

Refuge City Church — October 23, 2022

“Perspective: Worldview”

Introduction

- “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way...” [Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*]
 - Every generation can rightfully claim this quote to define the era in which they lived.
 - For today in 2022, heading into an election cycle, and on the cusp of a new year, we can claim this in various ways.
 - **THINK:** Think through what you thought of/perceived as I read through that statement. What comes to mind?
 - Did you focus on the good or bad? Happy or sad? Pre or Post Covid? Conservative or Liberal? Economic expansion or recession/inflation? Trump vs. Biden? Race/Racism, Abortion, or the LGBTQ?
 - When the words *Politics*, *Culture*, and *Society* are mentioned, what comes to mind, and how do you perceive those things?
- The past few chapters of our study of Acts, Paul has gone through the ringer when it comes to *political controversy*, *cultural divide*, *religious legalism*, and what happens when Christianity infiltrates those arenas.
- If anything has challenged your perspective on the world around you, it’s happened in the past 5-10 years, if not the last 3.
- **What is the importance of having perspective?** What does perspective do for us?
 - That will be the focus of our study for the next 3 weeks.
 - How are we to think about the world around us, and how are we to live our faith in Jesus in the political and cultural arena?
 - **Romans 12:2**, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
- Paul was able to stand before every Roman tribune, governor, and Jewish council with a good conscience.
 - We need to *think* through and *know* that on which we stand as followers of Jesus. What is your philosophical [fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence] and moral foundation as it relates to the Word of God?

What is a worldview?

- Everyone on earth has a worldview!
 - It is your conception of the world and all it entails.
 - It’s your set of beliefs that influence your thinking, knowledge, and actions.
 - It is the lens through which you look to see & understand the world.

- Yet, many of us don't consider the cleanliness of the lens, or the lens altogether!
 - **Example:** Car windshield. Clean or dirty? What do you do to clean it? Cleaning the outside is our first inclination. But what about the inside?
- **QUOTE:** "Most of us go through life not recognizing that our personal worldviews have been deeply affected by the world. Through the media and other influences, the secularized American view of history, law, politics, science, God and man affects our thinking more than we realize." [Del Tackett]
 - What has influenced your perspective, or lack thereof?

Do you possess a Biblical Worldview?

- **QUESTION:** Do you believe it's important to have a biblical worldview?
 - If so, is that based on *your* opinion of the issues, or on the absolute truth of God's Word?
 - **QUOTE:** "If Jesus Christ came to this planet as a model of how we ought to live, then our goal should be to act like Jesus [1 John 2:6]. Sadly, few people consistently demonstrate the love, obedience and priorities of Jesus. The primary reason that people do not act like Jesus is because they do not think like Jesus. Behavior stems from what we think – our attitudes, beliefs, values and opinions." [George Barna]
 - **2 Corinthians 10:5,** "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ."
 - **QUOTE:** "Satan's strategy is to use speculations/theories and incorrect information that contradicts God's revealed truth. The propaganda of our enemy consists of ideas that run counter to the truth of God." [Thomas Constable]
 - We understand that we live in a fallen/sin-filled world.
 - **Romans 5:12,** "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—"
 - **Psalms 14:3,** "They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt..."
 - **Romans 3:23,** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- How can you determine if you have a proper biblical worldview?
 - To start, ask yourself the following questions:
 1. Do absolute moral truths exist?
 2. Is absolute truth defined by the Bible?
 3. Did Jesus Christ live a sinless life?
 4. Is God the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe, and does He still rule it today?
 5. Is salvation a gift from God that cannot be earned?
 6. Is Satan real?
 7. Does a Christian have a responsibility to share his or her faith in Christ with other people?
 8. Is the Bible accurate in all of its teachings?
 - You may have answered 'yes', but do your thinking, speech, and actions prove it?

- **Gut reaction:** You may immediately know something is right or wrong, but can you clearly articulate why? Or even where that rational/moral knowledge comes from? Let's look at a few examples:
 - *Murder*: right or wrong?
 - **Matthew 5:21-22**, “You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.”
 - *Gossip*: Does it depend on the situation?
 - **James 4:11**, “Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you.”
 - *Sexual immorality*: Does it depend on the pervasiveness of the thought or action?
 - **Matthew 5:27-28**, “You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:3**, “God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin.”
 - What are your thoughts on watching rated R movies, listening to secular music, celebrating Halloween, drinking alcohol, gambling, marijuana/CBD, abortion, homosexuality/LGBTQ, etc... We MUST think through these things as they pertain to our life in Christ.

Christianity vs. Philosophy vs. World Religions

- **Philosophies** [non-religious worldviews]
 - *Naturalism*: the rejection of ‘supernatural’ entities, and that science is a possible, if not the only option, to explain the realities of human existence.
 - *Postmodernism*: God is excluded as a foundation for making sense of reality and human experience; we cannot speak of any universal truth, reason, or morality. We just have fragmented perspectives; No universal foundation for truth, morality, human dignity exists.
 - *Pluralism*: There are many pathways to truth; in religion, there are multiple paths of truth and the afterlife.
 - *Moralistic Therapeutic Deism*: God intervenes only when asked. As long as I'm not hurting anyone, I can be a good person, doing what makes me feel good.
- **World Religions**
 - *Islam*: One God [Allah]. Jesus was just a prophet and was not crucified. Muhammad is greater than Jesus. Trinity does not exist.
 - Salvation: faith in Allah, belief in Muhammad, *good works*.
 - *Mormon*: God is a man who became God. Jesus is the physical son of God. Jesus and Satan are brothers.
 - Salvation: *earned by good works*.

- *Jehovah Witnesses*: One God. Jesus was created, and a former angel. No trinity.
 - Salvation: *earned by good works*. If you can't keep the rules, you're 'disfellowshipped'.
- *Buddhism*: Religion of 'awakening' or 'enlightenment'. The pursuit of life without suffering, material desire, and the achievement of nirvana through mindfulness and meditation. [No God, in the sense as we define God]
- *Hinduism*: wide range of religious philosophy embedded in polytheism, and a complex code of behavior, achieved through karma [cause & affect]/reincarnation, and the achievement of 'liberation'.
- We have to be able to engage with unbelief in Jesus and His gospel.
 - This seems overwhelming and a daunting task.
 - But, how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.
- Especially today, God has given us everything we need to increase our knowledge and understanding of who He is.
 - **Hebrews 13:20-21**, "Now may the God of *peace* who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, *equip you with everything good that you may do his will*, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."
 - Are we making good use of what we've been given?

Where do we begin?

1. **Ask** the Lord to reveal any hindrances to a biblical worldview.
 - **James 4:2**, "You do not have, because you do not ask."
 - **Psalm 139:23-24**, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"
 - **Psalm 51:6, 10**, "Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."
2. **Identify** where you are really placing your trust [man, politics, cultural trends, etc.]. Pray the Lord open your eyes to see and ears to hear.
 - **Psalm 146:3-5, 8**, "Don't put your confidence in powerful people; there is no help for you there. When they breathe their last, they return to the earth, and all their plans die with them. But joyful are those who have the God of Israel as their helper, whose hope is in the Lord their God... The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are weighed down. The Lord loves the godly."
3. **Seek** the Lord's wisdom on the issues that bring confusion...the issues that make you ask, "How should a Christian respond??" [think before you speak!]
 - **Proverbs 2:3-6**, "Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God. For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding."

Conclusion

- There is no fear in thinking critically, logically, and with reason about the world in which God has placed us.
- We are sojourners, traveling through this land. It is not our permanent home.
 - **1 Peter 2:11-12**, “Dear friends, I warn you as “temporary residents and foreigners” to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. Be careful *to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors.*”
 - However, that doesn’t mean we completely ignore all that is going on. We are called to engage this world!
 - **1 Peter 2:9**, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, *that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*”
 - But we do so with God at the center of our mind, and see the world through the lens of His glory and purpose.
- **QUOTE:** The Christian believes...that knowledge of God is absolutely necessary to understand the world. And the only way to know about God, in any meaningful way that might provide insights into reality, is for God to reveal himself to His creation. We are completely dependent upon God to explain himself and our world so we might understand both ourselves and our place in His creation. [Daniel Dewitt]
 - **Romans 11:36**, “For *from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*”