

## CHANGING THE WAY WE LOOK AT LIFE

There is no end to the different ways that people look at life. People view existence in this world through very different sets of eyes. Even when people look at the same circumstances and situations, different people have totally different views. Let me use two examples as illustrations.

- ❖ To some people, life stinks. No matter what the circumstances are or the situation is, they always see the stinky things.
  - Trouble chases them like a vicious dog. Problems cling to them like ticks.
  - Tragedy rains on them like hail stones. When something good happens, they cannot enjoy it.
  - They spend their time wondering when the bad will come. If they win a million dollars, the taxes are horrible.
  - When someone is kind to them, they wonder, "What is that person trying to do to me?" To them, life is horrible, so they look for the bad in every situation.
  
- ❖ To some people, life is wonderful. Everything is wonderful!
  - If trouble chases someone like an angry dog, that person irritated the dog.
  - If problems cling to someone like ticks, that person walked among the ticks.
  - If tragedy falls on someone like hail stones, that person chases tornadoes. Life is naturally good!
  - Bad things do not happen unless you invite them into your life. They never look at life and see anything bad.
  
- ❖ Three men experience the same plane crash and survive.
  - All three sustain basically the same injuries.
  - After the crash, one lives life in fear. Everywhere he looks, he sees something threatening life.
  - One lives in anger. Everything is a giant conspiracy against him.
  - One learns from the experience. The crash and recovery made him wiser, more insightful.

How can the same crash in the same plane at the same moment which caused each man similar injuries produce such different reactions? It was not the crash experience. It was the way the three men viewed life. The way we look at life molds the way we live life.

## I. Are you a Christian?

- A. **If your answer is, "Yes," may I ask you a question: is it not obvious that something is basically incorrect with our concept of Christian existence, our concept of "church," our concept of spirituality?**
1. It is obvious to me that something is basically incorrect with our concept of Christian existence, the church, and spirituality.
    - a. If you talked to a youth minister who works with our young people, I have no doubt that he would tell you that it is obvious to him that something is basically incorrect with our concepts.
    - b. If you talked to those who work with our education program and involvement, I have no doubt that they would tell you that it is obvious to them that something is basically incorrect with our concepts.
    - c. There are any number of Christians in this congregation and congregations all over this nation; some in leadership roles and some who are committed servants, who would say it is obvious that something is basically incorrect with our concepts.
  2. Someone says, "Amen! It is about time you talked about what is wrong!"
    - a. "We need to correct some 'doctrinal issues' around here!"
    - b. To me, what is obviously incorrect about the way we look at Christian existence, the church, and spirituality is far more basic than what many call doctrine.
    - c. "We need to get some 'church practices' straightened out around here!"
    - d. To me, what is obviously incorrect about the way we look at Christian existence, the church, and spirituality is far more basic than what many call "church practices."
- B. **"Joe, what are you talking about? What possibly can be more basic than doctrine or church practices? Can anything be more basic than that?"**
1. Yes. There are understandings that determine our view of Christian existence, that determine our view of the church, that determine our view of spirituality that are more basic than what many classify as doctrine or church practices.
  2. "Why would you think that something is incorrect with our basic views?"
    - a. I want to say some things that I need to say, that we all need to consider in our minds and hearts.
    - b. I have a problem: some of you will think, "He is talking about me."
    - c. I want to make this very clear.
    - d. I am not talking specifically about any person or situation.
    - e. I know for a fact these things are common place.
  3. Let me share specific reasons for concluding that something is basically incorrect with our concepts of Christian existence, the church, and spirituality.

- a. Too many who sit here most Sunday mornings and Sunday nights view Christian existence, the church, and spirituality as a matter of projecting an image.
  - i. Everyone in the family knows the rules.
  - ii. **Rule # 1:** "All family arguments on the way to church stop when we are within one mile of the church building."
    - a. "We can fight like cats and dogs at home or in the car any other time."
    - b. "But not on Sunday or Wednesday when we are within a mile of the church building."
  - iii. **Rule # 2:** "When we get out of the car, everybody must act like we are one, big happy family. We are not. But every one of us must act like we are on Sunday or Wednesday at the church building."
  - iv. **Rule # 3:** "Nobody can say anything to anyone about our family problems to anyone who goes to \_\_\_\_\_ Church of Christ. If you have to fake it, fake it. We must protect our image."
- b. There are too many who think that a lifestyle of drinking, or drugs, or addictions have no relevance to spirituality.
- c. There are too many who think that pornographic habits have no influence or effect on Christian existence.
- d. There are too many who have concluded that sexual activity outside of marriage has nothing to do with faith in Christ.
- e. We Christians get our lives in horrible messes;
  - i. We Christians inflict horrible pain on ourselves;
  - ii. And we Christians struggle with the consequences of ungodly lifestyles because we allow godless influences to shape our view of life.

C. **"What do you mean? What are you talking about?"**

1. Let me try to say it as plainly as I know how to say it.
2. Too many Christians *willingly* look at life in the same way that people who do not belong to God look at life.
3. Too many Christians *willingly* look at spirituality in the same way that people who are not spiritual look at spirituality.
4. Too many Christians *willingly* look at the church in the same way that people who have no desire to be the church look at it.
5. Too many Christians *willingly* look at Christian existence in the same way that people who do not want to be Christians look at Christian existence.
6. Too many Christians hunger to live just like people who are not godly--and just add "going to church."
7. It is impossible to look at life as do the godless and belong to God.
8. **Question:** who is influencing who in the way they look at God and spiritual existence?

**II. A basic truth that is fundamental to spiritual existence: when a person is converted to Jesus Christ, it changes the way he or she looks at life.**

**A. I want to share two illustrations from the Bible.**

**B. The first illustration comes from Jesus himself.**

1. I could use many of Jesus' statements, but I will use **Matthew 6:19-34**. Read with me.

Sometimes in our studies we are so focused on dissecting the thought that we never see the basic point.

2. What is the basic point? "People who are serious about godliness and righteousness absolutely must change the way they look at life".
  - a. "You cannot look at life the way you always looked at life and be God's people."
  - b. "I know that is the way the world looks at life, and they even tell you their view of life is God's view of life."
  - c. "But if you truly want to be God's people, you must see life differently."

**C. The second illustration comes from Paul as he wrote to Christians whose background was in idolatry. The statement is found in **Ephesians 4:17-24** (READ).**

1. "You must not look at life in the same way as do people who live godless lives."
2. "You cannot look at life in the same way you did when you worshipped idols."
3. "Christians look at life differently; they think differently, feel differently, and have different values."
4. "Christians desire to be what God created them in Christ to be--they want to be different because Christ makes it possible for them to look at life differently."

- Too often the influences that control the minds of Christians are the values of godless forces, the pleasures of godless forces, and the standards of godless forces.
- Many of these forces do not even pretend to be godly.
  
- When I study the Bible's concepts of godliness and spirituality, and I look at our common concepts of godliness and spirituality, I grieve.
  
- Our concepts too often are based on church membership, church attendance, and church programs. They are not based on **being** something. They are based on **doing** something.

- So if we *do* what we consider to be the right things, we can live and behave like people who have no spiritual interests.
- That is not the Bible's concept of Christianity. That is churchanity.
- Is the church important? Absolutely!
- Those who are in Christ are the church. Jesus died so we could be the church.
- But we who are the church simply cannot look at life in the same way as do people who are not the church. We who seek to be godly, spiritual people in Christ cannot look at life and adopt the lifestyles of people who have no interest in being godly or spiritual.
- If we think the difference is seen in church attendance, we do not understand godliness. If we think the difference is seen in church membership, we do not understand spirituality. If we think the difference is just a different set of rules, we do not understand righteousness.

The difference is seen in the way we use life. We use life differently because we look at life differently.

Tonight, we must change the way we look at our Christian lives.

We are here to be servants and to serve the Living God.

There are some here tonight that need to change, want to change but are scared to change for the simple reason that they're comfortable where they are.

Friends, in plain terms as someone who cares for your soul, not how much money you put in the collection plate or if you're wearing the latest in fashion, HELL IS ABOUT AS UNCOMFORTABLE AS IT GETS.

Congregation, we need to change the way we look at our Christian existence and if our priorities are not doing Gods will then we change. We need to change the way we look at our spirituality and change if we're not doing the will of God.

PLEASE DON'T DELAY GIVING YOUR LIFE TO GOD THROUGH CHRIST.

CHANGE THE WAY YOU LOOK AT LIFE TODAY, FOR TODAY IS THE DAY OF YOUR SALVATION.

WON'T YOU COME TONIGHT AS WE STAND AND SING.?