

Becoming Heavenly Minded
September 2017
Sunday School #1

“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” (Romans 8:6)

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:2)

Preface

- I. 1616-1683
- II. Became very sick and during his time alone, he wrote the work, “The Grace and Duty of Being Spiritually Minded.”
- III. He, surprisingly recovered and published his treatise for a small congregation.
- IV. Owen lists some reasons for developing this work.
 - A. The world has unrelentingly pressed and maneuvered into the life of the Church until it has captured all of her thoughts and affection.
 1. “...it will in some fortify the soul against faith and obedience, and in others weaken all grace, and endanger eternal ruin. For “if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us;”
 2. “...professors of religion grow withering, useless, sapless, giving no evidence that the love of God abideth in them. On these and many other accounts do many Christians evidence themselves to be strangers from spiritual mindedness, from a life of meditation and holy contemplation on things above; yet unless we are found in these things in some good measure, no grace will thrive or flourish in us, no duty will be rightly performed by us, no condition sanctified or improved, nor are we prepared in a due manner, or “made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.”
 3. “...men walk and talk as if the world were all, when comparatively it is nothing.”
 4. “The world is transforming the Church into it’s own image and likeness.”
 - B. “To call men off from this evil frame of heart and mind, to discover the sin and danger of it, to direct them unto the ways and means whereby it may be effected, to supply their thoughts and affections with better objects, to discover and press that exercise of them which is indispensably required of all believers if they design life and peace, is some part of the work of the ensuing discourse.”

The Words of Romans 8:6 Explained

I. Words

A. “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

(Romans 8:6, NKJV)

B. [6 Τὸ γὰρ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατος, τὸ δὲ φρόνημα τοῦ Πνεύματος ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη.]

II. Double antithesis

A. Subjects—carnally minded; Spiritually minded

1. Two States or Conditions-

a) You are either carnally minded or spiritually minded.

(1) “So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

(Romans 8:8, NKJV)

(2) “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” (Romans 8:9, NKJV)

b) There is a mixture in Christians.

(1) “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.” (Galatians 5:17, NKJV)

c) The difference seems to be between what dominates or rules—what you “live” by.

(1) “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” (Romans 8:5, NKJV)

(2) “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” (Romans 8:13, NKJV)

(3) “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1, NKJV)

d) “Unto one of these doth every living man belong; he is under the ruling conduct of the flesh or of the Spirit; there is no middle state, though there are different degrees in each of these as to good and evil.”

B. Predicates—death; life and peace

1. Minding of the flesh=Death
 - a) “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,”
(Ephesians 2:1, NKJV)
 - b) “among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our
flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by
nature children of wrath, just as the others.” (Ephesians 2:3, NKJV)
 - c) “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your
flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all
trespasses,” (Colossians 2:13, NKJV)
 - d) “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ
Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23, NKJV)
 - e) “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to
the law of God, nor indeed can be.” (Romans 8:7, NKJV)
2. Minding of the Spirit=Life and Peace
 - a) Owen says that the word **Spirit** has a double sense.
 - (1) The Person of the Holy Spirit:
 - (a) “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed
the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not
have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” (Romans 8:9,
NKJV)
 - (b) “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead
dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will
also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit
who dwells in you.” (Romans 8:11, NKJV)
 - (2) It is used for the principle of spiritual life wrought in all that are
regenerate by the Holy Ghost; for “that which is born of the
Spirit is spirit,”
 - (a) “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which
is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6, NKJV)
 - (3) He believes that this context demands the second use of spirit.
 - (a) “It is most probable that the name “Spirit” is here used in
the latter sense,—not for the Spirit himself, but for “that
which is born of the Spirit,” the principle of spiritual life

in them that are born of God; for it is, in its nature, actings, inclinations, and operations, opposed unto “the flesh,” Rom. 8:1, 4, 5. But “the flesh” here intended is that inherent corrupt principle of depraved nature whence all evil actions do proceed, and wherewith the actions of all evil men are vitiated. The opposition between them is the same with that mentioned and declared by the apostle, Gal. 5:17, etc. Wherefore “the Spirit” in this place is the holy, vital principle of new obedience, wrought in the souls of believers by the Holy Ghost, enabling them to live unto God.”

b) The **mind**ing of the spirit

- (1) “φρόνησις is its power as it is practical, including the habitual frame and inclination of the affections also.”
- (2) “Nowhere doth it design a notional conception of things only, but principally the engagement of the affections unto the things which the mind apprehends.”
 - (a) “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:1–2, NKJV)
 - (b) “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.” (Philippians 3:18–19, NKJV)
- (3) Wherefore, the “minding of the Spirit” is the actual exercise of the mind as renewed by the Holy Ghost, as furnished with a principle of spiritual life and light, in its conception of spiritual things and the setting of its affections on them, as finding that relish and savour in them wherewith it is pleased and satisfied.

(4) So, on the contrary, it is when men “mind earthly things.” From a principle of love unto them, arising from their suitableness unto their corrupt affections, their thoughts, meditations, and desires are continually engaged about them.

c) Therefore, three duties are implied in this verse:

(1) “The actual exercise of the mind, in its thoughts, meditations, and desires, about things spiritual and heavenly.”

(2) “The inclination, disposition, and frame of the mind, in all its affections, whereby it adheres and cleaves unto spiritual things.”

(3) “A complacency of mind, from that gust, relish, and savour, which it finds in spiritual things, from their suitableness unto its constitution, inclinations, and desires. There is a salt in spiritual things, whereby they are condited and made savoury unto a renewed mind; though to others they are as the white of an egg, that hath no taste or savour in it. In this gust and relish lies the sweetness and satisfaction of spiritual life. Speculative notions about spiritual things, when they are alone, are dry, sapless, and barren. In this gust we taste by experience that God is gracious, and that the love of Christ is better than wine, or whatever else hath the most grateful relish unto a sensual appetite. This is the proper foundation of that “joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.”