



Sermon – July 28, 2019
Chris Osborne

Verses Covered

Ephesians 4:17 – 23

1 Peter 5:8

Romans 12:1 - 2

So I'm going to give you an offer today. Two doors. Over here, week long, best resort, all expenses paid, first class flight, seven days, Disney World. If you have grandkids, someone to take them while you stay in the motel. Or in my case, playing golf at Palm, Magnolia, or Osprey, the three golf courses at Disney World. I'll get you on at Bay Hill, Arnold Palmer's course. Which I've also played. Right there. There's your first offer. OK. Or July, one week, tent camping in Somerville. Which one are you taking? Or I'll give you season tickets, A&M Football. I'm gonna miss that sound. Sort of. Kyle Field, parking pass, where you can get in and out in five minutes. Yeah, you get more Whoops over that than the game. Or season tickets, parking pass, Hearne High School. Now which, which are you going with? How many are going over here to Somerville? How many are going to Disney World? Oh this is sad. What's wrong with you people? New York, not Paris. Dropped the gun twice there. So, private joke. Now we don't ever pick, in a secular sense, the worse option. We don't. I mean, seriously, if you had the choice between a week at Disney World, your kids taken care of, your grandkids taken care of, you can sit and relax, everything's paid for, or sitting in a hot tent in Somerville, with no restrooms and no facilities, you'd take Disney World. We never take, if we're really presented with equal options, we're never going to take the worst option. So why do we do spiritually what we would never do in a secular sense? Why do we do that?

Look at Ephesians chapter 4. We've come to verse 17. Now we're going to walk through this clause by clause. But I want to make a point because I want you to listen to what he says. It is amazing. Remember he's writing to a church in Ephesus, Timothy's probably pastoring and he's stunned at what he discovers. Now listen to this. Verse 17.

¹⁷I say this, therefore, and I bear witness in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles are walking,

Now he says, no longer. In other words, quit it. Gentiles have gone back, the Christians in Ephesus have gone back to living as the Gentiles and here's what he says about them. Look at this.

they walk in the foolishness of their mind,

Literally, the Greek word means the futility. Their mind is futile. It cannot produce without Jesus. It cannot produce what it needs to be able to live correctly in the world.

there's a foolishness of their mind, ¹⁸darkened in their understanding

It says they can't see. They can't process which is why everything's futile. They can't process what they need to process to be able to make it in the world. What does the Bible say? It is not in man to direct his steps. They don't have the capacity to guide their life.

they are separated from the life of God because of the ignorance in them,

They have no connection to the Creator for whom they were made. We were made for Jesus. They have no connection. They're banished. They don't have any spiritual life in them.

because and because of the hardening of their hearts, ¹⁹they are such nature that they

Now here's a weird little phrase.

they have numbed themselves by having been delivered over to the licentiousness that works every kind of uncleanness in coveting.

Now the last thing he says is a little wordy, but here's what he's saying. They are numb to the fact that they live completely by what they feel. They live out of their licentiousness. They're chasing after things. They live out of their coveting. They are completely controlled by what they feel. And they're numb. They have no idea that they're not making their own decisions. They think they are. They think they're wise. They think they're brilliant. They think they're smart. But the fact is, they don't have any of that. They are completely numb to the fact that they are driven and controlled by what they feel. Now but look in verse 20.

²⁰But you, you didn't learn Christ this way, ²¹if indeed you heard Him and you were taught in Him, just as there is truth in Jesus

Remember, they don't have any truth. There's truth in Jesus.

that you would put off the old lifestyle, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lust of deceit and by the renewing of your mind, put on the new man who is being created according to God in righteousness and holiness of truth.

So you've got to deals here, right. They're ignorant, they can't see, they're separated from the Father, there's no grace, there's no connection, they have nothing. They are even numb. They have no idea they are chasing what they feel. We, though, are different. We possess, according to him, truth in Christ. We're connected to the Father. We have a new man and by the renewing of our mind, I don't have to go back here. If I keep my mind renewed, I don't have to ever go

back there. I have been set completely free to be in Jesus. Now honestly, the richness in the transforming beauty of what Jesus Christ has done in my life is way better than a trip to Disney World. It's way better than football tickets at Kyle Field. So why, I would never go back to Somerville, never go to a high school football game when I have a chance at college, why, why do I go back here? We have a hymn that has always resonated with nearly everybody that's ever sung it. Because one of the lines, one of the couplets is, prone to leave You, Lord, I feel it. Prone to wander from the God I love. Why is that true of us? We would never do that in a secular vein which is not nearly as valuable as a spiritual vein, and yet we will give up the riches of Jesus and go back into a realm where you live by what you feel instead of the truth, propositional truth you have because you're connected to the Creator. Why do we do that? And he says to them, "I'm telling you in the Lord, I know what you're doing." He says, "I want you to quit it." 2,000 years. Why do we do that? That we do spiritually what we would never do in a secular stance.

If you're going to the Garden of Eden prior to the fall, you've got Adam and Eve. Great place to live. Perfect relationship with each other. Holiness that we don't even think about. And every day the Father comes down and that connection is, in a sense, lived out. It's exploited. It's lived out. They experience the Creator and all that He's done for them on a daily basis. Now He's told them there's one tree, right, they can't eat from. Now my bet is that there wasn't a day they walked by that tree that they didn't back up a little when they saw it. Because they know, based on what this being who comes down every day and visits with them has said to them, is that this tree will kill them. It will damage them and that it is for their protection that they don't eat from this tree. I don't think they would ever have eaten from the tree until he arrives. He comes in, Eve's walking by, says, "Hey, nice place here. I notice you never eat from this tree." "No. God told us we eat from that tree, we'll die." Now I want you to listen carefully to what he said. Because this is what he says to you and it's why you go back to a filthy lifestyle and you leave the riches of the grace of Jesus Christ. Because of what he did. Brilliant on his part. I got to give it to him. He said, "Listen, God is conning you. If you eat from this tree, you're going to be just like He is. You'll know good and evil. He's not protecting you. He's cheating you." And once she realized, "Hey, God is ripping me off. He's not protecting me. He's cheating me." Once that hits it, she grabs it, eats it, gives it to Adam, and here we are. The real issue, it's not just that he caused them to doubt the word of God. That's always the argument. But it's a little bit more subtle than that and a little bit more nuance and a little deeper. He didn't just make them doubt the word of God. He made them believe that God's word was ripping them off and was cheating them. I'm going to believe until I die, if he's not in the garden, they don't ever sin. They sin because he is in the garden. That is why we struggle. Listen to this. 1 Peter 5:8.

⁸Be sober, watch. Your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion, walks around seeking someone to devour.

He's active. And if he's not, his imps are active in your life. And their job, his job, is to make you believe that God's ripping you off. And if you think living in this holiness is ripping you off when, in fact, living over here is a blessing for me, then you will leave God's holiness and you will wander away from Him and you will go back when you buy into exactly the same thing Adam and Eve bought into, his con job on you. It was about 30 years ago, I get this, and it was a really nice letter from a young college girl who had been in the service the previous week. We'd come to a section that dealt with physical intimacy before marriage, biblical parameters. So she wrote

me a letter. And again, very nice, as a matter of fact, the end of the letter she said, see you Sunday. But in the letter she said, "I know what your view is of premarital physical intimacy." Now let me be clear, there are some things that are my view, but there are a lot of things that are my view because they're what He wrote in here. So what He wrote in here is not before marriage. So she wrote me. She said, "I understand your viewpoint, but you're wrong." Now here's what she said. And, again, very nice. Not cantankerous. Not obnoxious. She said, "My boyfriend and I" who also was attending Central, "have been involved physically for several months." And here's the statement. "It has enhanced our relationship." Now she's right. The design of physical intimacy by the Creator inside a home is to enhance your relationship with each other. Absolutely no question. So why can't I do it before I marry? Because He's trying to protect you. Because it does enhance the relationship and if I do it prior to marriage, I will focus on that and miss seeing this person for who and what they really are. Then I marry and I wake up and go, "Wow I don't really like you. I'm caught now because of my holiness in Christ. I can't just leave. And I wouldn't have married had I seen the person for who they are. But by violating God's directive, I was not protected in my decision in a fallen world with someone that I couldn't see because that blinded me to who and what they are." It seems a con job when, in fact, it's the ultimate protection of the Father. And you have no regrets.

We have CAPS every year. Kids that have come through Central that are senior pastors, and their wives. So one year a new couple was coming. I won't say who it was and don't ask. New couple was coming and he said, "You know I'm a little nervous." I said, "Why?" "Well the wife of one of the pastors, I dated at A&M at Central." I said, "This is going to be fun." But it was interesting because nothing awkward, no struggle, because they had never engaged in physical intimacy prior to marriage. So there was no embarrassment. There was laughter and fun, but no embarrassment because there was no damage out of violating His directive. It protected both of them. Both godly people, but at some point inside that relationship, they both realized this is not the person for me. This is not the person for me. Not because anything was wrong with either one. They simply felt that and escaped which they never would have had they been engaged prior. His directives, Satan was wrong. His directives really are for our protection. So what do I do? Well he tells you. Put on the new man by the renewing of your mind. Listen to the book of Romans, chapter 12, verse 1. Same thing. Listen to this.

¹So I beseech you, brothers, because of the, through the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy well-pleasing to God, your spiritual service. ²Don't be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you can prove what is the will of God, good, well-pleasing, and perfect.

Same thing. So the only thing, because you're not smarter than he is, he knows that book better than you do. And he's good at making you think God's cheating you. So you have to allow the Holy Spirit to renew your mind. Now that means every morning when you get up, you make two statements to the Father. To the Holy Spirit you say, "Today, Father, I'm dependent on the Holy Spirit in me to take Your word and keep my mind renewed so I won't be prone to walk away from You back into something that is just brain dead. And I believe that Your Holy Spirit is capable of that and that He will do that. And so I rely on Your Holy Spirit and I trust in Your Holy Spirit inside my life to renew my mind today so the enemy can't pull me away from the beauty of the grace into the stupidity of the darkness." Now here's the problem you have. You've got to do that

throughout the day. You've got to start it in the morning and do it throughout the day because he is not continuous in his attack on you. I want you to listen to this, Matthew chapter 4, and then it talks about Satan left Jesus after the temptation. It says:

and behold then Satan left Him and behold angels came and ministered to Him.

Satan doesn't stay on you 24/7. What he does is he attacks you moment to moment. Truly smart. If you know he's coming, well I'm going to have my mind renewed. But if I get lackadaisical because he hasn't attacked me for a few days, maybe he attacked me Thursday and he's pulled his guys back. Why? Because he wants me to get a false sense of security that I can handle it and I don't need to have my mind renewed. And then he comes in and then he pulls me back to the stupidity of the darkness instead of the beauty of the grace. There's not a day because you don't know when he's coming, so you want to be prepped. There's not a day you don't get up and you say, "Father I need Your Spirit's renewing and I trust in Your Spirit's renewing." And if you do that, there may be a proneness to wander, but you won't go there because the Spirit will renew you at the beauty of grace against the stupidity of darkness. That only to those of us who know Jesus Christ.

Father, it is amazing that we take Your riches and go back to his junk, his foulness, his debilitating lifestyle. And Father we have a proneness to that because Your enemy is now our enemy and he is good at what he does. So Father renew us through the Holy Spirit in us all through the day so that when he does come, he doesn't meet us, he meets the third person of the Trinity. He's not scared of me. But he's terrified of You. Lock that down. I ask You that in Jesus Christ name.