THINKING THE WAY JESUS THOUGHT

The Goal of Spiritual Well-being

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| Slide # | Text |
| Slide #1 | Mental Health Week |
| Slide #2 | THINKING THE WAY JESUS THOUGHT  The Goal of Spiritual Well-being  Pastor Eddie Tupa’i President, New Zealand Pacific Union Conference |
| Slide #3 | “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”  Philippians 2:5 New King James Version |
| Slide #4 | “Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.”  Philippians 2:5 The Message |
| Slide #5 | Our closing devotion for Health Week has put our focus on the very real and increasing trials of those living with a mental health illness or experiencing a mental health challenge. We have learned of ways we can accept and support, encourage and affirm them, and withhold judgement. It is hoped that in doing so we have dispelled the stigma and shame that those experiencing these challenges might encounter. |
| Slide #6 | Following this thought, and as a final focus it is my desire to challenge us to ‘think the way Jesus thought’. This divine summons of the mind brings a sense of wonder as to how this could ever be possible. Join me in a brief exploration of this command through a personal tension, a reflection on the precious words of Philippians 2:5, a real-life example, and then seeking a response for how we can live this truth in our lives today. |
| Slide #7 | I’ll start with the personal tension. I am proud to be a Samoan, born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand. One of the many blessings God has graciously given to me is the calling to serve Him in pastoral ministry. I have discovered over the years that as a Samoan Pastor there are two ways I can think of myself in this ministry role. |
| Slide #8 | One, is to think of myself as *aofa’alupega* (head of all titles), alternatively to consider myself as a *faife’au* (doer of chores)*.* Both these terms are regularly used by Samoans to refer to their pastors. |
| Slide #9 | The first term *aofa’alupega* (head of all titles) reflects the supreme regard that Samoans give to their pastors. The title ‘*Aofa’alupega’* is the highest ranking of all the chiefly titles of Samoa, and is given only to pastors. Because of this elevated position in Samoan society pastors are entitled to special treatment, and they are privileged with the best care and support that the church and village can provide. |
| Slide #10 | The second term *faife’au* (doer of chores) reflects the deeply embedded values of Christianity that are interwoven throughout Samoan culture. Christian humility and service form the fabric of Samoan life and are seen right through from the procedures of the nation’s parliament to the protocols of a village council. In this context the Samoan pastor is expected to model, teach and live out Christ-like service whilst at the same time holding the highest positioned post in the village. In every facet of Samoan life the *faife’au* is to exhibit the godly characteristics of worship, faith, love, family, respect, honour, hospitality, sacrifice and community. |
| Slide #11 | I quite like the *aofa’alupega* part of being a Samoan pastor! The privileges and comforts are generous. The treatment due to the status, certainly make me feel very important, and even special. |
| Slide #12 | Thankfully, our God is good to me.  I am so grateful that God regularly brings me back to reality when I start to get ‘big-headed’! He reminds me that He has called me to be on God’s mission as a Jesus-like servant-disciple when get into ‘I deserve’ mode. I am called and sent to be a *faife’au* emulating the selfless, sacrificing, and submitting example of Christ. |
| Slide #13 | This tension in my thinking between *aofa’aluega* and *faife’au* is what I believe the Apostle Paul is referring to when he encourages us to, *‘Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.’* |
| Slide #14 | This week we have reflected together on God’s healing for our minds and bodies. For some of us the topics covered will have been challenging, but it is with hope that what we have learned will be of benefit; whether you or someone you know or love has experienced a mental health challenge, or is living with a mental health illness know that God is on your side. A mental health challenge does not mean we lose our connection with God. |
| Slide #15 | Our loving God created us to experience wellness and wholeness of life, however sin entered our existence bringing ill health, pain and suffering. |
| Slide #16 | The good news is that God sent Jesus to restore the brokenness caused by sin in our lives. God’s healing of our minds and is a life-time commission of trusting in His divine will, Word, and way. |
| Slide #17 | At the very centre of following God’s way, obeying His will and trusting His Word is the health of our minds. Our thoughts, decisions, habits, and emotions are worked through in our souls as we interact with the world around us. To confront the impact of sin in and around us God offers to us the ‘mindset of Christ Jesus’.  God invites us to think as Jesus thought! |
| Slide #18 | God’s way includes looking for what is best for others even if that means foregoing what is ours to claim, this can be difficult when helping those with mental health challenges. bodies is a life-time commission of trusting in His divine will, Word, and way. |
| Slide #19 | Our way and God’s way are two incompatible ways of thinking. One is inward and promotes self. The other is outfacing and elevates sacrifice, service, and submission. |
| Slide #20 | Our way of thinking has been impacted by the self-defeating disease of sin. Our thoughts are riddled with the viruses of selfishness, self-centredness, and pride. |
| Slide #21 | God’s way, as seen in Jesus, is founded in the principles of sacrifice, service, and submission. These attributes of God’s character are also the method of His mission to rescue humanity from the impacts of sin. |
| Slide #22 | Let me share an example of a Samoan pastor who understood and was able to take on Jesus’ way of mission thinking. He is the late Pr. Eddie Erika. Pr. Eddie would intentionally find ways to avoid the preferential treatment given to Samoan pastors. He would do this not only because of who he was, but also to model and instruct. For example, he would refuse to sit at the head table that was reserved for pastors at special functions. However, I believe the most extraordinary ‘thinking like Jesus’ action that he took was in his retirement. When he retired from paid pastoral ministry Pr. Eddie made an unusual, even perplexing request. He asked that his ordination as a pastor also be retired. The truth be told, his ordination was his privilege to hold on to. He had ‘earned’ it. But when questioned he insisted on the withdrawal of his credentials, explaining that this was so he could no longer be treated as a pastor, but as one of the church members, |
| Slide #23 | Jesus’ invites us to a way of thinking that recognises God is on a mission to rescue all of humanity from the entrapment of sin by defeating self-centredness, decreasing the grip of greed, and dismissing the desire to be better, higher, or greater than one another. |
| Slide #24 | Our Father, through our Lord Jesus, and by the power of His Spirit calls us to give up our privilege, forsake our status, and give up earthly position for God’s plan of unity and equality for all people under the cross of Christ. |
| Slide #25 | “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death —even death on a cross.”  Philippians 2:6-7 New International Version |
| Slide #26 | ***Suggestions for private reflection:***   * When thinking of my attitude towards mental health, in what way does my thinking align with that of Jesus and in what ways am I challenged? * Since I have come to know God, how have my priorities and my attitude to others changed? Can this be reflected in my interactions with those experiencing mental health challenges? * What Bible character reminds me of the *‘aofa’alupega’* (head of all titles) role of spiritual leadership? Find a text to support this view. * *Other than Jesus, which Bible character is most closely aligned to the ‘faife’au’* (doer of chores) role of spiritual leadership? Find a text to support this view. |
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