

**10.06.19 ~ Ephesians 4:17,
The Futility of Unbelief.**

Read Ephesians 4:17-19... Whatever we read, watch, or listen to, even the people we associate with, will influence the way we think and act, and ultimately, who we are becoming.

Paul tells us (**Ephesians 4:17**) not to live any longer like the Gentiles [those who do not know God]; for their attitude is (**1Corinthians 15:32**), "If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." But we are warned (**1Corinthians 15:33-34**) "Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God."

An unbeliever will compare himself to other people; and he will always be able to find someone who is less admirable or more vile than himself. But it doesn't matter how you compare to other people, not in the eternal perspective; for the measurement God uses for entrance into heaven is Jesus (**John 14:6**); those who reject Him are damned, those who repent and believe in Him are saved (**Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:8; 10:13; 8:1**).

In order to be saved, you must have a change of mind about yourself, your spiritual condition, and about God. You must see yourself in relationship to God who is Holy, not to other men who are sinful.

Unbelievers see everything in relationship to their own thinking, they become the ultimate authority and standard; this leads to godless and futile thinking.

Psalms 94:8-11, "Pay heed, you senseless among the people; and when will you understand, stupid ones? He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see? He who chastens the nations, will He not rebuke, even He who teaches man knowledge? The Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are a mere breath."

The earliest Biblical example of futile thinking is found in **Genesis 3:1**, as Eve is tempted to take the forbidden fruit; the serpent asks her a question, causing her to doubt what God had said, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" Eve is now confused (**Genesis 3:2-3**), "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"

The serpent causes doubt, creating confusion, now Eve is ready to be deceived, at which point the serpent says (**Genesis 3:4-5**), "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Eve was beguiled and then captivated to where her thinking became totally futile (**Genesis 3:6**), "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."

What had God said to Adam about this tree?

Genesis 2:16-17, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

The Bible declares that Adam and Eve, on the day they sinned [disobeyed God] they died spiritually (cf **Genesis 3:7-20**). Adam lived physically for another 900 years (cf **Genesis 5:5**), but spiritually he was separated from life with God because of sin; and mankind has been separated from God, ever since.

Genesis 3:21-24, "The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, 'The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.' So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life."

Ephesians 2:1-2, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."

You and I were dead in our sins, before coming to Christ (**1Corinthians 15:22**) "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."

Every physically alive person is spiritually dead, separated from life with God, because of original sin. Everyone is born a sinner, but forgiveness is granted through Jesus Christ (**Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:8; 8:1**).

2Corinthians 5:21, " He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf [He took our punishment, died in our place, paying our debt to God for sin], so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Satan tempts us to touch, taste, look at, listen to and think about that which is not good for us, nor is it pleasing to God. And when we disobey God's Word, seeking to satisfy our flesh, we will most likely attempt to justify our sinful actions, and if possible, we will blame someone or something else, maybe even God Himself.

1John 2:15-17, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

James 1:13-15, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death" [separation from God].

Solomon was the wisest and wealthiest man of the ancient world; he experienced every worldly advantage and pleasure, and after trying and tasting the best the world had to offer, he came to the following conclusion.

Ecclesiastes 2:26, "To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind." **[Futility]**

Ecclesiastes 3:1, "There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven..." **12-13**, "I know that there is nothing better for [a person] than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor—it is the gift of God."

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, "The conclusion, when all has been heard, *is*: fear God and keep His commandments, because this *applies to* every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil."

Think about it: century after century, mankind goes on seeking the pleasures found in this life; however, those who live without God find themselves dissatisfied and often controlled by the very 'things' they spent their life chasing after or working for, leaving them lonely and confused, for the things they thought would bring joy and fulfillment only brought sorrow and despair.

Has anything really changed? No!

Galatians 6:7-10, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

Philippians 4:12-13, "I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

Believe in God, obey God's Word, participate in the fellowship of God's people, proclaiming God's Son.

Joshua 1:8, " This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Romans 12:2, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

True Futility is knowing that God has offered for you to become His child, to receive forgiveness for sin and eternal life; but, you continue to reject His Gift, remaining dead in your sins, separated from God, without hope.

1Timothy 2:3-4, "God our Savior... ..desires all men [women, and children of age] to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

That simple truth is, Jesus Saves (**John 14:6**), He alone is "the way [to God], the truth [of God], and the life [from God]; [and] no one [goes] to the Father [Who is in heaven] except through [God's Son, Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior: Crucified, Resurrected, Coming again].

Pastor Mike
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