

# Perspective

## *It Changes Everything*

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Scripture: Assorted

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How is it possible that two different people can look at the same set of facts and come to two completely different conclusions? How is it possible that two people that are in an accident, the same accident, have two different answers to the same question as to who is at fault of the accident? How is it possible that two NFL teams can both finish nine and eight with one fan base excited and happy while the other one wants to fire everyone and start over?

How is it possible that two different people will attend the same church service together and one felt that it was a loving and caring environment while the other feels that everybody was rude and not friendly? Now, of course, there's different answers to these different questions, but there is one that they all have in common, and that is perspective. Perspective changes everything.

Your perspective is your personal attitude. It's a way of regarding something. It's really a point of view, and your perspective can change everything. Let's see how perspective affected the situations I mentioned above. Two scientists looking at the same facts, two archaeologists. The first one believes in a young earth and a creation.

And so when he sees the dinosaur bones altogether, he comes to the conclusion that this dinosaur must have died during the flood, and so it was covered really quick, and that's what killed it, and that's why it's preserved. The archaeologist next to him believes in an old earth and evolution. And so he comes to the conclusion that this dinosaur must have died millions of years ago, and over millions of years, it was covered by sediment and ash and other things. And so that is why it is preserved today.

In the accident scenario, you have the person that was in the front car that got rear-ended. And of course, he believes that the lady in the car behind him was at fault. While the lady that was in the car behind him understands that the only reason she hit him is because she was rear-ended by the guy behind her. And so they have different perspectives. The NFL teams, the first team is excited about a 9 and 8 record because last season they lost all 17 games.

And so 9 and 8 seems great because they weren't supposed to be really good this season, and they found out that they have a strong core of young players that are going to move forward, and so there's hope for the future. While the other team that went nine and eight made the Super Bowl last year and lost, and they were expected to win it this year, and the fact that they didn't even make the playoffs has the whole fanbase saying, "Fire everyone.

Let's just start over." The two people that went to church, the guy was standing in front of his wife the whole time as she walked behind him, and so everybody shook his hand and was really friendly with him, but she was directly behind him, and nobody said anything to her. And so she thought the church was very rude. Why is it that those who know Jesus personally view the world so different from those who do? That's the question I want to look at today.

Why is it that those that know Jesus as their personal Savior view the world from one standpoint, while those that don't know Jesus look at it from a completely different perspective? If you're here today and you're a believer, you've put your faith in Jesus Christ. Have you ever had a conversation with a non-believer and thought to yourself, "We must be from different planets." It seems like you don't even understand each other, and I promise you that it goes the other way as well.

They think you're from another planet too. It just doesn't make sense. The apostle Paul says it this way in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. You are a new creation. The old is gone. The new is here. When you proclaim Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, your perspective about the world and about others and about yourself changes forever because of Jesus.

Your worldview will forever be changed. Your entire perspective is changed. Pastor Randy Alcorn says it this way, "For Christians, this present life is the closest they will come to hell. For unbelievers, it's the closest they will come to heaven." Think about that just for a moment. If this doesn't change your perspective on this world, I don't know what will.

This is why we view things completely from a different point of view. For the next few weeks, we're going to be in a series that we're calling perspective. And during this series, we're going to try to answer the question, "What does the life of a Christ follower look like? And how is it different from those who don't know?" Understanding this, if this is the closest to hell that I'm going to get as a follower of Christ, then I'm not going to focus on this place.

I'm not going to spend my time and energy trying to build my kingdom here. Instead, I'm going to be focused on the kingdom coming, right? But if this is the closest to heaven I'm ever going to get, then I'm going to hold on for every last minute I can because this is the best it ever will be. You see, if Jesus is Lord of my life, then I allow Him to direct my steps. He guides my life and makes my decisions. But if I am Lord of my life, then I get to do whatever I want to do.

And let me just tell you from personal experience, as fun as it might sound to think, "You know what? I'd rather make my own decisions. I'd rather be in charge of my own life. I have learned from firsthand experience. I don't make the best decisions." And I would say you probably don't either. It is better that we allow somebody that knows more and better than we do to make the decisions for us. So I want to pray, and then I want to look at Scripture to learn exactly how different Christ followers are from non-believers and what that means for how we should interact with each other.

So let's pray and then we'll jump into the text. Heavenly Father, we've gathered today. And certainly, I know there are people here that have proclaimed you as Lord and Savior. And I have to imagine in a room this size and those that are watching online or listening on the radio, there are probably people that are with us today that have not made that proclamation. They're still just kind of checking things out. They're not sure if they even believe in a God.

And so they've probably already come to that conclusion this morning just listening to us sing that we're from a different planet. None of this makes sense to them. And so my prayer, Father, is that you would pour your spirit upon them and you would make yourself known to them so that they would put their faith and their trust in you. And for those of us that are believers, that we would understand our perspective has changed and that we would love others well even though they may not understand us.

And so, Father, speak your truth to us today. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. The first way that believers and unbelievers are different is that we are ruled by different standards. We're truly ruled by different standards. The apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:14 said this, "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.

For what do righteousness and wickedness or lawlessness have in common?" He's pointing out one of the biggest differences between those that follow Christ and those that don't. The believer is governed by

righteousness, trying to live a holy life, while the unbeliever is governed by lawlessness. Now, as followers of Jesus, we fully recognize that our righteousness is not our own, but it comes through Jesus Christ and what He has done.

There's not a single person in here today that can stand before anybody else and say they are saved by their own righteousness. For all of us are sinners that have been saved by grace. You may also think about your friends that are unbelievers, and you might say, "I don't know that their life is necessarily ruled by rebellion and lawlessness. I have friends that are not believers that seem really nice. They seem really friendly.

They seem like a good person. Is their life truly ruled by lawlessness? And as hard as it is to answer that question, it is yes. John says in 1 John 5:10 it did this to me first service too. "Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar because they have not believed the testimony that God has given about his son." So this is point number one.

If somebody is not proclaiming Jesus as Lord, they're calling God a liar and you can't serve God until you give your life to God, until you understand Him to be God. This is the opposite of what is commanded to believers. As believers, we are commanded in Scriptures to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. I am ruled by God's kingdom and by His rule, while those who don't proclaim Him as their Lord are ruled by themselves.

These two individuals, the one that's ruled by the kingdom of God and the one that's ruled by their own kingdom, are going to find it very difficult to understand each other because they're governed by two very different standards. Our worldviews do not align, and so we won't make sense to each other. The second difference between a believer and an unbeliever is that we belong to different kingdoms.

Paul says to the Colossians in chapter 1 verses 13 and 14, "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." When we put our trust in Jesus Christ, Scripture says that we are acknowledging that we belong to a different kingdom. This means we have a different king.

It means we have a different language, different priorities, a different culture, and certainly different standards, as we have already mentioned. Going back to 2 Corinthians 6:14, Paul says it this way, "Oh, what fellowship can light have with darkness?" You see, in Scripture, light represents truth. It represents knowledge. It represents holiness. It represents life. While darkness will represent ignorance, it represents error.

It represents sin and misery. And so Paul is saying, "What do these two things have in common?" Peter even acknowledges that you are a chosen people, you're a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

Peter is saying, the apostle Paul is saying that for those that confess Jesus as their Savior, it's as if a light has been turned on in their world. They are willing to open their eyes for the first time and see the world for what it truly is. For light and darkness are diametrically opposed. Where one exists, the other cannot be present.

I've shared this with you before, but when I was a youth pastor, we took a bunch of teenagers on a mission trip to Tennessee, and their fun day was going spelunking, which is like caving. And we went into this cave, and you get deep into the cave. We were over a mile into this cave, and you get to this little room where you would sit down and you had to sit because you couldn't stand. The ceiling was right above your head. We all had on headlamps and flashlights, and we turned them all off.

And it's the first time I experienced true darkness, where if you put your hand in front of your face, you can't even tell that it's there. It's true darkness. And then we lit one small candle in the center of our group as we were sitting there. And it was amazing as you watched the light make the darkness flee. That one small candle lit

up that entire small room that we were sitting in, and all of a sudden, you could see again. It's this analogy that the writers of Scripture are using between light and darkness, that once light is presence, darkness cannot exist.

It must flee. The two are diametrically opposed. Where one exists, the other cannot be present. And so when we have our eyes opened and we see the light, our understanding of right and wrong is transformed. We see ourselves for who we really are. We recognize our need for a Savior, and we see God for what He truly is, that He is holy, that He is righteous, and He is good.

When we confess Christ as our Savior, not only are we ruled by different standards and belong to a different kingdom, but we certainly have different kings as well. Those that are part of the kingdom of light have Jesus Christ as their ruler. But Scripture says, "If you are not part of that kingdom, then by default, Satan is your ruler of the dominion of darkness." Again, Jesus and Satan are fundamentally opposed to one another.

Jesus says in John chapter 14, verse 16, he says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus claims to be the truth. And look how Satan is described in Scripture in John 8:44. We read there that Satan is a murderer, and he has been from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him.

When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. You see, in Scripture, we recognize Jesus teaches about love, empathy, compassion, selflessness, serving others, caring for others, and having a future hope, while Satan promotes hate, selfishness, living for the moment, having personal power and personal control.

And so those who follow Jesus look to Him as their standard, as their prototype, that they would live a selfless, loving, compassionate life, while those who follow Satan will follow his example and look into the mirror and see themselves as their own standard. And we've all fallen for that. It's interesting, as I have had the opportunity, certainly, in my life, to talk to many believers and many unbelievers, I find it interesting that those who have not confessed the Lord as their Savior usually believe that they're a pretty good person.

Do you ever run into that? You say, "Do you think you're a pretty good person?" "Yeah, I'm not perfect, but I'm a pretty good person." And yet, when I talk to believers and I ask them what they think about themselves, they will openly admit, "I'm a sinner saved by grace. I am not a good person without Jesus." Isn't that interesting? It's because our eyes are opened when we confess Christ. We begin to see ourselves for who we truly are. And that is a sinful human being.

And the fact that we can have righteousness, again, is only because of what Jesus did on the cross. It's not because of us. It's all because of Him. And this is a huge difference. 2 Corinthians 6:15, Paul says, "What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What harmony is there between Jesus and Satan? There isn't any. What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?"

Not much, Paul says. For we have different worldviews. A believer has put all of his or her trust, hope, faith in Jesus, and in His righteousness. All of my hope moving forward doesn't come from anything I can do in my life. It comes from what Jesus did for me as a follower of Jesus. For an unbeliever, they put their trust in themselves, or maybe in the world, or maybe in the fruitless philosophies of man-made religion.

The unbeliever scoffs at the authority of God's Word and believes they are their own authority. The believer's life revolves around Christ, doing the best they can to make sure that He receives our praise and the praise of others. Just like that new song that we sang this morning, our goal is that God would receive the praise, recognizing that when He receives the praise, that's when it's best for us, is when He receives the praise.

For the unbeliever, their life revolves around themselves, trying to make a name for himself or herself. The unbeliever craves the praise of man. The believer craves the praise of God. The believer sees purpose for life

and a created order. The unbeliever sees randomness in the world and the idea of survival of the fittest. You see, these differences often makes it feel like we are from different planets.

And so as followers of Jesus, we interact with those that have not had their eyes opened yet, and it's hard for us to understand them. But let me just tell you, you are probably not going to debate somebody into the kingdom of heaven. You have a much greater chance of loving somebody into the kingdom of heaven. You are never, by your own effort or your own words, going to convince or change somebody else's heart. The only way that somebody's heart is changed is through the power of the Spirit.

And you and I are all examples of that. The only reason we have a changed heart is not because of what we have done, but because of what the Spirit has done in us. And so as followers of Jesus, as we think about those that have not yet received Him, our number one goal should be prayer for them. Yes, we love them. Yes, we care for them. Yes, we want to be there and be present in their lives. But I can't change anybody's heart. Only God can do that.

And so we do the best we can to show them the light. And so the question I have for us today is this, are you different? When you look at your life and others look at your life, do they notice that there's something different there? Do those that are unbelievers look at you and recognize that there's something different about your life? You have a different worldview. You have different standards. It seems like you're from another planet.

Is your life producing fruit for righteousness? Is your life pointing people towards Jesus? I remember when I was a teenager going to a public school, and by God's grace, he called me to himself at a young age. I gave my life to Jesus at nine years old. I had no idea what that meant, but I did what I thought I was supposed to do. And God continually drew me closer and closer to him.

And so as God called me towards him, I understood the fact that I had different standards. I was part of another kingdom that this was not my world, but I remember going to school. And as a teenager, you already feel awkward. You already feel like you don't fit in. And I remember thinking to myself, "Going to school, I am tired of just feeling like I'm different. I just want to fit in. I just want to blend in. It's already awkward enough being a teenager, but I couldn't.

I couldn't fit in. And maybe you're here today and you think, "You know what, Pastor, I understand. I go to work and I work with all of my coworkers, and you know they go out to the bars afterwards, and they hang out, and their life is just so different. They don't invite me. And I'm just sick of feeling like I'm swimming upstream all the time. Maybe here you're a student, and there's other kids on campus or at the high school or the middle school, and you just have a different standard, and you know what they're doing, and you know what life looks like for them, and you just so desperately want to fit in.

You just want to belong. You want to blend in. You don't want to be the person that stands out. Can I just encourage you today to keep going? It's okay. When someone looks at you and says you're weird or different, do you know what your response should be? Thank you. They might weird them out a little bit, and that's okay. They just think you're even more weird. But you just say, "Thank you." Because whenever somebody looks at me and says, "Man, you just view the world totally different than I do," or you're different.

I want to take that as a sign of God. Thank you. It means that I'm doing my best to be faithful. It means that you're shining through me, and it means that they're not seeing me as just another normal person in this world. That I'm doing things differently by your grace. You see, Scripture says that when you proclaim Jesus as your Lord, you are a new creation. You have been transformed. Others may not even recognize you. Have you ever heard the testimony of somebody that has given their life to Christ later on in life?

And they had these old friends that they lived one way with, and then now they've given their life to Christ, and their old friends are like, "I don't even know who you are anymore." It's because you're transformed. You truly

are transformed. You become a new creation. You have a new king. You're part of a new kingdom. You have different standards. My goal for you this week is that you would take some time to answer the question, "Do others see a difference in me because of my relationship with Jesus?" I hope you can say yes.

People do see that difference. And if not, maybe it's a good time to evaluate where you truly are at. Have you given up your life to Jesus? Have you surrendered fully to Him? So much so that His Spirit has come inside of you and transformed you into a new creation. As always, there will be people up here that would love to pray with you. They'll be on both sides up front. If you want prayer, it doesn't even need to be about the message or about anything else. It could just be something that's going on in your life.

Feel free to come up and pray with them. If you just want to do your business with God, the altars are always open. You can come to the altars. I have tried to tell people if somebody comes to the altar, it means they want to be left alone and so try not to bother them. But if somebody does come up to you and pray with you, I can't stop them, and it just means they love you, all right? But if you want to do your business with God and don't want to be bothered, feel free to come up to the altars. And they'll just let you do your business. If you want somebody to pray with you, come to the sides.

It's always available for people to pray. Let me close. Heavenly Father, I do thank You that You transform us into a new creation, that we're not the same old person. It certainly doesn't mean we're perfect. It doesn't mean we have it all figured out, but it means that we are depending on You and upon Your grace and Your mercy, that we would be changed, that we would be different, that when people look at us, they truly wouldn't even see us, but that they would see You through us.

That You would receive the praise, knowing that when You receive the praise, it is what is best for us as well. Lord, for those that might be here today and are on the fence, and they're just not sure whether this whole thing is real, I pray with everything I am, that you would pour Your Spirit upon them, that You would reveal Yourself to them in a real, real way that they would submit to You as Lord, and they would give over control of their lives and take this incredible journey.

It's not always going to be easy, but you promise that you will be with us. And so we thank You. And Father, there are always people that are hurting, that are going through a difficult situation, that are struggling this morning. I pray that they would feel Your peace. Lord, they know they're not alone. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.