

**THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF
SIDNEY EDWARD COX**

Message: When Jesus Does the Thinking - The Mind of Christ

Editorial Note: This sermon were delivered to the Grace Bible Church in Detroit, Michigan sometime between 1962 in 1972. Sidney Cox was 75 years of age in 1962.

Sidney and Violet Cox resided in Detroit during their retirement years. In 1962, they retired to the Salvation Army retirement home in Detroit, "The Eventide." Violet was in failing health and ultimately died in 1967. Sidney continued residency there until a late in life move to Birmingham in 1972.

During the latter part of his life, Sidney Cox had developed a close relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance ("CMA"). CMA operates as a vast network of churches, similar to a "denomination." Grace Bible Church was a CMA church to which Sidney and Violet belonged during their years in Detroit. Sidney was often asked to lead Bible studies and often filled their pulpit to preach.

John Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. December 29, 2008.

Now, our subject this morning is *When Jesus Does the Thinking. When Jesus Does the Thinking*. Now of course, immediately a scripture comes to our minds because thinking, in case you are wondering, is done with your mind. Now there's a lot of folks who think with something else; but generally speaking, that's where our thinking centers, in our minds. And this is a very important subject this morning and I hope you'll be praying for yourself as you listen and for me as I talk that God will be able to say something to us.

Immediately a scripture comes to mind, one of the most important and beautiful in all of the Word of God and it's Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Now, let me remind you first of all of two or three common place things. First of all, I want you to keep in mind the importance of repeated words. Quite frequently in our study of the scripture, we catch the stream of thought as we notice repeated words – words will occur over and over and over again. Now in this little book to which we are turning our thoughts and our hearts I trust this morning, you will find this word 'mind' repeated over and over and over again; and you will find it there in such a repeated fashion that you do not discover anywhere else. This is where the thought is concentrated.

And that brings me to the second thing that I wanted to remind you about and that is that while streams of truth run all the way through the Word of God, you will find at some one place there is a concentration of it. You can find it all the way through, but at some one place there is a concentration of thought. Now we express that sometimes don't we as we are thinking and talking about our Bible, and we say sometimes, "Well, there's the faith chapter. And here's the love chapter. And here's the resurrection chapter. And here

E:\Sidney Cox Library Project\Subject Folders\Various Sermons & Lessons - Other Congregations\When Jesus Does the Thinking. The Mind of Christ\When Jesus Does the Thinking. The Mind of Christ..doc

is some other kind of a chapter.” What we’re really saying is that at that particular spot there is a concentration of truth. Truth that runs all the way through, but where you see it concentrated at some one particular place. You will notice that in this part of Paul’s lovely letter to the Philippians – the concentration of truth on the mind of Christ and the necessity of the control of Christ over our thinking processes.

Now, you’ll find it over and over again like that. The third thing is, the next thing that I wanted to remind you about that we have mentioned before is, that quite frequently you will find the subject of one chapter mentioned in the last verses, or the last verse of the previous chapter. Now our thought is centering in the 2nd chapter particularly of Paul’s letter to the Philippians, but at the end of the 1st chapter you will find the word, the word we’re talking about. You will find the word ‘mind.’ Let me read it to you here – 27th verse of the 1st chapter, and this is what it says, “Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ: that whether I come to see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye,” and now he gives a definition of what victory is. Here is victory for us. It is to, “Stand fast in one spirit, in one mind.” Now, that’s victory.

But right in the heart of it, you will notice this word that we’ve been talking about, ‘One mind.’ ‘One mind’ - what does he mean by that? ‘One mind’ - whose mind? Not mine I hope. Not yours I hope. When it talks about one mind, we’re talking about His mind – the mind of Christ. “We are of one mind” – not yours or mine, God forbid. His mind! And this is the thought that is before us again this morning – one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel. And there’s the word at the end of the 1st chapter, and the moment that you get into the 2nd chapter, you find the word over and over and over again; not only the basic truth of it; not only the affirmation of it; but in this lovely letter there are seven illustrations of how the mind of Christ works. What does it do? What does the mind of Christ accomplish? What’s the different between the life of one who is controlled by the mind of Christ and one who’s not? What is the difference? How do you know whether the mind of Christ is there, or not?

Now, all of these questions are answered, and not only answered in words, they are answered in illustrations. Whether we shall get through with the seven of them or not this morning, I don’t know; because you not only find the illustrations in the Word of God, but the moment that you step out of them you can see illustrations of it everywhere.

Now, let’s look a moment and see just what we’re thinking again as to the importance of this matter of the control of our thinking. This world of ours is divided into two sections in various ways – the good and the bad, and the saved and the unsaved and all the rest of it. And you’ve got so many different ways in which you can see this old world of ours divided into two distinct sections.

Now let me give you the thought that’s here. This world of ours is under the control of one of two personalities. Let us remember that Satan is still the God of this world. He is still the prince of this world. He’s not only a prince of the power of the air, he’s the prince of this world and he still has his hand and grip upon it; and all we need to do is to

look around us; surely all we need to do is to read our newspapers to find out how tight that grip of Satan is upon this world of ours.

But the point that we are thinking about right now is that Satan is interested and must obtain control of the thinking of those whom he's using for his purposes. Men and women everywhere in high places and in low are priding themselves in these days on their ability to think for themselves, and you'll notice that in nearly every case, the one who's thinking for himself thinks away from God rather than toward Him. He's thinking away, not thinking towards God at all. Just look around and see what's happening and you will find great men who are priding themselves on their ability to think, and their thoughts are going away from God constantly and leading themselves and everybody else into the mess and the morass in which we find ourselves; and really in reality, what is doing the thinking is not this person at all. Somebody's standing in the shadows controlling the thinking of those who pride themselves on their ability to think for themselves.

Satan my dear, does a lot of thinking in Washington. Did you hear it? He does a lot of thinking in Washington. He does a lot of thinking in Detroit. He does a lot of thinking in Chicago, and the people who are doing his thinking for him are the ones who are priding themselves that they are thinking for themselves.

Now on the other hand, there is a realm in which the Lord, Jesus Christ is in the center. Now He has a purpose too, and He must control the thinking of those with whom He is working and for whom He has died and with whom He is carrying out His purposes – He must control our thinking. That shouldn't be a startling idea at all. We see it over and over again. We say it over and over again. There's a song that we sing, I don't know whether you sing it here or not, I suppose you do. But there's a song with a lovely verse in it. It says:

Take my warmest, best affection,
Take my memory, mind and will;
Then with all Thy loving spirit,
All my emptied nature fill.¹

Did you hear it? "Take my memory, mind and will." And Francis Ridley expresses it beautifully, doesn't she? She says, "Take my intellect and use every power as thou shalt choose."

Now my dear, in this matter of surrender to Christ, it's easy enough to surrender your pocketbook. It's easy enough to surrender a bit of your time. It's easy enough to surrender an ability. But the most difficult thing that we have to surrender, and the vital thing in surrender is the surrender of our right to think for ourselves. Now we may be perfectly competent to think for ourselves in the natural realm, but when we move into

¹ This is the 2nd verse of a song that appears in The Salvation Army songbook, #520 by Francis Bottomo (1823-1894).

the realm where Jesus is in the center, we are not competent at all, and the Holy Spirit's great work for us is to quicken these minds of ours so that they do not think naturally at all. They think supernaturally and by His own gracious act, He will take the mind of Christ and impregnate our lives with it! I don't know whether that's the right word or not, but it'll do for the time being. He will take the mind of Christ and so capture our minds that His mind and our mind are one! And before He can do anything with you my dear, He'll capture your mind, and must.

The mind of Christ – when we think as He thinks, then we shall walk as He wants us to walk. His great purpose, or Satan's great purpose is to produce somebody that bears his image. Satan's great purpose in the world is not to get folks to do a series of nasty little acts or a big act. Not at all. What he's after is producing folks that are looking like him and thinking like him and acting like him and desiring like him, who are one with him in thought. That's what he's after – conform to the image.

For the Lord, Jesus Christ, the greatest thing that He desires of any of us, the greatest thing the Holy Spirit can do for any of us, is to bring us to the place where we are conformed to the image of His son. And here's where it starts, my dear. It starts right there, when He can get that mind of yours; when He can control your thinking; when you think as He thinks, then the image will become more clear all the time. That's where it starts and the Holy Spirit's great work for us is to take these minds of ours and by His own mystic alchemy blend them together with the mind of Christ.

Did you hear it? Now that's what we're talking about this morning. That's what we're thinking about, I hope, this morning. It's easy enough for us to give up anything else, but to put our minds on God's altar and acknowledge ourselves as being incompetent to think for ourselves in the spiritual realm and pray that God's spirit may so take the mind of Christ that as we think, He thinks. Did you see it?

Now, we ask the question of course, how do you know when the mind of Christ is controlling an individual? How do you know when the mind of Christ is controlling a church? Well, you will find the illustrations abounding here, both of individuals and of churches. How do you know whether the mind of Christ is controlling this church? How would you know? Well, the answer to that is just as simple as the question. You know by what the mind of Christ produces; what it causes us to do; what is seen in our decisions.

Now, the wonder of this is that the great illustration of how the mind of Christ is seen is not pointing to you or me, it's pointing to Him. The first great illustration of the mind of Christ revealing itself is in the person of our Lord, Himself.

Before we go into that, for a moment let's have a look at this chapter and see the constant repetition of this word, "If there be any consolation in Christ....fulfill ye my joy," that's in the 2nd verse, "That ye be likeminded." Likeminded with whom, my dear? Likeminded with each other? I hope so, but that's secondary. Likeminded with whom? Now you'll meet that word a little later on. Likeminded - our minds are blended together in that wondrous likeness, that oneness for when we think as He thinks.

E:\Sidney Cox Library Project\Subject Folders\Various Sermons & Lessons - Other Congregations\When Jesus Does the Thinking. The Mind of Christ\When Jesus Does the Thinking. The Mind of Christ..doc

“Let nothing be done,” and here’s the fact and here’s the garments of the mind of Christ. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind.”² Did you hear it? We’re talking about His mind now. You remember who it was who said, “I am meek and lowly in heart,”³ and here’s His mind, “Lowliness of mind.” - not the mind that seeks the high places but the mind that delights in the low places; that glorifies the common place; not seeks for something extraordinary. Not at all. The mind of Christ, my dear.

Are you thinking? Are you asking yourself some questions? – because presently you’ll find that this scripture will come right in this room and sit down right beside you. It sure will. It’ll sit right down beside you in just a moment. You just listen. “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”⁴ And then breaks upon us the great illustration of the mind of Christ, seen as it can only be seen when it is visible in Him.

Now, you let me go on and watch. You just watch now. “Who...thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”⁵ Do you see where that began? It began in his thought. Here’s the mind of Christ expressing itself in His great redemptive act, “Who...thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” And then this is what happened when the mind of Christ is made visible. It becomes, “Of no reputation, and takes upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”⁶

The mind of Christ becoming visible and the top most people of it all is His thought, _____, his thought; and down, down, down he came to where you are and where I am. This is the mind of Christ.

Now, we take our shoes off when we approach anything like that. But perhaps we feel a little more comfortable when we move from that illustration to the more practical one perhaps, or the more possible one, or the one where we feel even more comfortable, because the next illustration, and it will come sit down right beside you, my dear. You just better move over. This scripture is coming and sit right down beside you, because here is an illustration of the mind of Christ in a church, and it was the church at Philippi. 12th verse, “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed.” Now here’s the basic central fact of a church that is controlled by the mind of Christ is its total obedience.

Did you hear it? “Ye have always obeyed.” Now, wait a minute. Here it comes. It’s going to sit right down beside you. Not only when you had a pastor, but when you didn’t. This church didn’t have a preacher. And yet my dear, controlled by the mind of Christ, it was more faithful in his absence than it was in his presence. Did you hear it? - more faithful in

² Philippians 2:3.

³ Matthew 11:29.

⁴ Philippians 2:4-5.

⁵ Philippians 2:6

⁶ Philippians 2:7-8.

those trying days when the pastor was away and they haven't got one. You haven't got one, just somebody who's filling in for a moment. More faithful in the absence than in the presence. My. Comes and sits right down beside us, doesn't it? You see, he's not just talking about the Church at Philippi, he's talking about the Grace Bible Church too; and very, very faithful, because here we qualify, don't we? In his absence?

Let's look at it again. Here's this church. Here's the mind of Christ. Whatever we do, we will do it without, "Murmuring or disputing."⁷ Did you hear it? Now, that's what the mind of Christ produces - "Without murmuring or disputing."

Now, let's look again. "That ye may be blameless and harmless."⁸ Now you notice my dear, how accurate these words are. It doesn't say that you must be faultless. It says blameless. There's a vast difference between being faultless and blameless.

A very important man who loved his little girl; he had a little 6 or 7 or 8 year-old daughter, and every night this little girl would come into his room and climb up on his knee just before she went to bed, and father and daughter spent a little time together. And then one day, this had been going on for a long time, but one day, she didn't come and he wondered why. She was around the house. He could hear her. And the next day, she didn't come again. And the next day. And the next day. And the next day. And then, father had a birthday, and on his birthday the little girl came bounding into his room with a package in her hand, and she said, "Oh Daddy, I've been making these for you. Here's a pair of slippers and I've knitted them and made them with my own hands all for you." And the father took the package and looked at it and held the little girl close to his heart and then he said to her this, "I'm so glad you made these for me. I'm so glad you thought of it, but I want you to always remember, I'd rather have you than anything you can do for me. And he looked at the slippers and I expect there was a stitch dropped here or a little bit of imperfection somewhere else. They were not faultless my dear, just blameless.

Do you see the difference? Do you see the difference? And sometimes my dear, in our blundering along, we want to make stuff for our Lord, but it may not be faultless, but in His eyes it will be blameless because you see, it's the mind of Christ that's looking at it; not some other mind, not even your own. He looks at it. The quality of blamelessness is there. This is the church. Oh, we may do a lot of blundering things and there may be faults in a lot of the things that we do; but my dear, with His mind controlling us, we can be blameless even though they are not faultless. Notice what this church does controlled by the mind of Christ – its one business is to, "Hold forth the word of life,"⁹ - not hold it within its own circle, hold it forth.

Here's a church controlled by the mind of Christ. Did you see it? And you go a little further down and you'll find a man controlled by the mind of Christ; and old Paul says, "I'm going to send Timothy to you, and when he comes he'll bring back to me a report and I hope he can bring back something that will bring comfort and joy to my heart." And

⁷ Philippians 2:14.

⁸ Philippians 2:15.

⁹ Philippians 2:16.

then he talks about Timothy and here's that word 'likeminded' again. I told you we'd meet it again, here it is, right before our eyes. Here's a man controlled by the mind of Christ. What's he like, this man. What is this man like? Paul's going to send him down there. He's likeminded. Likeminded with whom? Just likeminded with Paul? Oh yes, of course, and that's very important, but there's something more important than that, for Paul and Timothy together were likeminded with Jesus. That's the _____ of it. Here's a man controlled by the mind of Christ and Paul sends him down there and says to his friends in Philippi, "I'm going to send him down there because he's likeminded. I have nobody else that's as likeminded as this man." Likeminded. What would a likeminded man like that do? Here again, it'll come sit right down beside you. That's one thing the scripture does constantly, if we allow it to, it'll come and sit down right beside you.

Here's a man likeminded. What's the mark of the likeminded man? He, "Naturally cares for your state."¹⁰ In other words, he thinks more of you than he does of himself. There are points there, a very few of them, but occasionally you get a word in the scripture that I'd like to change. Now I know we're on delicate ground there, but I'd like to change that word 'natural' and make it 'supernatural' – "He will supernaturally care for your state." Because we don't naturally care for other people more than we care for ourselves, do we? Or, do we? We don't naturally do that. That's supernatural. Anyhow, the word's there and we just leave it there, of course. "He will naturally care for your state." He's a man who's likeminded with Jesus and he thinks more of others than he does of himself. Did you move over? You'd better. Let's move over, let the Word of God sit right down beside us. He thinks more of others than he does of himself. "For they all seek their own,"¹¹ but not this one. No, no, no. No, no.

Look again, "As a son with the father, he 'slaved' with me in the Gospel."¹² Now, the word is 'served' but that's the meaning of it. "He slaved with me in the Gospel." How much time did he give? He gave all of it my dear. How much strength did he give to the Gospel? He gave all of it. How much of himself did he give? He gave all of it. This is the mark of the man when the mind of Christ is in control – "As a son with the father, he slaved with me in the Gospel."

I wonder how much money he got? I wonder what was his salary? I wonder what were the monuments that we... I wonder whether there was ever a time when Timothy felt that he wasn't being done just right there and when he marched up and down outside somewhere or other with a picket sign? Can you imagine it?

"This man slaved with me in the Gospel."

¹⁰ Philippians 2:20.

¹¹ Philippians 2:21.

¹² Philippians 2:22.