

THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST
Supplement 3

OUR THOUGHT LIFE

*From a series of pre-sermon messages by Brother David Danner
Cedarvale Conservative Mennonite Church
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“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true,
Whatsoever things *are* honest,
Whatsoever things *are* just,
Whatsoever things *are* pure,
Whatsoever things *are* lovely,
Whatsoever things *are* of good report;
If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise,
Think on these things.”

Philippians 4:8

Introduction

I greet each one this evening in the name of Jesus the One who made it possible for us to be led to heaven and to experience the blessings that He is preparing for us there.

The order of the service each evening in this revival meeting service I have felt led to have us looking for a few minutes at the beginning of the message time at the theme of our thought life and I would like to think about the various subjects that are touched in Philippians 4:8.

This evening I would like to simply to introduce the idea of thought life and the importance that it plays in all of our lives.

Philippians 4:8

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

#1.

I can't look into your mind this evening and see or know what is in your mind and there is probably a little more sense in which you can look at me and know what is in my mind because I'm speaking this evening, but I can't look into your mind and see what is there but God can. He can see it in each of our minds and He can as the hymn writer puts it: That He knows our thoughts before they are our own. God knows them but the Scripture has as "a man thinketh in his heart so is he." [Proverbs 23:7](#)

If a man thinks bitter thoughts it isn't long till he is a bitter man. If a man is contented and he thinks contented thoughts he is a contented man, but the man who is ungrateful and unthankful for the things that he has becomes a man who is very demanding and expectant of his rights and so we find many people like that in our world today.

A man who is joyful in his experience will experience happiness. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.

Another Scripture that comes to mind as we think about this matter of thought life is the Scripture that says that we need to bring into captivity every thought, to bring into captivity every thought. Something that is brought into captivity is placed under restraint and our thought life needs to be like that, our thought life needs to be brought under restraint. There are restrictions, there are some places we don't let our thought life go, there are some things that we will refuse to think about and meditate upon. ([Read 2 Corinthians 10:5](#))

There are other things that we may think of that we need to analyze very carefully, we analyze it very carefully because we need to consider what motivates me to think these thoughts? What is the motivation? Because the motivation determines whether it is right or whether it is wrong.

And then there are other thoughts, meditations from the Scripture for instance, that we can meditate on again and again we can recall them to mind, and they are refreshing and they are encouraging and they are things that will build us up and strengthen us in our faith.

The thought life is a very, very important as aspect of our lives.

There are not many of us sitting here this evening with our minds kicked out of gear, in fact I hope you aren't sitting here with your mind kicked out of gear, but our minds from the time we get up in the morning till we go to sleep at night, I was going to say until we go to bed, but sometimes when we go to bed our minds keep going for a while, but until we actually go to sleep at night our minds are going and going and going and what we are thinking about will greatly affect what kind of life we live.

Well that's an introduction to the matter of thought life and we will be looking each evening at one of the things mentioned in Philippians 4 verse eight.

#2.

May it be the desire of each of one of us this evening that we may be closer to Him, if we are not close to Him this evening it is not because it is not possible and it is not because He has moved but if we are not close to Him it is because we have moved.

Each evening we will be looking for a few minutes at a thought from Philippians 4 verse eight.

We introduced the idea of thought life last evening and we are picking up the first one here the things that he tells us to think about.

The first one he talks about is finally whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are true. And Pilate asked the question: "What is truth?" What is truth? ([John 18:38](#).) Well we could make an easy definition by saying that it is not lying and [Ephesians 4:25](#) tells us to put away lying, it says: "Wherefore put away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour for we are all members one of another."

As we think about truth one of the ways to think about truth is to speak the truth, to speak that which we know is true and not to enter into that which is falsehood. Now there are sometimes those who have a sensitive conscience who are plagued with a feeling that they must have told an untruth.

We had a brother and number of years ago who I work with in the local community who felt the need to come and ask for forgiveness numerous

times because he found out after he had told us something that something was a little different than the way he had told it and he felt convicted that he had told a lie.

That is not what we are speaking about this evening.

When we tell the truth as best we know it even though we may learn at a later time that we may have to go and tell someone that you have found out differently and correct the situation from that point, we don't believe just because something is different in the way we thought it was that we have told a lie. Now I don't think there's anyone here and I doubt that there is anyone here this evening that is comfortable telling what you know is an outright lie but some of us may have the temptation to shade the truth and be less than fully honest.

Maybe it is more what we don't say than what we do say but if we leave someone under a false impression we have told an untruth

Truth sometimes seems to be relevant, or relative I should say it that way, truth seems to be relative because of the differing perspectives from which we view it but truth itself is not relative, it is an absolute, and as absolute as truth is we should be very careful and cautious about calling another person a liar, because when we call someone a liar we are looking through the lens of perspective that colors our judgement, and when we call someone a liar we are taking it upon ourselves to read another person's motives and only God can do that.

So it may be all right at times to tell someone that we are not sure that they are being altogether honest that they are telling the truth in full but to call someone a liar outright is taking truth. pretty much upon ourselves.

We want to think about or thinking about truth this evening and how our thought life needs to be surrounded around truth.

Too often our questions are like Pilate when we say what is truth? I don't think that Pilate was having so much a problem determining what truth was as he was having a problem with accepting what he knew to be truth, that's where the problem lay. And too often that is our problem when we ask what is truth we are not ready to accept that which we already know.

So what is the truth that we should be putting our minds upon?

Here are just a few truths about God that we need to know and that we can ponder upon. We can ponder upon the fact that He is light, we can ponder upon the thought that He is love, we ponder upon His mercy and His compassion but we also remember that God is just and He judges men according to truth as the Scripture says.

When we ponder upon truth in relation to man we know that we as men are weak and needy and we are inclined to do evil but it is by His grace, God's grace that we can be a people to His praise and to His glory.

In business life we think about truth, we deal fairly with those that we are working with those that we deal with. We represent our product honestly. In social life we give the benefit of the doubt to others.

As we think about this matter of truth I wonder if one of the places where we fall short is in the matter of membership, in membership in church as we become members of a congregation. In our Mennonite circles we each have our rules and discipline that we give as directives to be followed and we say that when we become a member that we will live by it and we will do our best to present it and promote it. Each counsel meeting we again reaffirm that we are in harmony with it but too often we use those rules and discipline as a guideline or as an average to work by.

And my understanding of rules and discipline are that they are to be the fence, that we stay on this side of the fence and not get over on the other side of the fence, and that bothers me sometimes how that people can say that they are in harmony with the rules and discipline and yet live outside of the fence. I don't understand that, I don't see where that comes into the matter of truth.

Edgar Allan Guest penned these words over 60 years ago he said:

"I have to live with myself and so I want to be fit for myself to know, I want to be able to as days go by always to look myself straight in the eye, I don't want to stand with the setting sun and hate myself for the things I've done.

I don't want to keep on a closet shelf a lot of secrets about myself and fool myself as I come and go
Into thinking that nobody else will know the kind of the man that I really am.

I don't want to dress up myself in sin; I never can hide myself from me
I see what others may never see; I know what those may never know,
I've never can fool myself and so whatever happens
I want to be self-respecting and conscience free."

As we think about the matter of truth this evening I think that although there may be some few who are very conscientious whose conscience troubles them too quickly for most of us in the matter of truthfulness we need to help our conscience to be more conscientious and more sensitive than it is.

May God help us to think things that are true and to ponder upon that which is truth rather than that which is false.

#3.

We greet each one this evening in the name of Jesus the one who extended the hand of love to Peter there in that situation that we just sang about for Peter went out across the water doing something that man generally cannot do.

It is used in this hymn and I believe used in the Scripture in a way that helps us to understand that the power that Christ's has to work in our lives as we are walking across a water, we are walking across turbulent water as far as walking in this world is concerned and the only way that we are going to be able to come through that is when we lift our eyes to Christ, it is the only way.

Whenever Peter looked at the water and whenever we look at the situations and circumstances of life we begin to sink, but when Peter lifted his eyes to Jesus he was able to walk on the water and so will we, we will be able to find our way through the circumstances in life. [Matthew 14:28-29](#).

May we ever look to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, the only one who can bring us through triumphant and victorious. [Hebrews 12:2](#).

Each evening we are looking at one of the thoughts found in [Philippians 4 verse eight](#).

The one that we are going to look at tonight is “Whatsoever things are honest.”

Now you might think what's he going to say that is different to last evening because last evening we were looking at truth and what is the difference between truth and honesty? And I will grant you there is not much difference between them but if you look in a Greek dictionary and check out the word here there is considerable difference in meaning from the Greek text.

The word honest here is the same word that is translated "grave" when it says in first Timothy let the deacons be grave. But in many ways it seems to be a very different word there when he says whatsoever things are honest but it is exactly the same Greek word. And the word here means to give honour, to venerate, to think of things that are honourable and it is from that standpoint that we are going to think this evening upon those words. [1. Timothy 3:8](#)

Jesus, the Scripture says honored his Father, his Father in heaven and we with our thoughts and words should give admiration, adoration which reflects upon God's Majesty, reflects upon His sovereignty and His power and holiness as we looked at this evening in the devotional. [John 8:49](#)

We look to God with reverence and awe, recognizing Him as the Sovereign, Almighty, all knowing creator of the universe and we bow ourselves before Him in His presence.

The Prophet says: “The Lord is in his holy temple let all the earth keep silence before him.” [Habakuk.2:20](#).

That is honourable in relation to the heavenly Father. We always speak of Him if we think honestly as the word is used here we always think and speak of Him in honourable tones with respect and reverence.

Now the Scripture tells us that we are to honour our parents and I don't see anyone here this evening that does not have parents, you have a father and you have a mother, maybe they are not living any more, but even if they are not living you can honour them by how you respect their teaching, how you speak and how you think of them. Maybe your parents did make some mistakes, in fact I'm sure they did, but most of us if not all of us here this evening are where we are because of what our parents taught us and the example they gave us, and as much as they served the Lord and worked under His direction we need to give honour to them as our parents, even those who were not as what they should be, even parents who go wrong deserve honour. [Ephesians 6:2](#).

God doesn't when to honour thy father and mother, it does not specify that they need to be God fearing people. There is a certain amount of respect and honour that is always due to our parents but there is a special respect and honour to those who have been faithful in guiding us right.

I cannot think of any case in which we should speak or think dishonorably of our parents, we should respect and reverence them for what they are and what good they have done and where they have made mistakes we need to forgive them and move on. Honour your parents.

The Bible also teaches us that we should not honour ourselves.

It is an example of that back in the book of [Esther](#) when Haman tried to bring honour to himself and we see in that story how God works and brought that to nothing, brought it to nought.

We should not seek to bring honour to ourselves as Simon did when he desired to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit. Simon wasn't thinking right he didn't understand all that he was taught when he thought that somehow he could purchase such power. [Acts 8:18](#).

But the Scripture does teach us to be humble in accepting honour that is given to us. Go back to the story of [Esther](#) and you have the man Mordechai who was given honour but he accepted that humbly, he did not go looking for that, he did not go seeking it, but he accepted that honour humbly.

And think about Paul, I was thinking last evening when Brother Edwin shared with us these verses out of Acts 28 and this stood out to me in verse 10, verse nine talks about the people of the land who are healed of diseases and so forth and verse 10 it says: You also honored us with many honours.

[Acts 28:9-10](#)

Now Paul could have allowed that to lift him up but I don't see that happening here rather he was simply accepting the honour that was due simply from the fact that he was pastoring them that he was helping them and he accepted that honour under the grace of God, I believe giving that honour back to the Lord, who also honored us with many honours.

So there is a right and proper honour that is given to those who give of themselves in helping us, in guiding us a long the way, whoever that is, our parents, teachers, church leaders, each one in their respective place, a place to honour them in their labors. And think and speak of them in an honourable way.

We are thinking of thought life here and how we think whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are honourable.

In [first Peter 2:17](#) it has this short thought it says: Honour the King.

Sometimes in our society, I'm reflecting now from the US side, I do not know much about what happens here in Canada in relation to that but I think people are much the same, and sometimes it is people that come into my store and they begin to talk derogatory about civil leaders, the President, here it would be the Prime Minister, and it doesn't take too much of that until I am ill at ease and I have had to explain to some of them that you know that is not the way we talk about our civil leaders around my store, we just simply don't do that.

We accept the fact, we understand the fact that these men are men but these men are placed there by God and we speak of them in honourable ways. We show respect and give due reverence towards them.

Now most times I don't come out quite that blunt and tell them that but if they understand what I begin to tell them why they soon realized that I am not here to listen to their derogatory statements.

Paul at one point in Acts was speaking to the High Priest and he did not know that he was speaking to the High Priest and he called him a whitened sepulcher and someone beside him said: “You speak that way about the High Priest?” And Paul immediately recalled his words even though this man, even though this man was a spiritual leader, even though this man was holding a position that really no longer existed, Paul recognised the fact that for him to speak derogatory about this man was going to undermine his own authority. [Acts 23:4](#)

That is what happens when we speak derogatory about other authority, we undermine our own authority. Honour the King, honour church leaders. Remembering that yes they are men and they do make mistakes but because of the position that God has called them to they deserve our respect in their respective offices.

That same verse in [first Peter 2:17](#) says: “honour all men.” What does that mean?

That means that we respect all men as persons, as human beings, as persons with a living soul no matter what their race, no matter how much money or how little they have, we respect all men as human beings and as a soul who is going to reach the eternal destiny.

We like to think that we don't have any prejudices among us, we'd like to think that, but I question whether we have fully thought through that.

There are people that we see, maybe it is that man who has rings in his ears and we say: I'm not sure we'll have anything to do with this person. But that person has a soul and I'm not saying that we should follow his example but that is not the point but we respect that person as a person, as a soul, a living soul and we respect him as a fellow human being. Why? Because he is human like we are.

I was kind of taken aback a little bit a few weeks ago when, we have a credit card machine in our store and the company that we sell for sometimes gives promotions through the credit card whereby the person is able to buy something and have it for a period of time interest-free while they are paying for it.

In order to do that we have to push a button on it that says "Promotional" And then it will ask for a promotion code. Well I was going through one of those procedures and I thought I hit the button that says promotion but when I got to the place where the promotion code is supposed to come up and ask for that it zipped on by and I knew I had pushed the wrong button. So after the transaction was over and the person had left I called the company, I called the credit card company and told them what had happened and asked if there was some way that we could fix it and it was very obvious to me that the man on the other end of the line was an Afro-American by the way he spoke, but he said to me he said: "You know he said we have the same kind of problem out here and we call it human."

And I was just moved by that and he very nicely helped me through what I needed to do to fix up the mistake I had made. And I thought someone makes a mistake for me and I need to make that correction and help them through am I as patient as this man was with me and was I as understanding that we are human beings.

That is being honourable, that is honoring other people as men like ourselves.

I think all of us at some time are tempted to think or to speak derogatorily about someone else, maybe it is our neighbour, maybe it is that driver who butts in front of us, maybe it is that Minister who tramped on our toes, maybe it is the civil authority who acts unbecoming in his office or enacts some laws that defy common sense, you know some of them do, but when that happens and we are tempted that way let's just stop and breathe a word of prayer for that person and for yourself.

I'm going to promise you something, you will be refreshed in your thoughts and you will be bought easily able to capture your thoughts and to help them and leave them in an honourable way and positive way in thinking about that person.

Yes that person that butted in the line in front of you, yes that person who is asking you to do something that requires common sense, your responses and your actions will be greatly moderated by positive thoughts. Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are honourable.

Let's pray to the Lord that he would help us to think such thoughts.

#4.

I greet you this evening in the name of Jesus Christ the one who made that wonderful story of love possible, without Christ that story could not be told.

Each evening we have been spending a few minutes thinking about parts of thought life that are brought to us in Philippians 4 verse eight.

We started out by introducing the thought of thought life; we looked at things that are true, things that are honest, tonight we want to look at "things that are just."

We could take this like some of the other ones in a lot of different directions but since we only want to spend a few minutes this evening we will not be able to do that but we are looking at this thought of "whatsoever things are just."

As far as I am able to discern I think the way justice works here in Canada is pretty much the same as it does in the US. The courts of our land, maybe I should say lands, operate under something that is known as the rule of law, I understand that to mean that whether that you are the President or the Prime Minister or whether you are the most lowly subject in the land you all come under the same law.

It may not always seem that it quite works that way but the fact is that we can be glad this evening that we live in lands where society endeavours to achieve that and that is commendable.

Nearer home we have church leaders and fellow brethren in the church who are accountable to the same constitution, same regulations, but sometimes there seems to be in our churches that a double standard appears. If a leader or his family failed to support the church's position by word or action it undermines that position which is very difficult to administrate and on the few occasions where a leader or his family makes excuses or tolerates things beyond that in their own lives it causes chaos in

the church and will soon deteriorate to the place where the book of Judges says: " Where everyone does what is right in his own eyes." [Judges 17:6](#), [Judges 21:25](#).

It does come also to each father in the home and his responsibility to adhere to the rules that he makes for his children, the same rules, there may be some variation how it fits to different age levels but a father who requires more of his children than he requires of himself is not very effective nor is it just.

I think of a home situation that I know of where the father carries a rather high standard for his family, he doesn't just ask them to do these things but he requires it of them, but somehow he fails to see that need or to understand how important it is for him to personally apply things to his life and in his personal and business life he seems to grant himself considerable latitude. Many of his clients can hardly distinguish him from other worldly businessman but on Sunday morning he can appear at church and Sunday school lesson and appear quite in line. It causes his family to struggle with respect for him and one of his sons has rejected the church, he has joined the Liberal Mennonite church and married a divorced woman and the son blames his father.

Now we know that is not just, justice demands that the son must accept that one wrong never makes another one right, justice must demand also though that the father accepts the fact that his son is responsible for his choices but he cannot excuse himself from all responsibility in relation to it.

Justice. What sort of things are just?

I had occasion some time ago to be in a courtroom, in fact of had occasion to be in a courtroom several times over the past several years in but I think about one time that I was there.

There was a man there and the policeman was accusing him of some traffic violations, particularly one thing that he accused him of was of following to close. After the policeman had his say the Justice of the Peace that was sitting there in his courtroom, the Justice gave the man who was

accused opportunity to speak for himself and he said that the policeman had baited him by driving his unmarked car very slowly in front of him. The judge pondered for a few moments and of course the accused was asking to have his violations released because of the actions of the policeman. The judge he refused to do that, he did not dismiss the charges, but after he had told the accused that he was still responsible he turned to the policeman and he said: "Young man, (he was a young policeman,) he said: Young man I have a few things to say to you. You are expected to be an exemplary citizen, the community is looking up to you. I wasn't there to see but the indications are that what you did was not becoming to your office and we expect better things of you." And then he dismissed him.

I thought it was well put. I think that there are numerous applications that we can make from that when we think of the responsibilities of leaders, the responsibilities of teachers, responsibilities of parents, we could make application that we are persons that someone is looking up to them and us and we need to live up to that expectation.

For the last several years our business has required some e-mail communications and I'm not sure what your position here in this group I'm not asking that to be all defined, our church group has tolerated the business use of e-mail but as a leader I have shied away from doing that and I have been able to content myself with the third-party system where I pay someone to do that e-mail communication and receive it by fax or later by CD.

But something I have found a little troubling to me is that there are some persons who look at this way of doing business and they look at it and they say: "Well what you are doing is having a double standard, you are trying to make yourself better than other people." I don't think that is the case but that is what some feel about it.

The thing that I find interesting is that the person whom I hired to do that is not a part of any Mennonite group but they and some of my business colleagues understand exactly what I am doing and that just troubles me a bit.

I believe that we each one need to be willing to take our place in being examples and especially that the leaders are not out on the cutting edge of what is tolerated.

It is my opinion that justice will be best served when I set a high standard for myself, a bit lower standard for my family and give the most tolerance to those who are beyond my administration, but too often we see something different than that happening.

Well I think that's as far as we will go on this subject of justice tonight. There are like I say in many other areas we could go out into and look at but let's apply this part at least to our lives in each of our respective responsibilities.

#5.

I greet each one this evening in the name of Jesus Christ the one who said He came to seek and to save that which is lost [Luke 19:10](#). We sang about that did we not?

I would just think a little bit about the stories that we have in the Gospels about Christ and His care for men's souls and I see Him preaching to the thousands that had opportunity on a number of occasions but I also see Him speaking to the rich young ruler, and I see Him sitting on the well of Jacob speaking to the Samaritan woman. Whether there was one or whether there were thousands His heart reached out to them, His Word was there to bring them to a saving knowledge of God. [Luke 18:18-25](#), [John 4:17-18](#)

And as His children this evening we should likewise carry that weight and desire that souls might be touched and brought into the fold.

Each evening we are spending a few moments on a predetermined look at one of the thoughts, one of the things that we are to think about in [Philippines 4 verse eight](#).

We looked at the importance of thought life the first evening, then we thought about things that are true the second evening, and then things that are honest and last night we thought about things that are just.

Now tonight we are going to think about “things that are pure.” For a few minutes we are going to talk about purity.

The Scripture tells us as one of the writers of the Scripture says when he has tried me I will come forth as gold. [Job 23:10](#).

I have never tried to purify gold, I have never observed the process but am told that to purify gold takes some fierce heat and the purifying process as the Lord perfect holiness in our lives at times takes some heat too, some experiences in life that are not altogether pleasant, some experiences in life that test us and try us.

In thought life the things that we are willing to concentrate on and put forth effort to meditate upon must be put through a very fine sieve, a very fine sieve indeed. Many things that are available for us to think about and to meditate upon are not things that will come under this heading of purity; many things must be sieved out. The world in which we live is corrupt.

The Scripture says this about it that some of the things that are done of them are not fit to be spoken of and certainly not to think about. [Eph.5:12](#).

Why do we talk about purity in a group like this?

I was once along, as a young man I was travelling along with a man who was in good standing in a Mennonite church, he was a married man, we passed by a sight on the roadside that was not to lay eyes upon and he made this comment he said: "It's all right to know what's for supper but he said there is nothing wrong with looking what's on the menu." A married Mennonite man, it is hard for me to fathom that!

We live in a corrupt world and we are affected by more than what we sometimes think and sometimes we allow ourselves to be drawn into things that we have not considered as we should.

Job says: "I have made a covenant with mine eyes why should I look upon a maid?" [Job 31:1](#). I have made a covenant with mine eyes.

Jesus said if a man looks upon a woman to lust after her he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. [Matthew 5:28](#).

If David had made a covenant with his eyes like Job said he did and stuck by it he would have saved himself from much trouble. [2 Samuel 11:2](#).

If we are going to have a pure thought life and we are going to think things that are pure then there are some places of business that we are going to need to avoid, and there are some books that we will not read, and there are some magazines that we will not look at.

As I think about books one thing that we will not be reading is romance novels and many of them are so-called Christian novels but in fact in some ways I think they are worse because we think maybe they are all right. I'm not sure what is among young people today, a few years ago it was the Jeanette Oakes series, I'm not sure if they are still around or something else, but these books will not help you to lead a pure thought life.

There are sometimes when you are going to need to avert your eyes and look at something else. I warn you that if one should begin to feed on this sort of thing it is awfully hard to cut it off and it is nearly impossible to put it out of your mind. Men who have allowed themselves the privilege of feeding on these kinds of things have testified many years later it is almost impossible to rid themselves of that which they have fed themselves on.

It wasn't by chance that Joseph had fled from that woman who tried to seduce him, it wasn't by chance, [Genesis 39:7-13](#), Joseph had determined in his mind that he would not be defiled and on that basis he was able to face that temptation in the victorious.

Pausing on these thoughts let's look at a verse in Titus one. In [Titus 1:15-16](#) it 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. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

We are thinking about pure thought life, we are thinking about things that would help us to that and this describes what happens when one believes that way but it says there in verse 15 unto the pure all things are pure, and we can live that kind of a life and we can have that kind of thought life but it will take some careful attention to accomplish that.

#6.

I greet you this evening in the name of Jesus Christ the author and the finisher of our faith, the one who is yet mediating for us before the Father today. [Hebrews 12:2, 24](#).

Each evening we have been looking at one of the thoughts from [Philippians 4 verse eight](#) for a little pre-sermon.

We have looked at the things that are true, honest, just, pure and tonight we want to look at the “things that are lovely” Literally translated the word that is translated lovely here would indicate a sort of being friendly toward.

There was a man that came to Jesus and he asked him: “What is the greatest commandment?” And Jesus said that it was to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and then Jesus said the second is like unto it: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” And the Scripture says that he in order to defend himself, to justify himself said: “And who is my neighbour?” And Jesus told a story, He said there was a certain man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and that was a journey of 20 miles but a journey that went through some rough country in that it took one from a high altitude down to a place below sea level. In the course of his travel he met up with some rough people, they beat him and they took everything that he had and left him there for dead.

Whilst he was lying there by the roadside there were some men who came along.

First man came along and he passed by on the other side of the road and he barely looked at him and I am not sure if he thought the man was dead or what but he didn't stop to help in anyway, maybe he was busy, may he had an appointment at the other end that he had to meet, whatever it was he didn't stop.

The second man paused a little bit came a little nearer and he likewise hurried on, maybe he couldn't stomach the scene, maybe he got faint and he saw blood, I'm not sure what his problem was but he didn't stop either to give any help to this man.

Now a third man came along and he had his donkey with him and he stopped by this man and saw him as a man in need, and he picked him up, put some oil on his wounds, gave him a little something to drink, set him on his donkey and led him down the hill to the next inn that they came to. There he paid to the innkeeper to keep this man and told to keep him until he was able to go. He told him if there is anything more incurred in costs the next time he comes by he would pay for it. [Luke 10: 25-35](#).

Now by all indications in that story it would seem that the man that was beaten and lying by the road was a Jew but the man who picked him up and took him down to the Inn on his donkey was a Samaritan and Bible readers know that there was a lot of enmity between the two and the Jews had nothing to do with the Samaritans. But yet this man was willing to help this Jew whom he found lying along the road.

Friendly toward.

Most of us meet some people whom we are not sure exactly what response we should give to them but it is never wrong to be friendly to people. Well I'll stop short on that but there are a few times in life when we need to move away rather hurriedly but generally speaking it is not wrong for us to be friendly to people.

When we hold anger, when we hold malice, when we hold wrath and grudges and such like, and we don't find that among Mennonite people do we? But we are human beings aren't we and those kinds of things can be among us and I don't know if there's anyone here holding that tonight or not, anger, malice, wrath, grudges. But if you have something like that in your life it is little bit like a container that is holding acid, you all know what acid does it eats whatever it gets against, and the container that holds that acid, the acid does more harm to the user than anyone else.

We are thinking about things that are lovely, those sort of things aren't lovely, those sort of things will not bring one to act friendly toward another.

We are thinking about friendly feelings that well up from within, Scriptures teach us things like this, that a soft answer turns away wrath. [Proverbs 15:1](#). When we face accusations we answer with a soft answer it will change the picture.

The scriptures teach us to offer forgiveness rather than be offended by others. In contrast to the lovely things the scriptures tell us that there are times that people become bitter and the Scripture even talks about the root of bitterness. [James 3:14](#), [Hebrews 12:15](#).

One of the weed trees that grows in many of our fence rows in our area is called a mulberry, sometimes it is more like a bush but it can grow into quite a tree and I have tried on numerous occasions to destroy mulberry trees, and I can tell you what if there is just a little bit of the root left there it grows a mulberry tree. And that's the way bitterness is, if there's just a little bit of bitterness in our heart it grows a bitterness tree, you can root it out, you can try to get rid of everything but if there's just a little bit left there I guarantee you it will grow and when it grows it causes strife, because of contention, and the Scripture would say it causes every evil work. [James 3:10-16](#).

We are thinking about things that are lovely, things that cause us to feel friendly toward.

We need to exercise ourselves and the good things that we know about people and the good thing is that we know about our neighbours and the good things that we know about our brethren and we exercise ourselves even in offering good to those who do us evil, we return good for evil. Friendly feelings, friendly toward them, things are lovely.

I think we will leave off at that point and tomorrow night we will look at the last one the things that are of good report. We could have easily brought these two together but we will look at that tomorrow evening.

#7.

We greet each one this evening in the earthly name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Each evening for a few moments a few minutes before the message we have been looking at one of the parts or one of the things that the Apostle Paul told the Philippine church to look at and what to think of in [Philippians 4 verse eight](#).

The first night we talked about the importance of our thought life, and the second night we looked at things that are true, and then honest, and just, and pure and lovely.

Now tonight we want to think about “things that are of good report.”

The idea of good report simply means that things that are generally considered acceptable.

There were 12 men that Moses sent down to or over into Canaan to spy out the land.

Two of them Joshua and Caleb brought back a good report of the land. They said that they saw a goodly land full of milk and honey and they saw the land that they said we are well able, we are well able to conquer this land.

The other 10 men came back with a report and they said that they saw a land filled with milk and honey but they saw men there that were giants, and they saw cities that were walled and we, we are like grasshoppers. We are uneducated, we are an ill prepared people, we have zero experience in going out against nations like this. We are not able to go up against these people. [Joshua 13](#).

That which is of good report.

Brother Henry said that one night when he was speaking here that when they left Conference there was one man that said: "I give you about 20 years." And now it is near 40 and there is still the faithful remnant here. Well that's good. But we are still going to need to take the course that

Joshua and Caleb took. We are well able to conquer the land; we are well able to conquer the giants and the walled cities.

Well how is that possible? It was only possible in the power of God.

Joshua and Caleb remembered how God had brought them across the Red Sea, how He opened the path through the water, how He made a dry land for them to walk across, and He destroyed the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. [Exodus 14](#).

Joshua and Caleb remembered how God had supplied water for them in the midst of the desert and how He had given them manna and quail. Everything that they had need of they had supplied to this point why would God now cut them off? [Exodus 17:1-6](#), [Exodus 16:15](#), [Exodus 16:13](#).

I'm here to tell you tonight that if you think of the good report and you remember that like Joshua and Caleb did that you need the Lord on your side and you need to go forward with the Lord with a helping hand you can conquer the giants and you can conquer the walled cities and continue to have a faithful people here.

Yes you are going to need to face the giants, the technology issues of our day, casual Christianity that continually tries to creep into our midst, creeping worldliness, materialism, but our God is able to deliver us, He has had a way for His people throughout the ages past, He has been a help in ages past and He will be our hope for years to come but we need to depend upon Him.

We reject the humanistic approach that the world offers when it speaks about the power of positive thinking that says you are what you think. We reject that.

But as we looked at these things that the Apostle Paul directed the Philippian people to look at and to think about we have to acknowledge that they are positive things and I believe that Christians are positive people because they are looking forward they are looking up knowing that their redemption draws nigh, they are looking for a better kingdom in a better place.

Let's not look back into the past, let's not try to move forward in a gloom and doom attitude but let's look what needs to be done, let's move forward and allow God to work in and through us.

Christian thinking rises above the gloom and doom that the world has to offer, we do not allow ourselves to be bogged down in pessimistic thought life but rather we look toward Him who knows all things and we know that we are more than conquerors through Him that loves us.

May the Lord bless these thoughts as we have looked at them throughout these seven evenings.



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