

[Gauger:] Some things are easy to change. Our choice for lunch, the book we read, the DVD we watch. What about changing your mindset? That’s our focus next.

Hi, welcome to the Friday edition of *PROCLAIM!* with Dr. Michael Easley, President of the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. I’m Jon Gauger. Glad to have you along. I think you’re really going to be challenged by today’s study. We’re in the Book of Romans looking at Chapter 8, specifically Verse 5 in a message that Michael has titled “Change Your Mindset”. Let’s join him now in a message first heard at Emmanuel Bible Church in Northern Virginia.

[Easley:] I’ll never forget the first time I learned to use a floor maintainer. Some you know this is a buffer. And, if you ever have the joy and privilege of learning how to use it, you should start in the middle of a gym floor. These buffers can strip, and clean, and polish a floor unlike anything known to man. You can take a linoleum floor and make it look like a mirror if you know what you’re doing. The only time you’ll see them today is in a new car dealership perhaps or a gym that uses an older type floor. They’re sort of fallen by the wayside, but it’s an art to use one of these things. And, the first time you use it there are two levers on the handles and as you squeeze those levers that thing will launch. And, the strongest man or woman in this church could not stop it. In fact, Arnold couldn’t control this thing. They are so powerful and they’re so much torque in the thing it just takes an immediate turn until it smashes into something or you let go of those levers. It is an incredibly powerful machine and what you learn very quickly is that you cannot control it. It wants to control you. In fact, it is so powerful that until you learn how to use it you won’t succeed in doing anything but making damage. And, once you learn how, you can do it with two fingers on each side. You cannot control the power of this machine. It can control you, but you can cooperate with it. And, you can, in the finesses of using that strength, harness it for incredible results and incredible job. You cannot make it do what you want it to do. In a sense, you have to cooperate with it. Sin, wants to control you and me and you cannot manhandle sin. You cannot do it. No one can. Sin wants to control us, but no human being is strong enough to control sin.

Paul has been teaching us in Romans 6 and 7 the problem of sin in our lives. And, because we cannot control sin no matter how hard we try, or how good our intentions, God has given us His power and His Holy Spirit to help us and indeed to control us. So, we no longer think the way we thought. We no longer do what we used to do. We no longer try what we used to try because God gives us His power and the person, the work of the Holy Spirit, to help us to what we cannot do in our flesh by ourselves. Sin entangles us. Sexual temptations, homosexual temptations, claw at our soul. Power and control sins claw at our hearts. We want to control our husband, our wife, people around us we work with. Material acquisitions, stuff, money, pulls at our wallets and our hearts that bigger, better, newer, more is what it’s all about. The arrogance many of us struggle with that we have to be right all the time and we like to hear our own voice more than other people, and the pride that we so often brandish around. Sin wants to control you and me.

What would it be like if our sexual temptations lost some of their death grip on us? What would it be like if the acquisition for material wealth and bigger, better, newer, more just started loosening its grip a little bit? What would it be like if we didn’t have to always be right? What would it be like if we could actually encourage other people instead of telling them how we think things ought to be? And, that is the kind of work the Holy Spirit accomplishes in the life of the believer. How do we agree with and live with the Spirit of God and the power of God?

Well, in Romans, Chapter 8, today we’re going to see two mindsets; a mindset on death which is futile, a mindset on the flesh which leads to death, and we’re going to see a mindset on the Holy Spirit of God. Paul is very simply and very specifically going to tell you there are two mindsets and all of us in this

room are in one mindset or the other. There's no middle ground. If you have your mindset on the flesh, it is death. If you have your mindset on the Spirit, it is life and peace, and the result for the believer is the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit.

Let's look at the passage together. Read aloud with me Verses 5-8 on the screen. "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. Because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God, for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so. And, those who are in the flesh cannot please God." "The futility of being in the flesh," Paul says, means that we cannot please God, and he gives us three reasons of why we can't please God in the flesh. The first is that our mindset, our mindset is fleshly. In other words, it is according to the world's patterns. It is according to the flesh of our lives. Now, Paul is describing a person here who's not trusted Christ. He's talking about a person who's not believed, not yet put faith in Christ to do for them what they cannot do for themselves. He's saying when your mindset is on the flesh, it results in death. This mindset is an idea of according to our natures. It is a pension, it is a bent, it is the way we are designed.

Now, before I came to Christ and maybe you recall this too, my mind was set on egotism like nothing else. My life was all about me, about what I wanted, about my sins, about my drugs, about my licentious lifestyle; and, it was according to this nature. There was a toxic self in me. Interesting, in Mark, Chapter 8, Verses 33, Jesus uses the same word that Paul uses here when he talks -- remember the setting is Peter has just heard with the Disciples of Christ's impending crucifixion and death, and Peter pulls Him aside and rebukes Him. Now, that would have been interesting. What's it like to rebut Jesus, right? Well, Jesus says to him, "Get behind me Satan for you are not setting your mind on God's interest, but on man's." You're not setting your mind on God's interest, but man's. And see, our mindset and the flesh is always on man's interest, never on God's interest. The problem is our mindset before Christ is fixed away from God.

Secondly, the second reason we cannot find any meaning or pleasing of God, or we can't work in such a way that our life counts is because our mindset on the flesh results in death, Paul says. It is death. The mindset on flesh is death, but the mindset on the Spirit is life and peace. Paul says, "It is death." He doesn't say it results in. He says, "It is death". Not to strain the word too much, but I think he's saying a very hard truth here; that before we trust Christ our mindset is death, we are dying. And, that death is not just the physical death that we will all experience, it's the separation from God death that we'll be separated from Him in death. I vividly remember this mindset, can you? Before you trusted Christ can you remember how you used to think? And sometimes we need to go back there and dig that up and remember how we used to think. My mindset was completely on myself, it was on all the absorptions of the darkness of who I was. Those are grim days.

Third, Paul says, The reason the mindset on flesh cannot please God is because it is hostile toward God. And, we've noticed in this Romans before, there's no neutral zone with God. There's no Swiss. You're either for God or you're against Him. There's no middle ground. Sometimes people say well, yeah, I can never worship a god who ... fill in the blank. I can never believe in a god who allows injustice and war. I can never accept that your God is God because He lets children die or children starve and develop in countries. I can never believe in a god who would permit ... fill in the blank. What are we saying? We're saying my view of God is better than God's view of God. We're saying my view of God supplants what this might say about God. It's true what we're saying. I have a better idea because if God were God He wouldn't do that. The mindset on flesh is hostile toward God.

C.E.B. Cranfield, the great Anglican Scholar writes, "Fallen man's fierce hostility to God is the response of his egotism determined to assert himself, to assert his independence, to be the center of his own life, to

be his very own God. He cannot help but hate the real God whose very existence gives the lie to his self-assertions.” To be an enemy of God is to hate Him, is to be hostile with Him. Cranfield hits it spot on. The problem is I want to be God and I want to work it the way I want to work it. And, the mindset on the flesh leads to death and because it leads to death everything in my being is hostile toward God.

[Gauger:] A serious, if not, unsettling observation, Michael. Our mindset, our very mindset is hostile toward God. I don't like thinking that about me.

[Easley:] Well, it's the default part of our spiritual life.

[Gauger:] Yeah.

[Easley:] You know, that's who we are, that's our condition, and that's what we're being saved from in this fallen state.

[Gauger:] You know, I think we have maybe painted with grays where we should be using deep blacks; this true color of our mindset apart from God.

[Easley:] Yeah. You know, the idea of always evil all the time comes to mind that our penitent, our selfishness, our pride, our perversion, all this stuff reveals our mindsets. And, again, I think when people are quiet long enough -- you know, this stuff haunts us like crazy. And, that's why we need a Redeemer. That's why we need a Savior who can buy our salvation because we can never get there on our own.

[Gauger:] That Savior Jesus is someone who a listener right now longs to embrace, but yet, feels distant from. Help them bridge that gap.

[Easley:] And, this is the great power of this passage; is that by trusting Christ, by believing on Him, by putting your faith in Him, it's not what you do, it's not what you try to accomplish, it's what He's done, it's what He's accomplished. So, by faith, by trust, it's a mental, emotional, spiritual process. You are putting your faith in Christ to do for you what you can never do for yourself.

[Gauger:] You know, I'm sitting here thinking as we talk with Michael that this is a brand new year and there is no better time than right now to start out this year beginning your relationship with Jesus if you never have. It's easy to do so. In fact, you could even get some help at this toll-free number I'd like to give you; 1-888-NEED-HIM. A volunteer will answer your questions and maybe lead you a prayer that will help you begin a relationship with Jesus. Again, that toll-free number is 1-888-NEED-HIM.

Now, if you already know Jesus and maybe even if you don't but you'd like to listen to our Romans' message series again, you can; we have packaged together 14 of these messages on 7 compact discs. They're available for purchase at our website, www.proclaim.mbn.org. Great to listen to this teaching, again, to let it really sink into your mind. www.proclaim.mbn.org is our website and the offer you'll want to check out is right there.

Well, I'm Jon Gauger. See you Monday when we return with a whole new slate of messages from Romans right here on *PROCLAIM!*