

Title: Change Your Life By Changing Your Mind
“Transformed: How God Changes Us.” Part 4: Mental Health

We have been in our sermon series, “Transformed: How God Changes Us.” Over the past three Sundays, we have studied the importance of setting faith-filled goals for our life transformation, and we’ve looked at the first two areas of change: our spiritual health and our physical health.

Today, we are going to explore the third vital area: our mental health. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 4:23: “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” When we pause and observe our daily lives, we quickly realize that we are largely shaped by what we think. Every single action begins with a tiny seed of a thought. Actions always start in our minds.

The seventeenth-century French philosopher Blaise Pascal made a famous observation that fits our theme well today. He said: “Man is a thinking reed.” He was pointing out the dual nature of our human existence. On one hand, we are physically fragile—like a slender reed swaying in the wind, easily bent or broken by the pressures of this world. But on the other hand, unlike a simple plant, we possess the God-given power of thought. Through our minds, we can comprehend the majesty of God and the immensity of His creation. Even though we may feel weak in our bodies, we can live victorious lives when we learn how to guard our minds and think well.

Whether we are walking, driving, working, talking, or simply relaxing, we are constantly thinking about something. Whatever we think about, we will eventually end up doing—whether it is good or bad. That is the tremendous power of the human mind. If our minds are filled with good things, our lives will be healthy. But if we allow evil or negative thoughts to take root, our words and our actions will quickly become unhealthy. I truly believe that our mindset determines the course of our lives, and every one of us carries a personal responsibility for our own thoughts. If we manage our minds well, we can experience deep, lasting peace. But if our thoughts are left unchecked, we will find ourselves overwhelmed by anxiety, pressure, and stress. That is why we must be so careful about how we think. So this morning, I want us to examine three practical, divine choices we can make to cultivate a healthy mind on our journey of faith.

Firstly, we must feed our minds with truth. We all know that our bodies require good nutrition to stay healthy. Healthy food makes us strong, while junk food harms our bodies. The same principle applies to our mind. We must feed our thoughts—not with cultural junk, but with divine truth. And that truth is found right here in Holy Scripture. When we open the Bible, we meet men and women of faith who learned to fill their minds with godly thoughts. Throughout their faith journeys, they made a conscious effort to think about how to please God in everything they did.

Think of King David. He wrote that the Word of God was “a lamp for my feet and a light on my path” (Psalm 119:105). David truly cherished God’s Word, declaring that it was “sweeter than honey to my mouth” (Psalm 119:103). Even in the middle of the night, he

would wake up just to meditate on God's truth (Psalm 119:97). That deep, daily devotion is precisely why Scripture calls David a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14).

So let us ask ourselves an honest question today: Do we feed our minds with the Word of God every day? When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness to use His power to turn stones into bread, He replied: "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4). The Word of God is our soul food. The theologian Blaise Pascal famously observed that inside every human heart there is a "God-shaped vacuum"—a deep spiritual longing that worldly possessions, entertainment or status can never satisfy. When God created humanity from the dust of the ground, He breathed into us the breath of life (Genesis 2:7), and we became living beings. Because of how God designed us, we have two distinct types of hunger: Physical hunger, which requires food from the earth and Spiritual hunger, which requires divine truth given to us from above.

When I was ten years old, a friend invited me to his church, and I began attending Sunday school. Encouraged by my Sunday school teacher, I challenged myself to memorize Psalm 1. At the time, as a young boy, I didn't fully grasp what those sacred words would mean for my future. But looking back today over my long journey with God, I realize just how deeply that scripture has guided, guarded, and blessed my life. Of course, there were times when I stumbled and failed to walk closely with the Lord, my Shepherd. Yet even in those moments of weakness, the Word of God planted in my mind as a ten-year-old child kept calling me back to the right path. God's Word helped me choose righteousness whenever I was tempted to stand in the path of sinners (Psalm 1:1).

We need to understand how temptation and habits work. When we repeat certain behaviours over time, they turn into fixed habits—and without God's truth, some of those patterns become defective. Just as we must discipline our physical bodies to eat well and exercise rather than indulge in junk food—just as a doctor might tell you, "Take care of your physical heart"—we must also guard our spiritual hearts: our thoughts, our focus, and our minds.

Do you know the primary strategy Satan uses against us today? He bombards our minds with ungodly input through what we read, listen to, and watch. But we cannot change our habits without first changing our hearts. Temptation is rarely a one-time, isolated event. It is a process. Pastor Rick Warren breaks down this process into four distinct steps. Step one is desire. Step two is doubt. Step three is deception. Step four is disobedience.

The good news is that Jesus, our Good Shepherd, completely overcame Satan's temptation! In our Gospel reading today, Jesus shows us exactly how to respond when the enemy attacks us with desire, doubt, deception, and disobedience. Jesus reminds us of the critical importance of feeding our minds with godly thoughts. He taught the crowd that it is not what goes into a person's mouth that defiles them spiritually—it is what comes out of the heart (Matthew 15:10-20). The religious leaders of His day

focused heavily on outward rituals and appearances, but Jesus pointed out that outward rule-keeping cannot produce true inner holiness. Food only affects the physical body, but our words and actions come directly from the core of our minds and hearts.

We must renew our minds daily with truth rather than ungodly influences. That is why having a daily personal devotion time with God is so essential. Through this daily quiet time with the Lord, our thoughts are nourished with spiritual nutrition, and our hearts are transformed. Remember: renewing our minds is not a one-time event. Cleaning our hearts takes time. God calls us to continually store up whatever is pure, lovely, and praiseworthy in our hearts (Philippians 4:8). In Christ, real transformation is possible. As we consistently pour God's Word into our spirits, He changes us from the inside out. Let us keep examining our hearts through Scripture and surrendering our lives to Jesus, so that He can transform us into His beautiful creation.

The second choice we need to make is to focus our minds on the right things. There is a well-known saying: We become whatever we think about most. If we constantly fix our thoughts on Jesus—on His character, His love, and His grace—we naturally begin to reflect Him in our daily lives. Because we are in Christ, we gain the capacity to live like Him, think like Him, speak like Him, and act like Him. This means we also need to learn to think about eternity. There is so much more to life than just the here and now. The trap many of us fall into today is short-term, worldly thinking.

In our Epistle reading today, the Apostle Paul challenges us: "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Colossians 3:2). Paul reminds us that even though we walk in this world, we have died with Christ to its elemental spiritual forces (Colossians 2:20). That is why he insists on this heavenly focus: "Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1). Notice that Paul is not making a gentle suggestion here—this is a godly command. Once again, it is not a one-time decision. It is an ongoing, daily transformation that continues until the Lord calls us home. We are called to seek heavenly things in every moment of our lives.

What does it actually mean to set our hearts on things above? It means practicing the presence of God daily and letting Him continually renew our hearts. Paul uses a striking picture to explain this: he compares spiritual growth to changing dirty clothes into clean ones (Colossians 3:9-10). To recover the beautiful image of God in which we were created, we must take off the old self—the broken, earthly nature we were born with—and wrap ourselves in the new self that Christ provided through His cross and resurrection. Please understand this: we cannot clean ourselves up through our own willpower. Only the power of the blood of Jesus Christ can wash away our sins and free us from the patterns that bind us.

I read a fascinating article about flightless birds. Biologists point out two main reasons why certain birds lose their ability to fly. First, physical weight: Birds like ostriches, emus, and cassowaries are simply too heavy or massive for wings to lift. Second, lack of challenge: Birds like penguins, kiwis, and domestic poultry lived in environments where

they faced no predators and had food readily available at ground level. Consider the kiwi bird, a national icon of New Zealand. Kiwis have wings, but they are completely useless for flight. Why? Because the fertile soil where they live provides an abundance of insects and earthworms right beneath their feet. They never had to strain themselves or reach for the sky to find food. Over generations, they grew complacent, stayed on the ground, and their wings shrank into useless stubs.

As we reflect on why those birds did not fly, we have to ask ourselves an uncomfortable question: Are we soaring in the spiritual realm, or have we become flightless Christians? When earthly comforts and worldly pleasures become more important to us than the things of God, we become just like those flightless birds. When we settle for the temporary, fleeting treats this world offers, our spiritual wings can deteriorate.

Brothers and sisters, we live in this world, but we are not of this world! We must fix our minds on heavenly realities—on God, on eternal life, and on Christian virtues. When we keep our hearts focused above, then when Christ appears, we too will appear with Him in glory! The people around us—even sometimes our fellow believers—might not always notice or appreciate what you do for God’s kingdom. But the Lord sees every quiet sacrifice. He sees our hearts, and He will reward us abundantly. Let us set our minds on things above, trusting that God will renew our minds and help us soar like eagles in His spiritual realm every day!

Thirdly, we need to fill our thoughts with prayers. In our Psalm for today, the Psalmist writes: "Evening, morning, and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice" (Psalm 55:17). Praying in the morning, at noon, and during the night is not about religious legalism—it shows a heart that continuously depends on God throughout the entire day. When we feel overwhelmed, God invites us to cry out to Him, trust in His deliverance, and place our heavy burdens onto His shoulders. Another Psalm says, "Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws" (Psalm 119:164). How often are we supposed to pray? I know that praying constantly might sound intimidating. But persistent prayer is not about counting hours or keeping a must-do list. It is a matter of priority. When someone or something is a top priority in our lives, we naturally make time for them in our busy schedules. We reach out, we talk, and we cultivate that relationship. If an intimate relationship with God is our highest priority, coming to Him in prayer won’t feel like a chore. We will joyfully place our thoughts in His hands, listen for His guidance, and draw on His strength.

I don’t know about you, but the longer I walk with the Lord, the more I realize just how much I cannot do on my own. I desperately need God’s protection, His provision, and His presence every single day. Too often, I try to tackle life’s challenges in my own strength, only to find myself overwhelmed as problems pile up. That is why I have learned to kneel before our Almighty God and tell Him—humbly and honestly—every anxiety and concern in my heart. Once again, think of King David. In Psalm 121, he asks himself where his help comes from. As the powerful king of Israel, David could have listed his armies, his vast knowledge, his wealth, or his royal advisors. Instead, he made a humble declaration: "My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and

earth” (Psalm 121:2). David knew that true strength comes from keeping our eyes fixed on God.

Throughout the Bible, prayer is mentioned nearly four hundred times! Prayer has the power to move the heart of God. Prayer opens doors that seem impossible and brings peace into chaotic situations. Think of an electrical appliance. If you have a refrigerator, a washing machine, or a microwave, you don’t expect it to work unless it’s plugged into a wall outlet. Prayer is like our spiritual power cord. When we pray, we plug ourselves into God’s unlimited power, grace, and love. Our negative, discouraged thoughts begin to shift as God renews our minds from the inside out. We should not pray only when trouble strikes. We should bring everything to God—our families, our work, our children, our community, and our world. As we fill our thoughts with prayer, God promises to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

In our daily lives, there are always two ways to view our problems: we can obsess over the difficulty, or we can take it to God. Do you know the difference between worry and meditation? If we replay our problems over and over in our heads, that is worrying. If we replay God’s Word and His promises over our circumstances, that is meditation. The only difference is what we choose to focus on! When I faced heavy seasons some time ago, I sang that familiar hymn: “I must tell Jesus all of my trials, I cannot bear these burdens alone...” Those words deeply comforted me because I knew I could not carry the weight by myself. Too often, even as believers, we try to solve everything on our own first, turning to God only as a last resort.

Do we look at only the tough situations we are in, or do we keep on focusing our eyes on Jesus, who is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2)? If we focus only on our circumstances, we cannot move forward along the bright path God has set before us. We get tired, burdened, and discouraged. Now, please understand me: I am not saying we should ignore reality. We have to face real situations as we live in this world. But at the same time, we need to include Jesus while we do our math! Focusing our eyes on Jesus means continually asking, seeking, and knocking in prayer. When we pray persistently, we don’t just discover what God can do in the future—we also realize what He has done in the past and what He is doing right now in the present. That helps us look past our problems to God and gives us strength to move in His direction. Persistent prayer gives us the eyes of Jesus to see what He is going to do. When we pray, God will keep our minds and our thoughts, no matter what challenges we face.

To conclude, God gave each of us a brilliant mind—it is one of His greatest gifts to us. But our mind is also the primary battleground where Satan attacks. To experience true health and victory, we must put these three divine choices into practice regularly. First, we need to feed our minds with truth. Let us ask God to help us reject cultural junk and nourish our souls with His Word. Second, we need to focus our minds on the right things. Let us ask God to help us fix our eyes on Jesus, love others, and live with eternity in view. Third, we need to fill our minds with prayer. Let us cast our anxieties on Him, stay plugged into His strength, and let Him guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, I want us to read the first part of our series theme verse aloud together. This holy text is projected on the screens. Are we ready? Let us recite it together: “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2). Let us ask God to help each of us to make these healthy choices daily and transform our minds, break our old habits, and shape us into the likeness of Jesus, both today and in the days ahead. Amen.

** In this sermon, I have used some material from Pastor Rick Warren’s sermon called “Change Your Life By Changing Your Mind,” and this message is based on the following texts: Psalm 55:16–19; Matthew 15:10–20; Colossians 3:1–10*