



Into the Word:

Jeremy challenged us this week concerning the things that our thoughts focus on. As he said many of us have minds that race and constantly analyze our surroundings and what we are doing while some of us are more laid back and tend to go with the flow. Regardless of which type brain we have, our thoughts are influenced by the culture around us. We are bombarded with images, sounds, advertisements, etc that are designed to influence our thoughts and behaviors. How are we as Christ followers to respond and live in this culture.

Read Isaiah 8:11–22.

God tells Isaiah how to keep his spiritual moorings in a society that gives God lip service but is determined to ignore both God’s warnings and blessings. The tone is set in verse 11: “The LORD spoke to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people.”

That is our challenge—not following the way of this culture. Focus on verses 12–13.

The people around Isaiah feared two enemies to their north, even after God told them those enemies would prove to be no threat (Isa. 7:4–9). What are some fears of our society that influence our thoughts? Should we also have those fears? Why or why not?

Why is the fear of the Lord (v. 13) the answer to the fears shared by the rest of the society around us? In particular, why does regarding the Lord Almighty as holy change our perspective? (Hint: The fact that God is in control and that He is holy means what concerning our future?)

Focus on verses 14–15.

In the passages before this, Isaiah has mentioned three times that God will send one called Immanuel, “God with us” (7:14; 8:8, 10). Immediately after this passage, he points clearly to Jesus Christ—9:1–7. That is whom he means here in verse 14 when he says, “he will be a sanctuary.”

How is Jesus Christ our sanctuary? How do you hide in him when dealing with the thoughts that culture tries to put in our heads?

We hide in Christ by trusting him, and we foster our trust when we read Scripture, pray, and fellowship with other believers. What happens to anyone who doesn’t hide in Christ, according to verses 14–15? Can Jesus simply be ignored?

Focus on verses 16–22.

Isaiah storms over how people in his day would listen to the dead rather than listen to the living God, yet when life falls apart, they curse God. Where do people in our day turn for counsel?

What good will it do if we “inquire of the Lord” for guidance if few of the cultural influencers in our society pay attention to God’s Word?

Scripture grounds us in the truth and reminds us of the rich benefits of grace and righteousness. Through that we ourselves become living “Scriptures” to the world around us, which will not likely listen to God any other way.

Action Step

Look again at verse 18.

How can we have this same kind of effect in our society?

Based on this study, what are the three things we can do that will help us guard our thoughts in today’s culture:

_____ the Lord

_____ in Christ as our “God-with-us” sanctuary

Pay close attention to God’s _____.