



gracefellowship

Series: Filter
Date: September 11, 2022

Title: Learning to See
Passage: Genesis 1:1-2

Scripture Reading: Genesis 1 (full chapter)

- Recognize MK's one-year anniversary at GFC -

This morning we are kicking off a new teaching series called "Filter." For the next four Sundays we will be talking about developing a Christian Worldview. We are going to do something today I don't typically like- we will get to the Bible, but it's going to take a while. In most of my sermons I like to have the Bible as the centerpiece of what I'm talking about from the very beginning. Today, however, I need to set some things up for you and at the end of the message we will tie back in to Scripture and answer the big questions of the morning.

Every person in this room has a filter through which they view the world around them and the things happening in the world as life unfolds. When we ask the question: **What is a worldview?** We come to this answer:

A worldview is the lens through which we view the world and make decisions about how we will live.

The worldview you have impacts how you live because every aspect of your life is filtered through it.

- Sometimes purposefully: You are aware of what your worldview is and you make intentional choices based on your views.
- Sometimes ignorantly or reactively: You do things instinctively that reveals your worldview even if you are not conscious of it.

Here's what research tells us: **Most people's worldview is established between the ages of 15 months and 13 years of age!**

In other words, by the time you hit 13 years old, you have established how you will most likely look at the world around you, what filter you will use to make decisions for your life and what you believe about at least the most basic questions we ask as humans.

Every preteen and adult in this room has a fairly established worldview. And every worldview requires faith! Christians are not the only people live by faith as we express our views on how we live. Every worldview requires faith!

There are many worldviews you can hold...

- Secular Humanism
- Naturalism
- Atheism
- Agnosticism
- Some of us have worldviews that are primarily political and your main lens you see the world through is what the talking heads say on CNN or Fox News or MSNBC.

What you believe shows where you place your faith. Even atheists, who say God doesn't exist operate in faith. This week I read a piece talking about how there is growing doubt to classical Darwinian evolution among evolutionary biologists and they are creating new definitions of evolution. Those existing evolutionists are attempting to reassure people. Douglas Futuyma recently stated, "Just because we don't know *how* evolution occurred, does not justify doubt about *whether* it occurred." Translation- just because we can't prove it in a laboratory doesn't mean we have to doubt it happened. It takes faith to believe in evolution the same way it takes faith to believe in God. And it takes faith to believe there is no God! All worldviews require faith because there is no way you can know with 100% certainty what you believe is true.

There are many worldviews.

But what I hope to convey in this series is what it means to have a Biblical Worldview. What does that mean?

"A Biblical Worldview is the filter that causes a person to make their choices in harmony with biblical teachings and principles." – George Barna

The Bible informs how I think about the events of life and is the primary lens through which I understand the things happening in the world.

You may assume that as a Christian you have a biblical worldview. But the research of the Barna Institute shows clearly that is not the case. In fact, it's not even the case when it comes to Protestant Pastors in the United States. In a survey of over 1000 Pastors this year Barna indicated that only 37% of Pastors hold to a biblical worldview. When the same survey was applied to Youth Pastors and Children's Pastors they found that only 7% and 4% respectively held to a Christian worldview!

(Slides:)

37% of Pastors have a biblical worldview

(their beliefs and life choices line up with the teachings and principles of the Bible)

7% of Youth Pastors

4% of Children's Pastors

When I first began pastoring here at GFC the number one feedback I received on Sunday mornings from guests at our church was this: "It sure was nice to find a church where they preach from the Bible; we've been looking for a while now and very few places we went were preaching biblical messages." Now, I know many of the Pastors in our city and there are godly men here who preach God's Word with integrity and Spirit-led truth. But it's also not surprising to hear that churches aren't teaching from the Bible if they don't even hold to a biblical worldview.

6% of American Adults (include with the statistics above on the same slide)

That should shock you. But it doesn't stop there. Barna tells us that only 6% of American adults have a Biblical Worldview. Here's what the research tells us is predominant among American adults who claim to be Christians- 88% hold to a worldview that is described as syncretism.

- Syncretism is the picking and choosing of many worldviews and beliefs to fit what suites us best. It is a copy and paste type of worldview that allows people to adopt what fits best for them in any given situation.
- Syncretism's hallmark is that there is no absolute moral truth, so I can do whatever I want, think whatever I want and pick perspectives however I choose. It's all about my comfort, my happiness, my satisfaction- as long as I'm in charge. In essence, Christians who live like this will say there is a God, but they don't yield to His divine authority.

The most popular worldview Christians are drawing from is called Moral Therapeutic Deism. In this worldview there is a God, but he is distant and not engaged with us. His primary job is to make my life happy and comfortable. You might think of this like carrying Jesus around in your pocket. You pull Him out when you need help in life and He is supposed to jump to your aid and make everything ok. Then when life is smooth again, he goes back in your pocket for future use at your discretion.

3 out of 4 People with this worldview consider themselves Christians, but 95% do not consider success in life to have anything to do with consistent obedience to God.

9 out of 10 Do not believe they were born into sin and need to be saved by Jesus- still calling themselves Christians.

3 out of 4 Do not believe God is the basis of truth.

9 out of 10 Do not believe the Bible is true and relevant communication between God and us, therefore, they rarely read the Bible- but they still consider themselves Christians.

I tell you all that this morning to ask you to be honest with yourself about what you really believe. Let's be honest about where we are and what we believe. If you call yourself a follower of Jesus, do you really to a worldview guided by His Word and under His authority.

Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself as you determine which worldview you hold:

- 1. What do I believe?**
- 2. Why do I believe that?**
- 3. Where does this belief lead?**

What do I believe?

Faith is not an exercise that leaves knowledge behind. In other words, when the Bible talks about faith it never talks about it as a blind pursuit without knowledge. Think about faith like driving your car. What if you got in your car and said, "I'm going to drive to NYC!" And the person on the road trip with you said, "Are you sure this interstate takes us there?" And your reply is, "Nope. But I have faith if we just keep driving it will eventually take us to NYC!" Well, that's dumb. But if you say, "I checked the map and if we take this interstate north and follow these directions we will get to NYC." Are you sure? "I'm as sure as I can be and I trust this to be true because others have taken this path before me and have made it to the destination." I'm still going by faith- I haven't driven there before, but it's not blind faith- it's built on knowledge, guided by a map.

The second question is: Why do I believe that?

Do you believe something based on your feelings, or based on truth and factual information? Do you believe something because it's *your truth* or because it is *absolute truth*?

The third question is: Where does that belief lead?

Where does your worldview take you?

Every belief you have is moving you somewhere. Some of your beliefs are leading you closer to God, while others are moving you further away. As you make decisions in life, look further down the road and ask the question: Over time, where will this take me?

Listen, I'm not going to cram Jesus down your throat and tell you that you have to believe what I believe. But I am going to ask you, especially you teenagers, who tend to live more in the moment and not think big picture, to really look at the decisions you are making and the worldview you are embracing and ask yourself where this will take you.

Here's the last thing I want to share before we get into Scripture. All Worldviews are basically seeking to answer a few specific questions. Whether you are an atheist, agnostic, humanist, whatever...you want to know and endeavor to answer things like this:

Questions all Worldviews seek to Answer:

- a. Where did we come from/Why are we here?**
- b. What is wrong with the world?**
- c. How can this be fixed?**

If you have an atheistic worldview you answer those questions one way.

If you have a materialistic worldview you have different answers.

If you hold to a biblical worldview you answer those questions through the lens of the Bible.

As Christians, we hold that the Bible is the Word of God. It is His voice to us in written form. Over the next few weeks we are going to work through those three questions I just shared and give a biblical answer to them. Today we are going to start with "where did we come from?"

Look with me at Genesis chapter 1. The first 4 chapters of Genesis lay the ground work for a biblical, Christian worldview. It seems to make sense that if we call ourselves Christians we should base our beliefs on God's Word. Again this isn't blind faith. God's Word has been proven true over and over again theologically, in archeology, in it's descriptions of science and how the universe works

:: Genesis 1:1-5

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.

5 God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

Where did we come from? The bible's answer to that question is, God created. Everything that exists was created. And the creation came from One who is uncreated.

In the first verse of the Bible we see that God existed before everything else. He is outside of space and time and is the originator of all that is. Also, in this first verse the Hebrew language uses the term Elohim for God. It's a word that describes a single object with plural forms. As we go through the pages of

Scripture we find a single God who exists in three distinct persons- Father, Son and Spirit. In the first verse of the Bible that detail is laid out.

The Bible tells us that God speaks everything into existence. There is a beginning to the universe. For years the prevailing thought was that the universe was eternal and had no beginning- it was just random and chaotic. Then science began speculating as they studied light in the universe and the distance between galaxies and many other factors that there had to be a beginning. It was described as the big bang. Some of you have a real problem with the Big Bang Theory. But do you know who originally hated the theory of the Big Bang? Atheists! Why? Because it proved there was a starting point to the universe. And if there is a starting point, something or Someone had to have started it. Early on evolutionary science was the one who wanted to keep Christians from learning about the Big Bang. Over time however, the twist became that the Big Bang was still a random, completely by chance event, not connected with a Creator. There is more and more empirical data today that supports a universe that has a beginning point and that supports the beliefs of biblical creation.

In fact, I would love to point you to a series of messages by Chip Ingram called "Why I Believe." You can find them on YouTube. He does a brilliant job of laying out some of the most recent findings and research that is pointing to a starting point of creation. Even the James Webb telescope that is giving us some of the most magnificent images of space ever seen, is also confirming how light from distant galaxies fits the ideas and science of a starting point to the universe.

Here's what all this really means. If God created everything and there is a starting point to the universe, then everything in the universe is orderly and designed, rather than chaotic and random. The universe is perfectly dialed in and there is a fine tuning to it. If you don't believe in a Creator, you would probably expect to find a random universe that is chaotic in nature. But that isn't what we observe in science at all. In fact, I want you to watch this 6 minute clip that shows the precision and fine tuning of the universe you might expect if there were a brilliant, supernatural creator behind it all.

<https://youtu.be/EE76nwimuT0>

"The Fine Tuning of the Universe"

A biblical worldview ways that God is the Creator. Therefore, His laws govern the universe. As Christians, we submit ourselves to Him and embrace what He has revealed in His Word about life under His sovereign control.

As you read the story of creation in Genesis 1, here's what you will continue to come back to: everything God made was good. Everything God created was good because God is good. That also means God defines good and we discover what is good in His Word. As a Christian I don't have the ability to pick and choose what I like and don't like in the Bible. For those of you who call

yourselves a Christian, I want to ask you to take a deep look at what you believe. But just as important as what you say you believe is how you live out those claims. We are not called to be people who simply believe things- we are supposed to be at work in this world bringing God's Kingdom to light all around us. This week one of the verses I talked about with my kids on the way to school was Romans 10:9-10

:: Romans 10:9-10

9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For it is with your heart you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

There is both belief and living out what we believe that is involved in the Christian life. A biblical worldview helps us to bring things into perspective so that we know how to live in the world around us. It's learning to see the world like God sees the world so we know how to bring His love to everyone around us.

I hope you'll join us for the next few weeks as we dig deeper into Genesis and find biblical answers to the major questions in life. Next week we will talk about our place and purpose in God's creation.

- Pray