TOXIC WEEK 1, TOXIC THOUGHTS...
EVERYONE IS INFECTED

Intro: Do you ever wonder what people are really thinking about?

It's so easy to get lost in Toxic thoughts,

- "I'll never be good enough! My life doesn't matter!
- I hate the way I look! I can't do it all!
- I will always be miserable! What if it doesn't happen?
- God just doesn't care about me!"

The Proverbs 23:7 says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.

So it really is the thought that counts.

“A noble and God-like character is not a thing of favor or chance, but is the natural result of continued effort in right thinking, the effect of long-cherished association with God-like thoughts.” — James Allen, As a Man Thinketh

Many of life's battles are either won or lost right here in the mind.

James 1:8 (KJV)
8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

- For those of you that are Christians, you know that at some point in your life when you called on the risen Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, there was a transformation that took place,

- You were spiritually born again and made new. And the moment that you were, there was a battle that started in your life.
• Paul kind of talked about this battle in Romans seven, you probably know a lot about it. He said...

**Romans 7: 14** We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do... I do not do, but what I hate to do... that’s what I do.

• He was talking about the very common battle between our fleshly nature, our fallen nature that wants to do what we want to do.

• Anything that is in direct defiance to God... We call that sin and we are all infected.

• Your flesh wants to do what it wants to do, your born again spirit wants to do what's contrary to the sinful nature, what God wants to you do.

1. **This is the battle going on that is often fought in the mind.**

   a. The mind decides, should I obey my fallen nature, or should I obey the spirit person who is connected to God?

   “A particular train of thought persisted in, be it good or bad, cannot fail to produce its results on the character and circumstances. A man cannot directly choose his circumstances, but he can choose his thoughts, and so indirectly, yet surely, shape his circumstances. ”  
   — James Allen,

   • The problem is that so many of us... we're losing the battle because our mind has been polluted with toxic thoughts and lies from our adversary the devil and the sin that has our world has intoxicated us with its desire to please it.

2. **Let's get a working definition of what toxic means. If you are taking notes, this will be our anchor thought for the series:**

   **Anchor thought:** TOXIC IS ANYTHING CONTAINING POISONOUS MATERIAL OR INFLUENCE CAPABLE OF CAUSING SICKNESS OR EVEN DEATH.

   a. So many of us are being silently poisoned by all sorts of things in this world that are toxic.
Illustration: I don't know about all of you, but for me... there was like these negative thoughts burned on the hard drive of my mind that would play over and over and over again.

- If I was going to meet someone that I considered important I would be nervous. My mind would say, "Don't mess up, you always say something stupid!"

- Then I would meet them and I would say something stupid.

b. When I would be preaching years ago in a moment like this, what would be going through the back of my mind was; "You're not doing good, they are just looking at you!

- They don't care! This is a stupid message, you should have done something else!" Don't loose your day job eddie.

- And my mind would play these thoughts over and over again.

- I've learned to replace them with the truth; that I am going to declare the living and active Word of God, it is sharp and alive and it will pierce & mend hearts today!

Listen... The bottom line is, if you think negative thoughts, you will become a negative person. If you learn to think like God, you will become like Christ.

Today I want to talk to you about toxic thoughts.

- Everybody say...it’s the thought that counts!
- Say it again... it's the thought that counts! Everybody,
- It's the thought that counts!

Two thoughts that we are going to look at in our lives today.

The first one, if you are taking notes, here's what we are going to do, we are going to learn, by the power of God's Word, to:

I. IDENTIFY AND REJECT TOXIC THOUGHTS.

1. We are going to identify any thoughts that are inconsistent with God's Truth, and we are going to reject those lies.
**Proverbs 4:23 CEV** Carefully guard your thoughts because they are the source of true life.

a. We are going to very carefully guard our thoughts.
   
   • Whenever there is something that tries to get into our brain that is inconsistent with God's Truth, we are going to guard our thoughts, because our thoughts drive the course of our lives.
   
   • As a person thinks in his heart, so he is.
   
   • Rather than meditating on anything that is contrary to God's Word, we are going to stop and guard our minds against anything that is a lie and we are not going to allow it to fortify a stronghold.

In 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, Paul said: The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.

b. Remember we are in a battle, spirit verses flesh. We don't fight with worldly weapons, we have spiritual weapons.
   
   • The Bible says: On the contrary, they have divine power.
   
   • The Greek word that's translated as power is the word, "dunamis" (doo'-namis).
   
   • We get our word dynamite from this word. It's the explosive power of God.

**Our spiritual weapons, they have divine power to demolish what?**

On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

c. The Greek word translated as strongholds is the word, "ochuroma".
   
   • It means a prisoner locked by deception.

**Life APPLY:** So many people here today are not becoming who God wants you to become because you are locked in a deception of lies.
• You believe something about yourself that is not true.

• You are locked in a prison of lies, and today the dynamis explosive power of God can and will demolish those strongholds.

2. Scripture goes on to say: We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God....

a. Everybody, here's what we do...Take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

**So how is this done?**

3. We are going to carefully guard our minds. If there is anything that is not pleasing to God, we are going to reject it.

• We are going to take our thoughts captive. We are not prisoners to the lies, instead our thoughts are our prisoner.

• Anything that is inconsistent with God's Word, we take it captive and we actively make it obedient to Christ.

• We are not going to replay the old recordings that are not true.

• We are not going to think on those things that hurt us or break the heart of God.

• We are going to carefully guard our minds and we are going to actively take captive every thought and make them all obedient to Christ.

4. Now here's what we are going to do. I'm going to walk you through a little exercise.

• From this point forward, as you identify where you're prone to dwell on toxic thoughts, that the Holy Spirit is going to remind you every time you open up your mind to a toxic thought.

**II. I've broken it down into four very simple categories so we can just kind of identify where we are vulnerable.**

a. We are going to talk about negative thoughts
b. We are going to talk about fearful thoughts
c. We are going to talk about discontented thoughts
d. We are going to talk about critical thoughts
e. And we are going to identify where we're prone to toxic thoughts so that we can reject them and replace them with God's truth.

1. **Negative Thoughts...** I’m not a negative person but deal with constant negative thoughts. Anybody with me?

   a. Some of you know what I am talking about.

       - Others of you are disgustingly positive!
       - You make us more negative thinking people just miserable with your happiness everywhere you go!
       - Just think happy thoughts and you’ll fly...Peter Pan LOL

       - Some are like... "I'm just happy, happy, happy, oh! Things are good, things are good!"

       - Others be like... "No, there not! It's bad! It's going to get worse!"

       - So, let me just go through some things that some negative people think and if this is you... I want you to be honest and you can just check your little box and say yes, I battle with this.

   b. **Sometimes negative thoughts say**, I don't have what takes, you know,

       - I'm never going to be good enough. No matter how hard I try, I just don't measure up.

       - Everybody else, they get all of the breaks, but not me baby! I mean, if something bad is going to happen, it happens to me.

       - If something good is going to happen it happens to you. I just can't do it all, there's just too much!

       - I mean, I try and try, but I'm always overwhelmed and I just can't get it all done! No one appreciates me.

       - I give and I give and I give, and they take me for granted. I've got the gift of giving and they've got the gift of taking. It's just not fair!

   c. It could be just kind of simple, petty things.
• My hair won't do what I want it to do on this day and my cell phone dropped another call and we're out of milk! Just negative!

**Be really honest**, how many of you would say that you can be prone to negative toxic thoughts? Be real honest.

**I pray the Holy Spirit will remind you, this is a vulnerable place therefore we are going to guard our minds against negative thoughts.**

2. Another one is fearful Thoughts.

   a. It's so easy to worry today, isn't it?

   • You can't go anywhere. What if I lose my job?

   • You turn on the news and everything is bad.

   • Or, I'm such and such age and I'm not married! I might never get married and I don't feel safe!

   • Someone could break in and I don't feel emotionally safe and I worry about my kids!

**Illustration:** Here's how Toxic some of your thoughts are....

If your spouse or Kid is ever running late sometimes you panic!

You literally start to worry. They could be 20 minutes late & your ready to file a missing persons report.

Or you think... that's it they’ve been in a car or they’ve been hit by a car, they’re dead! My so and so is dead! I have to start looking for the insurance papers...I'm going to have to do the funeral; I don't want to do the funeral.

I’m too old to remarry... maybe I'll start going to the Gym...

**How many of you would say that you can be prone to worry and fear?**

3. A third problem is that we can have very discontented thoughts, discontented.
a. I don't like my body, I don't like the way I look, I'm not attractive, I can't be happy unless I'm dating someone. I can't be happy unless I'm married.

• I married the wrong person, I wish my husband was more like that guy, a better spiritual leader, a better provider.

• I wish my wife wouldn't nag all of the time! Nag, nag, nag, nag, nag!

• Don't elbow anybody and don't you dare say Amen as I'm saying that!

• We would be happy if we had kids. I wish we had kids, or I wish we had different kids! These kids are driving me crazy! I wish I had a better job, bigger house, nicer car.

• I wish we had granite countertops and a walk-in closet. I can't be happy unless I have it.

b. Maybe you say, I wish it wasn't true, but I can be very discontented?

• **How many of you would say that is you?**

• **We must guard our minds from discontented, toxic thoughts.**

And then the final one...

4. **Some of us, we can just be so Critical of everything.**

a. We see somebody and we are like,

• I would never do that! Who does he think he is? Can you believe the way she dresses?
• Fashion Police...You know, critical!

b. **How many of you know somebody like that?**

• Raise your hand! See, you are being critical of them right now, look at you!

• You know, I don't like these people, I don't like this place.
• This place would fall apart without me!

c. Some of you even have the spiritual gift of criticism in churches!

• I mean, right now you are criticizing everything that is going on!

• I don't like this place! Music is too loud!

• How many of you would say that you can be critical, it can happen at times?

d. Guard your thoughts, because you have a choice.

• The battle in the spirit world is often going to be won or lost in your minds.

• If you want to find some negative things to think about you can. You make a choice, you choose to reject what is harmful and choose to embrace what is true.

Illustration: If you want to find some reason to be faith filled, you can. If you want to find a reason to be critical of other people, it's so easy!

• You want to criticize this church? Don't waste your time! I can criticize it a thousand times more than you can!

• But, if you want to find something good... you can look and see God working everywhere!

• If you want to be discontented, you can be very easily discontented, or you can look and say, thank you God for all of these tremendous blessings you've put in my life.

• Listen.. You're going to find what you're looking for.

Illustration: It's a little bit like the difference between a hummingbird and a vulture. So, everyday what does a hummingbird find? Nectar, sweet things, right? Everyday

What does a vulture find? Dead things everyday! Why? Because you will find what you are looking for.
Life APPLY: You can find sweet things, you can find things that build your faith, you can find truth and hope or you can find things to worry about and to sink into fear; even though God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. You will find what you are looking for.

III. We are going to identify and reject Toxic thoughts

1. I'm not going to let that influence who I become and what I believe.

   a. I am going to reject it and instead I am going to replace it with God's truth.

I love the way Paul said this, **Philippians 4:7-8**: ...the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true... noble... right... pure... lovely... admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.

   • Whatever is pure, think about it.
   • Whatever is lovely, think about it.
   • Whatever is noble, think about it.

b. Meditate on it, let it infuse your mind and change your heart.

   • You don't think about fear and worry and critical nature and discontented.

   • As you do, the Word of God will start to renew your mind and you will become a different person.

c. Replace the lies with the truth!

   • Believe it! Stop giving in to the toxic lies of this world.

   • Reject them and saturate your mind with truth.

**Romans 12:2**: Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

**How are we transformed?** You're transformed by the renewing of your mind.
Romans 12:2 Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is; His good, pleasing and perfect will.

The Greek word translated as renewing is the word anakainosis (an-ak-ah'-ee-no-sis), and here's what it means; a renewal, a renovation, it means to make better than new.

Your thoughts really do matter. A toxic thought contains poisonous material capable of causing sickness, or even death. That's why we are going to identify and reject those toxic thoughts. The Bible tells us to carefully guard our thoughts because they are the source of true life. Scripture says:

The Bible says:... Philippians 4:7 the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

In Closing:

How can I have the mind of Christ?

Answer: In 1 Corinthians 2:16, Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13 and then makes a statement concerning all believers: “We have the mind of Christ.”

Having the mind of Christ means sharing the plan, purpose, and perspective of Christ, and it is something that all believers possess.

Having the mind of Christ means we understand God’s plan in the world—to bring glory to Himself, restore creation to its original splendor, and provide salvation for sinners.

It means we identify with Christ’s purpose “to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10).

It means we share Jesus’ perspective of humility and obedience (Philippians 2:5-8), compassion (Matthew 9:36), and prayerful dependence on God (Luke 5:16).

In the verses leading up to 1 Corinthians 2:16, we note some truths concerning the mind of Christ:

1) The mind of Christ stands in sharp contrast to the wisdom of man (verses 5-6).
2) The mind of Christ involves wisdom from God, once hidden but now revealed (verse 7).

3) The mind of Christ is given to believers through the Spirit of God (verses 10-12).

4) The mind of Christ cannot be understood by those without the Spirit (verse 14).

5) The mind of Christ gives believers discernment in spiritual matters (verse 15).

I want you to take a moment and just be real honest and ask yourself; are you prone to drift into toxic and negative or critical or discontented thoughts?

Are you consumed with fear and worry and often anxiety, putting your faith in the works rather than putting your faith in God?

If that's you, I'm going to pray a real aggressive prayer and I am just going to tell you up front, I'm going to ask God to constantly remind you.

Then, this week in your life groups and as you are talking it over with other believers, I just want you to confess it to others and say, "**Yes, here's where I'm prone to toxic thoughts.**"

We are going to ask the Holy Spirit to remind us to reject those thoughts and then we are going to get into God's Word and we are going to learn to replace them with truth.

Those of you who would say, "Yea, I have some of those areas, and I really want those gone.

I want to think God's truth instead of embracing the lies."

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, take all of my life, I choose you. I am a sinner, I need a Savior; Jesus save me, Forgive me for all of my sins. Make me brand new. My life, it's not my own, it now belongs to you. Thank you for new life, renew my mind as I give you my life, all for you.

In Jesus Name I pray. AMEN