

MADRID CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 2017

2017 ANNUAL THEME:

PUTTING ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD



EPHESIANS 6:10-20

"PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL" (EPHESIANS 6:11).

LESSONS TODAY:

9AM

11AM



"AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL" (MATTHEW 6:13).

SAYING "I THINK" (OR SOMETHING LIKE IT) ABOUT THE BIBLE

Occasionally I will hear people criticize others in a Bible study for saying things like, "I think this passage means..." I've even been criticized for saying, "I think..." in sermons. The critics say, "It doesn't matter what you think, it only matters what the passage says." But the words, "I think..." actually play a very important role in discussions about the Bible. So here are some reasons to keep saying, "I think..." when studying the Bible.

When you say, "I think..." hopefully you are saying, "I've thought about the meaning of this passage." Hopefully you are saying you've considered things like:

- how the original audience would've understood this passage
- the immediate context
- the broader context
- the meaning of words in their original languages

Why would it be wrong to say, "I've thought deeply about this passage and here is the result of my thought process"? Do we really want to discourage thinking? **Doesn't biblical interpretation require thinking and logic?**

A person's thinking might be wrong. They might have reasoned incorrectly and come to the wrong conclusion. But please don't criticize them for thinking. Because, on the other hand, their thinking might be right. When someone says, "I think this passage means..." they might have the correct interpretation; and they came to that conclusion by thinking.

It is usually the case that when a person expresses what they *think* a passage means, they are being humble. They are saying, "I don't have the final word on this passage and I don't know everything, but here are my thoughts." They are leaving the door open to the possibility that they could be wrong. The day before Paul came to town, if you had asked the Jews in the ancient city of Berea to tell you about what the Messiah would be like, they would likely have pulled out some scrolls and said something like, "Well, I think this passage in Isaiah means the Messiah will..." Their

humility was the reason why – when Paul showed up and preached something different – those Jews were willing to *rethink* their position in light of Scripture (Acts 17:11). The Jews in the city of Thessalonica, however, would have been the kind of people who said, “Don’t say, ‘*I think*’ about this passage. It doesn’t matter what you think. It just matters what it says.” Their minds were made up and were immovable. So when Paul came preaching the Good News, they ran him out of town.

Let’s not discourage humble dialogue about Scripture. There is a time for being confident and there is even a time to be dogmatic, but there is also a time to say, “I’m not sure, but I think…” or even, “this is my opinion or belief about a passage.”

The Greek word for this kind of thinking and reasoning is, “dialogismos.” Paul used this word in Romans 14 and it is usually translated “opinions.” Paul knew that God’s people have always had – and will always have – opinions about the things we should and shouldn’t do. In Rome, there were Christians who said, “I don’t think we should eat that.” And other Christians said, “I think we should continue to celebrate this feast day to the Lord.” Paul didn’t tell the Romans to, “Stop thinking.” He didn’t tell them to stop having opinions. He just told them not to quarrel and divide over their thinking. He told them not to judge each other according to their own thinking.

When someone says, “I think…” we ought not to tell them it doesn’t matter what they think. It does matter what they think. It matters very much. But just because they think something, doesn’t necessarily mean everyone else has to follow their thinking or be bound by that one person’s thinking (see Romans 14).

Conclusion

Of course not every matter is a matter of opinion and some things are simply not open for debate. There are some things Scripture expressly says and when someone states, “I think differently,” they are wrong. Unfortunately, I’ve studied with people who will read a passage and then say, “Well, I think…” and proceed to express an opinion that is the exact *opposite* of what the passage says. This kind of thinking is not humble, faithful, or receptive to truth. This kind of person believes their personal opinion or their life experiences trump Scripture.

But even in those cases, I don't want to stop them from thinking or even expressing their thoughts. I want their thinking to be transformed by Scripture. I want them to eventually say, "I *think* I've changed my mind. I *think* I was wrong before. I *think* I need to do what Scripture says."

No, it's not wrong to say, "I think" when studying the Bible. In fact, if you're not frequently saying, "I think" (or something like it), there might be something wrong with the way you're studying the Bible.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 09/03 – Song/Prayer Service
- 09/02-09/04 – Labor Day Weekend Outreach
- 09/10-09/13 – Gospel Meeting w/ Matthew Allen
- 09/10 – Shed Potluck After Services
- 10/29 - Next Invite Sunday – *The Best Possible News: Jesus Will Return*

Brethren, please be prayerful about our upcoming opportunities to serve and reach out to the lost in our community, and be thinking about what you can do during this weekend to help.

If there is an event you are planning that you want put in the bulletin, let Jason know!

DAILY READING:

- 08/14 – 2 Chron 5-8; Psalm 72
- 08/15 – 2 Chron 9-12; Psalm 73
- 08/16 – 2 Chron 13-17; Psalm 74
- 08/17 – 2 Chron 18-20; Psalm 75
- 08/18 – 2 Chron 21-24; Psalm 76
- 08/19 – 2 Chron 25-27; Psalm 77
- 08/20 – 2 Chron 28-31; Psalm 78



"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

-Psalm 119:105