

Can Man Solve His Own Problems?

TEXT: Jer. 10:23

THESIS: We must trust in God even when our society says that God does not exist.

INTRODUCTION:

1. One of the most memorable statements in the book of Jeremiah is: "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23).
 - A. In this verse, Jeremiah issued a threat of Judah approaching ruin (vs. 17-25).
 1. For the Jews here, there would be 3 carrying aways.
 2. And, blame for Judah's decline was laid at the feet of pastors, being the priest and shepherds of God's people (vs. 21).
 3. Those who thought themselves to be stable residents in the land of Canaan were forced to learn, when they were evicted by Babylon that "the way of man is not in his steps."
 - B. In like manner, man cannot chart his own course, unless God is working with him, for it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps, even though he appears to be perfectly free to do all things his way.
2. Civilization is becoming comfortable with the notion that people are perfectly able to solve their own problems without God.
 - A. As people today have "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25), moral decline has been the inevitable result.
 - B. We have become a culture in love with the naturalistic view of life.
 - C. The most crucial problems that we face are those that have a moral foundation and are trying to make God obsolete.
3. Secular knowledge and human skills are currently exalted as the answer to all things.
 - A. Man's word is given as the answer to questions of origin and meaning of life.
 - B. Human counsel is offered as guidance for every human relationship, including dating, marriage and the home, as well as every form of sexual conduct and orientation.
 - C. Human wisdom is highly prized as the fix for every human problem.
4. But, do we have the answers to all things and what makes man think that we can guide our own steps and who is feeding us all these things?

DISCUSSION:

- I. WHO ARE "THEY" WHO SAY THAT MAN CAN SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS?
 - A. So, who are the "they" who say we can solve our own problems?
 1. They are identified as those who, as in Ezekiel's day, exalt themselves to where their "heart is lifted up" and they say, "I am a God, I sit in the seat of God" (Ezek. 28:2).
 2. They are the ones with the philosophy (humanism) who argues that the God of the Bible does not exist, and that man is the captain of his own course in life, being his own god (Nelson Mandela).

- B. Humanism therefore, focuses on the worldly and temporary and is a distinctive doctrine centering on humanity.
 - 1. And so, their attitudes or their way of life centers on human interests or values, as opposed to those things of God revealed to us in the Bible.
 - 2. Thus, the foundation beliefs of secular humanism is:
 - a. No existence of the God of the Bible.
 - b. No life after death.
 - c. No absolute standard for right and wrong.
 - d. No ultimate meaning for life.
 - e. No true free will because of genetic reasons (we can't help it . . . we were born this way).
- C. The time is not too far in the distance when we as Christians will be further tested as to whether we will obey God or man.
 - 1. But, we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard (Acts 4:19-20).
 - 2. And, we must obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29).
- D. So, who are the "they?" "They" are those who follow an ancient, but up to date philosophy of vain deceit.
 - 1. Satan is one who flatly contradicted God's original message by saying that "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4-5).
 - 2. And, the expression of this same type of thinking is found in other passages:
 - a. "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6).
 - b. "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23).
 - 3. Thus, humanism is the belief system of those who adhere to the primacy of man as guided by science and human reason.
- E. The "they" are those whose philosophy of vain deceit puts them on Satan's side of the contemporary cultural war of worldviews.
 - 1. A culture war occurs when a society is at odds with itself.
 - 2. And, it touches all of life and determines how one approaches reality.
 - 3. In the arena of politics, for example:
 - a. In the past, elections were battles wherein the party of the working class squared off against the party of the ruling class.
 - b. Today, politics is largely a clash of worldviews, putting an "archaic" conservatism that believes in limited government and more God . . . against an "enlightened" liberalism that espouses more government with less God, especially in areas where sexuality is concerned.
- F. So, the cultural war is a spiritual struggle of opposing worldviews of which there are only four:
 - 1. Naturalism is the philosophies of atheism and secular humanism.
 - 2. Pantheism is the Eastern religions and the New Age Movement.
 - 3. Postmodernism is the current mindset in the world that believes absolute truth is non-existent.
 - 4. Christianity.

5. A worldview then, is a way of thinking about the main issues of life, namely God, human origins, questions of right and wrong, our destiny and human relations.

II. CAN WE SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS WITHOUT GOD?

- A. As we consider culture wars, they have erupted since time began.
 1. There was a culture war early in human existence when, "GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." (Gen. 6:5-7).
 - a. But, in contrast to this decision, "eight souls" (1 Pet. 3:20) were spared death in the global flood.
 - b. Moses said of the Patriarch, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD . . . Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." (Gen. 6:8-9).
 2. Later, for 350 years, the rebellion of Israel during the days of the judges fueled their continual cycle of sin, oppression, repentance and deliverance.
 - a. It was during that time that in their formidable resistance to God that he, "delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them" (Jdgs. 2:14), and upon their reflection and repentance also redeemed them.
 - b. Regardless of what is happening, God was always at the epicenter of these spiritual conflicts.
- B. It is no different now.
 1. No matter what "hot button" questions may be, the central issue is God.
 - a. Prayer in public schools.
 - b. Display of the 10 Commandments in a courthouse.
 - c. Same sex marriages.
 - d. Problems with saying, "One nation under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - e. Abortion, Euthanasia.
 - f. Our country is boiling in a war between the conservative "right" and the secular "left" in the political arena of ideas.
 2. But still, at the core of this worldview war is the question of God's existence.
- C. Every effort is being waged to erase God and Christianity from public life.
 1. From Hollywood to Washington D.C., to our local newspapers, all are openly hostile to God.
 2. And, they are waging war against Him to dethrone God and enthrone man.
 - a. This is why homosexuality and the Darwin theory of evolution go hand in hand.

- b. People are making legal same sex marriage and advancing the homosexual agenda by way of evolution.
- D. Marriage today is viewed by many as merely a legal contract, allowing people, by law, to “marry” whomever they wish of either sex.
 - 1. Indeed, marriage is a legal contract, but it is far more.
 - 2. Marriage has a:
 - a. Social purpose in seeing that there is “a someone” to share and help the other in life.
 - 1. God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” (Gen. 2:18).
 - b. Biological purpose in producing and raising children.
 - 1. Paul wrote, “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” (1 Tim. 5:14).
 - c. Domestic purpose in establishing the home and family.
 - 1. Paul taught the young women, “to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (Tit. 2:4-5).
 - d. Moral purpose of purity.
 - 1. Paul said, “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” (1 Cor. 7:2).
 - 3. Thus, the idea of homosexuals marrying can never satisfy one single purpose that God intended for marriage.
- E. But sadly, lawmakers are unconcerned about God’s will for marriage as expressed in the Scriptures.
 - 1. And now, fair-minded people are confused by the arguments.
 - 2. But Jesus addressed sexuality and marriage when He asked, “. . . Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?” (Matt. 19:4-5).
 - 3. It is apparent that homosexuals are not included in this pairing.
 - 4. Marriage as it was initiated in the beginning involved one man and one woman (Gen. 2:18-25).
- F. Among the sins of the ancient Gentile world, were male and female homosexual relationships (Rom. 1:24-27).
 - 1. In both cases, the persons involve exchanged something natural for that which is not natural.
 - 2. That is, some women were rejecting their stronger male counterparts in preference for lesbian unions, and some men were denying their fairer sex for homosexual companions (vs. 26-27).
 - 3. In both cases, the participants were doing that which is against nature (vs. 26).
- G. Still, it is popular for women to appear and act in masculine ways, and for men to appear more feminine.

1. And, we have gotten so use to that, that sex changes, gender ambiguity and bi-sexualism hardly shock us anymore.
2. The feminization of men is a trend that has been growing for years.
3. And, we are being brought to the point of one sex saying to the other: "I don't need you."

III. WHAT MAKES UP PROBLEMS FOR US TODAY?

- A. Humanistic influences have attempted to erase all standards of right and wrong in our culture.
 1. They have argued against giving God absolute authority in our lives, decisions, beliefs and morals.
 2. They have eliminated the perfect truth of God for "well that's your opinion or interpretation", they have eliminated the prejudice truth against the world with truth that accepts all things, they have added to the single faith in God to numerous faiths, they have changed God's ethics to just a private matter based on your own faith.
- B. Those who would lead us away from a Biblical worldview to a secular worldview are attempting to change our perception of ethical and moral problems as being problematic.
 1. The Bible by regarding it as a purely human product than religious truth is humanly manufactured rather than divinely revealed, maintaining that we do not really have problems, only preferences.
- C. As people feel increasingly comfortable in solving their problems without God, they learn alternative ways of making moral decisions.
 1. Base their moral decisions upon whatever will bring them the most satisfying results.
 2. Others base their decisions upon what they think will please the most people so as to minimize interpersonal conflict.
- D. When God is taken out of people's lives, things that were once considered important become more doubtful or uncertain.
 1. The legality of a thing gives it moral certainty in the minds of many people whether it is approved of God or not.
 2. For example, the popular conclusion that a woman is free to do whatever she wants with her body since the fetus is not considered a person anyway.
 - a. God is the giver of life, breath and all things (Acts 17:25).
 1. That fact alone makes human life sacred.
 2. God's word teaches general sanctity of life principles.
 3. Our bodies are important (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
 - b. Today, you can be fined 250,000,000 and spend 5 years in jail for collecting eagle's eggs.
 1. But, by federal law, you can kill an unborn baby and it is o.k.
 3. This is all humanism and whatever pleases ourselves, is O.K. because we are able to solve our own problems.

CONCLUSION:

1. In our day of astounding human achievements, it is not unreasonable to think that some have concluded that the “way of man” is indeed “in himself” and that it is “in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).
 - A. And, a casualty in the culture war is the social view of absolute truth so that they can largely reject God and worship the creature more than the Creator.
 - B. And, by doing so, we now think we are capable of solving our problems without God.
 1. Abortion, gambling, evolution, homosexuals are all consider personal choices in today’s world.
2. But, it is futile for man to think that he can solve his problems without God.
 - A. How are we to convince anybody that sin, which is our greatest problem, can be solved outside of man’s ways especially when man refuses to acknowledge that there is such a thing as sin?
 - B. How can we possibly lead anybody to Jesus Christ who can save us from sin when we are told that whatever we do is right in our own eyes and that we can solve our own problems?
3. It’s so frustrating being a Christian sometimes.
 - A. But, to keep from being discouraged, Christians need more than ever to trust in God rather than to trust in themselves.
 - B. Remember Solomon’s wise words: “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.” (Prov. 3:5-8).