

WAR OF THE WORLDVIEWS #33
“The Heart of the Matter”
Part 2

I. Introduction

- Everyone has a worldview. Even if they are unaware of it. Even if it’s a bad one
- Your worldview determines how you answer the “big questions” of life.
- One of the biggest questions of life is...

WHAT’S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

(Notice the *presupposition* here: Things are not what they should be!)

- Socialists say it’s income inequality-that government must enforce the redistribution of wealth to fix things
- Democratic capitalists are the opposite; get government out of the way and let the free markets loose
- Secularists believe we can fix the world with more and better education
- Atheists say that religion is the problem!

BUT HOW DOES THE BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW ANSWER THE QUESTION
“WHAT’S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?”

- Many Christians would answer, ‘SIN’; and that would be the right; but the biblical worldview goes deeper than that; it goes, so to speak, to the “heart of the matter”

The biblical worldview identifies the human heart as the source of all the woes in this world.

- I’m not splitting hairs here! This is not just semantics! If I simply say that sin is what’s wrong with the world, I still haven’t dealt with...

II. The Heart of the Matter

A. Beloved, We Have a *Radical* Problem!

“Radical”

Refers to the fundamental nature of something

1. *Many* of the world’s religions would say “sin” is the problem; many religions teach that sin is what’s wrong with the world.

2. But only the *Christian* worldview the problem goes deeper than that! It’s not just what men DO that’s wrong with the world; it’s what men ARE!

a. We have a “radical” problem; the ‘fundamental nature’ of man outside of Christ is what’s wrong with the world.

b. The famous Christian British author G.K. Chesterton once wrote this note to an English newspaper...

“Dear Sirs:

In response to your article, ‘What’s Wrong With the World’...I am.”

Yours truly, G.K. Chesterton

3. Oh beloved! Don’t you know that many of the world’s religions teach men to stop sinning; as if all that’s wrong with us is our *behavior*! But that’s not the biblical answer!

“All the answers the Holy Ghost gives concerning man, are to humble man: man is ready to flatter himself, and one man to flatter another, but God tells us plainly what we are.”

Joseph Caryl (1602-1673)

B. The Human Race Has Heart Trouble!

1. The Lord Jesus Christ said it most plainly this way when dealing with the religious people of His day...

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure of the heart bringeth forth evil things.

Matthew 12:34-35 (emphasis added)

2. The fatal flaw of the Pharisees' teaching is still with us today; a religion that deals only with what we DO but does not deal with what we ARE. They were concerned with behavior; like enforcing Old Testament dietary laws...

16 And He said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also? 17 "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?

18 "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. 19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. 20 "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

Matthew 15:16-20 NASB

3. The word "heart" is used over 1,000 times in the Bible; almost never referring to the physical organ, the "blood pump".

a. "Heart" in the Bible refers to the spirit and soul of man; it is our essence; our fundamental nature; the part of us that directs everything else.

For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

Proverbs 23:7

4. Here we have the amazing revelation that we "think" with our heart as well as our mind! It is the condition of our hearts that determines the choices we make with our minds.

"The mind justifies what the heart has chosen."

Dennis Peacocke

a. A man is married, but he has a problem with lust; his heart chooses to begin a flirtation with a co-worker; his mind justifies it as harmless fun. But the flirtation intensifies and in his heart, he chooses to pursue an affair; then his mind will begin to build a case to justify the behavior he has chosen to pursue: "After all, my wife is not meeting my sexual needs"; "She's always nagging me"; and then the mind will tell him, "You don't need to hurt your wife; you can figure out a way to keep the affair a secret." So he commits adultery. But the heart chose the behavior long before the act was committed! This is why Jesus said...

You have heard it said, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you that he who looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery already in his heart. Matthew 5:27-28

b. Let's say you're in a tight spot; you did something wrong and the only way out of it is to tell a lie; If your heart chooses to lie, your mind will immediately begin to build a case that justifies your lying. Lying is a sin. But the sin began in the heart. And so it goes....

5. The Bible consistently gets to the heart of the matter;

a. God sent the great flood because of sin; but look closer....

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Genesis 6:5

b. God delivered Israel out of Egyptian bondage with 10 mighty miracles and splitting the Red Sea; but their hearts were not right!

But our fathers refused to obey Him; they rejected Him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. Acts 7:39

- It was easier for God to get Israel out of Egypt than it was to get Egypt out of Israel!

6. God is brutal about His verdict on the human heart...

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9

C. The Great Omission

1. We must not omit our attention to the real answer to "what's wrong with the world?"

2. Sin is a good short answer. But the heart of the matter is the human heart.

3 Consider the half-truth of this famous saying...

“You can’t legislate morality.”

a. On the one hand this is a false statement because morality refers to behavior and all laws are passed to regulate behavior! So in one sense, you CAN legislate morality.

b. But on the other hand, and this is what is usually meant here, you cannot legislate or impose morality on the human heart.

c. Laws against murder don’t stop us from killing one another anymore than speed limits stop us from speeding.

D. The World Has Heart Trouble With No Cure Outside of God

1. The prophet Jeremiah asks 2 rhetorical questions

**“Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?
Neither can you also do good who are accustomed to doing evil.
Jeremiah 13:23**

a. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin color; the leopard cannot change his spots!

b. In the same way, the human heart cannot change itself!

2. We can change our minds; but we cannot change our hearts!

3. We make too much of “free will” when we think that will power alone can make us right with God...

**“Until the will is changed, until what is called ‘free will’ is made, in truth, to be free will—free from the chains of evil and the love of sin, the man cannot rise to happiness and God any more than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots.”
Charles Spurgeon**

4. When God wants to fix a man, He goes beyond the man’s *behavior*. A *new heart*, a *change of nature* is required!

5. God gave Israel His Law. But the commandments could only regulate behavior; they had a heart problem! So God said...

I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.

Ezekiel 36:25-27

6. In the New Testament Paul rebuked the churches of Galatia debating over circumcision...

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth (profits or means) anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Galatians 6:15

It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation.

Galatians 6:15 New Living Translation

A RADICAL PROBLEM REQUIRE A RADICAL SOLUTION!

7. God doesn't come to *fix* my heart; He comes to *replace* it. I don't need a heart bypass; I need a heart transplant. God doesn't come to make me a *better* man. He comes to make me a brand *new* man.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18

Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

“...he has become a new creature altogether...”

Amplified Bible

8. God has gone beyond dealing with our sin; He deals with the heart of the matter. And He doesn't stop with salvation...

9. So let me close....

III. Practical Implications for the Christian

A. Comfortable Christians Listen to This Teaching and Say: “So What?”

1. There is a “comfortable Christianity” in American culture that:

- Says, “OK-I’m saved. God has given me a new heart. I’m already a new creature in Christ; I’m on my way to heaven
- So this teaching is good, but “so what?”

2. Oh, I’m so glad you asked! At the risk of offending, I’ve been building up to close with this...

B. Even Christians Can Have Heart Trouble!

1. The Bible is brutally honest about the hopeless condition of the human heart without God. But many of the born again forget the fact that there are warnings in the Word even for believers

a. Who was wiser than Solomon?

**Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.
Proverbs 4:23**

(Here is truth for ALL men, not just Christians)

b. Who loved God more than David?

**Examine me O Lord, and try me; test my mind and my heart.
Psalm 26:3**

(David lived in the fear of the Lord; He knew his heart was capable of evil)

**Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:
And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.
Psalm 139:23-24**

(And after he committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband murdered, what was his prayer?)

**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Psalm 51:10**

2. And what does a clean heart and a rights spirit look like? How do I know if my heart isn't right? Consider the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount where He describes...

B. The Normal Christian Life

1. We spent an entire year going through the Sermon on the Mount, verse by verse.

2. It's the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest Preacher who ever lived; it's the only place in the Bible where Jesus gives a detailed picture of what normal Christianity looks like....and how does it begin?

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT BEGINS WITH THE BEATITUDES

3. These 8 famous sayings are not about what we DO...they are a description of who we ARE.

(They are the BE-attitudes, not DO-attitudes!)

4. This proves that the foundation of the Christian life is not a new set of rules but a new heart!

5. These are my 8 checkpoints for guarding my heart; anything less is not normal!

SO WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

A good answer is "Sin"; a better answer is the human heart.

And that's the heart of the matter.