

## The Passive Mind

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

What I'm trying to talk about these evenings is the mind. And last Sunday we talked about how Satan always has to satisfy our minds before he can get us to deviate from our trust in God. And so even the most physical of sins always requires Satan to justify it to our minds in some way. And maybe you'd look at the verses we were studying and then we could begin there together and go on a little deeper tonight into the whole problem of the passive mind.

And I think I can show you plainly how we get into that deception, loved ones. Genesis 3 outlines the original approach of Satan to us human beings. And it's interesting to see that it was to our minds. In the form of the serpent you remember, Satan approached Eve. Genesis 3:1, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat of any tree of the garden"?"

You remember, we spent a little time last Sunday evening remembering ourselves how often Satan had taken that approach with us. Questioned our minds, not really our memories because we had a fair idea of what God had said, but questioning our minds. "Did we really accept that into our minds that God had said to us? And did he exactly say that to us?" And you remember how we shared, how often many of us have sensed God saying in a communion service, "Five o'clock every morning, that's where I want you. Your day will go in a different way entirely if I meet you at five o'clock every morning." Or, "At six o'clock," or whatever the time is, "I'll meet you on your knees in your bedroom, first thing, whatever happens."

And then the communion service passes and Sunday afternoon comes and then you get to Sunday evening when you watch something a little too long on television and then the voice comes, "Did God say five?" And then the next step is, "Well, tomorrow isn't so very important. Maybe six tomorrow and back to five the following day." Except that you never get back to five the following day, and anyway the spell of trust is broken because you've actually manipulated the thing to your own ideas and our own wishes and so the whole command of God is lost.

Have you ever caught the real import of a command of God? God commands Moses to do a certain thing which Moses can't possibly do on his own power! And so the decision to obey the command also ensures the provision of the power. Have you ever seen that? God doesn't just go around commanding just for the sake, "Here Jim you do that. John you do that. Tom, I'm a big God I can tell anybody what to do." No! He always specifically tells you to do something that you'll need his power for. That's what he wants to manifest in you.

So really commands from God are not simply valuable from the point of view of what they get you to do, or whether they're right or wrong. A command from God is always customized and tailored for you, so that the only way to obey it is to receive some extra life of his. And of course, that's the meaning of a command you see. But often we don't see that. We think, "No, no I feel deadbeat, I'm going to be seven hours sleep and I usually get my eight and a half." Or, "I'm going to be five hours asleep and I always get my six. And that's right, five tomorrow won't really be essential." Well of course, that's the one thing it is. 'Five' is essential tomorrow because God is going to show you how he gives you strength that you don't have physically yourself, because you had a good night's sleep.

And so that kind of thing we shared, you remember, how Satan comes along and says, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?’” And then the next step, in Verse 2, “And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.”’” And of course, that wasn’t what God had said at all. God said that you wouldn’t eat of the tree of the knowledge of Good and evil but the tree of life was also in the midst of the garden and you were to eat of that.

And so you remember we shared last Sunday how Satan tries to get us to switch God’s word to us just a little. To switch it just a little. And then of course, eventually he goes the ‘whole hog’ and in Verse 4, you remember, he says, “But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not die.’” And just downright contradicts God’s word to you. And that’s his approach with us.

Now, what has followed from that is a further deception, because many of us have turned to verses like Romans 8:7, “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, indeed it cannot.” And we say, “There, you see, the mind got us into trouble in the Garden of Eden. It was the mind that Satan deceived. It was the mind that declared its own independence and autonomy.” And do you see there’s another verse that says, “The mind is hostile to God?”

And then we turn to other verses like 1 Corinthians, there is a verse there that we often use. 1 Corinthians 1:18, “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart.’ Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.”

And so we say, “You see there’s another passage where God is saying, ‘It’s not your mind or your wisdom that will save you, it’s me only.’” And we collect these verses together and Satan gets us to the conclusion that the mind is evil and that the one way to get yourself into trouble with God is to use your mind. And loved ones, Christendom is convinced of that. Great parts of Christendom is convinced that the worst thing you can do to follow God is to use your mind and it’s based on the kind of experience that we see Eve having in the Garden of Eden. It’s based on the kind of verse in Romans 8:7, or the kinds of verses that we get there in Corinthians.

And so Satan practices probably his greatest deception because he knows the mind is the king of the soul. It is really the original executive in the soul. Of the emotions and the will, the mind is really the king. And Satan knows that if he can get us to stop using our minds then he can do whatever he wants. And I think someone said last Sunday to me, “Well then, I mean, you’re saying that we get into trouble so often, and I agree with you, by using our minds, now then do you mean we shouldn’t use our minds?” And loved ones, that’s exactly what Satan wants.

Do you see the issue isn’t using your mind, or not using your mind? The issue is using your mind in a legitimate way or using your mind in an illegitimate way. That’s it. If you stop using your mind altogether I’ll share with you a little later on this evening some of the agonies that you will get into through doing that. It is God’s will for us to use our minds in a legitimate way, not an illegitimate way. Now, let’s look back to Genesis and there are a couple of instances there that plainly show you a person using their mind the right way and a person using their mind the wrong

way.

Plainly the wrong way is the one you get there in Genesis 3, “Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God say, “You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?”’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.”’ Obviously, that’s the wrong way.

Using your mind to contradict God’s word is the wrong way, using your mind to get a knowledge beyond the knowledge that is in God’s word, or the knowledge God has given to you through your spirit. That’s the wrong way to use your mind. We haven’t to use our minds as a substitute for God and for his love, and his gift of knowledge to us through the intuition of our spirits. Nor have we to use our minds to contradict God’s word.

A right way to use our minds is there in Genesis 2:19, “So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he could call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.” God gave us our minds to use. That’s the only way we’re ever going to fulfill his directions to us. Whether we’re oil men that sink wells, or whether we’re engineers that build bridges, or nurses that nurse patients, or doctors that cure the sick, or whether we’re mathematicians, or whether we’re secretaries, God has given us our minds to fulfill the commands that he has given to us. And God expects us to use our minds for that purpose.

The only way he will ever get his directions to us through our spirits into our fingertips is through our minds. God expects us to use our minds to understand his word. He expresses often that, “My word is a revelation to you and I want you to understand it.” You remember, Jesus tells the story of the Parable of the Sower and the seed. And he explains how certain people understand God’s word and in them it bears fruit a hundredfold. If you don’t use your mind to understand his word, and to work out what it’s going to mean for your life, there will be no fruit born in your life. And so God expects us to use our minds to understand, but not to contradict his word.

Now loved ones, I could maybe illustrate the thing plainly in that diagram that is the key to all knowledge [Audience laughs]. You’ve given me a complex about this diagram [Audience laughs again]. You remember how I shared so often that really that’s something of the way the scriptural interpretation of the personality can be explained, that we are spirit, and soul, and body [Diagram shows 3 concentric rectangles. The innermost is labeled 'Spirit'. The next level out is labeled 'Soul', and the outer is 'Body'.] And then if you follow through spirit in the Old and New Testament you find that the spirit is able to commune with God. Is able to know by intuition what God wants you to do. Then your conscience judges you on the basis of that. [The 'Spirit' rectangle has the words 'Intuition', 'Communion' and 'Conscience' in it.] We get into a lot of trouble because we get our conscience working on the basis of our minds. But conscience actually judges on the basis of what God is telling us. That’s why the Bible says, “The spiritual man is judged by no one.” When you’re working as God intends you to do, then really nobody can judge you. It is your conscience that judges you on the basis of what God is telling you.

And then the soul, which is the human part of us involves our will, and our mind, and our emotions [The 'Soul' rectangle has those 3 words, 'Will', 'Mind', and 'Emotions'.] and then our bodies. And we shared, you remember, that the way God intended us to operate was that way. [Indicates the 'Holy Spirit' which is printed outside and above all the rectangles, and draws arrows from him into the

'Spirit' rectangle.] That his love would pour his spirit and his whole attitude into us in our communion, and we would know therefore, what he wanted us to do intuitively. And our conscience would constrain our will [Here draws arrows down as he indicates each component of our soul, and to the body.] which would obey our conscience and our will then would begin to express to our mind, our mind would understand it and work it out in deductive detail sending all the necessary signals to every part of our body in order to express this in the world.

And of course, as it expressed itself through our bodies our emotions would express the joy of our communion with God also and would express the joy of our personality working the way it was meant to.

Now, what actually happened was instead of our mind being used to understand what comes through our spirits, our whole rebellion took place and involved instead of looking to God for our security, and our significance, and our happiness, [He places an overlay onto the diagram that shows arrows up from outside the 'Body' rectangle] we began to look to things for our security, people for our significance, and experiences and circumstances for our happiness and we began to live backwards. And as we did that our mind lost its capacity to understand and it began to instead manipulate these things in the way that it wanted.

Now loved ones, that's it. When you use the mind that way to manipulate things, and people, and circumstances, to provide the security, and the significance, and the happiness that we are meant to get from God, then that is what Romans 8:7 is talking about. And you see that it's not just the mind that Romans 8:7 mentions. If you look at it, the word of God does not say, "For the mind is hostile to God." It says, "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God."

And that's the mind that manipulates; the mind that is set on the flesh, the mind that tries to get from outside, from our fleshly bodies, from the flesh of other people, from the material things around us, from the events that we see and hear around us. The mind that is set on trying to get from those, that is set on that flesh, that is hostile to God. Why? Because it's trying to bring it in that way [Indicates on the graphic from the world in through our bodies] and God wants us to receive it from himself.

So loved ones, that's the mind that is hostile to God. And you remember, that far from God telling us not to use our minds, in the verse that we're studying at the moment on the Sunday mornings -- if you'd like to look at it, Romans 12:2. God tells us what is needed with our minds. "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." And that's what's needed; not, "Don't use your mind," but in fact, "Renew your mind." Allow the Holy Spirit -- and we're going to be talking about that for the next few weeks [referring to the Sunday morning messages]. Allow the Holy Spirit to begin to show you how to renew your mind so that it becomes the kind of mind that can operate the way it was meant to operate. And that's God's will for us.

Now many of us have not done that, really. We have followed on with this old deception that we ought not to use our minds. And so some of us have decided the only way to worship God, and to adore him, and to praise him is exactly what you said, "My Lord and my God. I should blank out my mind and I should just look at God." Now loved ones, that is not at all the kind of advice we get in scripture, blanking out your mind.

The transcendental meditation people will suggest that you try to blank out your mind. Then, Buddhists will suggest that you try to blank out your mind. All kinds of spiritualists will suggest

that you try to blank out your mind. But loved ones, God has always said to us, "Thou shalt love me with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind." And God has implied that the mind is to be involved in an active, cooperating way, when you praise and adore him.

And that's the message you remember, you get very clearly in -- I think it's Philippians 4:8, if you look at it. "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, 'think' about these things." That's it. And not just let the mind be blanked out.

So loved ones, when we go before God to praise and adore him, he wants us to think with our minds about the things that he has given us, about the beautiful day that it was today, about his goodness to us all through the years of our lives. Think about what he looked like when he was here on earth in the shape of Jesus. Think about the things that he did with the little children. Think about the attitude he had to Zacchaeus [the rich tax collector who climbed a tree to see Jesus]. Think about Psalms' words, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." "Bless the Lord, O my soul." Think! Think when you go before God! Don't blank out your mind!

Now some of us actually have done worse than that. Blanking out your mind is simply not using it. But some of us have got into this kind of theory; we say to ourselves, "Now, I want God to speak to me. So, first of all I'll ask him to speak to me. So Lord, will you speak to me and show me what you want me to do? And then I'll let the first thought that comes into my mind be the thought that I believe is coming from God." And we leave our minds absolutely passive so that God can send the thought into us. And loved ones, I think a lot of us do that. I think a lot of us have the idea that praying the little mantra, "Lord, speak to me and tell me what you want me to do," does the trick. I think we believe that. We believe, "If I just say that word, 'Lord, speak to me and tell me what you want me to do,' and then I leave my mind absolutely blank, then God will tell me."

Loved ones, that isn't the way God works at all. And as soon as you leave your mind passive like that you let other forces use it. And that's the heart of a 'passive mind'. A 'blank mind' is simply not using it yourself. A 'passive mind' is worse; it's letting other powers use it, believing that you're doing right. And I understand. I know we do it because we believe that's the way God speaks. Loved ones, God doesn't speak that way. God speaks to you as your whole being is used to praise, and thank him, and love him, and study his word, and pray for others, and ask forgiveness for your sins, and petition him for your needs. That's the way. God speaks to you in the midst of your activity on his behalf. He does. He does not speak to you in this kind of blankness and this kind of 'non-cooperative passivity' that many of us try to produce.

Now loved ones, do you see, we do it in good faith? We think, "Alright, Lord I'll ask you to speak to me," and then [He puts on a blank stare and then waves his hand past his face] Pow! "Speak!" Well you can see with the old starey eyes what it reminds you of. It reminds you far more of a person that is hypnotized than it reminds you of somebody who is actively involved with a dear friend. And really -- if you think of it -- with your friends, or with your husbands, or your wives -- I mean, you don't meet each other and say, [he faces to the side and steps forward with almost a military 'coming to attention'] "Tell me what you want me to do!" [Audience laughs.] You don't. You just don't. You talk with the person. And you involve yourself in discussion with them, back and forward. And you get to know them. And you get to sense what they're thinking about things. And in the course of the conversation you begin to sense, "Boy! Well that's what 'they' would do.

Yeah, I see.”

And that’s the way our dear Father speaks, you see. Not through that passive mind stuff, loved ones. And that’s why so much of Christendom -- have you noticed so much of Christendom and so much of 'charismania land' -- as opposed to true charismatic -- 'charismania land' has gone into 'thought reading' -- you know, 'thought reading'? -- and into foretelling the future, and into singing choruses again, and again, and again to hypnotize the mind into a kind of 'mantra like' passivity. That’s it. That’s why! Because Satan has deceived great areas of Christendom -- even parts of Christendom that have initially been touched by the Holy Spirit -- he has deceived great areas of Christendom into the idea that if you leave your mind passive, somehow the Spirit will speak to you.

Now loved ones, that’s not so. You see, the Spirit speaks to you when your whole being is involved in worshipping God. The Spirit speaks to you as you use your whole being. [Indicates the whole personality on diagram] The Spirit doesn’t speak to you when you say, “Okay Spirit, I’ve annihilated my soul so speak to me.” [Puts his hand over the 'Soul' part of the diagram] No, the Spirit doesn’t speak to you when you say, “I’ve annihilated my body by beating it and by chains therefore, speak to me.” No, the Spirit speaks to you when your whole being is involved with God and with worshipping him.

And you remember there -- I think it’s 1 Peter if you look at it. 1 Peter 1:13, “Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” “Gird up your minds.” God tells us to gird up almost the garments of our minds and get going in his service and in ministering to him. Now, huge numbers of us have not done it. And we in fact, have let our minds be used by evil spirits. And that’s why a lot of you have such trouble at times in prayer, and a lot of us have trouble in serving God. That’s why a lot of us are useless to God, because our minds in fact, are almost the playground of evil spirits.

Now loved ones, maybe it’s good to say this, there is a difference between obsession by evil spirits and possession by evil spirits. It’s questionable if any child of God could be possessed by an evil spirit, because that implies that your will has been submitted to the evil spirit. And so it is really impossible for a child of God to be possessed by an evil spirit, but we can be oppressed by evil spirits. Many of us can sense an oppression of a spirit at certain times or in certain situations. And certainly it is possible to be obsessed at times by evil spirits.

And that’s the danger with a passive mind, that the evil spirits obsess your mind. Of course, what happens is you can see your spirit may be alive and well, but if Satan can obsess your mind with his spirits then you can see there’s a blockage there. The Spirit comes down to there, but can’t get any further. [On the diagram puts his hand over the 'Soul' part of the personality.] And that’s why many children of God are useless to God in the world, because this whole area is possessed or obsessed by evil spirits. And so the Spirit of God’s life can’t get through to the body because the only way through is by the mind, emotions, and will.

So loved ones, it is important to know what the state of your own mind is. To tell you the truth, I don’t think the old educational system that many of us faced in high school and elementary school helped, because it was too easy for us to have a kind of holiday camp high school experience where it was virtually a continual holiday camp and our minds virtually went to sleep. The old television doesn’t help it because we sit there and we’re bombarded, “Entertain me. Entertain me. Entertain me.” And so Satan has found it very easy to obsess many of our minds so that they’re virtually

passive.

I thought this was so important that I would just read what old Nee says because I think it's so revealing. So he says, "What are the signs of a passive mind?" And maybe it would be good to say to you, don't get all upset in a faithless way and say, "Yes, that is my problem." That is probably part of your problem. Probably some passivity has taken place in your mind. But don't get into the position where, "Ah, evil spirits have control of me." They haven't. If you're a child of God, "He that is within you is greater than he that is without," and your will is presumably being submitted to God in normal every day activity. But it is possible that Satan is trying to get a hold inside your mind.

[Begins reading from "The Spiritual man" by Watchman Nee.] "Flashing thoughts. Flashing thoughts, like a perpetual motion machine receiving many notions from without which are blasphemous or confused. The will is impotent to do anything."

Now, one of the reasons we're saying that is, that is not the way it's meant to be. But I think many of us have got so used to that, flashing thoughts and thoughts coming into my mind that are absolutely blasphemous. And we get the idea, "Oh well, that's the normal Christian life."

No, that's ridiculous. Our minds are meant to be good and faithful servants that help us, not that hinder us. But, when we have allowed some passivity to take place in our minds, Satan is able to do that. He's able to just come and go as he pleases. And of course, he persuades us, you see, [Shows the 'Body' and 'Soul' on the personality diagram] that our mind is in fact at the mercy of the way our bodies feel. That's it. That our minds are at the mercy -- if we don't feel good physically today, well we feel a little down emotionally. And our mind, of course, is always used to being dominated by our emotions.

Now, that isn't so. The mind can be controlled by the will. That's why God said, "Whatsoever things are pure, and lovely, and have good report, think on those things." Because, he knew we could obey that. He wouldn't tell us to do that if he didn't know our will could control our minds. Loved ones, your will can control your mind. Actually, that's part of the first steps towards freedom that you would grasp that. "My will can control my mind. It is my mind. It has been bought with a price. I have the mind of Christ Jesus, and I can make that mind think what I want it to think." And really it is true loved ones; your mind was created by God to obey your will. And it is sub-normality that it does not!

[Begins reading from Nee again.] "Insight into special matters, or abrupt urging to do this or that." How many of us have had that? Sudden insight, "I see it all!" "I know God wants me to go to Africa!" And so I go to Africa. Sudden abrupt flashing insights such as created Christian Science, such as created Christian Mormonism -- all heresies were created by this same situation where the thoughts of the mind were controlled by Satan. And the abrupt thought was taken as a revelation from God.

The Father does not work that way. Nine times out of ten, any abrupt revelation that you have got has not come from God at all. God is our dear friend, and our dear father, and he works in us in as natural a way as we operate with each other. And loved ones, that's why Jesus said, "I have not called you servants, I have called you friends because a servant doesn't know what his master is doing. I have called you friends because you understand me. You know the kinds of things I would do, you know the kinds of ways I would move." And so it's a natural thing to you. And loved ones,

that's true with us. Nine times out of ten, anything abrupt or flashing into your mind is not from God. It is from the evil one.

[Begins reading from Nee again.] "In Bible study, sudden thoughts during meditation which burst upon people and then end up tearing a church to pieces as they share those things." I don't know if you've had experience of that, but I have certainly been involved in that in churches, where they have a Bible study and then somebody would have a sudden revelation. And they would share that without any thought, without any checking with the elders, or with anyone older than themselves spiritually. And the result was it tore the place apart, because of course, it was sent by Satan.

Flashing thoughts about our miserable selves, you know, we're all so big headed. [Begins reading from Nee again.] "You are God's special vessel. I will do a work in you that will shake the world. God will open a wide door for your message. Step out to live by faith. Your spiritual usefulness is unlimited." Drip! Absolute drip! Really! Really! Any dear little servant of God that has been used by the Father has been the most surprised guy around. That's right. Every little David that has ever been used by God has been the most surprised man or woman around. God doesn't burden us with that kind of stuff. Only Satan does in order to blow our minds up and make us vain, and proud, and preoccupied – well, what does that preoccupy you with? Does that preoccupy you with God? Not on your life! That preoccupies you with one person, the great 'me'. What a great person 'I'm' going to be.

Whereas, the Father's way is so good, so free, so light. He tells you to lift this wire. You lift this wire. Nothing great about that! Then he says, "Lift the microphone." And you lift the microphone. Nothing great about that! Then, "Lift the seat." And you lift the seat. Nothing great! And before you know it, you're lifting the piano. And you don't realize the amazing things that God is beginning to do through you. But that's the way it comes about.

But God doesn't say, "You are going to lift that piano with your little finger and everybody is going to be filled with awe at your power!" He doesn't, loved ones! So when those thoughts come into your mind, they're not of God. And on the whole, when we're preoccupied with what God is doing among us, on the whole it's not of God. When God is in control usually we're preoccupied with God himself and with his beauty.

Sometimes a sudden thought comes into your mind, "They seem to think this about me. I think that person thinks this about me. Boy, I think everybody in the office thinks this. I think they're all critical of me." That -- loved ones, it's Satan. It's Satan sends into your mind a sudden thought that has no connection with how the rest of your life is going. And that's maybe one clue about this business of flashing thoughts. Is this an expression of the way your life has been going over the past days and weeks? Is this a real continuation of what you've been experiencing or is this something sudden? And if it's something sudden, it is not from God.

God leads us in a gentle way. He leads you through a door; you see a passage ahead of you; you walk to the end of that passage; you see another door, you walk through that door. That's the way it goes. And suddenly you find yourself in broad sunlit uplands, and God has placed your feet in a broad place. But it comes naturally and easily. Flashing thoughts come because our minds have been given over to some passivity, and evil spirits are able to use them.

What do you do? Oh, it's simple. It's Philippians 4:8 [KJV], "...Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if

there be any praise, think on these things." Think! Think! Think! That's it. Not in a manic way; not in a scared way. Think in faith, you see. Don't say, "Oh, I must think, otherwise what Pastor says will come true. I must think. Think, think, one, two, three, four, five, zippity-do-dah." No, don't! That's fear! That's not faith! It's fear. Don't think in fear. Don't run. Stand! "...And having done all, to stand." [Ephesians 6:13] "Lord, thank you that you have given me your mind. And thank you that I'm in you. And thank you that since you are in me, you are greater than he that is without. And Lord, I thank you for that. And I want to thank you now for some of the things you've done Father, for me." And then just think.

That's it. Think in faith. But do think, loved ones. And when you go – there's so much more, but we'll go on next day -- but when you go to bed at night, think of something in regard to Jesus. Don't go to bed and try to make your mind passive. Don't go to bed and try to blank out every thought in your mind. Think of maybe Jesus blessing the children. Think of him doing that. Or, think of Jesus in the house of Martha and Mary. Or think of Jesus at the end of your own bed. But think of something positive about God as you go to sleep. No, it may not be the very last thing you think of, but if you set your mind upon God he has made a promise, "Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." [Isaiah 26:3 KJV] And so the first step is to stay your mind on God.

So loved ones, first of all about the flashing thoughts: Then if we just deal with that tonight. That's not the normal activity of your mind. It's not the normal experience of a child of God. The normal experience of child of God is that your mind will work under the control of your will. And if you say to me, "Well, how do we begin to take back the control of our minds?" Start with Philippians 4:8, "Whatsoever things are lovely and have good report... Think on these things."

If you say to me, "Brother, if you had my mind you'd see that I thought of it for a minute, and then I'd be away out in San Francisco, pulling my mind back from there." Pull it back. And you say, "Yeah, but I just get it back, and I think of another verse. And then I have to go to Alaska and get it." Pull it back. "Yeah, but I just got it back, and I'm thinking of Jesus' blessing the children, and then it's out thinking of a horror film." It doesn't matter, pull it back. Pull the mind back however often loved ones, you have to do it. Pull it back, because then Satan begins to realize that you know the secret that your mind is your own. It belongs to you in Christ Jesus, and you are able to control it.

And loved ones, gradually, bit-by-bit as we go through these next Sundays, you'll see that it is possible to come free of a passive mind if you begin right now. Begin right now. And then, when we come together in prayer times, don't blank out your mind. Don't wait, "Lord, raise up a prayer in me." Don't do that. Use the dear old mind. Our dear Father is here. Pray out a prayer to him. It might not be the greatest prayer; it might not be the most beautifully worded; worst of all it might not be 'spiritual', but it's a prayer that's using your mind. And that is loving God with your mind. And the Father always answers that.

So loved ones, do! In worship use your mind. And use it – the mind usually produces thoughts, believe it or not. And thoughts often issue forth in words. So when you get a thought speak it out, even if you just whisper it. Many of us have started just having to mouth our prayers, because it gets the thought outside of us. And that is a power over Satan.

But of course, what is best is, in prayer times, when we just pray out. There's something, you remember, Erich Sauer [1898 - 1959, author of "Dawn of World Redemption" and more] says of a man or

woman's spirit, "When you speak a word, your spirit emanates from you and rises to God." And of course, if you get many people doing that, then instead of a séance, with everybody quiet and passive, you get something approaching a good prayer meeting. And that's – a good prayer meeting is a meeting where every child of God is active -- is actively loving him with their minds, and their words, and their bodies. Really! And that is health, and that is fullness.

And oh, for any wee soul here who is just under it and you say, "Flashing thoughts! My life is spoiled by it. My life is spoiled by flashing thoughts." Take it back! Take it back under your control, just -- Old Churchill [Winston Churchill, war time prime minister of Great Britain] said, "Never, never under any circumstances, whatever the provocation, however many amplifying systems they turn off, never, never, never give in." And that's it. No, don't, just don't give in. Don't give in to Satan. You don't need to. You are in Jesus. You are more powerful than the one [Satan] that he [Jesus] has trodden under his feet. And the mind that you have is the mind that has been freed by our Savior. That's the beauty of it. Your mind was freed by Jesus on Calvary. And your mind can be controlled by your dear will.

Let us pray. Dear Father, we thank you for the message of liberty that we have in Jesus' resurrection. We thank you Lord, that we know that you are at the right hand of God tonight, and that you have a mind that works perfectly. And we have it on the authority of your word that we have the mind of Christ Jesus. So Lord, thank you for that.

Thank you that this mind that we now have in these heads, or in these bodies, is the mind that was renewed, and cleansed, and redeemed by you on Calvary. And we thank you that that mind is well able to do what you have appointed it to do. So Lord, we commit ourselves now to beginning to use our minds to love our Father, to worship him, and praise him, and adore him, and to use our minds to fend off the fiery darts of the wicked one when he would persuade us that we have to let our thoughts run as they will. Lord, we reject 'free association'. We reject all of hypnotism. We reject anything of repetition that would make our minds dormant. And Lord, we intend, starting this very hour, throughout this week and the coming weeks to exercise our minds after godliness, to 'gird up' our minds, to bring our minds and every thought into captivity of Christ Jesus. And Lord, we know as we do that our very lives will begin to be transformed.

Lord, thank you. Thank you for unveiling and exposing Satan's lie. And thank you for showing us the power that we have tonight.

Now the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with each one of us now and throughout this coming week.