

**University Heights Church
of Christ**
445 Columbia Ave.,
Lexington, KY 40508
(859) 255-6257
www.uheightschurch.com

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is
immediately followed by a
short worship period)

First Friday of Each Month

Singing: 7:30 PM

LEADERSHIP

Elders

Garry Banks, David Collins,
John Thompson

Evangelist

Adam Litmer

Deacons

Troy Antle, Richard Brundige,
Matt Thompson, Adam
Litmer, Bill Morelan, Jim
Parsons, Pat Seabolt, Adam
Daniels, Jamie Powell

Adam's Office Hours

Tuesday-Friday (8:30-4:00)

**The congregational
meeting is this
afternoon at 5. All
members are
encouraged to attend.**

the just and on the unjust. Did you get the part of this passage that states the spiritual benefit to those who are merciful to their enemies? It helps us be the children of our Father who is in heaven.

Peter once asked Jesus about the frequency of forgiveness and suggested that maybe seven times ought to be sufficient. Jesus responded by stating that seventy times seven was more appropriate. Now we know that Jesus was not saying to stop forgiving upon having forgiven someone 490 times. But let's consider just how large that number is. If someone sinned against you one time a month, it would take more than 40 years to forgive that person 490 times. Who among us would keep forgiving the offender that frequently for that long? I suspect our mercy would reach its upper limit long before 490 was reached. Jesus put forth that number, not as some upper limit, but to show that forgiveness *has* no upper limit. When one obeys the gospel and is baptized for the remission of sins, all of his sins are forgiven. And every time we confess our sins while striving to live a godly life, *If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* (1 John 1:9)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.... (2 Corinthians 1:3)

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Jeff Howerton, Rhonda Boyd, Paul Atkisson, Barbara Matheny, David Morrow, Debbie Parker, John Bennett, Robert Brundige, Donald Dawson, Gail Stein, Sandy Childress, Susie Burton, Jacob Profit, Valerie and Barry Boyd, Jannett's mother and stepfather, Sandy Driver, Erlene Young, Doris Baker, Burnice Richardson, Ruth Poynter, Larry Sells, Christian Shadburne, Mattie Johnson (hip replacement), Evelyn Damron, Cassie Neel, Tony Tirey, Rose Curtis

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The Anatomy Of The "Mind Already Made Up" Heart

Adam Litmer

This past week I engaged in what became a very frustrating Bible discussion. Very quickly it became obvious that the individual had already made up their mind and the goal was not to seriously consider what God had to say on the topic. As the discussion progressed arbitrary limitations (nothing from the Old Testament, nothing from Paul, only words directly from Jesus contained in the gospels) were set forth to seemingly place the views of the individual in a more favorable light. Ultimately it became clear that the discussion could not continue with any profit. The result was sad, but all too common.

This article is a little different than most that I write. I want to set forth what I have observed as the anatomy of the "mind already made up" heart in my thirteen years of preaching. In so doing I believe that we will clearly see the dangers of approaching spiritual topics subjectively and why doing so renders beneficial Bible study incredibly difficult, if not altogether impossible.

1. When the "mind already made up" heart asks spiritual questions, it does so with a single agenda: maintain its cherished belief. As a result it is usually averse to a meaty Bible discussion requiring a careful consideration of principles and the actual meaning of words.

2. When the "mind already made up" heart begins to experience opposition it seeks to place arbitrary restrictions upon the discussion. It might decide that the discussion be necessarily limited to the New Testament. If opposition continues it may decide that the epistles should not be considered but only the words of Jesus in the four gospels.

3. However, the "mind already made up" heart is not opposed to ignoring its own self-placed restrictions if it believes a phrase or word from the restricted area might help it push its point in some way.

4. The “mind already made up” heart is more interested in its next argument than in listening to what is being said by the other person. Often, it doesn’t really know what the person across from it just said because it wasn’t listening. Thus, it is often not equipped nor inclined to answer the other person because, really, their contribution is seen as nothing more than a moment for the “mind already made up” heart to catch a breath and formulate its next speech.

5. Often the “mind already made up” heart is convinced that it and it alone is truly spiritual, loving, and committed. Disagreeing with the “mind already made up” heart is seen as proof that one simply does not know God’s Word very well or is sadly lacking in interpretive ability.

6. The “mind already made up” heart often struggles mightily with the idea that it could be wrong. When accused of failing to rightly divide the Word of God it is often quick to claim persecution and mistreatment rather than sit down to a calm examination to see if the accusation is true.

I think you get the point. There must be a willingness to approach the Scripture with objectivity. If God in His Word clashes with one of my cherished beliefs He is right and I am wrong. One of us has to change and it is certainly not Him! Yet approaching such issues with my mind firmly made up, viewing Holy Scripture through the subjective lens of my own preconceived notions, renders actually understanding it impossible. Let us always remember that no belief is so valuable, nor can any belief become so cherished, that not even God and His revealed will is able to change our minds. Certainly every Christian must maintain a number of beliefs with unwavering conviction (inspired Scripture calls them “the faith”—Jude 3; “things most surely believed”—Luke 1:1, etc.), yet let us always ensure that such beliefs are the result of God’s revelation, not subjective desires or opinions.

Hosea 11:9

John Thompson

In Hosea 11:9 God makes a profound statement about Himself. It ought not to be profound; it ought to be glaringly obvious to us, but what God says is a truth that often eludes us when we become too full of ourselves.

God says, “*I am God, and not man.*” How is it possible that we lose sight of how infinitely superior in every way possible God is to us? I would suggest that the moment we begin to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think we

have begun to turn our back on God and His authority. People whose pride reaches too high a level fail to see that the salvation of their souls is totally dependent upon the very God whose authority they seek to overthrow.

This passage in Hosea speaks to the fact that God’s superiority is nowhere better demonstrated than by His great mercy. Let’s take a closer look at this passage. God’s statement that He is God and not a man is the reason given for His decision not to carry out an action that He would have been fully justified to carry out.

While the Israelites remained divided into a northern and a southern kingdom, Ephraim had become the dominant tribe in the north. When many of the prophets spoke of Ephraim they were including all of the ten tribes that made up the northern kingdom of Israel. The book of Hosea is especially impressive, and we would be well served to read it again, noting how pervasive Israel’s sins had become. In addition, they had spurned God’s corrective discipline and seemed oblivious of His ever-increasing anger. Yet, He says in Hosea 11:9: *I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.*

Just think about what God is revealing about Himself here. Man’s continued sin makes Him angry, very angry. In His anger He is fully justified in punishing the sinful, even destroying the sinful. However, He chooses, for the most part, to extend mercy, and what a degree of mercy it is! It is a mercy that is a function of the very essence of His being; It is a mercy that only God can extend. It is a mercy as unlimited as God Himself. It is a mercy far and away beyond anything that man can extend. Man brings retribution on those who offend or trespass against him at the drop of a hat compared to the restraint that God shows. Sometimes even an eye for an eye is not sufficient to satisfy man’s desire for revenge.

Yet, Jesus taught a better way to live, a way that enables us to become godly, i.e. Godlike, with regard to mercy. He said, in Matthew 5:43-45, *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on*