

A Losing Trade

Today is about having our thinking formed by the message of the gospel.

Romans 1:18-32 NLT *Verse 25 again: “They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.”

- I. Why can anyone make a losing trade?
 - a. God’s wrath (anger) is revealed now when He gives people over to what they think they want. 1:28 “Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done.” *Free will – God wanted people who could receive love from Him and give it back freely which required free will. *We aren’t like trees, stars, or animals. This was by design.
 - b. We live in a world that is beautiful and the dark.
 - i. Why is our world beautiful? God. “They knew God...” Because God revealed Himself in creation. The power of His majesty is seen in stars, oceans, and mountains. The beauty of His nature is seen in flowers (smell and looks); the sunsets and sunrises (clouds with light); the birds that sing; the good things human beings are capable of (we were made in the image of God and even though we’re broken, we are capable of doing good); the wisdom of His nature is seen in seeds, the human eye, and in all the parameters necessary for life on this planet. (Has Science Proven God?) Carl Sagan in the 60s and the department of SETI Search of Extraterrestrial Intelligence – 2 factors for life had become over 200 by 2014, so the odds of life even on our own planet became infinitesimally small. The inference is that we must have been created.
 - ii. Why is our world dark? God. The God who made us foreknew sin and the sin nature that would come about, and that each of us would have deal with the presence of an unreliable narrator we could follow instead of Him. When we choose darkness over light, we not only grow in darkness ourselves; we make the world darker for everyone. To justify our darkness, we encourage other people who are on the fence to join us. It makes us feel better to have other people join us in our darkness. Their world doesn’t just become dark – the whole world becomes darker. And God is the One who allows this.
- II. The unreliable narrator.
 - a. The Mystery of Mrs. Christie – (Marie Benedict - 2020) we assume that the narrator is unbiased but in one of her novels the narrator ends up

being the murderer. The whole book was first person but it appeared to be in the third person. We all have an unreliable narrator living inside us called the sin nature.

- b. My quiet time and the One Year reading the day I worked on this. Psalm 36:1 NLT “Sin whispers to the wicked, deep within their hearts.^[a] They have no fear of God at all.” *The atheist is like the man claiming that oxygen doesn’t exist while breathing the very oxygen that allows him to make the argument. “In Him we live, move, and have our being.” God must laugh at passionate atheists.
 - c. The external unreliable narrator became the internal unreliable narrator after Adam and Eve sinned. Two lies Satan gave:
 - i. God’s character – God is jealous of you and wants to protect His own position – He knows that you can become your own god.
 - ii. God’s word – “Surely you won’t die.” God will not hold you accountable for your actions.
 - d. The spiritual warfare today is worse than Satan and his demons, they have an associate who lives inside of us.
 - i. Romans 7:23 NLT “But there is a different law at work deep inside of me that fights with my mind. This law of sin holds me in its power because sin is still in me.” *We must recognize this or we will end up in death instead of life.
 - ii. Proverbs 14:12 NIV “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”
- III. False worship.
- a. Everything created has good in it because God made it, but when we make good things, “god” things, they become what we live for and that’s idolatry. What we live for is what we worship.
 - b. Gave them over to their desires – when God given desires become “over” desires we end up seeking fulfillment in them:
 - i. Sexual pleasure – rejecting God’s purpose for sex and His boundaries for sex – includes pornography and any sex outside of marriage, and includes an active homosexual lifestyle. All of these things will keep us out of the kingdom, but not out of His reach! 1Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV “Or do you not know that the unrighteous^[a] will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,^[b] ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” *God doesn’t expose to shame us, but to wash us and redeem us!

- ii. Security – the Father knows we have needs and a desire to be safe but when it becomes an over desire - money easily becomes our God. You can't serve God and money.
- iii. Self – my uniqueness can become a desire to be autonomous – I don't want anyone else telling me what to do. Disobedient to parents – rejecting authority – watch out because the victorious Christian life is about God telling us how to live – He's the only reliable narrator. 1 Samuel 15:23 NKJ "For rebellion *is* as the sin of [Ⓞ]witchcraft..." *You think it's just you, but it opens your life to darkness you didn't anticipate. "The thief came to kill, steal, and destroy."
- iv. Spirituality – I can be puffed up by my experiences apart from the Bible or I can use the Bible and become puffed up with my doctrine so that I assume I'm a reliable narrator. The truth isn't just knowing, it's becoming – add to your faith virtue. Jesus Himself is the truth. Only the Spirit who wrote the Bible can lead us into the truth of the Bible – He is called the Spirit of truth and the One who will lead us into all truth. John 5:39-40 NIV "You study[Ⓞ] the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰yet you refuse to come to me to have life." *Is my relationship with my beliefs about Alice or with Alice herself. One will be fixed, the other will be always growing and can easily be corrected.

IV. True worship.

- a. When we choose to worship the glorious, ever living God, we can enjoy good things and give thanks for them without making them god things that control us.
- b. Part of our worship now includes regular MRIs – the cancer can be in remission, but won't be removed until Jesus returns. It can metastasize at any time and start taking over. When we confess our sins, His Spirit does a fresh chemotherapy on us that knocks out the sin, but not us!
- c. Communion is a time where we should ask the reliable narrator to help us examine ourselves. 1 Corinthians 11:31-32 NASB "But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. ³²But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world." *Condemnation is the enemy's attack on us because we still have a sin nature – if you were a real Christian you wouldn't struggle! Not true: "If we walk in the Spirit we will not carry out the desire of the flesh." It doesn't say we will no longer have it.
- d. The difference between imputed righteousness and imparted righteousness: 1 John 1:9 ESV "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- i. We can't lose imputed righteousness unless we choose to give it back. Our salvation is very secure. No one can snatch us from His mighty hands and His unfailing love. Just because your children disobey doesn't make them any less your children.
- ii. We lose imparted righteousness when we don't live in fellowship with God. Our lives become darker and darker even as believers. He wants us to repent so He can restore His fellowship and right worship in our lives.