

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 6:11:2007

Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

THE WELL DRESSED CHRISTIAN

7. THINK LIKE A SOLDIER

“ You don't have a brain in your head, ” Would you believe that someone actually said that to me once ? Well, she didn't exactly put it that way, but that is exactly what she meant. *Indeed Catherine has said that to me many a time, but it is simply not true.* If a person is alive and functioning, you can be sure he has a brain in his head. And what an organ it is. Indeed it is an amazingly complex electrical chemical marvel, weighing only about three pounds, but containing billions of cells that are capable of performing an incredibly enormous work load, generating, receiving, recording and transmitting energy. *Scientists have estimated that after 70 years of activity, a brain may contain nearly 15 trillion separate pieces of information. Thousands of thousands of thoughts can pass through it every day but the brain never does get tired. It is a magnificent thinking machine with marvellous capacity.*

My problem it that I never use my brain to its full potential. Most of us seldom use more than 10 percent of the brain's capacity. And that is unfortunate because the more we use our brains, the more effective they become. Many folk testify that the more material they memorise,

the easier it is for them to memorise. The more we use the brain the more information it stores up. The brain is a treasure house of memories more vast than we can ever imagine. But man is more than a machine and the part of him we call the mind goes beyond that lump of grey protein located under the skull. Now the term “ *mind,* ” is sometimes used to refer merely to our intellectual faculties. It's also used to refer to that complex of elements in us that feels, perceives, thinks, wills and reasons. You see, the mind is the control centre of our being where the direction of our lives is established. What goes on in the mind determines what we are, and what we shall become. Three thousand years ago Solomon wrote, “ *for as he thinketh in his heart so is he.* ” (Prov 23:7) Can you understand now why the mind has become a battleground ? Everyone who wants us to agree with him about anything, or wants to get something out of us, or wants us to act in some particular way will try to manipulate us by feeding his own information into our minds. Politicians, salesmen, religious organisations and many others are trying to get a foothold in the door of our minds.

Our minds are being pulled in very direction and sometimes we simply do not know whom to believe. That is why it is imperative “ *to take the helmet of salvation.* ” You see, the salvation that God has given us acts like a helmet, it protects the head, and therefore the mind, from the blows and beatings of the Devil. Now a Roman soldier would not go to battle without a helmet. The casing of the Roman helmet was primarily made from cast bronze which was supplemented by other metals and overlaid

with pieces of leather. The helmet was designed to be comfortable and yet be a protective covering for the head and ears. It was secured on the soldiers head by a leather strap below the chin. ***Now the primary function of the helmet was to ward off blows from a broadsword.*** This broadsword was three to four feet long and the soldier would lift it above his head and bring it down on the opponents head. It dealt such a crushing blow to the skull that this type of helmet was necessary to deflect it. Now what is the purpose of the helmet of salvation ? To protect your mind from the attacks of the enemy. Now we have entitled our study this “ **Think like a Soldier,**”, you see it’s all to do with the mind. Now,

(1) THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MIND

We are living in a day when many Christians only emphasise the emotions. They want to have a glorious time feeling good. But feelings come and go. Sometimes our closest walk with the Lord comes at times when we aren’t feeling very good or every victorious. Other believers only emphasise the will. They say that no matter how we feel, we must be fulfilling a certain list of duties at all times. ***But in reality the Christian life is a combination of all three.*** The mind is enlightened. The heart is stirred and the will is enabled to do what God wants us to do. Only when the mind, the heart, and the will are working together can we serve the Lord effectively. Therefore we can’t ignore the helmet of salvation. Now I want you to notice (1)

(a) IN CREATION:

You see, God created Adam a mind. He had the ability to think, reason, and understand, as well as to perceive, to feel and to will. The evidence is unmistakable. Let’s go back to (Gen Ch 2)

- Adam named every species of beast and fowl on the earth of his day and that took mammoth mental powers. (2:19-20)
- Adam understood his responsibility to have dominion over the earth. (Gen 1:28)
- He learned to till the soil and to care for the garden in which God placed him. (2:15)
- He was able to comprehend God’s plan for marriage and to love his wife. (2:23-24)

Some of His descendants through Cain also showed advanced mental development. This was time when ***marketing*** came to the fore as Jabel sewed up the cattle business. (4:20) ***Music*** also came to the fore for Jubal “ *was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.*” (4:21) And along with marketing and music ***manufacturing*** came to the fore as Tubal Cain taught men the industrial and mechanical arts. (4:22) One of Adam’s descendants through Seth gave special attention to cultivating a close intimate walk with God for of Enoch we read “ *And Enoch walked with God.*” (Gen 5:24) My this was the main reason that the Lord made human beings with minds, so that they could get to know Him, enjoy His fellowship and glorify Him. But something happened very early in the history of man.

For instead of glorifying the Lord and enjoying Him for

ever, Adam chose to defy God. Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, and something happened to his mind. He knew evil. His mind became familiar with and affected by sin. And from Adam's time to this, the mind of every person that is born into this world has been influenced by sin. Man's mind is great, there is no question about that. There has never been a computer built that can match its capabilities. Yet the Bible tells us that the mind is,

1. DARKENED:

Paul says, “ *this I say therefore and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind. Having the understanding darkened.* ” (Eph 4:18) That word “ *understanding.* ” is just another term for the mind. You see, the unsaved man lives with his mind fixed on temporal things, transitory things, and things with no eternal value. He is in the dark about spiritual things.

2. DEFILED:

Paul says, “ *unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure but even their mind and conscience is defiled.* ” (Titus 1:15-16) The word “ *defiled,* ” originally meant to dye with another colour but came also to refer to staining, soiling, polluting or contaminating. There is much concern in these days about air pollution and water pollution but what about mind pollution ? Some unsaved folk seem to have garbage cans for minds for every time they open their mouths they scatter their moral muck.

3. DEPRAVED:

Paul spoke about “ *men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth.* ” (1 Tim 6:5) The word “ *corrupt or depraved,* ” means corrupted, destroyed, ruined, spoiled or debased. This does not imply that unbelievers can never say anything good or true , but it does mean they are incapable of producing anything that makes them acceptable to God. The Bible also tells us that the mind is

4. DEAD:

Again Paul says “ *For to be carnally minded is death but to spiritually minded is life and peace, because the carnal mind is enmity against God.* ” (Rom 8:6-7) The natural mind is unable to know God, to enjoy God, to have fellowship with God, indeed the unsaved mind is a enemy of God it is spiritually dead. Now is there a cure for the natural mind ? Well, think of (1) in creation, and then,

(b) IN SALVATION:

For salvation involves your mind. In order to be saved, a person must first repent. Now repentance is a vital part of the gospel. Do you recall what John the Baptist cried ? “ *Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand.* ” (Matt 3:2) The Lord Jesus preached the same message of repentance. (Matt 4:17) Paul preached repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:21) What is repentance ? It's a change of mind. We change our minds about sin, God and eternity. With this change of mind comes a change of life. So the Christian life begins

with repentance and faith. It continues to grow as we cultivate our knowledge of the Word of God. Peter says, “ *But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* ” (2 Pet 3:18) A person who does not use his mind is not going to grow mentally or spiritually. God wants us to have a spiritual mind, the mind of Christ. (Phil 2:5) He wants our minds to be transformed. The Word of God says, “ *be ye transformed by the renew of your mind.* ” (Rom 12:2) My we’ll not have victory in the Christian life, unless we have an understanding of the Word of God, of how Satan works and of how God gives us the victory. (2 Cor 2:11) Now when Paul talks about the helmet of salvation, he is not indicating that you need to be saved. Paul had already discussed that issue in (2:8-9) You wouldn’t be in the army if you weren’t a believer. Satan would not attack you if you were not a Christian. I think the apostle is indicating something else here.

Many people today are confused about eternal security. Sometimes I am asked the question, “ *do you believe in the concept of once saved, always saved ?* ” People are concerned about that. They commit sin, and then they feel guilty. They often say, “ *I don’t know if I am saved anymore.* ” How can we understand the security of the Christian ? By understanding the meaning of salvation. A young girl travelling in a train noted that an Anglican Bishop sat across from her. Keen for the Lord and unabashed by the regalia of the clergyman the girl posed a question to the Bishop. “ *Are you saved ?* ” she asked. To this the Bishop looked up and smiled and then put a question back to the girl, “ *Do you mean if I have been*

saved in the past, or I am being saved now, or that I shall be saved in the future ? You see all three are true. ” Yes, there are three aspect of salvation.

1. The Past Aspect: Freedom from the Penalty of Sin:

If you were to ask me, “ *Are you a Christian ? Have you been saved ?* ” I would say *Yes, at nine years of age I received Jesus Christ as my Saviour. There and then I was saved from the penalty of sin. My sins were placed on Christ at the Cross and my penalty for those sins were paid in the death of Christ.* ” The Bible says, “ *there is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.* ” (Rom 8:1) 1.

2. The Present Aspect: Freedom from the Power of Sin:

For to those who were believers Paul says “ *take the helmet of salvation.* ” (6:17) Were they not already saved ? They were. Yet they were being saved. Paul has this aspect of salvation in mind when he wrote, “ *For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life.* ” (Rom 5:10) If the death of Christ was the means of our reconciliation, then the life of Christ is the means of our preservation. Christ lives to provide us with a day by day deliverance from the power of sin.

3. The Future Aspect: Freedom from the Presence of Sin:

What a hope to know what when “ *He shall appear we*

shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.”

(1 Jn 3:2) A day is coming when we will be saved from the presence of sin itself. ***Now listen, salvation has happened that’s justification, it is happening that’s sanctification and it will happen that’s glorification. Salvation is past, present and future. If salvation is past, it is accomplished. If it is present, then you can’t lose it because it is continuing. And if it is guaranteed in the future then you are absolutely secure.*** Now what is the enemy’s intention ? To persuade us we can never win. His whole strategy is to shake our assurance and to fill us with doubt, despair and depression. You see, it’s only when we understand God’s purpose in salvation that our minds can be protected from the onslaughts of the Devil. To rest with confidence on this truth that the Lord has saved us, is saving us and will save us will protect our minds from Satanic deception.

Do you recall Joseph ? When he was a teenager he dreamed of sheaves that bowed down before his sheaf and in another dream he saw the sun, moon and stars all make obeisance to him. When he shared these dreams it provoked wrath and envy in his brothers. However, when things went against Joseph he needed those dreams. You see, those dreams were an antidote to **doubt** when his brothers turned against him, beat him and abandoned him. Those dreams prevented **discouragement** when he was sold into Egypt. When he was tempted with **defilement** in Potiphar’s house it was undoubtedly the hope and assurance that God had a purpose for him which enabled Joseph to say no to lust. You see, his hope stemmed from the early revelation that God had given him and these

conditioned his mind for all the subsequent history that would befall him. Even when the full plan unfolded he confessed to his brethren, “ *But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*” (Gen 50:20) My we are fighting with the knowledge that we are bound to win. (1)

(2) THE INFLUENCES ON THE MIND

“ *Wouldn’t it be nice,*” as Richard Strauss comments “ *if Satan left us alone after we got saved ?*” You might think he would have no more interest in us. He can never lay claim to us again. Yet the Devil never seems to get off our case. Why is that ? Its because he has discovered that he can do as much damage to the cause of Christ by influencing a Christians mind as he can by totally controlling an unbelievers mind. You see, while a Christians mind has new capacities, it does not lose its old capacity for sin. A struggle is in progress. On the one hand there is an inclination toward God, on the other hand there is an inclination toward God, and on the other hand there is an inclination toward sin. (Rom 7:23-25) So the battle for our minds goes on long after salvation. And what a crucial battle it is.

You see, the sad thing is that some Christians do not realise that they are in a battle. Satan brainwashes them so subtlety that they don’t know what is happening. They are slowly and systematically saturated with the world’s philosophy and stripped of any effective usefulness for the Lord. (1 Jn 2:15-17) Now according to (6:11) the Devil

uses “ *wiles*, ” tricky schemes he employs devices, carefully designed plots. (2 Cor 2:11) His goal is to devour us, to swallow us up in sin and ruin our testimony. (1 Pet 5:8) Now what are the methods that he uses ?

(a) *THE USE OF THE MEDIA:*

How does Satan plants thoughts in our mind ? He uses the television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, films and billboards. Through this means he gets us bogged down in materialism, he slips his standards of morality into our minds. Do you see when you and I watch the soaps on television, do you know what is happening ? We are being duped by Satan, softened up to accept the world’s values. Do you spend hours before the television ? Has your mind become thoroughly saturated with what the world’s standards ? (Phil 4:8) What about,

(b) *FALSE DOCTRINE:*

For he is a master at making us more receptive to false doctrine. Do you recall Paul’s warning ? “ *In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.* ” (1 Tim 4:1) The ardent devotees of false religious systems say some very convincing things, and oft times the way they live secures for them the praise of men. But those things are simply Satan’s tactics for making their Unscriptural views more acceptable. Paul says “ *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, and no wonder for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.* ” (2 Cor 11:14)

The Devil also,

(c) *REPETITION:*

He knows the effect of hearing a message repeatedly, over a long period of time and from many different sources and he uses that tactic to great advantage. My our children and young folk are being bombarded constantly with erroneous messages from their teachers, lecturers, friends and friend’s parents. They are in danger of being deluded in matters such as sex, drugs, abortion, marital roles and divorce. Suddenly we hear them say, “ *Sex before marriage is alright if we have a meaningful relationship,* ” or “ *homosexuality is fine if that’s the way a person wants to live.* ” My the sheer weight and persistence of the opposition overwhelms us, and we really do want to be odd so we gave in and rationalise our surrender.

(d) *MUSIC:*

Is another tactic of the Devil. Dr. Richard Strauss says, “ *those who have studied the effects of contemporary music have found that it promotes the use of harmful drugs and the uninhibited practice of sex.* ” Then there is,

(e) *PEER PRESSURE:*

The kind of thing that young Daniel experienced in Babylon, the kind of thing that some of you young folk are experiencing this ! My what Satan can feed into our minds today, through the eye-gate and ear-gate will help him accomplish his devious ends tomorrow, next

week, next year, ten years down the line. It does not matter to him when he gets you, as long as he does. *Now is there any hope of winning this struggle ? Is victory possible ? Can we resist appeal to our sinful natures ?* Well, this is where the helmet of salvation comes in. For notice not only (1) (2)

(3) THE INJUNCTION FOR THE MIND

Look if you will at (6:17) Now as I have said before the Roman soldier had to defend himself against a broadsword. Satan's broadsword has two sides to it. You see, Satan wants to belt you on the head with discouragement and doubt. Think of the,

(a) THE BATTLE AGAINST DISCOURAGEMENT:

My are you a discouraged disciple ? Has Satan been whispering in your ear ? Has he been saying “ *You sure are giving a lot and not getting much in return.* ” You are conforming your life to the standards of God and setting yourself apart from the world but what happens ? You just lost your job. Some blessing. What's God doing in your life ? Are you discouraged because of a wife or husband who has no interest in the things of God ? Are you disheartened because no one would ever say thanks to you for your ministry ? Perhaps you have a physical weakness that really causes you to grow tired of struggling ? My don't look at present circumstances, cling to the hope of an eternal salvation and the glory that will be yours.

1. In the Old Testament Elijah battled with Discouragement:

Look if you will at (1 Kings 19:1-2) Elijah had just experienced a great victory by killing the false prophets of Baal. But then there was a quick turn of events. (19:1-2) Jezebel was a Baal worshipper and because of what Elijah did to her priests she was determined to kill him. Now if Elijah could handle 450 false prophets, you would think that one woman would not shake him. But he decided that the only thing he could do was run. (19:3-4) *Now that's what I call discouragement.* One moment he confronts the prophets of Baal undaunted, the next he flees panic stricken from the threat of a woman. One moment he is on the mountain victorious, the next he is in the valley defeated. He has come from the pinnacle to the pits. Have you ever been there ? Are you there now ? In the grip of despair ? Have you said, “ *Lord, I can't go on. I can't take anymore ?* ” Fanny Crosby was blind since early childhood and lived right through to 95 years of age. When she was eight she wrote a formula for her life which was entitled, “ ***Blind but Happy.*** ”

***O what a happy soul I am
Although I cannot see
I am resolved that in this world
Contented I will be
How many blessings I enjoy
That other people don't
To weep and sigh because I'm blind
I cannot and I won't***

My When Satan tries to debilitate you with his sword of discouragement remember this, “ *Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.* ” (Rom 13:11) Don’t give up. The end of the war is near. Your service for Christ is not in vain. Put on the helmet of salvation. 1.

2. In the New Testament Timothy battled with Discouragement:

What discouraged the young preacher boy ? Many things. For one he was young and tempted by youthful lusts. (1 Tim 4:12) People were saying that he was too young to know anything. (4:12) There were also false teachers who came to Ephesus and Timothy didn’t know if he could handle them. (1:4-7) Timothy was drowning in a sea of discouragement. So Paul wrote to encourage him, “ *Stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands, for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.* ” (1:6-7) Is Satan using the broadsword of discouragement against you ? Sometimes Satan whispers in my ear, “ *Why don’t you quit preaching for a while. Sure its very disheartening to be in the ministry. People don’t appreciate you, the church is doing the things you want it to do, why don’t you gave up on it.* ” But do you know something ? We need to keep going for the coronation day is coming.

Do you want to stand in front of your commanding officer with shame on your face because you quit in the middle of the battle ? I don’t know about you, but I want to be able to say, “ *Lord I may be bruised and bleeding, but I am here and I fought all the way.* ” My a great day of

victory is coming therefore don’t let Satan discourage you. Don’t let him take away the hope that helps you persevere. (a) But Satan has another edge on his sword for there is

(b) THE BATTLE AGAINST DOUBT:

1. The False Doctrine of Eternal Insecurity:

Is still with us. Do you know that Satan wants you to doubt your salvation ? After you have sinned Satan will say, “ *You’re not a Christian. Why would the Lord ever save you ?* ” Some folk say you can lose your salvation. Some are taught that you can never know if you’re saved until you face the Lord. Can you imagine living like that ? That would not be a fulfilment of (1 John 1:4) which says, “ *And these things write we unto you that your joy might be full.* ” You would have to change it to say, “ *These things are written unto you that you might be miserable.* ” How could you be joyful knowing that your salvation is a guessing game ? There are others who think that every time you sin, you lose your salvation. Can you imagine living under that kind of fear ? *Why does Satan want us to doubt our salvation ?* Because he wants us to doubt God’s promises. He wants us to believe that God does not keep His Word. He wants us to believe that God cannot hold onto us forever. He wants us to deny God’s power and resources. But over against 1, there stands,

2. The True Doctrine of Eternal Security:

How do you react to Satan’s attack of doubt ? The helmet

of salvation assures you that if you were saved in the past, you will be saved in the future. Do you recall Paul's words ? “ *Being confident of this very thing that He who hath begun a good work in you (past aspect) will perform it (present aspect) until the day of Jesus Christ (future aspect)* (Phil 1:6) Is that not enough to ward off the enemy's blows of doubt. Look if you will at (Jn 10:27-29) Christ here gives us a picture of the Christians eternal security. These verses describe the seven strands in a heavenly rope that bind us eternally to Christ. What are they ? John McArthur lists them.

1. The Character of the Shepherd:

“ *My sheep,*” Whose sheep are you ? If you are Christ's sheep, it's His duty as a Shepherd to care for you and protect you. If He loses you that is a slur against His own ability as a Shepherd.

2. The Character of the Sheep:

“ *My sheep hear My voice,*” Although they occasionally stumble and sin, they know whom to follow.

3. The Definition of Eternal Life:

“ *And I give unto them eternal life,*” How long does eternal life last ? Forever. To speak of it ending is a contradiction in terms.

4. The Definition of a Gift:

“ *I give unto them,*” you didn't do anything to earn eternal life, and you don't do anything to keep it. It's a gift.

5. The Truthfulness of Christ:

“ *They shall never perish,*” if Christians were to perish that would make Christ a liar. But God cannot lie and what God says is trustworthy. (Titus 1:2)

6. The Power of Christ:

“ *Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand,*”

7. The Power of the Father:

Look at (10:29) In (10:28) Christ says they are in My hand, in (10:29) they are in the Father's hand. That's double protection. My nothing or no-one can rescind God's salvation or snatch you from His shepherding hand. No wonder Paul says, “ *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” (Rom 8:38-39) Has Satan been filling your mind with discouragement and doubts ? Be assured that the day of glory is coming. Your salvation which includes future glory is eternally secure in Christ. Someday there will be a reward for you when the Saviour faces you and says “ *Well done good and faithful servant,*” (Matt 25:23) The day of victory is coming, so don't bail out. Win the battle for your mind, put on the helmet.

