

XV. THE TRAGEDY OF WORLDLINESS (pt.2): 1 Samuel 8

INTRODUCTION. In 1 Samuel 8, you and I can learn a great deal about the tragedy of worldliness. Remember, "these things were written down for our instruction" (1 Cor. 10:11). We are not only to learn what happened 3,100 years ago in 1 Samuel 8, we are also to see the example (in this case a bad example) that we are warned about elsewhere in Scripture.

QUESTION. What is worldliness?

ANSWER FROM 1 SAMUEL 8.

- (i) Worldliness is when you trust in a different king or deliverer than the LORD, or
- (ii) When you want to blend in with the world instead of be distinct from it, or, still yet,
- (iii) When you look to your own feelings and reasoning rather than the wisdom that comes from God through His Word.

CONTEXT. 1 Samuel 8:19-20 "But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, 'No! But there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.'"

- **MATTHEW POOLE:** In verse 20 they say, "'That we also may be like all the nations:' woeful stupidity! whereas it was their glory and happiness that they were unlike all other nations, Numbers 23:9, Deuteronomy 33:28, as in other glorious privileges, so especially in this, that the Lord was their only and immediate King and Lawgiver."

DOCTRINE. Worldliness is a temptation believers must both identify and put to death or else tragedy will surely strike.

OUTLINE. This story of the Old Testament saints giving in to worldliness is the like the bones of a body named worldliness. In this sermon, I want to try to put some flesh on those bones from elsewhere in Scripture, so you and I can best understand, identify, and crucify the temptation to the tragedy of worldliness.

So, let me give you 12 specific points from Scripture concerning *worldliness* vs. *holiness*.

I) The Lord saved His people from slavery in Egypt in the Old Testament so that they would be a holy kingdom of priests to the nations.

- **Exodus 19:4-6** "4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."
 - **Deuteronomy 4:5-8 (Moses speaking)** "See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him? Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?"
 - **[[Lev 18:24-27** "Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled. For the land has become defiled, therefore I have visited its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants. But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not do any of these abominations, neither the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has become defiled)."]]

II) The Lord warned His people under the Old Covenant concerning worldliness by saying, "You shall never return that way again."

- **Deuteronomy 17:16** "Only [the king] must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.'"
 - **The Old Covenant saints did not need to return to Egypt in order to do their duty and obey the revealed will of God.**

In fact, if they did that it would reveal they were not trusting the LORD Himself to provide for them and enable them to do His will.

Some of the greatest lies in our day is the same that Old Covenant believers were tempted with. The lies are these:

I) You have to be LIKE the world in order to fulfill God's commands in the world

OR

II) You have to be LIKE the world in order to win the world.

- **Psalm 20:7** says, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God."
 - **In the same way, some trust in worldly wisdom and some in marketing gimmicks**, but we as Christ's blood-bought people must trust in the name of the Lord our God and never, as it were, go back to Egypt.
- **BOYS AND GIRLS**, do you know about the mighty nation in the Old Testament called Egypt? They built huge buildings and pyramids; they had a lot of money; and they had a huge army with horses and chariots. Now, after God set His people free from slavery in Egypt He made them a nation also and told them to go fight and take the land of Canaan. And the Lord told His people, "Do not go back to Egypt and try to learn from them or be like them."
 - **Boys and girls**, the Lord commands us not to be like the world, but to trust Him and obey what He says in His Word.

The goal of the Christian is to be like the Christ, not like the sinful world that they were saved out of.

III) Christ died and was raised to train you to renounce worldly passions and to live in holiness.

- **Titus 2:11-13** "11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. . ."
 - **BOYS AND GIRLS**, Jesus died to set His people free from the enslaving power of sin.

IV) Christians are commanded to not live like the world any longer but to live in holiness.

- **Ephesians 4:17** "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do..."

USE FOR EXAMINATION AND EXHORTATION.

V) Christians are ultimately ashamed of their former worldly living, therefore they should run away from that which they know is shameful.

- **Romans 6:21** "But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death."

VI) The world hates true Christians, therefore Christians should not want to be like those who hate what Christ died to redeem.

- **John 15:19** "If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

USE FOR SOBERING.

VII) Mixing with the world rather than putting to death what is earthly in you leads to a trap.

- **Psalm 96:34-36**
"They did not destroy the peoples,
as the LORD commanded them,
They mixed with the nations
and learned to do as they did.
They served their idols,
which became a snare to them."
 - **BOYS AND GIRLS**, trying to fit in or being close friends with those who do not love Jesus will lead you to get trapped in destructive sin.

USE FOR EXAMINATION.

VIII) Friendship with the world is to be hostile toward God.

- **James 4:4** "You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

USE FOR WARNING.

IX) You and I are commanded in Christ to let our salt have taste and our light shine for God's glory.

- **Matthew 5:13-16** "13 You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet."

14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.
15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand,
and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light
shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory
to your Father who is in heaven."

- **BOYS AND GIRLS**, Christians are to be both salt and light.

X) Christ has made believers a Kingdom of Priests to our God and Father.

- **Revelation 1:5-6** "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

XI) Our commission is to Disciple the nations, not blend in with them.

- **Matthew 28:18-20** "18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

MOTHERS, FATHERS, HUSBANDS, SINGLES, BOYS AND GIRLS, settle this down now in your mind and pray that God would make it take root in your heart:

We who belong to Christ are the standard bearers, not the other way around. You are not crazy, Christian. The world, which is still in rebellion to Christ, is crazy. But it will not be like that forever.

The whole earth will eventually be filled with ascribed glory to God. The great commission will be fulfilled. Do your part today, tomorrow, and as long as the Lord gives you breath in this life, by discipling the nations, not mixing in with them.

XII) The Lord is merciful to His covenant people, even though we at times desire to return to our former slavery.

- **Nehemiah 9:17** "They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them."