

“Thinking on the Same ‘Wavelength’”—Isaiah 55:6-9

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Thinking on the Same ‘Wavelength’”, is Isaiah 55:6-9 → *Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord (cf. 1Timothy 1:2). Amen.

Everyday language is full of expressions or clichés describing how people can feel “tuned in” to each other. A couple may describe their first date by saying, “We just clicked with each other!” After a productive conversation co-workers might be amazed how they were so “on track” with one another and seemed to be “on the same page” throughout the meeting, almost as if they were “thinking on the same wavelength.”

Usually such clichés are metaphors used to describe how well people understand each other in conversation. However, as a level-headed realist, you know there’s just no way two human brains could literally “tune in” to each other so well that they’re “thinking on the same wavelength.”

Surprise! Whether you call it “good vibrations” or “being on the same wavelength” or “the same track,” maybe even calling it a “mind meld,” neuroscience calls it “brain coupling,” and apparently it is a real, measurable, research-validated phenomenon. Still, God created the human mind so complex that even with all your research and efforts you still cannot totally understand another person, even if you can relate closely to his or her thoughts and experiences to some extent. While your uniqueness can produce an amazing world of different creativity, inventions, experiences and perspectives, many times it can produce frustration in relationships as well.

In verses 8-9 of our text, Yahweh tells His people that they function on a different wavelength than He, since His *thoughts are not their thoughts, neither are their ways His ways*. In fact, He reinforced the difference between their thoughts and ways by using the example of the distance between the heavens and the earth! Why such a gap between them? After all, He did create us in His image (cf. Genesis 1:26-27) and we are the products of His thoughts (cf. Genesis 2).

Isaiah was a prophet of Yahweh who had the privilege of living during a very affluent time in Israel's history. One of his contemporaries, the prophet Amos, described their affluence as lying *on beds of ivory and stretching themselves out on their couches* (i.e. living in luxury) and eating *lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall* (i.e. they could regularly eat the choicest meat which was usually reserved only for special feasts). They would *sing idle songs to the sound of the harp and . . . invent for themselves instruments of music* (i.e. were entertained by all kinds of meaningless music). They drank *wine in bowls*, not just cups, and anointed *themselves with the finest oils* (cf. Amos 6:4-6).

Unfortunately, rather than being thankful for such affluence, Amos had to point out that God's people were allowing such affluence to turn them away from the LORD in idolatry. They were *not grieved* in their thoughts *over the spiritual ruin of God's people*. Thus, their ways and thoughts were far different from Yahweh's ways and thoughts. They clearly were not thinking on the same wavelength.

About 700 years earlier Moses had spoken this warning to God's people: *Take care . . . lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your*

God. Beware lest you say in your heart, "My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth." You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He Who gives you power to get wealth, that He may confirm His covenant that He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. (cf. Deuteronomy 8:12-14,17-18) It is not the wealth, affluence, abundance and luxuries in life which draw a one into idolatry, whose *thoughts* and *ways* reflect a sinful arrogance in opposition to God's *thoughts* and *ways* (i.e. *My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth*). The problem, rather, is the sinful human heart.

Can you relate? Consider the thoughts and ways of many in our culture who have been baptized into Christ Jesus. Ideals and behaviors at one time considered sin by Christians according to God's *thoughts* recorded in His inspired Word, the Bible, are now accepted as God's *ways* in arrogance. What was once inconceivable, when it was considered debatable, became acceptable. Book upon book has been published analyzing the movement of the Christian Church in our country over the past one hundred years, each trying to sift through the dynamics which has led to the spiritual ruin of many who claim to be Christians. Since we live in the most affluent time of luxury and convenience in the history of this country it would be tempting to put the blame on having abundance. It won't work. Satan is the culprit and your sinful nature is the accomplice.

The command of Yahweh through the prophet Isaiah extends to you today as well: *Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.* There will come a time when God's judgment will fall upon the idolatrous heart. Acts 17:31 says that God *has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a Man Whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead.* As long as you are alive this side of the grave *the LORD . . . may be found as you call upon Him while He is near.* Once your death or Jesus' return takes place your judgment is sealed for either eternal life with Jesus in heaven or eternal suffering in hell. So . . . *seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.*

This is a call to repent of your sins, based upon God's thoughts and the ways He has provided for you to be forgiven in the Person & Work of Jesus. In the Person of Jesus Yahweh came near to you (cf. John 1:14; Philippians 2:8-11), taking on your human nature (cf. Hebrews 2:14-17) in order to give His life as the perfect payment for your idolatrousness and disobedience. Repentance and faith in the atoning work of Jesus is thinking on the same wavelength as God because you submit to Him. Verse 7 of our text describes it with God's promise: *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; **let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*** Jesus said it this way in John 6:37 →

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out. We come on the basis of God's thoughts and ways in Christ Jesus.

This forgiveness of sins on God's part is another reflection of His ways and *thoughts* being so different than your ways and thoughts. Your ways and concepts of forgiveness cannot fathom God's *perfect patience* (cf. 1 Timothy 1:12-16) and unlimited forgiveness of sins. Think about how we would deal with constant rejection, rebellion and wickedness? Even if it is with patience, forgiving the 2nd time would seem kind of ridiculous, let alone *as many as seven times*, the limit of forgiving someone which the apostle Peter suggested to Jesus (cf. Matthew 18:21). How does the saying go? "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me." When you've experienced this unconditional forgiveness and steadfast love of God through repentance and faith in Jesus, your thoughts and ways get on the same wavelength as God's. Not that you can fathom His grace or express it perfectly, but you can trust it for your own atonement of sins and apply that atonement to the sins of others by the power of the Holy Spirit. He changes the thought thus: "Fool me once . . . I forgive you. Fool me twice . . . I forgive you. Fool me three time . . . I forgive you." and so forth.

When you turn to the LORD in repentance and faith then it is a turning which is based upon the permanence and power of **God's grace**,

forgiveness, love and mercy in Christ! Your getting on the same faith wavelength with God will not assure that others will return to Him. However, it does assure that you return to Him. You will turn to His way of thinking given you in His holy Word (i.e. His *thoughts*). You will turn to His way of sustaining your relationship with Him by bringing you to hear His thoughts and to dispensed and received forgiveness of sins in His ways through the Gospel, Absolution and the Lord's Supper. It is these actions of God in the Person & Work of Jesus which keeps you on the same wavelength with Him. Amen.

Along with the apostle Paul I pray . . .
that according to the riches of His glory
He may grant you to be strengthened with power
through His Spirit in your inner being,
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith
—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
may have strength to comprehend with all the saints
what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,
that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

(Ephesians 3:16-19)

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