

Battlefield: Earth & Heaven part 1

Word of God vs. the Word of Man

(preached 7/10/22)

Please turn to *Isaiah 55:1*.

We're involved in a war, a spiritual one. There's no sitting things out, watching from the sidelines, not being involved, or neutrality ... but that will be for another sermon.

What if we, the Church...

- Have been lured into the wrong battlefield?
- Are using the wrong weapons?
- Are fighting for the wrong spoils ("to the victor go the spoils")?

BATTLEFIELD. Today we're going to talk about the battlefield and let me begin with a true story.

CATHOLIC. I was raised Catholic, but walked away from the Catholic Church as an older teenager. There was no incident or traumatic event, I just left because I wanted nothing to do with religion and wasn't sure what I believed. I was a sophomore in college when one of my suitemates came home with a chic track.

CHIC TRACS don't refer to baby chickens or women, but was the name of the fellow who wrote them. They were drawn as short comic books that preached the Gospel in a "hellfire and damnation" way! When my friend told me one of the local student-led Christian groups had given him this, I was enraged. I was the opinion column writer for our college newspaper and I immediately penned a scathing article that excoriated said Christian group knowing that just about everyone on campus would read it. I was hoping to "shield" them from this clearly hate-filled group who seemed only interested in scaring everyone into the faith.

Please remember that, back then, ***I was a rebellious, unsaved, unbeliever who hated the church, the Bible and Christianity....***

PERCEIVED BATTLEFIELD. Since today's message is about the battlefield, here is the way I saw things back then...and the way I **didn't**.

- I looked at evangelical Christians as "Bible thumpers" who really believed that the words contained in said book came straight from God.
- I saw that they believed that the Bible was the only book written by God, and that all other religious texts (and otherwise) were not.

- In responding to social, political, and faith based questions and debates, said Christians would primarily quote or at least paraphrase the Bible as their answer.
- They acted as though their way was the only way to God and Salvation.

NOT RIGHT OR LEFT. I didn't see them as "conservative" or "right wing." There was no doubt the majority of them voted Republican, but I saw them as promoting a religious agenda vs a political one. I felt like they wanted everyone to worship Jesus, read the Bible, and live by it.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I SAW THE BATTLEFIELD CORRECTLY: THE WORD OF GOD VS. THE WORD OF MAN.

The reason I saw it this way is because this is how the Church was presenting and representing itself—as the stewards (oracles) of God's Word.

DRAWN DOWN TO EARTH. Here in the 2020's, though, I wonder if Satan hasn't succeeded in *drawing us down to earth* to fight here. What do I mean?

We should be fighting from the heavenly position. Why?

OUR GOD IS HEAVENLY AND LIVES THERE.

- The Word He's given us, our weapon, is divine and not from or of this earth.
- It came from His mind and heart, which are far above every angel or human being who ever lived.
- Conservative thought is from this earth.
- Liberal thought is from this earth.
- Right-wing ideology is of this world.
- Left-wing ideology is of this world.
- Republican & Democrat were created here.

God and His Word are divine, transcending everything and everyone on earth.

Both are above any wisdom, philosophy, morality, spirituality, intellect, reasoning, or anything from this world.

Isaiah 55:1-3 (ESV)

¹ “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

³ Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

Verse 1 is calling out to thirsty people. My boys and I have been trimming trees in the hot sun this past week and we always forget what thirst really is until shearing season! We’ll bring well over a gallon of water and go through it in the first half of the day, wishing we had more. So who are the “thirsty” of verse 1 and what are they thirsty for?

NOT PHYSICAL FOOD. Clearly its nothing physical because the Lord invites those who “have no money” to “buy” to both drink and eat. The food and drink He’s referring to is clearly spiritual and “bought” with something other than money.

Verse 2: the “currency” God is talking about is a heart willing to LISTEN to God...to what He is saying. The “thirst” He’s been referring to are those who desire truth, revelation, knowledge & wisdom from ABOVE.

NOT SATISFIED WITH EARTHLY.... In other words, they’re no longer satisfied with the knowledge, “truth,” and wisdom this world offers—those things no longer satisfy. Their spirit is craving the truth that comes only from God Who transcends this world and all it’s corruption and limitations.

Verse 3: shows the “price” paid for said “rich food”: to incline our ears to God, which symbolizes our willingness to listen to and receive from Him.

Have you ever been lied to? What if you formerly inclined your ear to someone who deceived you, perhaps for years? I have much experience in this! As a young unbeliever involved in a cult, I inclined my ear toward false teachers and deceivers for many years believing I was receiving heavenly wisdom. In fact, it was revelation that came straight from Hell and was seeking to lead me there.

When do most people finally quit listening to a liar? When someone starts telling them the truth. When we realize that Jesus IS the Truth and the Way, we’ll stop listening to the lying wisdom and morality of this world and incline our ears to His voice.

Isaiah 55:4-5 (ESV)

⁴ Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.

⁵ Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall

run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Verse 4: Just as David was a leader and commander of the Israeli people back in his day, Jesus is our leader and commander now and forever.

Verse 5: the Lord promises to extend His Word to Gentile nations—that's you and I! We no longer have to be the dogs who wait for scraps to fall off the master's table, we are now joint-heirs and in covenant with Christ! The Lord is now our God!

Isaiah 55:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;

⁷ let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Verse 6: the Lord may be found while you're breathing. There will come a time when the Lord cannot be sought or found, but when He will seek and find people instead. When Jesus returns on a white horse in Revelation 19, the time for seeking God to repent and be Saved will be over. He will be returning as the conquering King to vanquish evil and the age of grace will be finished.

RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW, IS THE TIME TO SEEK GOD. We don't just need His love, we need His wisdom and the revelatory truth He willingly gives us. We need everything He has to offer, which is everything that is holy, just, and good. We're not guaranteed next year, next month, or even tomorrow. Even if we're young and healthy, we don't know when our time to pass from this body and world will come.

Today is the day to seek the Lord! Today is the day that He is near to you and may be found!

Verse 7: inclining one's ear toward God results in this.

Isaiah 55:8-11 (ESV)

⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.

⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

¹⁰ "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

TRANSCENDS. God's thoughts, plans, words, actions, feelings, and inspiration transcend this earth and all who live on it. He is above every angel and devil and even their intellect and wisdom don't come close to His.

Let the church realign itself to the right battlefield: it's the Word of God vs, the word of man.

- It's God's thoughts vs. those of this world.
- It's God ways against the ways of the devil and his demons.

Have we been lured to an earthly battlefield, however? We don't call ourselves Christians anymore, but we've added a prefix according to the angle of our doctrine & stances: now we say things like "conservative Christian" or "progressive Christian."

Have we attached a corrupted, earthly label to a divine identity?

INFECTED THE CHURCH. And it's not just a matter of semantics, we've allowed these labels because the doctrines and morals of this world have infected the church. Imagine having a sparkling clean white robe, bleached and freshly washed. Imagine taking a dirty, smelly belt that was dragged through the mud and used to wipe off spilled milk and tying it around that robe...would that make any sense to anyone?

- The Word of God isn't subject to conservative or progressive ideology.
- The Word of God doesn't mix with human thoughts or feelings.
- The Word of God isn't shaped by human perspective or experience.
- The Word of God isn't changed by changing times and morality.
- No political party owns or has the corner on God's Word.

God and His Word are above all.

HAPPEN TO CONFORM. If any of the aforementioned things conform themselves or happen to align with God's Word then "amen!" Even then, let's acknowledge the source as coming from the Lord and quote/paraphrase the same.

FIRST WITNESS. God's Word is the Truth and therefore the first witness and remember: "from 2 or 3 witnesses agreeing on any one thing, then a matter is established/confirmed." (paraphrase). We bear witness to what the Bible says. We are the second witness and not the first. We are the ones who agree with what the Lord has already said and not the other way around.

Am I saying that Christians shouldn't be involved in politics or be involved with social issues?

- *That's not what I'm saying:* I clearly comment and respond to social and political issues and fully intend to keep doing so.
- We need good Spirit filled, Bible believing Christians in all 3 branches of government from local all the way up to the White House.
- We need non-politician Christians like you and I to respond to social and political issues with God's Word.
- If we get more involved in political or social organizations, we need to speak and act according to God's Word.

POLITICAL REASONS? When the whole Roe V. Wade thing went down, I was disappointed to see quite a few pro-choice people accuse the Church of believing what we do for purely political reasons and not because of our faith in the Lord and His Word. In other words, they were claiming the Church had become more "conservative" than Christian and that our foundation was not faith.

WAS IT TRUE? At first I was annoyed by this, but then I sat back and asked if that were true. I think that for some it is. Some have raised up conservative or libertarian ideology to the same level as the Bible and tend to quote that as often or even more than God's Word.

Here's my goal: ***I want the unbelievers to see me the way I once viewed Christians when I was an unbeliever: "they really believe that stuff?!"***

DONOHUE? Do you remember Donohue? If you're too young to know, he was one of the original talk show hosts and he used to love having the people in his audience discuss and heatedly debate each other. Years after he retired, he got interviewed by another talk show host who brought up the church and the various positions the church took on American policy. I recall Donohue, who was an unbeliever, saying "these people talk to God and claim God talks back!" (Said with condescension.)

Amen! When unbelievers look at the church I want them understanding that we're coming from the perspective that God wrote this book (the Bible), that it's the truth which came right from Him, and doesn't change with the times!

- I want them rolling their eyes and saying "those people think that Jesus is the only way to Salvation! They refuse to believe in Islam, Buddhism, or any other religion! They think they have the inside track to God."
- They won't think that as long as we're wrapping the earthly belt of being Conservative, Libertarian around the shining white divine robe Jesus gave us.
- They won't think that if we continue to quote conservative or libertarian thought as much or more than we do the Scriptures.

ENCOURAGED BY MEME. I was actually encouraged by one meme I saw posted during the Roe V Wade thing that read: “the same people supporting overturning Roe are the same people who believe in a guy who came back from the dead.” Although said meme was meant to be insulting, my response is “Amen!” The person who created that meme understands the battlefield!

The battle is the Word of God vs. the Word of Man.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (ESV)

¹³ And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

Psalms 119:159-160 (ESV)

¹⁵⁹ Consider how I love your precepts! Give me life according to your steadfast love.

¹⁶⁰ The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.

AGUR, PROVERBS 30. I love Proverbs 30, one of the few written by an Oracle named Agur vs Solomon. Please remember as I read this to you, an Oracle was someone who was revered by others as being a great and wise reader and interpreter of God’s Word. Someone who could and would prophesy according to the same and understand the deep mysteries of the Lord. THAT guy writes this:

Proverbs 30:1-3 (ESV)

¹ The words of Agur son of Jakeh. The oracle. The man declares, I am weary, O God; I am weary, O God, and worn out.

² Surely I am too stupid to be a man. I have not the understanding of a man.

³ I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.

MAN’S WISDOM. Agur is saying man’s wisdom is nothing. Empty. Vain. That he’s too stupid to know and understand anything. Let’s read on:

Proverbs 30:4 (ESV)

⁴ Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son’s name? Surely you know!

WE KNOW NOTHING BECAUSE WE’RE EARTHLY. He’s saying here humans are from earth and therefore know nothing.

- We haven’t ascended to heaven to get wisdom and bring it back.
- He goes on to identify God as the one Who is both all knowing and all powerful.
BTW...one cannot be all powerful without being all knowing.

- The power to form the wind and direct it requires knowledge. The power to create and manipulate water: the same.

SON OF GOD GETS WISDOM! Who is the Person Agur identifies as having heavenly knowledge and bringing it here to earth? ***Look at the last part of verse 4: the Son of God!***

Proverbs 30:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

⁶ Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.

GOD IS TRUE. FON'T ADD. The Word of God is true and remains true forever. For those of us who believe and live it, we take refuge in Him! Verse 6 warns us not to add to His words and have we done that by adding a political or social label and doctrine to it?

The wisdom of God in Heaven was given to us, brought here by our Lord and Savior Jesus:

John 3:31-35 (ESV)

³¹ He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all.

³² He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony.

³³ Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true.

³⁴ For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.

Father God is from above. Jesus is from above. They are true and everything they say is true. Whoever listens to what they're saying receives God's Spirit.

John 8:23 (ESV)

²³ He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."

CAME FROM FATHER. Jesus is the truth because He came from Father God. Humanity and the doctrines/teachings of humanity came from this world. We then die to the old self and are born again in the divine likeness of Jesus. Our spirit is no longer of this world, but from above like Christ!

DIVINE NATURE. Church, our Lord Jesus has made us, as Peter said, “partakers of the divine nature” which means our spirits are heavenly beings and not of this earth. We’re in a war, but let’s fight it from the heavenly perspective. We have God the Holy Spirit living inside of us, Who is not of this earth. We have our regenerated born-again spirit who is One with the Holy Spirit. We have Jesus, the Word of God, and His written word the Bible.

The Bible contains the thoughts, feelings, plans, and actions of the Lord:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- We don’t need earthly labels to mix with what Christ made us to be.
- We can belong to a party and vote, but that isn’t who we are or the position we fight from.
- We can become politically and socially active, but let’s do so from the standpoint of God’s Word.
- Any political or social doctrine or thought must conform itself to God’s Word or it isn’t truth. It must bear witness to the truth of what the Lord has spoken.
- The battlefield is the Word of God vs. the Word of Man, so let us wield God’s Word like a sword that was created by the Holy Spirit Himself!