray daily, you are susceptible to attack. That's why you need to read the scriptures. You can read philosophers and various other things but when you come to the renewed mind - your mind is not renewed by the latest thinking of someone, but by the proven word of God.

One of the things a lot of us do which we need to be careful about is, when asked if we prayed we say yes. But how we pray is we put the headphones on and listen to worship. That is only an emotional high - your mind is not being renewed. You get hit by one shot and down you go because you don't have depth. That's the problem of saying prayers. You can keep saying all your prayers, but it's not going inside - instead it's going out. The moment you're hit, then down you go because your mind is not renewed. I think we are really challenged to do that.

**Today's first reading is on how to handle your problems with a renewed mind.** Daniel is teaching us how to deal with your failures and the crisis that suddenly comes into your life. I see an amazing consistency in the scriptures on how to handle a crisis:

*Daniel 9:4*

*I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed: "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with all who love Him and obey His commands..."*

**Does this sound familiar? The first step of the Nehemiah prayer says: Remember who God is.**

**Who is God? The great and awesome One.** In other words he is saying to remember that He is above the situation. The moment you think the situation is above God, then you're gone. Nehemiah discovered the same thing. He remembered who God is. You must tell yourself who God is in a crisis; not tell God how disturbed you are. He is the great and awesome God and He has an answer for your issue. Immediately you see everything in a different perspective. That's why, if you look at Jesus when they asked him to teach them how to pray, he said, "Our Father in heaven." Remember who God is. If you remember your crisis you're going to get bogged down every time.

**This is the first principle of a renewed mind and in handling a crisis:** Don't try to deal with your crisis first. Remember who God is. If the crisis is coming at you - refuse to deal with it first, but go to the feet of the Lord and struggle with your nature until you hold on to the promise of who God is. He is above this, He is greater than it.

Over time you learn to be comfortable with that. Over the years, as you see the manifestations of what God can do, you begin to realize that just because you don't have a solution it means nothing because He has one. You have tasted and seen that. Therefore you don't get disturbed by the events that happen around you. Those days you would get lost in it and feel like you can't anymore.

**Colin said something beautiful yesterday - that leaders have this temptation to teach people how to live; but we don't know how to live ourselves.** We tell other people to be like God but we never realize that we are called to do the same thing.

So today, Daniel is teaching us how to handle any crisis in any time. How do you handle it? Remember who God is. It's very hard to hold on to this unless on a daily basis you remember who God is. That's why you must read the scripture and pray when you're relaxed. Then it goes in and moves in your heart. When you read the scripture when you're tensed, it bounces off your system. That's when you remember who God is. You tell yourself, "He is bigger than my problem and He has a creative answer." It's amazing - He has answers you and I can't even imagine.

**Look at what else Daniel has learnt:**

*Daniel 9:5*

*...we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws.*

**Does this sound familiar? The parallel is the second step of Nehemiah: Remember to repent.** Don't waste your time repenting about other people. Husbands repent about wives and wives repent about husbands.

**The second reality of how to handle a crisis is:** Don't offer excuses and say, "I want to kill myself because of my husband." Instead say, "Lord, I repent of this feeling of suicide I'm

having." It makes a big difference. Otherwise what happens is, I'm telling God why I'm going through this - because of that rotter! I don't take responsibility for this, I shouldn't have been disturbed, they should have known how to behave better. Immediately you are lost.

**Remember to repent.** If you've lost God, if you're getting desperate, angry, reactive, if you've lost your freedom - it's your fault; it's my fault - not somebody else's. Remember to repent before God. Give it to Him and say, "Lord, I give you the truth of my heart and I repent." That's the time He can act in your life. It's like medicine.

God has given us a renewed mind and a way to deal with crisis. Here we are dealing with it in so many other ways. We go and learn a modern psychological method - there is nothing wrong with psychology - but a renewed mind has a shortcut because it is God's answer to your problem. Immediately it works out.

**If I'm upset, the Lord showed me**, "You're saying you can't work because of the obstacles you have. But the problem is yours. When you get obstacles you become discouraged. You have to fix that because that is your problem. Once you have worked it out inside you, I'll show you a way through it." This is a renewed mind.

**The repentance goes on right through several verses:**

*Daniel 9:9*

*The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against Him...*

**Does that sound familiar? That is the third step of Nehemiah: Remember what God has promised.** The promise is: Even though we have made a big mess of it, He is merciful and forgiving and you can approach Him. If you renew your mind with the revelation of scripture you won't hide from God, you won't waste days and months running through your own thinking patterns. You allow the scripture to form how you handle events. You need to keep doing this.

I find myself renewing my mind during prayer time and 4-5 hours into the day, I'm back to normal. So I have to rebuild the whole thing in the night. I have accepted that that is my nature and that I'm human. The day we become living saints we will be fine; but until then we have to go through that process.

When you get up in the morning you don't have a renewed mind - your dreams have affected you. Again you get into the renewed mind. You don't live within your thinking patterns. Quietly you come out of yourself and you're rising above your nature. Otherwise we would have been prisoners of our own nature and we would have lived and died that way. Here we are rising to the mind of Christ and the heart of Jesus.

As you go along - what kind of a revelation He must be having for us! We are unable to get there because we are nailed here to this stupid way of thinking which we think is absolutely true. That is our crucifixion. We are crucified to the cross of our own mind. We need to rise above it.

**The gospel offers us the transformed mind of Christ:**

*Luke 6:36*

*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

**The standard is set: Don't lower your standards to fit other people.** If they are misbehaving, I'll teach them a damn good lesson. Then we are being controlled and manipulated by other people's behaviour. If we are constantly being renewed in our mind by the Lord, the Lord says, "Let my standards rule in your mind." Your standard is: Be merciful as your Father is merciful. Don't lower it for anybody.

How easily we lower the standards. Reactive people can actually get you to do that, they force you into their frame. Before long, we are down. When two reactive people get married, they have a grand time. Each one brings out the worst in the other and you really come down into it.

I know of a couple in our community - before they were married, one of them had a lot of internal issues. In fact that person said, "I don't want to get married because I'll ruin my partner's life." That person understood that. But the partner said, "That's my problem. I'll accept this person with the limitations and I'll make a commitment to love." Today, several years into their marriage, they have really developed into beautiful people. A lot of people don't see that kind of marriage - we only see the problems. This person was able to enable this broken, wounded, damaged person into a great, flowering personality - all because this person didn't get into that person's reactions, but made it a mission to transform and build. **You need a lot of internal stability and maturity to do that, and many of us don't have that.**

But if you have a transformed mind from the Lord, constantly being changed by the revelations of God, it is possible. That's when a marriage or a relationship becomes beautiful. It grows and flowers. It's available for all of us.

**Yesterday, those of you who were there saw the intensity of our servers. That is the result of a transformed mind.** The energy and the intensity of so many hundreds of people is coming because one or two decided to have a transformed mind. You walk with the Lord internally and you offer it to other people. Soon you will see that hundreds are moving in that same experience.

There is a positive transformation that can take place. The standard is to be merciful just as your Father is merciful.

*Luke 6:37*

*Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.*

**So, If you spew out reactions that's what you will have in your own heart.** If you're unforgiving, you'll suffer it. If you're reactive, you'll suffer it. Internally, you'll go through hell. A lot of people don't have to go to hell because they're actually living in hell and they're carrying this hell wherever they go.

So we have developed social skills. At the superficial level we can get along with people and say, "How are you? How do you do?" But the hell has not been resolved. That's why deeper relationships become difficult. We are always searching for a new one.

Today, that's what has happened in casual relationships. People are never going to mature or grow or have a fullness of life. The moment the hell is exposed, you withdraw and get into

another relationship. We have to trust God with a renewed mind. Then God gives the beautiful answer He has:

**Luke 6:38**

*Give, and it will be given to you...*

If you give love it will be given to you, if you give generosity it will be given to you, if you give care it will be given to you. In the same way, if you give hate it will be given to you, if you give reactions it will be given to you. Give, and it will be given to you. How much?

**Luke 6:38 continued**

*...a good measure, pressed down, shaken together...*

My grandmother had a box to store rice and she had paddy fields and she used to give all her family paddy. So there was something called a bushel. You pour the paddy into the bushel and it comes up. Then you shake it and it goes down. Then you press it and it goes right in. That's what is being said here in the gospel.

**Luke 6:38 continued**

*...and running over, will be poured into your lap.*

Imagine what God is waiting to give you - if only you stop carrying the standards of the world and enter the renewed mind.

**Luke 6:38 continued**

*...For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

Who will do it? Not other people - God will do it. Your generosity, your serving, your loving is coming from a divine connection. Give the people an inner response because of the beauty of this journey.

**I found a beautiful example of the renewed mind in a reflection I was reading. We can see the difference of a renewed and unrenewed mind.**

**The theme is:** *The delusive quality of human glory. Satan once tried to bring about the downfall of Christ by offering Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory in them.*

That is the third temptation, and many of us don't dwell too much on the third temptation because it's not a temptation for us - we are already inside it. Satan offered Jesus a massive deal and said, "You came to take the world - I'll give it to you. You don't have to be crucified, rejected, attacked or run around. Don't waste your time. I'll give it to you if only you worship me."

*In presenting to the man Jesus the glory of the world, he was shrewdly taking advantage of a known weakness in the human race. The trick should have worked, and it would have worked - but for one thing. There was no fallen man. This was no fallen man Satan was attempting to seduce.*

**Jesus actually had the renewed mind and he was not fallen.** Otherwise, give us a hat, give us a nice colour, give us a chair, give us a big place and down you go. How much we have

compromised even in religion over history, because of a hat or a position. It is so easy to get it done because we don't have a renewed mind.

*It was a sinless man full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom whose penetrating glance pierced the world's attractive exterior.*

He was able to see that becoming rich was not the solution, becoming glorious and a king was not the answer. He was able to see it - but we can't. After some time, we get into the armchair syndrome. We relax in the recognition of people, relax in the comforts, relax in the love, relax in the power that you can use to get what you want. If you do that, Satan catches you.

*Beneath its gaudy allurements* - there are some things that cling to you and it seems to attract things deep inside you and you're allured by it -

*He saw the corruption and the decay. He knew its glory was but bait to catch foolish victims. He knew its bright promises were all lies. Our Lord saw what other men could not see - this is the renewed mind. He saw not beauty, but death - a garish death. Death that must be purchased at the price of the soul.*

That means you have to sell yourself to get that. *What He saw revolted Him - He would have no part of it. All this Jesus knew, and Satan for all his wisdom did not know that He knew it.*

Satan didn't know because Satan thought that any human being is easy to catch. If you can't catch them with hardships, sacrifice and attack - catch them with a little self glory and position - and down they will go. He thought he would get Jesus as well, because he had so far dealt with people whose minds were not renewed. Even us, if our minds are not renewed, we become victims.

*The devil is familiar with the Bible* - in the second temptation he quotes psalm 91 - *but still he did not know, or would not have attempted the impossible and that to his own confusion and permanent loss of face. Here is sufficient proof that the devil is wise, but not wise enough.*

**So, any challenge we face, we face with a renewed mind. What is the heart of God concerning that situation?**

- Don't believe yourself,
- don't give in to your internal drives.
- Convert to the word of God.

**When you come for spiritual direction and guidance - ask for the mind of Christ and not for the opinion of the person you are asking guidance from.** In the end, we become two friends helping each other and it doesn't work that way. Help in the sense of helping the person to find the mind of Christ and on a daily basis, seeking His heart.