

“Jesus, Reset My Mind” - I Am What I Think About – Romans 12:1-2

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Welcome to week two in our series, *Reset: Jesus Changes Everything*. We kicked off this series last week, and if you were here, you'll recall that I said we are centering each of our times together on something of a prayer, that Jesus would “reset” our hearts—which was last week's topic—and then our minds, which is what we'll talk about today. From there, we'll pray, “Jesus, reset our voice.” And, “Jesus, reset our hands.”

We're working toward a *reset of the soul*, if you will, and I'm especially happy you are here today, because so much of our soul's health begins in the *mind*. With our *thoughts*. With the synapses that are firing in and through our brains moment by moment, all day long.

Also, this is where most struggle begins—with a dark thought. A thought of despair. A thought of fear. A thought of inadequacy. A thought of greed. A thought of hopelessness. A thought of hatefulness. A thought of arrogance. A thought of rage. *This* is the army that besieges us day by day, line after line of armed soldiers marching through our minds, just dying to pick a fight. To which Jesus says, “Bring it on.”

Can I show you how this plays out? This war between evil thoughts and the One to whom all things—evil thoughts included—must bow down? In our Gospel lesson from today from Mark 5, we see that when Jesus arrives in the region of the Gerasenes (Jerr – uh – scenes) he is met by a man possessed by a demon. He lived in the cemetery and no one could contain him. When Jesus asked his name, he called himself “legion” for he was possessed by many. Jesus healed the man and he was now in his right mind and people marveled. The Message says he was no longer “a walking madman,” and that he became the “talk of the town.”

Don't you love that last line? “*He was the talk of the town.*” Yeah, I *bet* he was. Can you imagine if this happened here in our town? [Pastor, play this out a little with specifics from your area...]

When errant, evil thoughts plague our minds, a walking madman or madwoman is exactly how we feel, isn't it? Quite literally, the mind that has not been reset is having hell break loose in it even now.

There is a young woman in Houston who believes she is worthless, hopeless, and fat. She is nineteen years old. When she was eight years old a neighbor took advantage of her. The encounter didn't last long, but the effects did. Not knowing where to turn for help, she turned inward, stuffing her secret deep, hoping nobody would ever know. She had been used and then tossed aside, a message that struck—and then misshaped—her soul. “I'm worthless,” her inner voice began repeating. “I'm a throw-away.” “I'm hopeless.” And eventually, after turning to junk-food binges for solace for years on end, “I'm fat.”

Another nineteen-year-old woman, this one in Chicago, believes that the idea of God is nothing more than a cruel joke. Of course he doesn't exist. And even if he did, how could he love someone like her? For so many years, she was told that she was the reason her mother suffered from severe depression, that if she hadn't been born, things would have been easier on the mom. Sometimes the mom would convey these things on the way to church, which was part of the family's every-weekend routine. How could her mother scorn her one minute and then sing praises to God the next? God was a joke. Life was a joke.

Today in Texas there is a man in his seventies who was diagnosed ten years ago with type 2 diabetes. He thinks about that diagnosis every night, late at night, after his wife has gone to bed, while he sits quietly in the living room, watching one crime drama or another, stuffing himself full with whatever sugary fix he can find—cookies, ice cream, cake, donuts, crackers, bowl after bowl after bowl of Frosted Flakes. “What’s the use in trying to change my habits now?” he reasons. “I’m doomed to a diseased life.”

Today, a fifty-five-year-old man is catching yet another flight, bound for yet another speaking engagement. He is determined to reinvent himself after leaving a pastoring role he’d held for two decades’ time. His marriage feels rocky, his three children are grown and don’t need him like they used to, and his “friendships” were all based on the power he held at the church. What now? He thinks about that question a lot. What now, for someone who, according to his inner voice, is “past his prime, not needed or wanted by loved ones, and a little aimless these days, truth be told.”

Today, a mom of three pours herself a glass of wine after work, her third so far. “Just a way to unwind,” she reasons silently. “The alcoholism that runs in my family? It hasn’t affected me.”

Closer to home—there is us. You and me, here in this room, wondering how in the world we can go on. For some of us, this isn’t the case today. Today is jubilation. Celebration. Relief. But for others of us? It’s not that at all. It’s *struggle*. Turmoil. Loss. Hopelessness. Helplessness. Pain. In our thought life, anyway, all hell has broken loose. In the deepest part of us, we’re longing for heaven, even as hell seems to be breaking loose. We’re walking madwomen and men.

Let me draw us back to the madman of Mark 5. Do you remember what the walking madman did, upon realizing that Jesus was nearby? “When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before Him. Despite the maddening realities he faced—in his mind, and therefore in his body and spirit too—he rushed toward, not away from, the Messiah, and he lowered himself in submission to the King.

See, this is why week 1 of this series had to precede week 2, because until our faith is reset from faith-in-self to faith-in-Jesus, all other resets elude us, including the one we are focused on today, the *reset of the mind*.

Until we realize that Jesus is near—and he *is* near to us today; until we rush toward Jesus and bow down in worship, surrendering our self-made propensities and plans; until we allow him to reset our faith—“I can’t fix what is wrong with me, apart from your power, Lord!” . . . Until these things happen in our lives, we will continue to see war waged in our minds. We will continue to need a reset.

These debilitating thoughts are real, aren’t they? They are real, and their effects are real. Most times, they feel more real than even the realities we are actually facing. The fear feels more real than the admittedly tough situation actually is. The stress feels more real than the admittedly tough circumstances actually are. The hopelessness feels more real than the admittedly tough relational strain really is.

Two things I’d like you to consider. The **first one** is this: **We would do well to remember that we can only think one thought at a time.** If you and I are thinking a life-giving thought, we can’t also be thinking a life-sucking one. If we are thinking a pure thought, we can’t also be thinking an impure one. You see where I’m headed here.

If the young woman in Houston is thinking that she might just be worth something, she can’t also be thinking that she’s worthless. If the ice-cream-loving Texas man is thinking that healthfulness might

just be within reach, he can't also be thinking he's doomed forever to disease . . . at least not at the very same time. We do well to remember that we can only think one thought at a time.

Which brings me to my **second consideration**: **Choose to think something good**. In 2 Corinthians 10, the apostle Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, says this: "For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ."

In his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul writes this: "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Philippians 4:8).

Take your thought life captive, Paul says. Don't let thoughts roam through your mind unattended. Seize them! Hold them captive! Demand that they comply! And then this: Fill your mind with true, excellent thoughts, so that all evilness will be eclipsed.

Have a listen to this week video's take on this idea.

[Play video "Week 2, Clip 2: Reset My Mind."]

Yes! Jesus wants to reset our minds! He wants to teach us how to think pure thoughts. You are loved! You are forgiven! You are valuable! You are not condemned! (Gospel application)

The reason Jesus wants to reset our thinking is that once we start internalizing this stuff—"I am loved! I am forgiven! I am valuable! —we can radically *change the world*, in his name. When we see that we are priceless creations of the most high God, we start treating everyone else like they matter too. Do you see why our thought life matters? We treat others the way that we feel about ourselves. If we are richly blessed, irrationally loved, and divinely purposed, do you think that posture will affect how we see everyone else? You better believe it will.

And so, we start here. With one simple thought. *I am loved. I am enough.* I am seen. I am victorious. I matter to God. Hope is not lost. Hope is *here*, nearby. This stuff will change your life.

Closing Illustration

You know, more than a century ago, two neurologists were studying the effects of the brain on the body—in other words, they wanted to know how *what we think* impacts *how we are*. This happened to be in the days when women wore huge hats, the kind with fancy feathers on top that added a good ten inches to a woman's overall height.

The researchers noticed that when women who typically wore these massive constructions were walking through doors, they would duck, even if they didn't have on a hat that day. "Their mental self was wearing the hat," the researchers noted, "even if their physical self wasn't."

Of note for us, as we think about resetting our minds, our thoughts, I want to encourage you to give yourself some grace as you step through future "doors." As you allow Jesus to reset your thoughts from self-defeating to victorious, from those centered on worthlessness and despair to those centered on pricelessness and hope, you will surely catch yourself "ducking" from time to time. You'll forget you no longer have on the hat of self-condemnation, of self-denigration, of depression and misery and angst, and instinctively, your chin will drop, your shoulders will slouch, your posture will curve, and

you'll make room for that old hat to clear the jamb. That old hat that is no longer on your head. My encouragement to you? ***Stay the course.***

Here's why: Romans 12:2 confirms that the path to genuine spiritual transformation—in other words, the radically reset life—is paved by one thing, and one thing alone: *the renewing of our minds*. When we think different thoughts, we will be different people, guaranteed. I want this reset, don't you? I want to think different thoughts, starting today. **Please pray with me...**

“Father, here we are, your children, in need of you. We need your presence, your power, your wisdom, and your love. We need your reminder for how to live the life that is truly life. *True life* . . . that's what we are after here. True life and true thoughts. May we lean into what you say about us, Father, and cast aside the myriad opinions from others about who we are, where we've been, and what we're worth. Help us leave the madness behind, God. Help us receive the healing, the beauty, the courage, the confidence, the *reset* we find in you. In Jesus's name we pray, amen.”