



**Shaping the Franciscan Footprint
Five Important Spiritual Thoughts from the Liturgy of the Word
...and follow up for the Secular Franciscan
December 1 – December 7**

1 -- "Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock."

(Mt 7:24)**

2 -- "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few."

(Mt 9:37)**

3 -- "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."

(Mt 3:3)**

...Am I preparing for the Lord in the way I live?

4 -- "What are you thinking in your hearts?" (Lk 5:22)**

Extended meditation:

Most sinfulness begins in our mind, our thinking. We think about things, and then we act it out, or more often speak it out. And often that acting or speaking is sinful. So, Jesus's question of the Pharisees or the people he is preaching to is often: "What are you thinking?"

Jesus makes a powerful statement to Peter in the Gospel (Matthew 16:23):

You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.

It leads to the questions of what is God thinking, and what is human thinking?

First, we ask the question about "human thinking." I think that the best way to answer is to study commercials, especially television commercials because commercials, according to those who make them, are what we desire. If we desire it, we will buy the product. What is "human thinking", according to our advertisements?

I come up with five things—think of some commercials on the television shows that you watch and see if you agree with me. According to advertisements, the way I see it, we should want these things:

- **1 – beauty** is a significant desire, usually a thin, young and athletic body with the right kind of figure, and therefore, the right food, the right razor, and the like, and all kinds of clothing, pills and creams are necessary;

- **2 – pleasure** is a desire, pleasure from eating or drinking or feeling comfort, better convenience in our lives, and feeling good about our pets; it includes the whole

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 area of enjoyment from sex (which is much more explicit in today's
 than it ever has been);



world

- **3 – money** is very much part of human being thinking—making more of it, saving it better, or especially getting something cheaper;

- **4 – health, and in particular no pain** is a guideline in human thinking—so that life can always be happy, with no suffering, and again, pills are necessary for it to happen, with a denial as much as possible of the pain of growing older;

- **5 – a sense of being superior or having power** is important—to be more intelligent, more powerful, more clever than someone else, and so we need the right car, the right bank, the right broker, more money, and so forth.

Those ideas especially and probably many others make up part of “human thinking.”

In sharp contrast, Jesus speaks of *God’s* thinking in the Gospel. What is “God thinking”? As described by Jesus, “God thinking” would consist of:

- **1 – denying oneself**—selfishness has no part of God’s way; there must be very little concern for how much we ourselves will get out of any venture:

What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?

- **2 – the cross** is part of “God thinking”—there will be pain and suffering, driving that point home to Peter, calling him Satan when he misunderstood it;

- **3 – we must have a religious guide:** he says specifically:

Follow me.

It implies knowing Jesus well enough so that *his* thoughts, words and actions become *our* thoughts, words and actions.

Therefore, we have given to us two different points of view. Practically everything in our lives can be considered in the light of the contrast of “human thinking” or “God thinking.” For example, living in a family, in a community, going to college, working to make money and so forth. Or take for example **our spiritual lives**: growing spiritually takes time, time spent in things like reading Scripture and reflecting on it or spiritual reading or time spent in prayer by ourselves. It involves the thought that we really must improve our lives. “Human thinking” about that is that it is a waste of our valuable time.

If we learn to “purify” our thinking, we will learn to become truly “God-thinking.”

5 – “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.” (Mt 11:28-30)**

...Have I?