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Psychological Soundness of Christ's Teaching

by Bill Lockwood

In these difficult times it is good to reflect upon the psychological soundness of Christ's teaching. By that I mean that Jesus' doctrine is wholesome and healthy to the psyche of mankind. It is soothing to sinful man and it is fulfilling to those who apply it. This sets Christians in bold relief from an anxiety-filled culture. Consider how our Lord offers the salve to still our troubled hearts.

First, He offers us the means by which we can have "faith that overcomes the world!" (1 John 5:4). John calls this overcoming "victory." Hebrews 11 shows that by means of faith men and women of yesteryear have endured sufferings, resisted great temptations and performed difficult tasks of obedience. Faith delivers and enables us.

Second, Jesus steers us away from "hyper-criticalness" (see Matthew 7:1-5). By focusing upon Christ we see our own failures in life and are less apt to be critical of others.

Third, He admonishes us to honesty. It is the good and honest heart that Jesus rewards (Luke 8:15). Paul warns that Satan has great power over men—not by force or superstitious activity—but simply because men "received not the love of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Fourth, not only are we to be honest in their actions and motives, but Christians are commanded to meditate upon that which is good (Philippians 4:8).

Fifth, to renounce self and enthrone God is the Christian message (Matthew 10:39).

Sixth, our Lord Jesus Christ frees us from anxiety (Luke 12:27-32). Simplistically, one professor I had would say, "There are two things about which we should never be anxious: One, those things which we *cannot* change; two, those things which we *can* change." Once more, focusing upon Christ and his eternal values transforms our hearts from anxiety-ridden to a "renewed mind" (Romans 12:1-2).

Seventh, to know that man is a moral being with responsibility for his conduct provides great incentive for righteous living. We do not inherit our character from one another, nor are we held accountable for the sins of others (Ezekiel 18:20). When people recognize that they will stand before a righteous judge to give an account for deeds of this life (Romans 14:12) it causes them to live godly. We are thus to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world (Titus 2:11-12).

Eighth, mankind naturally thirsts for eternal life and immortality. Yet, it is only by the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ that this thirst is quenched! Paul tells Timothy that "grace" has "now been made known by the appearance of our Savior Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought *life* and *immortality* to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10). The greatest news is that *death*, our last enemy, has already received its mortal wound.

All people desire life and immortality. It is only offered through Christ. Jesus' teaching is the only medicine that can soothe a troubled soul or a troubled world.