

PSALM 14
Whom Do You Seek?

Many of us are familiar with the first verse but we are NOT too familiar with what comes next. The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'

So, when it comes to the issue of God I want us to consider Pascal's Wager – French physicist/philosopher/mathematician

We don't usually place bets in church but today is an exception.

EX: Pascal's wager – not a proof of God but a reason for giving serious thought to the issue: "If there is no God then life is meaningless and when I die it's all over. I've lost nothing."

"But if there is a God and I deny Him then I must stand before Him one day and I face a godless eternity. I've lost everything."

Are you willing to wager your eternity by avoiding a serious consideration of the issue?

Pascal's Wager, like this Psalm is a call to consider the "God option" and the corresponding consequences

PSALM 14

Folly and Wickedness of Men.

For the choir director. A Psalm of David.

1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.

2 Yahweh has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men

To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God

3 They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.

4 Do all the workers of wickedness not know,

Who eat up my people as they eat bread, And do not call upon the Lord?

5 There they are in great dread, For God is with the righteous generation.

6 You would put to shame the counsel of the afflicted, But Yahweh is his refuge.

7 Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!

When Yahweh restores His captive people, Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.

FYI – Basically the same as PSALM 53 and admittedly, this Psalm is a bit of a hodge-podge thematically It is not purely lament, nor Messianic, nor a cry for help, nor prophetic, nor wisdom.

Dr. Davis summarizes the theme this way: "All mankind is universally depraved but there are those who have been- and will be delivered."

v.1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

Ideas have consequences, bad ideas have victims.

Why is this important? Because on this Father's Day we need to understand that many of today's victims are children, preborn and those who live with the consequences of bad ideas.

Bad ideas among adults usually have REALLY BAD consequences for kids.

EX: perhaps the most obvious recent example of this is the "Drag your Kids to Pride" Drag Queen event hosted in a certain kind of "adult" oriented bar in Texas. Adults seeking to express their "Pride" identities violated a state law by bringing minor age kids into an adult oriented establishment where they were exposed to rather explicit erotic entertainment. WHY????

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The exploitation of children has been going on a loooooong time, mostly in pagan cultures. In “Christian” influenced cultures it has also been going on to a lesser degree but not with cultural approval. What’s so shocking to us is that we are seeing the cultural approval in our day and time.

HOW AND WHY?

The fool in his heart says “there is no God”. And when there is no belief in God then everyone does what is right in his or her own eyes. The tragic idolatrous unbelief of Israel seen in the book of Judges has been on repeat throughout the course of human history.

This Psalm starts with a rather startling statement about what one is saying “In his heart.” That doesn’t automatically make it true.

The existence or non-existence of God is not something that is true based on what we say, “in our hearts.”

For most of my lifetime, that last statement would have found almost unanimous agreement. NOT any longer. Unless you’ve been a hermit for the past 20-50 years you’ve realized that the cultural measure or evaluation of truth has changed. We now live in an age where what you “think in your heart” IS TRUE because it is true for you, and that’s all that matters. I refer you back to Judges 22 to see how that worked for Israel.

Here’s the very short summary of the Psalm:

The foolish person lives as if God does not exist, but the righteous long for God’s salvation to be made known.

We must ask the question, “Who is the fool?”

We may be surprised by the answer.

What is a fool and how is the word used in 21st century? “1) One who is deficient in judgment, sense or understanding; 2) One who has been tricked or made to appear ridiculous;...

The context of scripture gives a different meaning

v. 1 the fool is seen from corruption, abominable deeds, does no good

The biblical concept of folly has more to do with moral character than mental ability. The fool is marked by aggressive ungodliness.

Even if he only says it “in his heart” it still controls him because the heart is the control center of our lives.

Thus Prov 4:23 says, **23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.**

We tend to see v 1 and say, “not me”. Perhaps it is true, but David keeps going and gives more context to what it means to be the fool.

All the while God is looking down to see if anyone is living with understanding = seeks after God.

The idea is that God is giving careful scrutiny to our hearts.

Now the idea of folly hits closer to home. If we aren’t seeking after God, then we are actually living in a foolish way.

If we say “there is a God” but we don’t seek him by living in understanding of His world, then the functional result is foolishness, i.e. living as if there is NO God. Ps 36:1 the ungodly is described as one who has no fear of God before his eyes.

The one who says, “There is no God” and thus doesn’t seek him is not much different from the one who says, “There is a God” but DOESN’T seek Him.

The one who lives with an understanding of reality seeks after God.

The one who seeks after God will have a better understanding of reality.

Those who deny God will not seek Him and thus have a very loose grip on reality. Just look at the moral and social confusion of our culture today.

You know we are living without understanding as a culture when we have emojis like this
this turns the idea of Fatherhood upside down and inside out.

A general guiding question as we consider historical and current events is, “What is the benign innocent explanation for this?”

If there is no benign explanation, then we should ask ourselves, “where do these ideas come from?”

We could go back over history and ask that question beginning in Gen 3 – “Why did they eat that fruit?” And we could cover every period of human history with that question, but for US we need to ask it in our current context.

What is the innocent explanation as to why anyone would go to a supermarket or a school and racially or randomly attack people?

Why would adults PROMOTE taking children into a sexually-charged establishment for a drag queen display or why adults would want to introduce distorted identity Concepts into kindergarten, elementary, middle or high school programs?

Why would terrorists attack a church in Nigeria, killing 50 Christians at worship?

Or why would States want to allow The Unborn to be killed up to the final hour before they are birthed?

Why would the medical establishment go along with surgically or chemically neutering young children?

Many of you have young children. A number of us have grandchildren and some have great-grandchildren. Given the trends in our culture we should have a holy concern for the environment in which these children will be raised.

People may say, “why pick on these certain areas of cultural despair just look at the list of the things that scripture says are an Abomination to God and we should focus on those things?”

Well, we can focus on multiple things at a time, but we should particularly focus on those things that have organized lobbying groups promoting them.

What is the anti-dote to a foolish heart that says, “There is no God.”

A heart that SEEKS HIM. Seeking after God includes corporate worship, but it is deeper and more intentional than that. Jesus came to SEEK and save the lost. He was intentional. Seeking the lost wasn't a side gig when he had time. He was all in. Do we seek God that way?

The filter for “fool or not a fool” ISN'T simply “I don't do corrupt abominable things”. The filter is “are you seeking God?”

So, the key question is, “Who are you seeking?”

How does God answer this question?

v. 3 All are corrupt, all turned aside, no one does good, not even one
see Ps 53; Rom 3

So, God sees that no one is seeking Him. No one is living with understanding = is not seeking God.

The fool is not a rare sub-species of humanity. We're all fools apart from the grace and wisdom of God. We find it hard to admit that we've gone astray.

What is the fool like?

v. 4ff Does the fool really not know? Does he really not see?

The fool refuses to see. He doesn't want to know.

Romans 1 speaks of those who “suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

What does suppressing the truth look like?

It looks like Aldous Huxley (Brave New World) who in his book Ends and Means speaks honestly about his philosophy of meaninglessness.

For, like so many of my contemporaries, I took it for granted that there was no meaning.. I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none, - Most ignorance is vincible ignorance. We don't know because we don't want to know-. P. 312 For myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom; p. [316]

***Don't be stifled by the so called arguments and objections of those who tell you, "There is no God." Deep down they probably don't believe it themselves. You might ask them this question, "If I could answer your objections to your satisfaction, would you then bow the knee before Christ as Savior and Lord?"

Odds are that the answer is "no." Their stated objection is NOT THE ISSUES. Like Huxley, they don't believe because they don't want to believe. They are already committed to another God.

TRUE CONSISTENT PHILOSOPHICAL ATHEISTS ARE RARE. Most people are simply functional atheists because it suits them to "say" there is no God. They don't really think it through.

v. 4 The second trait of foolishness, the view held in v. 1 - "There is no God" - is the misuse of others -v4 "They eat people as though eating bread." No sense of value of human life. No sense of the damage being done to the next generations or to human existence as a whole.

EX: the "norms" currently being touted with Pride would bring an end to all civilizations. Simply apply the principle from the kids' book, "What if Everybody did That?"

If you took 50 fully "medically transitioned" adults and put them on an island fully stocked for survival but no way off or on, how many people would be present in 80 years? My guess would be ZERO. The original group would likely be dead and there would be no procreation.

Such a worldview is antithetical to human flourishing, so why would we seek to celebrate it? This is not only contrary to God's reality and design; it defies simple biology. For those who want to hold to some form of Darwinian view of life, it defies the basic principle of survival.

Psalm 14 has echoes of and Romans 1

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,... 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen....

26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Those words may sound prophetic or to some they may land like arrows to the soul, they are the sober words of a gracious God who is giving a call to repentance so that we might SEEK HIM. Is it KINDNESS or harshness to warn people to avoid folly???

The sad reality is that they don't call on Yahweh because they don't believe in Him.

v. 5 Frustration of the fool and the consolation of the righteous.

The consequence of living outside of the reality of God is fear. Simply living for what this world has to offer and for our own desires is unsettling for those who take any time to reflect on the brevity of life.

“We only go around once and what have I got to show for it?”

“Has my life had any meaning at all?”

“What if I’m wrong and there is a God who is with the righteous?” PASCAL’S WAGER.

The frustration of the Fool is found in the effort to throw off the wisdom of the ages and redefine everything for oneself. Percy Shelley, a poet of the Romantic period put it this way

“In fact, religion and morality, as they now stand, compose a practical code of misery and servitude: the genius of human happiness must tear every leaf from the accursed book of God ere man can read the inscription on his heart.” Shelley – Poetical Works p.808

i.e. Christianity and marriage must be destroyed if humans are to be truly free and happy.

Does the fool ever see the consequences of his folly? Yes.

Often the realization happens in times of pain and loss. The fool has already rejected God so there is nowhere else to turn. That can lead to anxiety and fear.

We really can’t escape our sense of guilt even when we try to live without it.

In The Weight of Glory, C.S. Lewis writes: “In the end that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us..., either conferring glory inexpressible or inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised.” P.38

Shame implies accountability. They should have, could have known better. – Rom 1

Those in great fear end up turning somewhere to find refuge.

Those whom God has blessed with salvation turn to Yahweh as a refuge. Therefore we sing “AMAZING GRACE, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch LIKE ME.”

Though none seek after God, He seeks a people for Himself. We do well to remember where we came from – lost, hopeless, cut off – but God’s grace brings us in.

EX: Story of Bear Bryant after 1979 Sugar Bowl win over Penn St. Hotel. Coach Bryant had on a new T-shirt but it had a hole in it. One of the guests pointed out this malady to Bryant. The coach’s response was, ‘Yeah, I know. I always tear a small hole in my T-shirts, so I’ll never forget where I came from.’

Davis, Dale Ralph. Slogging Along in the Paths of Righteousness: Psalms 13-24 .

v. 7 David’s Hope

His hope is in the God who restores His captive people. Note this – God has a people and often they are a suffering people. But He is still their refuge and hope. Those who attack God’s people will find themselves on the wrong side of history as they will face the just Judge one day.

We make the mistake of thinking that our current circumstances are our source of stability and HOPE. God OFFERS HOPE IN CHRIST AND HIS RETURN.

As with all of scripture, this is a Psalm of faith in future grace.

The fool is one who is unconcerned about eternity and the judgment of God. This is particularly true of those who have been exposed to the Word and the people of God. The text isn’t clear about who David has in mind – the Moabite or Philistine unbeliever or a fool within the orbit of God’s people.

The parable of the Four Soils describes those who heard, were moved by truth, but ended up turning away.

BUT FOR THE GRACE OF God THERE GO I. I was your classic churchd ‘fool’.

v. 1 described me for many years – a religious person but a functional atheist.

Shortly after I turned 18 and began reading the gospel of John, I saw the truth of what is said in v. 1 and repeated in Romans 3 – no one seeks God; no one is good.

AND THEN Amazing Grace saved a wretch like me.

7 Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!

** No one is beyond the reach of the grace of God

David could only look ahead with the eyes of faith and trust that God would save. We can look back through the lens of history and faith and know the Savior.

DO YOU?

You may say, “yes, I know Jesus.” Even so, the Psalmist asks, “Do you SEEK HIM?”

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