

March 6<sup>th</sup> Leith Valley

Recognise and Deal with Oppression – Rev Helen Harray

Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18; Psalm 73

I want to talk about how we get our minds transformed and what blocks that.

### **Mantrol adv**

Welcome to mandom. Man's greatest achievements can be found within these walls. We control everything that goes on in here. But the fate of mandom is uncertain. There is something we haven't mastered control of yet.

That's our driving. We're good—but not great and if we're not in full control of such a manly thing then what does all this mean?

Men we are not mandriving. Mandriving is realising what we don't control \_\_ the road, all the hills and bends, the corners, the rain. It's knowing when to pull back and slow down. It's us staying in control. What we like to call Mantrol!

- This ad raises the question and not badly about how you stay in control?

Mandriving - taking control by driving to the conditions is being in mantrol.

Of course women generally have the sense to drive well any way so I guess we don't need an ad like this!

But whether it is mantrol or womantrol –there's a prior reason for the necessity of an ad like this and that is: we have a social problem when people live their lives without any reference to God.

If we were we living under the Holy Spirit's control, with lives submitted to Jesus we would drive more carefully...hopefully

But are we driving to the conditions set out in the Word?

For here we find that true man or womandriving is actually giving control away and engaging the power of God?

Paul entreated the Romans

**1. to present their bodies as a living sacrifice to Christ.** 'Living' ie alive not dead... ongoing, everyday given over to God. True worship involves heart, mind, soul and body, no ritual or lip service. Everything submitted to the control of the Holy Spirit.

**2. and not to be conformed to the ways of the world but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind.**

**Transformation of the mind is a process. But it has the quality of a complete change like caterpillar to butterfly...from night to day... a blinding flash of insight that forever changes the way you think.**

It is like the veil being taken away as in 2 Cor 3...suddenly you can think and see in ways you

just didn't before. Like a light switch going on, there's revelation and insight and we begin to be changed into the glory and likeness of Christ.

This renewing of the mind is the progress of sanctification, dying to sin more and more, and living to righteousness more and more, and carrying on this renewing work, till it is perfected in glory. The work of the Spirit first begins in the understanding, and is carried on to the will, affections, and conversation, till there is a change of the whole person into the likeness of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Thus, to be godly, is to give up ourselves to God. (Ro 12:3-8)

- **But do we just give ourselves away and abandon ourselves to God?**
- **How much is it God's control and how much work do we have to do?**

**DISCUSSION: whose work is the work of transformation?**

Is it all up to me?

Is it all up to the grace of God?

Is there a bit of both?

I do believe we have a huge part to play in the renewing of our minds. **God will do the work of transformation** but we have to exercise our rights as children of God to want that transformation and to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to get it.

Recognise that where our minds are concerned it's war.

<sup>3</sup> For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

2 Cor 4: <sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup> The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

**Satan blinds our minds.** Who does? Satan

He puts up arguments against God in our minds...why would a God of love do this?

He tempts us in the mind. A thought which when entertained produces fruit...a temptation though is just a temptation. We decide what to do with it.

And he clouds our minds with oppression so we are put off.

Paul says we do not war against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities... we have an enemy who wants to destroy us and who uses the mind as his primary target. We have to wage war on this level.

So here are some ways to renew the mind!!

### **1. Recognise oppression**

This morning I woke up feeling like a bus had hit me. I didn't get to sleep quickly because I was thinking about the weeks ahead and the enormity of the things I had to do. My mind was on active duty.

So I didn't get enough sleep. You might say well that's life. But as I sat down and looked at the day, supposedly my day off, my mind was saying a few other things like: why do I do this. It must be time to move on. God is so far away. A whole lot of negative thinking came racing into my mind. And a whole lot of unwanted emotions like: Grumpy, sad, peed off and self pity...pretty unproductive emotions. And I was trying to have a quiettime.

#### **This is what Christians call oppression.**

Oppression over the mind is like a fog, a cloud which weighs me down and fills my head and heart with its soginess. It feels like a heavy weight.

Many times we don't recognise this. We just think it's life, we'll get over it and we just need to get on with things. Get more sleep...

But just maybe it's part of the enemy's strategy to prevent you from reaching God, from a time of intimacy with Him. Oppression like this can sit for a long time too. It shields you from receiving blessing, drains your energy and closes down your spirit's ability to respond normally to God. And you normalise it.

One of the hardest things we have to do is fight for our relationship with God. We have to fight our flesh and our minds and our heart. Our default patterns of thinking which say if I feel down cast sad or angry, then this must be true.

As Richard said 2 weeks ago, our hearts will tell us we are in love and this emotion feels so good! But our hearts can do a u turn just as easy down the years...

But we have to go against ourselves, what is screaming at us as the only truth and instead declare who God is.

So that morning with great effort I chose to declare that God is good. That God is mighty. That He is my father...that I am loved absolutely by him

And you know it was like an instant snap into clearheadedness and rational evaluation of my emotions and thoughts. The oppression physically lifted off my head.

He is the glory and lifter of my head.

I was still tired at the end of the day but the negativity which was clouding my reason went and never came back. In fact I experienced peace.

Will I put my trust in God against all the evidence which says he is unfaithful and unworthy?

Once I had got past the fog, I took a look at why I hadn't slept and what I was telling myself. Things like:

I've got too much to do. I'm in charge. It's all up to me. I don't want to stuff up. I began to put things in better perspective... Who's work is this? Unless the Lord builds the house...It will be fine because God will bring the results. Praise. Trust, faith and giving it back. Satan comes in on the back of anything he can to screw it up and make it worse. We open the door to him.

### **How do you recognise oppression or evil attack in the mind?**

- Ruttled unhealthy patterns of thinking, over reactions, huge sensitivity
- Uncontrollable thoughts, imaginations, impure pictures, confusion, inability to concentrate especially in prayer or Bible reading, dragging tiredness, memory lapse, prejudice that comes out of nowhere, thick thinking...like you just can't get it, you can't make your mind obey.

Are these my thoughts?

Is it I who am thinking?

A negative, intrusive thought may be: I don't like what that person did. I'll tell them so.

Before you know it everything about that person is wrong and bad.

Is this true? No it is not. An oppressive thought has come into your mind.

What will I do? I will tell it to get out in the Name of Jesus.

### **2. RECOGNISE spoken words and curses over you**

Another thing to be aware of is that oppression may come from other people's words and opinions, or even curses and judgments spoken over you. Allowed to persist this may sit on you like a heavy weight. Once again you haven't even thought about the impact that something someone said has had on your mind and spirit. Those in ministry or in public positions are in prime places for target.

This can go as far back as childhood...a teacher or parent or school friends.

But may be an argument you've had with a spouse too. Words spoken out in anger and frustration. Could be you don't know that someone has secretly judged you.

### **3. PRAY THROUGH YOUR HOUSE**

Who owned your house or slept in your room? You don't know much about that.

What happened on the bed you sleep in?

Many ungodly things take place in buildings.

It is your right by virtue of your status as owning or renting your home or room or flat to pray for cleansing in your home. And to command evil entities to leave where formerly they had a reason to be there. This leftover spiritual state may be causing sleeplessness,

nightmares, fears, demonic presence, dread, arguments...Once again an oppression you don't need to put up with and can easily be fixed.

How do I break this oppression?

James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

- I declare who God is and who I am...I renew my mind.
- I submit to Jesus.
- I make sure I am not sinning
- I resist the devil and tell him to get lost.
- I get help with long term ruts --stink thinking.
- Be alert for the devil wants to destroy us. God wants us to grow up and be led by the Holy Spirit. Spirit control.
- It's a simple thing to daily ask Jesus to lift off the weight of judgments that others have made and to forgive and bless them for it.

#### **4. ENGAGE YOUR MIND**

A renewed mind enables us to know the perfect and acceptable will of God. We have to engage our minds in the process of renewal and of listening and hearing God. What we don't want is a blank or passive mind. Blankness establishes a vacuum into which deception or negativity can easily come. The devil's tactic is to make us senseless, brute beasts who have lost the power to discern spiritual things. Similarly we may think we have to make our minds passive to receive God's voice. But in fact we need to engage our minds in this process. And understand that God's leading is in the intuition of the spirit not the mind. Intuition apprehends the mind of God quickly; the mind's role is to appraise that. Is it in line with the Word, is it peaceful...is it true. Don't be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Eph 5: 17

God renews and uses our minds. He wants us to obey intelligently not blindly. We are to consciously engage the various parts of our body for obedience to God. This then is the harmonious working of mind and spiritual intuition.

**A mind free of oppression is full of gratitude and joy.**

**It's clear and at peace.**

**When free of clouding we can sense God in our spirits and learn to discern the perfect will of God for us.**

Do you have this today and usually?

So what I've said is:

True Manrol and womantrol is being under the Spirit's control. This involves a process of surrendering ourselves daily to God and to the renewing of our minds. It involves us in some work! Be aware of oppression that you can actually very simply break off your mind. Chose to fight for your relationship with God. Commit your house to God, it could be disturbing your peace.. Get some help if you need to.