

Ruin To Renovation - Sermon #9 - Driver's Seat Study Questions for Groups & Individuals

ICE BREAKER:

Tell of a time when you got really lost as a child, how did it feel, what was the outcome?

OPENING PRAYER:

Let's pray for our partners in the Middle East!

- Please pray for the **Syrian Women's Conference** coming up in early June. Pray for exactly the right women to make up the American team of 20 who will go to serve. A number of churches are planning to send women on the team. Pray for exactly the right Syrian women to be selected to come and be discipled, trained, and refreshed. Pray for the \$50,000 needed for this project. Committed to date: \$10,000.

DISCUSSION:

We said in the sermon that the Self is the inevitable place to turn in worship when we decide to worship the Created instead of the Creator (Romans 1:25), and the physical body becomes only useful in that it is that thing which enables us to satisfy the Self's desires. In the worship of Self, most of our obsessions become centered on sex and/or violence. And we find if what's false is deemed true, then anything can be true for anyone at anytime. The only absolute truth under this system is to say what's true for one person isn't necessarily true for another person (moral relativism).

1. Do you see these things in our society?
2. Point out some instances, or common things which reveal these things in our society.
3. If you've seen these things, how has it affected your life & relationships?
4. Do you struggle with the absolute exclusive claims of Jesus or the Scriptures as a whole?
5. How hard does this make it for you to be a witness for Christ?
6. Do you think it was difficult for the Apostles & others to be witnesses for Christ?
7. Look through Acts 17:16-34 where Paul witnesses to a group of people much like our society today...what did he use, how did he go about it? Was he bold or timid, rude or thoughtful? What was the outcome? How did he care what people thought, without a care for what they thought about him?

Philip Yancey tells us, *"The historian for Alcoholics Anonymous titled his work Not-God because, he said, that stands as the most important hurdle an addicted person must surmount: to acknowledge, deep in the soul, not being God. No mastery of manipulation & control, at which alcoholics excel, can overcome the root problem: rather, the alcoholic must recognize individual helplessness & fall back in the arms of the Higher Power. "First of all, we had to quit playing God," concluded the founders of AA; and then allow God himself to 'play God' in the addicts life, which involves daily, even moment-by-moment, surrender."* BUT...this is not relegated only to the alcoholic, all humankind wants to play God with their own life...

1. Is it difficult for you to stop 'playing God' in your life?

2. Share your thoughts on the differences of Christ as Lord & Savior in your life.
3. Look at the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17...read through them, realizing Jesus' claim to uphold the Law, what do these mean to you & society? Especially number 1...and do you notice how number 1 is linked to all the rest of these commandments? If we break any one of the other commandments, how does that also mean we've broken number 1?

Blaise Pascal posited that...'*knowledge of God without knowledge of man's wretchedness begets pride, and knowledge of man's wretchedness without knowledge of God begets despair, but knowledge of Jesus Christ furnishes man knowledge of both simultaneously.*'

1. What are your feelings regarding this statement?
2. How do you see this as true in life, do you have examples, or Scripture which reinforce these things?

Pascal is also quoted as saying, Mankind's "*condition is characterized by inconstancy, boredom, and anxiety. His relations with his fellow men are warped by self-love; society is founded on mutual deceit. Man's justice is fickle & relative, and no fixed standard of value may be found. Despite their predicament, however, most people, incredibly, refuse to seek an answer or even to think about their dilemma. Instead, they lose themselves in escapisms.*"

Do you feel you see any of this in society now? If so, describe.

This is countered by Ephesians 4:17-24 below, discuss this passage, and the hope & direction it brings...

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Loren Eiseley wrote, "Man is the Cosmic Orphan." And modern society tells us overall that we're the accidental by-product of nature, a result of matter, plus time, plus chance. There's no reason for our existence. All we face is death.

1. Why is this NOT true of us - can you find Scriptural promises to the contrary?