

Friday, May 8, 2020

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

(Philippians 4: 8)

Don't be afraid of the list in this reading from Philippians. It's not a "to do" list. It's a "to think about" list. You don't need resources or physical energy or even great health to "do" what is being suggested in this reading. All you need is TIME. "Time" has different meanings for different people. For the homebound, or hospital-bound, or those in a Nursing Home, time can be an endless drudgery of monotony. For those who are in the "prime" of life, time can often be the competitor that fights against my schedule and my list of responsibilities. For some, there is too much time in the day. For others, there is never enough time. I guess there are those who "waste time" – those who could do something of meaning and value, but who choose not to.

In today's reading, we are encouraged to use some of our time just THINKING. Some people would consider this a "waste of time." For certain personalities, time is there to "get something done." For these people, "thinking" looks a lot like doing nothing. And yet, for others, thinking has been their enemy because it's all they have been able to do for a long time, and their thoughts have not been their friend.

During the current pandemic, some people have found themselves having more "time" on their hands than they normally would have. But being the resourceful people that they are, they have figured out alternative ways to fill their "time." What if we were to re-learn the art of thinking – that is, if we ever knew that art in the first place? I do know that my thoughts have been rather fixated on the current crisis. Watching the news only gives me more to think about regarding the virus.

But we have better things we can spend our time thinking about. We can think about things that are "true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, praise-worthy." We're not even being asked to "do" anything about these things. Just to THINK about them. Why? What is the benefit of doing such a thing? It is my understanding that our thinking can have physical effects on how our brains are structured. That's pretty amazing. In addition to this, what we spend most of our time thinking about truly does affect our attitude and our outlook on life. Who we are and what we do begins with how we think.

So, whether you have more "time" than you know what to do with or you need to learn to slow down a little from your constant activity, what a blessing God gives to us when we fill our thinking with "lovely" things. How do I know what is "true and honorable and just and lovely" so that I can think about those things. The obvious answer is... from the Word of God – the Bible. I can't really trust my own thinking. It's influenced by my "fallen" sinful condition. So, I need God's Word to influence my thinking. But what if someone is not familiar enough with God's Word to let it influence their thinking? We can make it even simpler. I can think about Jesus. I can think about what He did for me by dying and rising from the dead. I can think about how great God's love for me must be that He would send His Son into the world to pay for my sins.

So, if you have found yourself with some extra time on your hands, use that time to THINK about all that God is and what He does for us. If you do not have enough time to just THINK, then something else has to give! We need time just to THINK about the God of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

God's peace!

Pastor Jim