

Thinking and Acting Christianly

- I. **Last week** - Learning to think like a Christian is like learning to think in a foreign language; my Chinese students are examples of this. Languages must be practiced to be retained. And though we are saved by GRACE ALONE through FAITH ALONE, in other words it is God's action and faith is His gift He gives, learning to think as Christians is an ongoing process. We are called to think God's thoughts after Him. Last week: Need to think properly about faith and to not trust in our works for salvation.
- II. **Since Conversion should be followed with relearning how to think properly, we must study to find ourselves approved.** This involves recognizing the need to know the Scriptures. Study to find ourselves approved as Paul instructs Timothy in 2:15, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth." This is a part of Christian growth and discipleship. So one side of learning to think like a Christian is the diligent study of Scripture. But there is another aspect and that is the application of this study we will get to later.
- III. **Go back to the limitations on Human Knowledge.** Last week a focus on the limits to human knowledge imposed by sin though we didn't call it that. Fallen sinful humans cannot grasp the mind of God or the things of God. **Read: 1 Cor. 1:18-25.** Not everyone can grasp the things of God. Sinful humans have a corrupt reason as Ephesians 4:17-19 says, that "you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness." Furthermore Rom. 1 says they intentionally suppress the truth.

So the gospel is foolishness to them unless Matt. 13:10-11, "And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" And He answered them said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted." This understanding of parables is an act of grace.

- IV. We are not omniscient beings. Contemporary postmodernism's skepticism: the complexity of the universe and the failure of human reason. "If we cannot know everything, then we cannot know anything."** Scripture teaches that there are something that we cannot and do not know. But that our omniscient God has revealed something to us, Schaeffer's True Truth. In the Corinthians passage read we have this spoken about. Sin limits our understanding of truth but even after we are saved there are limits. The limits sometimes are the inability for finite minds to grasp what an infinite mind is doing. We can know some as He reveals. But not all. "Now we see through a glass darkly but then we shall see face to face." Examples: Theological mysteries - Trinity, How Christ was fully God and fully human, how God chooses us yet holds us responsible for our choices. Mysteries about life: How I met my wife, why I have the children that I have, how I got my job. All the profound questions asked of Job.
- V. God has given us tools** to think through these things and to see dimly what He is doing, always recognizing, Isaiah 55:8, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are My ways higher than your ways."
- VI. What are we to do?** **1.** Look to scripture, find ourselves approved. It reveals God's thinking and doing. It tells us what God is like and what He is doing. But know it doesn't tell us everything. **2.** From this knowledge of Scripture apply it to life to understand what God is doing. Look at His providential hand and interpret all of life from God's vantage point. What is God doing through these things? Often we can see His hand but not always grasp what He is doing. **3.** When we cannot figure it out then trust Him because of who He is and what He has done in the past. Sometimes we know that God is at work. We can see His guiding hand, and we may not even like all that we see happening. It may go against every bone in our bodies and every inclination of our beings yet we still know it is God at work. This is faith, but not irrational and not blind. Based on our knowledge of who God is, how His Sovereign hand guides all things, and what we have seen Him do in the past. This leads one to trust God.