# Every Thought Captive — Delivery Transcript

**2 Corinthians 10:1–6 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, June 27, 2021** · *Every Thought Captive*

**Watch or listen:** Subsplash (video & audio) · YouTube

> ⚠️ ***AUTO-GENERATED TRANSCRIPT — verify against the audio before quoting publicly.*** *Produced from a Descript transcription of the Broadview Church sermon recording and lightly cleaned (filler words removed, obvious mis-hears of names and Scripture references corrected). No timestamps. This is not a publication-ready manuscript and it is not Wes's exact words for print. Check any line against the recording before it goes on a graphic, in an email, or in a book.*

---

All right, well thanks to the team for leading us in worship. If you have your Bible, you can open it up to 2 Corinthians chapter 10. I know that's not Revelation, as we've been in the book of the Revelation for the last eight to nine weeks. I thought we'd take a little bit of a break just for a couple of weeks to address some cultural issues that are floating around, making their way into our headlines and really animating most of the big cultural debates that we're having. I'm not going to address that many in this particular series.

I'm really going to hone in on one particular big idea, our kind of meta-narrative. And then at other points in this series through the book of Revelation, we'll tackle some of the other cultural issues that are floating around. And the logic behind that is sometimes when a church or an individual gets super focused on the last days or the end times they can get fixated on it and get totally caught up into, you know, when's Jesus going to come back and can't wait to go to heaven and I'm so sick of this earth and just Lord Jesus, come any minute now— and that's a biblical hope and something that you shouldn't repress by any means, but we don't know when Jesus is going to return.

We know that when he does everything will be better and every injustice made just. But until he comes, we're left on the earth with a mission. Tanner did a great job two weeks ago preaching on that great commission and how our church is called to engage in that mission and I don't want us, as the old saying goes, to become so heavenly minded that we become no earthly good. The fact of the matter is we live in a world and our calling is to make disciples and to make disciples in this particular culture, we need to know how our culture thinks.

Because our culture no longer thinks in a distinctively Christian way. We are no longer a Christian nation, not that we ever really were— we are what you might call a post-Christian

culture and if you're going to engage in evangelism you need to know what kind of ideas you're going to be coming up against in sharing the gospel with most people today. Now you may be an older person, you say, well, I don't know if that's true. If you go to my generation and lower, most young people today have a totally different worldview than the generations that came before them because they're being influenced and shaped by this ideology that we're going to look at this morning.

I know my typical bread and butter is just to preach through books of the Bible because I typically think God knows what's relevant more than we do. But for this series we're just going to camp out on this particular verse in 2 Corinthians chapter 10 because in it Paul gives us a framework for how to engage with non-Christian worldviews. The truth of the matter is, as we've said before, we are in a spiritual war. It's easy to get caught up in the talking heads and the talking points and cable television or YouTube personalities and just kind of watch people go back and forth.

It's super easy to get caught up in that surface level debate and to even demonize the other side because of X, Y, or Z individual. But as we're going to see in the Scripture and as we see throughout Scripture, the battle is not against flesh and blood, it's not against the talking heads, and it's really not at the level of the talking points. It is a spiritual battle that our enemy, Satan, has masterfully woven lies and deception into big structural institutions like the education system and the entertainment system and the political system and he has found ways like a great puppet master to pull strings here and there to accomplish his purposes of thwarting and undermining what God wants to do.

And that's the level at which we want to combat those false ideas and win that spiritual battle. So with that in mind, let's read the passage first— 2 Corinthians chapter 10, starting in verse 1. He says, now I, Paul, myself, appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. I who am humble among you in person but bold towards you when absent. I think that's a little inside joke on Paul there. In other words, I'm real strong and bold in my letters, but I'm not always so bold when I'm there in person.

But I'm begging you that when I come there, when I'm present, I will not need to be bold with the confidence by which I plan to challenge certain people who think we are living according to the flesh. In other words, you got a group of people in your church who are accusing me and my apostles or my band of brothers of living in the flesh, meaning not living in a Christian way, of living in a non-Christian way. And he's saying their ideology or their worldview is deceiving other people in the church.

And I'm about to come down there and drop a mic on these fools and tell them what's what. So I hope he's saying, I hope I don't have to come there and do that. And then he gives his rationale in verse 3. For although we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. Our battle's not against flesh and blood. Since the weapons of our warfare are not of

the flesh, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. And then notice this— he shifts to this ideological framework.

He says we demolish, not people, we demolish arguments, and every proud thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive. We take every thought captive to obey Christ, and we are ready to punish any disobedience once your obedience is complete. So Paul in this passage, once again, just like he did in Ephesians chapter 6, highlights that in the Christian life, whether we admit it or not, whether we like it or not, we are engaged in a form of warfare. Right, and that word warfare makes a lot of Christians uncomfortable because when they think about warfare, maybe you think about World War I or World War II or Vietnam or Iraq and it kind of boils down to physical combat and I don't want to really be engaged in physical war.

Maybe you're an anti-war person politically, and that's really not at all what Paul's talking about. But he is saying there is no neutral space in the Christian life. There is no peacetime in the Christian life. If you are on this earth as a Christ follower, there is a battle raging for your soul. There is a battle raging for the soul of your culture, for the soul of your church and if you're not aware of that war you're already losing. So you got to wake up, realize you are in a war.

In your notes I kind of frame this war three different ways. The essence of the warfare, the theater of the warfare, and then the third thing that I see in this text is the way to win, the way to win the war. The essence of the warfare, I think, according to the apostle Paul in this passage, is that spiritual warfare is ideological. It is combated at the level of ideas. In other words, you're not out there fighting demons. You know, you don't have to be like this demon hunter. I had a cousin who used to think he was a demon hunter.

He got himself into all kinds of nonsense. So you're not out there fighting these false spirits or these demonic spirits necessarily. You're fighting ideas. You're fighting bad ideas with good ideas. You're fighting false ideas with true ideas. You're fighting deception with the truth about reality. So he says our warfare is ideological. That's why I'm demolishing strongholds. Breaking down arguments, taking every thought captive. The warfare is ideological. The theater of war is hearts and minds. Human heart and the human mind. We are in a battle not to tear people down, but to win people over.

And this is something Paul has consistently taught throughout his letters. Maybe you are familiar with that very famous passage in Romans 12:2, where Paul says as Christ followers we should not be conformed to the pattern of this world. In other words, don't think like the world thinks, but rather be transformed. How? What's the method? Through the renewing of your mind. Because in the renewing of your mind, you're going to wake up from the lies and deception that the world is telling you, and you're going to come to a knowledge of God and a knowledge of God's will.

He says something similar a little bit earlier in Romans chapter 8, verses 5 to 8. He distinguishes between life in the flesh and life in the Spirit. In other words, a worldly life and a Christian life. A life that is thinking according to the patterns of this world, and a life that is thinking according to the patterns of the kingdom of God and the will of God. And he says the big difference between those who live in the flesh and those who live in the Spirit is the mindset. It takes place at the level of their mind.

He says, for those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on the things of the flesh. Those who live according to the Spirit have their minds set on the things of the Spirit. The mindset of the flesh is death, but the mindset of the Spirit is life and peace. In other words, how you live is determined by how you think. The greatest war going on in your life right now as a Christian person is at the level of your mind. You have an enemy who is committed to undermining the purposes of God in your life and his primary mode of attack is to attack your thinking, to attack the way that your mind works, your assumptions about reality.

Your interpretations of what they said and what happened and the implications thereof. You have an enemy who is trying to attack you at the level of your heart and your mind. And how do you win the war? You win the spiritual battle that's taking place in the theater of the human heart and mind through persuasion. Persuasion. Argumentation. Combating bad ideas with good ideas, debate, persuasion. Paul says I demolish strongholds, I tear down arguments, and I take every thought captive. And notice he's not just persuading other people, like in a public debate on a stage.

It's almost a form of self-persuasion as well, persuading myself that the truth of God is better than this appealing lie that's told to me by my culture. God's design for X, Y, and Z issue is truer, is better than deviating from God's design and doing it X, Y, and Z other way. So what I want us to do now that I've got that framework in place of a distinctively Christian way for how to engage culture, if we want to engage culture, if we want to make disciples in our culture, we've got to recognize that there's a battle raging.

The battle's ideological. The theater of war is human hearts and minds, so the enemy who's trying to win people over to his camp is doing so through ideological warfare. And the way that Christians should engage in that warfare is through acts of persuasion. And if you're going to persuade someone to believe what you think is true or to believe what God thinks is true, the only way you're going to win them over is number one, if you know what's wrong with their worldview. And two, know what's right about your worldview.

You've got to deconstruct what they believe and then construct a better alternative than what they believe. That's what Christians call evangelism. Some Christians call it apologetics—giving an answer, giving a word back, for the reason for the hope that is within you. So what I want us to do with our time is to apply this text to a particular way of thinking that is

gaining a ton of traction in our culture right now. I think most of the headlines that you read in the newspapers, most of the cultural debates that you see in pop culture, probably the debate you're having at your Thanksgiving table and Christmas with your children or grandchildren is animated by this particular worldview.

And we're going to look at the historical roots of it, but if I was going to give it a contemporary name, I would just call it contemporary critical theory. It's an approach to seeing the world that criticizes or deconstructs the power structures as they exist right now and says they're wrong for X, Y, and Z reason. We're right for X, Y, and Z reason, and therefore we should supplant the structures that exist as they are right now. So we're just going to call it critical theory or contemporary critical theory, and I want to give you a little bit of a history of it.

My goal this morning is not to necessarily even attack critical theory. We'll do a little bit more of that next week. What I want us to do this morning is to actually understand it. And if you're going to understand a view, you want to be able to articulate that view so well that the person who holds that view would say, Yeah, that's right. Yeah, that's what I believe. In other words, we don't want to create a straw man, we don't want to caricature people who hold this view. We want to take them on their own terms, using their own words, and try to honestly understand what do you believe about the world as someone who holds to contemporary critical theory.

Other versions of this, you have things like queer theory, you have things like critical race theory, gender theory, you have all of these disciplines in academia today. They all stem from this basic umbrella parent called critical theory. And if you want to know where it started, really the grandfather, granddaddy philosopher behind critical theory. In my view, would be a gentleman by the name of Karl Marx. Anybody have heard of his name before? Karl Marx popularized an economic theory known as Marxism. But critical theory is not an economic theory. Critical theory came out of a group of intellectuals post-Marx who were in Germany, it was called the Frankfurt School, because they were in Frankfurt, Germany.

And you had this group of scholars who basically said Marx was right. But if what Marx said about economics was true, imagine what the imbalance of power is doing to our educational institutions, our media and entertainment, our politics. If the problem with the world is an imbalance of power. What if it's not only destroying our economy, what if it's destroying everything else in our culture as well? And so what they did is they tried to extend the philosophy of Marx beyond economics and apply it to the cultural issues of the day.

Does that make sense? In other words, I say we're going to look at how the power imbalance has affected the relationship between genders. We're going to look at how the power imbalance has affected the relationship between different races and ethnicities. We're going to look at how the power imbalance has affected the relationship between straight people

and gay people. Gendered people and transgendered people. And so what you have today are modern day contemporary critical theorists. Who are working these issues out and they write books and they have popularized phrases. You've probably heard phrases, catchphrases like intersectionality.

Anybody ever heard that word before? Being intersectional, you've maybe heard the term going woke or getting woke. Anybody ever heard that term before? You have things like white privilege. Anybody heard that term before? Or whiteness or blackness or Latino-ness. These kinds of words, these kinds of catchphrases come from this particular worldview. And so what I want us to do is understand it first, and then once we understand it, I want us to critique it. And to help you understand it, I want to give you four frameworks. I want you to think of this worldview or this theory as a set of glasses through which you see the world and that there are four frameworks or four lenses.

That you apply to your way of looking at the world to understand it through this theory, through critical theory. And the first framework, maybe the foundational framework is what they call the social binary. Binary just means ones and zeros or one or the other. And according to their classification of how people fit in the world You and I belong to one of two groups. You either belong to an oppressor group or you belong to an oppressed group. Okay? There's oppressors and there's the oppressed. You're one or you're the other. You cannot be neither.

Okay? You're one or the other. It's a social binary. You have to be one or the other. I've got a graphic that I think helps explain this. This is not a graphic I created. This is a graphic from a book written by a critical theorist. Okay, here's here's the graphic. You've got the dominant group on my left. You've got the minoritized group on my right. And then you have what they call oppression, forms of oppression right here in the middle. Now, typically oppression was defined as an individual act of cruelty or injustice inflicted on another.

In other words, if you're going to be a racist, you would have to individually act in a way that thinks you yourself superior to another person because you're one race and they're an inferior race. But in critical theory, it's not individual acts of cruelty or injustice that cause the oppression. It is merely belonging to a group that is a majority group. In other words, if the culture is majority white then if you're a person of color, you belong to the minority group, which de facto means white people are oppressing you as a person of color.

And down the list we could go. You have the owning class, the people who own houses and assets and things like that. And then you have the renting class or the poor, working class, middle class. The oppression is classism. We don't have a lot of this in America because you can kind of work your way up, but in other places like Europe and in Britain that's more the case. You have the genders, men are the majority, and I don't know that technically we are the majority, but they would say we have the power.

And then women, transgender, queer gender. The offense is sexism. And down the list we could go. You have the people who have the power. They're the oppressors. Then you have the people who don't who do not have the power and they are the oppressed. And critical theory looks at everything and every person through that lens, through that social binary and looks at oppression through that particular lens. Not what they do as an individual, but what group the group to which they belong. Here's another graphic that I think shows you the redefinition of things like racism and sexism and religious oppression— it used to be what you did as an individual, but in critical theory it's just the fact that you belong to that particular group.

So you may be a Christian, you're a Protestant Christian. And you do not have to be Islamophobic or anti-Semitic. You don't have to say anti-Semitic things. Just the fact that you are a Christian imposes forms of oppression on minority religious groups. This chart also shows you this dynamic called intersectionality. Maybe you've heard this phrase before. Intersectionality, in my view, complicates the social binary because it basically gives you points along the oppression matrix. So you might be a female, which means you might be a white female that's lesbian, which means you are oppressed by men and straight women.

But if you are a white lesbian female, you are less oppressed than a Latino lesbian female, all right, because she has one added layer of oppression in that she is a person of color or a biracial person. You could add another layer of oppression to that, which would make her less oppressed than an individual who was maybe Latino, heterosexual woman that was Muslim. Okay, and so you can add check marks to your oppression matrix, which makes you more or less oppressed on the oppression scale, but you're either an oppressor or an oppressed person.

You're one or the other. So I would say that intersectionality complicates the social binary, but it does not reverse it. Okay, you have ones and zeros, you're oppressor or oppressed. You can be at different points along the way on that oppression scale, but you're one or the other. That's the premise number one, maybe the most important premise of critical theory. The second key critical framework is this idea called hegemonic power. How many of you have no idea what hegemonic power is? Yeah, a big fancy word that doesn't make a lot of sense.

We don't use it in our everyday language or dictionary. All hegemonic power is the ability to control how a culture thinks. Alright, so no one individual person possesses hegemonic power. But you have within any culture a group of individuals who possess enough power that they really control how the rest of the society thinks. Okay, how many of you have heard the phrase when in Rome? Anybody heard that phrase before? How does the phrase go? When in Rome you do as the Romans do, right? Because in Rome you have a group of people who dictate, here's our customs, here's our norms, here's our values, here's how we do things.

How many of you have ever taken a trip away from America to another country, such as South America or Africa, Brazil, any place like that? How many of you, when you landed in that other country, you recognized real quick, We don't do things here like we did in America. How many of you had that experience? They think about time differently. They think about relationships differently. I remember when I went to China, everybody was in my personal space. Like get away from me. Everybody's just all up on you. Well, I was in a different culture, I was in a different place.

The hegemony was different in that other location. Okay. They do things differently. What's unique about critical theory is they would say that the people who possess hegemonic power, the people who kind of shape the way a culture thinks. They are the oppressor class because they have that power. And you as an individual underneath that hegemony, if you do life differently than they do, then that's a form of oppression from them on you. In other words, if I were to go to Brazil and I can't get used to how they do time, then critical theory would say that's a form of oppression on me.

Probably they wouldn't say that of me since I'm a straight white guy, but that's the basic idea behind it, that if we're in America, and America's predominantly white culture, or predominantly straight culture, or predominantly Christian culture, that for you to have to accommodate to that whiteness or that Christianness or that whatever the case may be, that is a form of oppression. Okay, the hegemonic power. I want to give you a quote from one author who says this. This is Iris Young, from "Five Faces of Oppression." She says in its new usage, in other words, according to critical race theory, oppression designates the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because of a tyrannical power coercing them, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society.

In other words, the causes of oppression are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols. Okay? So that's how critical theory criticizes the culture. Saying that's where terms like whiteness come from. That's a white way of doing things, or that's a black way of doing things. It is kind of critiquing those values, customs, and norms and saying it is oppressing people because they're having to kowtow to the majority culture. Again, typically or historically oppression was not defined as hegemonic power causing you to have to shape your behaviors. The old way of thinking was if you're in Rome, do as the Romans do.

But in critical theory you should not have to do as the Romans do because the Romans have the power and they're using their power to force you to live ways you shouldn't have to live. The other thing that's important about this is you do not have to be the numerical majority to have the hegemonic power. How many of you have heard phrases like, the problem with the world today is old straight white men? You've heard that in headlines? Or old straight white Christian men, those are the real problem with the world today.

So there are a lot of you guys in here who fit that bill. But did you know that old Christian straight white men only make up about 15% of the world's popul— of America's population. So they're not the numerical majority, and yet critical theory would say they are the king oppressor class. But why do they say that? They don't say that because old white straight men who are Christians are the numerical majority, but they would say they possess the most amount of power. They possess the most amount of influence. Because if you look at our politicians, if you look at our ruling classes, if you look at the top, the richest, the wealthiest people in the world, they're all straight white men.

If you look at our Christian culture, it comes from that hegemonic power of Christianity enforcing its sexual norms and morality on everybody else. And so they are the problem because they are the oppressors. And they're using their power to oppress everybody else. Alright, does that make sense? Again, I'm not commending the view. I'm not saying the view's right. I just want you to understand it. You've got the social binary, you've got oppressors and oppressed. You've got the big form of oppression, which is a thing called hegemonic power. Now the third thing you've got to understand if you're going to understand critical theory is what's called a lived experience or I guess that's the best way to say it, lived experience.

The third pillar behind critical theory is that lived experience gives oppressed groups special access to truth about the reality of oppression. I probably should say just reality in general, but in critical theory, the most important thing about reality is oppression. So, in other words, if you're part of the oppressed class, you have special access to truth. You have special access to knowledge about the oppression you're experiencing, but if you're part of the oppressor class, you cannot come to know that truth because you are blinded by your privilege. In other words, if you're a straight white Christian male, you'll never really understand the oppression that non-white female or whatever other layer on the oppression scale, you'll never really truly understand the oppression they experience because you have to live it to experience it.

All right. In some ways that's obviously true, but in other ways they're saying it's not even potentially possible for you to come to understand the oppression that I'm experiencing because you are categorically prohibited from coming to arrive at that knowledge. I think it's a form of Gnosticism. Gnosticism was an ancient heresy that said, only people who are part of our group have access to this special knowledge. Here's a quote from a critical theorist who says dominant groups characteristically have experiences that foster illusory perceptions about society's functioning, whereas subordinate groups or oppressed groups characteristically have experiences that are at least potentially able to give rise to more adequate conceptualizations.

In other words, if you are privileged, you're blinded by your privilege. You see reality, but you're kind of oblivious to what's really going on. If you're part of the oppressor group, then you have a more adequate understanding of reality as it stands. You've probably heard the phrase getting woke. This is where getting woke comes from. When you get woke, you have your blinders removed. Now it's important to note that in critical theory, this special knowledge is not inherently possessed. Okay? You as an oppressed person, you may live out of what's called internalized oppression.

In other words, you may think that this isn't true. You may think that there is no special way that the oppressors are oppressing me, but you're only saying that because you haven't come to embrace this special knowledge. This special knowledge is not inherently possessed, but it's only available to the oppressed classes. It's also available to the oppressor class if that oppressor wants to come out of the oppressor class and be a special savior of the oppressed. And so when you get woke, you come to that special knowledge and you intercede on behalf of the oppressed people.

You'll never know it the way that they know it, but you can know it in some ways and help act against it, which leads to the fourth and final framework. And that is social justice through liberation. And again, social justice is tossed around like a pejorative. People have these things like, you're just a social justice warrior, or SJW, and they can demonize and belittle people who are genuinely interested in addressing sin in culture. But according to critical theory, their vision of justice I think is different than a biblical vision of justice.

According to critical theory, social justice must be achieved, and social justice is the elimination of every form of injustice. Let's see here. I think it would define social justice as the elimination of all forms of social oppression. Whether it's based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, or economic class. In other words, the oppressor classes must be totally done away with. And the oppressed classes must come to inherit a world, a utopian world in which there is no longer any oppression. How is that social justice achieved? How do we enter into that utopian world?

Two ways. Number one, you resist the oppressors. Number two, you liberate the oppressed. Resistance and liberation are your two tools in your tool belt to become active as a saint in this religious system of overthrowing the oppressors. You saw this language throughout the last four years when Donald Trump was elected. I'm not saying this to be political, but when Trump was elected, you had these groups, these what critical theory would call minority groups. You had the Women's March on Washington. You had this whole organization called Antifa. Anybody heard of Antifa?

And their mantra was to resist, right? You had the resistance movement because that's what you do in critical theory to fight against the power structures that exist today. Here's a quote from feminist Suzanne Pharr where she says, "These political times call for renewed dialogue

about and a renewed commitment to the politics of liberation. Liberation requires a struggle against discrimination based on race, class, gender, sexual identity, ableism, and age." And so if you embrace critical theory, your primary moral duty is resistance and oppression. Okay, any questions, class? I'm just kidding. Don't ask questions.

You can come talk to me afterwards. Send me an email, which I'm sure I'll get some. But before I critique critical theory, and we're going to do that this week and more next week, the reason that this theory is being accepted by a lot of Christians is because it gets a few things right. Christians would not embrace this if there wasn't something about critical theory that was attractive to them that seemed biblical. And so let's think about it. What do they get right? What does critical theory get right? The first thing I think they get right, the obvious thing that they get right, is that oppression is evil.

Old Testament, New Testament agree God's people should hate oppression. We should hate injustice. Not only should we hate it, we should be actively involved in supplanting it and overcoming it and bringing it to an end. Oppression is a sin. Now critical theory gets it wrong in saying that it's the only sin, or that it's the most important sin, or that people who are oppressed cannot engage in forms of oppression. They get a lot of things incorrect. But they are right and morally they are right to have an outcry against oppression.

The other thing that critical theory gets wrong, even though they get the moral category right, is that they define oppression differently than the Bible defines oppression. The Bible defines oppression as individual acts of cruelty, injustice, even structural systems that inflict injustice on others, all that is in the scriptures, but it would deny that the mere existence of hegemonic power or the mere existence that you belong to a particular group makes you individually culpable of the sin of oppression. Okay? It's critical theory assigns all of the guilt to the group and none of the guilt to the individual.

The Bible disagrees with it at that level, but it agrees that oppression is evil. The second thing that critical theory gets right. Is that it shows you that not all sin is located in the individual. And this has to be maybe the most controversial thing about critical theory. This is why so many Christians react so violently against it. Because there's a tendency in the West to boil down all of our attention on the individual person. But one of the things that critical theory accurately criticizes about culture is that when sinful people get together.

They can create sinful structures and they can create sinful systems. And when enough sinful people get together, they can create big sinful structures and big sinful systems that promote and propagate sin on other people. Now there's a hesitancy for a lot of Christians to admit that, but it's obviously true. You look at Hitler's Germany, the problem with Hitler's Germany was not just Hitler. It was the vast amounts of other people who agreed with that basic form of antisemitism and it was structures and systems in the government of Germany that propagated and promoted that anti-Semitism.

If you look at the abortion culture that exists today, most Christians would say the problem with abortion culture is not just individual people who believe that abortion is not wrong or that the human beings are just a clump of cells. It is the culture, it's the entertainment industry, it's the educational system, it's politicians, it's a group of sinful people creating a climate, a culture of sin that is promoted and propagated by that systemic injustice. Now am I saying that structures can— or that the moral culpability of that sin is in the structure?

No. That's where critical theory gets it wrong. Critical theory assigns the moral culpability to the structure itself. Individuals have to be accountable for their sin, and only through the repentance of sinful individuals can those structures be changed. You can overthrow the structures and the sin and never deal with the sin in the human heart. You may overthrow the structure, but you're not going to deal with the problem because the problem is the individual sinner. But sinners can create systems, and critical theory is right to address it. The third thing they get right is hegemonic power exists and it is insidious.

And I think Christians should know this better than anybody else. Our culture has a hegemony. If you have children who are in public schools, you know that there is a tendency in which you're going to have to always be questioning what they're learning at school. Because in our culture, which is heavily informed by Darwinian evolution and other isms that are godless ideologies, you know that they're going to hear things and absorb things, not even directly taught, they're just going to absorb things that are hostile to a Christian worldview. Well, that's hegemony.

That's the hegemony of American culture shaping the mind of your student. Critical theory is wrong to say that we must destroy all hegemony, that there should be no hegemony. They're wrong to say that. The right answer is there should be one hegemony, and it should be the Lord Jesus Christ. Truth about reality as defined by a biblical worldview. That should be the proper hegemony. And when we finally do get a utopia, it will be because Jesus Christ is the light of the world. So they're wrong in what they try to do with the hegemony, but they're not wrong to point it out.

Our culture says beauty is external. God says true beauty is internal. That's a hegemonic power that we're always going to be fighting against. And so we cannot dismiss everything about critical theory because it does get certain things right. But I would warn and caution any Christian from adopting critical theory because it's not just an analytical tool, it's not just something that has particularly useful insights about X, Y, or Z. It's a way of viewing the world. And even though it may be commended for attempting to address particular social ills like oppression and racist structures and systems and so on and so forth, the way that it tries to address those issues and the way that it tries to cure those issues contradict and really subvert a distinctively Christian worldview.

It's because of the way that they understand oppression that a Christian cannot embrace it because they locate all of the sin in the group and none of the sin in the individual. And that is a distinctively un-Christian way of thinking about sin. They do not find the value of human beings based on being created in the image of God. They find the value of human beings based on their class. Are they oppressed or oppressor? And because of that, not only does it contradict a Christian worldview, it fundamentally erodes and undermines core Christian convictions.

It seeks to attack and tear down hegemonic power. A Christian would agree that godless hegemonic ideology should be destroyed. But it disagrees that it should be totally done away with, but rather that Lord Jesus should be put on the throne. We should seek to bring about his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. And so not only does it conflict with the Christian worldview, it subverts it. It tries to destroy Christianity. Why? Because Christianity is part of the problem according to critical theory. Because Christianity is part of that system of oppression that has kept people who are not Christians from being liberated to live out their truest selves.

And the Bible would say you should not, that freedom to express yourself as an individual is a path to greater slavery, not a path to liberation. The only way to truly be free is to give yourself completely and wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ. Liberation for the sake of liberation will create more slavery, not more freedom. And for that reason, Christians should be very wary of embracing critical theory, whether it's gender theory or queer theory or critical race theory from addressing the ills of society. Let me show you this as a worldview because a part of the reason that a lot of Southern Baptist people are addressing this issue is because of a resolution in 2019 called Resolution 9.

Has anybody even ever heard of that? I'm just curious. A handful of people that's good. I always tell people nobody cares about what takes place at the annual meeting. And I'm right. But Resolution 9 said that critical theory was a useful analytical tool. And I think what they were trying to say is what I just said about how critical theory gets some things right, where they I think got it wrong is in saying that it was just an analytical tool. It's not an analytical tool, it's a worldview. Let me show you this.

Worldviews attempt to try to make sense of the world, right? They ask certain fundamental questions. They give certain fundamental answers, and if these answers to these questions are done in these fundamental ways, then we can reach this fundamental destination. Let me show you these questions. There's four of them. And they fall under four different categories. The first one is how did we get here? That's the question of creation. The second one is what's wrong with the world? That's the question of the fall. The third one is how do we fix what's wrong with the world?

That's the question of redemption. And then number four is when will it be solved? How will we know when we've arrived at our utopia? Now if you take those questions and you ask them as a Christian, a Christian is going to answer these questions in the following ways. How did we get here? We were created by a holy and a good God. God's creative decree created something from nothing. He spoke and the universe came into existence. We were created in the image of God. In other words, we mirror God likeness to the rest of the world.

We are unlike any other part of creation because we possess God's image. What gives us our value is not our relationship to other people. But the way in which we are image God. Things went haywire. What's wrong with the world? Things went haywire when sin was introduced into the world. It first came through the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve. They rebelled against God's good design. They said, I want to do life my own way and not God's way. And because they did that, the world was struck by the event damaging effects of sin.

And so now when you and I are born into the world, we are born with what's called original sin, which means we have a predisposition towards rejecting God's design and doing life in our own way. And the degree to which we do that is the degree to which the world goes wrong. And when we do it together, it gets wrong or we do it in large groups of people, it gets even more wrong. And that's where those systems and structures come into play. But what's wrong with the world is not oppression.

What's wrong with the world is deviation from God's good design. Number three, how do we fix it? That's the question of redemption. And in Christianity the way we fix it is through the Lord Jesus Christ. We fix the sin problem in our world by repenting of sin, agreeing with God about our sin, and putting our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We reject worldly wisdom and we recover God's good and perfect design for our lives individually and corporately. The way to fix racism is to repent of sin and to allow the Lord Jesus Christ to rule the dynamics of race relations in our life.

The way to heal the relationships between straight people and gay people is to repent of sin, sin of pride, sin of cruelty, sin of injustice, and to allow the Lord Jesus Christ to dictate the relationships between those two categories of people. It's repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's exchanging our worldly wisdom with the wisdom of heaven in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then the last question is, how will we know when it's fully fixed? When will we arrive at utopia? The problem will ultimately be solved when Jesus comes back again, and until he comes back again, we are called to do whatever we can in our own life to bring about his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

All right, so it's an already not yet tension. We don't believe as Christians that we can arrive at some kind of utopia. We don't believe that we can bring about the kingdom without the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. But that we should work towards that to the best of our ability insofar as we're able. That's the Christian worldview. Now take those four questions

and ask them according to critical theory, and you will get fundamentally different answers. All right? Critical theory, how did we get here? And critical theory, it comes from Marxism.

There is no God. Okay, it's a godless ideology. So our value as human beings is not that we're created in the image of God. Our value and inherent worth as human beings is dependent upon our class. Are we part of the oppressor class? Are we part of the oppressed class? What's wrong with the world? It's oppression. It's an imbalance of power. How do you fix it? Through resistance and liberation. When will you know that you've gotten there? When you have ultimately destroyed the hegemonic powers that exist currently and replaced them with the oppressed people and give them all the power.

It's fundamentally a destructive— it's a critique, it's a critique of what is, to replace it with critical theory. And so given that those two worldviews answer these four questions in fundamentally different ways, there is no such thing as a peaceful coexistence between Christian theism and critical theory. It just is not. And while Christians may want to appreciate certain insights, or maybe even there be some agreement between what the Bible says and what critical theory points out to some degree the similarities may be there, but the differences are more important than the similarities.

And the differences not only contradict a Christian worldview, they actively subvert it. And so what I want us to do next week when we come back together is to show the better way. If we're going to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ. If we're going to destroy strongholds and demolish arguments, it's one thing to tear it down. It's a whole nother thing to present a better alternative. How should Christians address these issues? What is the biblical answer to the problems that are at work in our culture today?

Not just with race relations, but with all of these cultural relationships that are being agitated right now by this theory. So in closing, here's what I want to encourage us to do. Number one, think critically about your thoughts. Remember what our text says. We live in the flesh, but we do not wage war according to the flesh. So think critically about your thoughts. Number two, orient your heart and your mind towards God. And not a person, not a camp, not a political ideology. Whether you're on the left or whether you're on the right, orient your heart towards God first and foremost.

So you'll not be held captive by these godless ideologies. The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh. They are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. It's through God we demolish arguments and every proud thing that's raised up against the knowledge of God. Take every thought captive to obey Christ, which is the last thing. Submit all of your thinking, all of your thinking to the Lord Jesus Christ. If you're a young person here today, you have been influenced by these theories. You don't even know it yet. You don't know the ways how, but the hegemony of our culture is influencing us.

So we've got to submit all of our thinking to the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to ask and answer: is this a way of thinking that is going to honor the Lord Jesus, that's going to further his kingdom in the way that he's called me to further it? And it's not just philosophical worldviews, it's how you think about everything. How you think about the movies you watch, the music you listen to, the friendships that you engage in, the conversations you have with those friends submit all of your thinking to the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, maybe you've been captivated by this approach to thinking, and maybe there's some anger and bitterness in your life that this morning you would say, you know, I've not allowed myself to be guilty of sin because of my belonging to a particular group, but in the Bible we all belong to one group. It's called humanity, and all of us are sinful. And the way to be redeemed of that sin is just to admit it, to agree with God that he's right and I'm wrong, and I want to repent of my sin and put my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if you've never done that, you can do that for the first time this morning with a prayer that just says, Lord, I'm sinful, I'm guilty. Would you save me through Jesus Christ? And then those of us who are Christians, I just want to challenge you, not only personally, to take stock of what your mindset is, but to pray for our church as we engage in a culture that has in large part embraced this theory and that God would give us wisdom. Not just for how to show the ways that it's wrong, but for us to show a better way, for us to give a reason for the hope that is within us and why that hope is a better hope at the end of the day.