

Galations #19

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[0 : 00] What in the world is a group of guys like you doing out on a morning like this? This is a great time to be in the sack and catching a few extra Z's, but lo and behold, here you are, and I guess it's something like four or five degrees above zero, and one would wonder what in the world would tempt you to be out on a day like this, and my inclination is to think that it is only one thing that makes it worthwhile gathering, and that is God has spoken, and He has not stuttered, and He has recorded what He wants us to know in this book, because God is so committed to communication and to revelation that He has taken everything He wants us to know and has incorporated it in a book, and that means that information and communication are absolutely essential.

They are key ingredients to life. Words are important because they convey sentences and ideas, and it is no coincidence that Jesus Christ is referred to as the Word of God. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made flesh, and the Word dwelt among us. And it is an amazing concept that we have this communication from God Himself, and it was all wrapped up in a person.

God took everything He wanted us to know, and He put it in a book, and to make sure that we get the message, He took everything He wanted us to know, and He put it in a person. And that person is the incarnate Word, none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

And it is this person that the Apostle Paul was confronted by on the road to Damascus that forever changed his life. We have described Paul the Apostle from time to time as perhaps the second most important person who ever lived, because it is he, it is Paul the Apostle, who defines and declares in great detail the details and information about the greatest person who ever lived.

[2 : 19] What makes the Apostle Paul so important is that no one has so completely defined the person who is the most important, and that is none other than Jesus Christ.

And we'll see in our text this morning when Paul says, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom I am crucified unto the world and the world unto me. This is an amazing concept, guys. And it is something that we really need to wrap our brains around and understand, because this is the essence of our being.

This is that which connects us to God and to eternity. And you cannot find any concept that is more important than this. H.G. Wells, whom I've quoted before, did not profess to be a believer, and I'm sure he probably wasn't by his own testimony, but he did say something that I haven't been able to get out of my mind, and I've communicated to you in the past, and you'll hear me say it again in the future, because it is so important, and it is this.

If there is no God, nothing matters. But if there is a God, nothing else matters.

[3 : 39] Because if there is a God, that indicates that there is purposefulness, there is meaning, there is intention behind the creation that we have, and there is going to be, as surely as there was a beginning, there is going to be a conclusion.

We are committed to the idea that history is not linear, rather, it is linear, not circular. We're not just going around and around and around and around. We are going from a point of origin to a point of destination.

There is going to be a final wrap-up, and we are now en route to that. What's going to happen in that wrap-up? A number of things, cheapest of which I think is going to be accountability, reckoning. There will come a time when we will be called upon by the authority of the universe to give an answer for our decisions, for our behavior, etc.

This time is surely coming. I came across a book recently, and it's been distributed, being distributed now at Grace. It's a large coffee table book. It's about that thick, big book.

[4 : 57] And it is a compilation by Dr. Henry Morris, who is now with the Lord. And Dr. Morris is the founder of the Creation Research Society in San Diego, California.

And he co-authored with Dr. John Whitcomb a book called The Genesis Flood back in the 1960s. And that book really started or continued, I guess we should say, the controversy about creationism versus evolution.

And these are capable defenders of the faith and deniers of atheistic evolution and theistic evolution, for that matter. And they have written some very credible things supporting the biblical concept of creation set forth in the first three chapters of Genesis.

And over the years, Dr. Morris has compiled a huge list of quotes by evolutionists, not creationists, by evolutionists.

[6 : 16] Statements that they have made, arguments that they have set forth. And he has just collected those over a period of about 50 or 60 years. And he cataloged them and put them all in this book.

And the title of the book is, That Their Words May Be Used Against Them. The words of whom? The words of evolutionists.

And the positions that they set forth. And the rationale for it. And this book contains that huge list, documented of hundreds and hundreds of prominent, very prominent evolutionists from Europe and Asia and the United States.

All of the statements that they have made in their various books and publications and texts and so on, setting forth the concept of evolution. And all he's doing is allowing them to speak for themselves with the statements that they have made.

And as you read through the book, you are stunned by the contradictions and the disagreements among themselves regarding these things. And all Dr. Morris wanted to do was allow those who hold the evolutionary position to demonstrate their fallacious reasoning and their inconsistencies by you just reading them.

[7 : 39] And it is an education. It is quite an education. And the words that they have uttered are actually arguments against them and their positions. And one of them that I found to be most interesting, and I can't think of the name of the fellow who took the position now.

And by the way, these are virtually all accomplished PhDs who write books and teach in universities and colleges. They are not dumbbells. They are very intelligent people.

But one of them in particular really jumped out at me. This evolutionist made this statement, this observation. I do not believe that there is a God.

And I do not want there to be a God. Now that's very revealing. Why would he take a position like that?

Because he comforts himself with the idea that if there is no God, there is no final assize. There is no final accountability. There is no anything.

[8 : 41] That when you die, that's it. It's over. There's no heaven, no hell, no consciousness, no nothing. And that's what he would prefer. And it's very interesting that he would be candid enough to admit that and acknowledge that.

But some do, and as in his particular case, he did. So everything hinges upon the subject of authority.

Always has, always will. We need to understand that. What you believe or don't believe will be determined by what you accept as your final ultimate authority on anything.

Life, death, etc. What you believe about that will determine what you believe. And this brings us right down to this book called the Bible.

You've heard me say before, the Bible is a book such as man would not write if he could. And could not write if he would.

[9 : 56] The Bible has taken a lot of abuse over the years. A lot of ridicule. A lot of rejection. People talk about, ah, the Bible's got contradictions in it.

It's so deep, nobody can understand them. Blah, blah, blah. And on they go. And all of this is cop-out talk because it enables them to avoid the book. But we who have spent years in reading and studying and trying to understand the book very readily come to the conclusion that no mere man could put things together like this.

Over a period of 1500 years from 40 different sources on three different continents in four different languages, this cannot possibly be of a human contrivance.

It sets forth themes that are so sublime and so revealing. And you know, the thing about the Bible, among other things, the Bible simply tells the truth about man and about God. And sometimes, it's not very pretty, but it's very honest. The Bible doesn't try to cover up anything. It lets it all hang out.

[11 : 15] It is all there. All the dirty laundry from humanity, from the creation to the present. It just reveals the situation as it is. And one of the most amazing things, it strikes me almost every day I live, and that is this.

You cannot find any source in history, any writing, any documentation in history that explains why the world is the way it is right now, why people are the way it is right now, why people are the way they are, and how we got this way.

You cannot find anything in writing apart from the Bible that explains that. And does it ever. I mean, fellas, the book nails us.

It nails us. It really reveals the essence, the character, and the nature of humanity in his fallenness. And it is just the supreme truth-teller.

It just reveals what is. And as you read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and consider what's set forth there in history, and what is prophesied, it all fits.

[12 : 38] I mean, not only does it all fit, but nothing else does fit. That's amazing. And there it is. So, this gives credence to what the authors have written, because all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished, equipped, outfitted, and do every good work.

So, we have everything we need to know in that book. Granted, it doesn't answer all our questions. I've got a jillion questions that I'm looking for answers that I don't find in the Bible.

So, the Bible doesn't purport to tell us everything we want to know. But it does tell us everything we need to know. And there's a big difference.

There? Kind of paraphrase what you said. The Bible stood the test of time. 2,000 to 3,500 years. I mean, it's still standing strong. Absolutely.

What other books have you read? And you will not find any book so revered, and you'll not find any book so challenged, and so discredited, and so hated.

[13 : 59] I mean, Adolf Hitler had his Bible bonfires in World War II, because they were trying to, you know, purify Germany from things like the Bible.

But it has an incredible track record in its translation, in its production, in its languages throughout the world, and so on.

So, the old book stands. And we are looking at what the Apostle Paul, whom I've described as the second most important person who ever lived, because of his definition of the first most important person who ever lived.

And as you read Paul's epistles, starting with Romans, especially if you get into chapters 3, 4, and 5 of Romans, you will find the person and work, the accomplishment of Jesus Christ, and its implications spelled out there, like you will no place else.

And this is all by revelation, because Paul didn't know these things. He didn't know these things. He didn't have a clue, any more than anybody else. But he makes it clear that the risen Christ revealed these things to him.

[15 : 20] After the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, Christ revealed these things to Paul from heaven. And he gave us that testimony early on in Galatians.

And we'll not go back there, but we are just finishing up here. And I think we may even come close to finishing this chapter. We're in chapter 6.

And let's see. We've covered verse 8 about sowing to the flesh, reaping corruption.

And we spent quite a bit of time on the flesh and spirit. And I'm prepared to move on, but I don't want to, if there is any clarification that is needed, or if you have any questions regarding this tremendously important theme of the flesh and the spirit.

Are we okay on that? Or are there any comments or questions? This is such a critical thing, because this is what determines our behavior. Is whether we are walking and functioning in the flesh or in the spirit.

[16 : 30] That's everything. That determines the character of your walk and the quality of your walk. So, if that's the case, then we may move on to verse 9, where Paul says, And let us not be

weary in well-doing.

You can get weary from doing well, but you should not get weary of doing well. And there is a huge difference. In due season, when the time comes, we shall reap if we faint not.

Moffat renders that, Never let us grow tired of doing what is right. The time never comes when it becomes wrong to do right.

Time will never come when it becomes wrong to do right. And the time will never come when it becomes right to do wrong. Now, in order for there to be a right and a wrong, there has to be a standard.

There has to be something by which right and wrong can be measured. And there are such standards, or there is such a standard.

[17 : 44] And we refer to this as absolute truth as regards moral relativism. We today are dealing with a society, a culture, and God knows, a body politic, that is into moral relativity.

The issues of black and white for so many people no longer exist. Everything is gray.

Well, I'd be the first to admit, not everything is black and white. There are gray issues. But that which is of most importance, that which God wants us to know, is communicated to us in black and white.

We live in a culture where authority is relegated to the individual. And that means you are the arbiter.

You are the interpreter of what is right or wrong. It is what is right or wrong according to you. Which, of course, will differ with the person next to you, and will differ with another person, because moral relativity makes the individual the authority.

[19 : 11] And this is partly where we are. Let me just give you an example. Did you ever get the impression that, and I'll just use politics as an example because we're in the throes of politics right now.

Have you ever gotten the impression that some politicians cannot be embarrassed? Cannot be shamed that they have no shame?

Where does that come from? How could somebody like a man, Harry Reid, and I'm not saying this as a Republican or a Democrat.

It would be just as wrong if it was a Republican, but it just so happens to be a Democrat. How could Harry Reid stand up and say that Mitt Romney has not paid his income tax for the last ten years when he knows that is a bald-faced lie?

And everybody knew it. And he made that statement. Why in the world would he say something like that? Because he was convinced that his saying it would cause a certain number of people to believe it.

[20 : 29] And it doesn't make any difference that it isn't true. It's kind of like in love, war, and politics, all's fair. You know, whatever. But there would be a time, I would like to think, there would be a time in American history when a man would not dare to make a statement like that that he knew was wrong.

Now, people say all kinds of wrong things all the time. But we would like to think that most of it is done in error. Not intentionally.

But when somebody intentionally lies, well, now wait a minute. Isn't it a moral absolute that it is wrong to lie?

Isn't that a given? Well, depends. If you are the authority, then you are the one who determines whether or not it is wrong to lie.

I think it was Winston Churchill who said, yeah, it was Winston Churchill who said that the truth, the truth is such a precious commodity that it is often surrounded by a bodyguard of lies.

[21 : 49] And when you stop and think about it, when a country goes to war, what is always the first casualty? The truth.

The truth. Because that is when lying starts. Wholesale. And whether you are talking about a military war or a political war, truth is always a casualty.

Because what we want people to do is not necessarily believe the truth. We want them to believe what we want them to believe.

Whether it's true or not. Because that will not only impact their decision, it will impact their vote. So when you are coming from a position of moral relativity, and by the way, Harry Reid was interviewed sometime after this.

I don't recall who it was that interviewed him. It was a TV interview and millions of people saw it. And he was confronted with this. This was after the election was over. And he asked Harry Reid about that.

[23 : 01] When you said that about Mitt Romney, and it was not true, he said, do you think that you were justified in making a statement like that to millions of people?

And by the way, he made it from the floor of the Senate, which meant he was immune from prosecution. He could not be sued for libel or slander because he said it from the Senate floor. And statements that come from the Senate floor are immune from prosecution. Now, if he had said it and put it in a newspaper as a private citizen, then he could have been sued. But he knew full well that he had protection when he said that from the floor.

And when he was called on the carpet and asked about that, do you think it was right for you to say that? You know what his answer was? Well, Romney didn't get elected, did he? Are you kidding me?

Do you see what this is? This is incredible. Someone, I think it was Mark Twain, I think it was Mark Twain who said that man is the only creature that has the capacity to blush or the need to.

[24 : 13] Why would we have a capacity to blush? Because we are capable of being embarrassed. But listen, you can't be embarrassed and you can't be shamed if you are the one who makes up the rules as to what constitutes shame or embarrassment.

You make your own standard. You see, shame and embarrassment come. They are the products of having violated the truth.

Shame and embarrassment comes from knowing that you have violated a standard. But who sets the standard?

In moral relativism, you set the standard. And if you set the standard, you haven't violated your own standard.

So, you're good. You can go out in public and smile and whatever, no matter what your past is, because you haven't violated your own standard, you're the one who set the standard.

[25 : 28] But if you've got a standard of absolute morality, absolute right and wrong, it's easy to see when that's violated, then you have a cause for embarrassment. Roger, and then Dana.

I'm sorry? When we say Harry has a seared conscience, he's no longer...

Is there something about that in the Bible? Yeah, yeah, there is. There is. Paul wrote to Timothy and talked about people with a seared conscience. And a seared conscience simply means that one's moral north star is gone.

He just makes it up as he goes. He doesn't have a moral north star for guidance. It is his own. And he establishes it and makes it as he goes. And this is rampant in culture today. Not just in politics, but across the board. And what it does is it enables man to rationalize and justify anything that he wants to do.

[26 : 41] Because he is his own standard. And this is where we are in our world today. This is what's going on. This is why we have the behavioral modes that we do today. Dana, Joe.

The crack appears when we first believe to ourselves that the means justify the ends. Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It does.

And you know, part of this goes back to and, you know, I'm not anti I'm not anti Vince Lombardi. I think he's probably one of the greatest football coaches that ever lived.

But when he made the statement, you know, for which he's famous, winning isn't everything. It's the only thing. Well, what does that mean?

[27 : 44] Just how far do you carry that? What are you willing to do to win? And do you know what the answer for for most politicians what the answer is?

Whatever it takes. Whatever it takes. In fact, guys, that's the buzzword today. Whatever. Whatever. What does that mean? Whatever leaves it all open-ended. It means anything goes. I remember, in fact, I was so ticked off about this, I wrote an article to the newspaper, Springfield newspaper.

This was back in the days when everybody read the newspaper. I read this article to the newspaper. I never thought they would print it, but they did. They did. And it had to do with kids cheating at the county fair.

Kids cheating in the raising of animals to be judged at the fair to win the blue ribbon and whatever. and it talked about the lengths to which kids went with the encouragement of their parents to be

able to win that blue ribbon and the underhanded and illegal things that went on and all that matters is you don't get caught.

[29 : 10] You know, this is the Lance Armstrong thing and the doping and the bicycle riding, you know, and all of the Tour de France that he won and the name of the game is do whatever it takes and you can get away with that because you're not violating your own conscience.

Your own conscience has set the standard and you haven't violated it. And the standard is do whatever you have to do. I mean, you use steroids, you use this, you do blood doping, you do whatever because all that matters is that you win.

Everybody wants to do it. Yeah, everybody, yeah, and if I don't do it, they're doing it, you know, so that makes it right. And you know, the Barry Bonds thing and the steroids and it's reflected in the home runs hit and the batting average and all the rest of it.

and it does give people an edge, an advantage. And you would be surprised how many in our culture today, and you will find this even among some Christians, who will say, you have to do whatever it takes to win because others are going to be cheating too.

So besides, everybody does it. Everybody does it. and these guys can put their names in the record books even though they cheated and had an unfair advantage over others and their names in the record books and they are proud as punch and they sleep at night.

[30 : 44] How could they do that? How could you do that? When you know you cheated, you got an unfair advantage that others didn't get. So, so, you do whatever it takes to win.

That's the mentality we have slipped into today. And it pervades politics, it pervades sports, it pervades everything. That is the kind of moral relativism that we are dealing with.

Anything goes. The only rule is, don't get caught. That's where we are. And you know something? When people look at life this way, they also extrapolate that to more important issues like eternity, life after death, etc.

What is it? What does that mean? It means whatever you want it to mean. It means whatever you think. How essential is it that Jesus Christ rose from the dead? Doesn't actually matter.

All that matters is whether you believe it. Doesn't matter whether he actually did or not. question is, do you believe that? Because if you believe that, he did.

[32 : 01] But if you don't believe that, he didn't. What? Are you kidding me? Do you see the fallacy in this?

Do you realize the law of non-contradiction has to apply? Or reason goes right out the window? And the law of non-contradiction says there is no way that Jesus Christ could have risen from the dead and also not have risen from the dead.

That is an impossible scenario. You've got to take one or the other. The law of the middle is excluded. There is no middle. You cannot say Jesus Christ came back from the dead kind of. Kind of? he did or he didn't. Now you can choose either one you want but you can't take both. That's called double think and it is a logical impossibility.

But people apply this to all kinds of things. This is what moral relativism is. It is whatever you perceive it to be. You set the standards and frankly guys our shoulders aren't big enough for that.

[33 : 16] The standards have already been set and all we need to do is see whether or not we comply with the standards that are already set. There is already in place a moral north star that determines right and wrong in everything.

Roger. Those who are today should tell a lie long enough and hard enough that most people will need. Yeah, unfortunately that's true.

Unfortunately that's true. You tell a lie and it helps, you know, it's easier, Adolf Hitler proved this, it's easier to put over a big lie than it is a little one. And you tell a lie, tell it big enough and tell it long enough and you can get a number of people to believe it.

And that's not only true in politics, it's true in anything and everything. And this is what we're dealing with in our culture today. So this brings us back to what we recognize as the only real authority and that has to do with this book.

And this is why we're here this morning. Hey, everybody here has got other things they could be doing, among which is another hour of sleep in a warm bed.

[34 : 28] But we are here because of what we believe about these issues. So, verse 10 then, Paul says, As we have therefore opportunity, and we are given opportunity frequently, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

That means that each of us as believers in Jesus Christ have a responsibility, we have a moral responsibility to do good, and to be good for our fellow man. When we love our fellow man, it means, and the best definition that I've ever come up with for what love really is, is when you really love somebody, whether it's your mate, your child, your neighbor, whomever, when you love them, you do for them what is in their best interests. Whether you feel like doing it or not. Now, there's the real test, because lots of times we don't feel like doing it, lots of times we feel they don't deserve that. But real love is that which does the right thing, the best thing for the object of our love. And it is not based on feeling, it is an act of the will.

[36 : 00] We do it because it's the right thing to do. And then he says, especially those of the household of faith, and that simply means we have an obligation to fellow believers in Christ that transcends our obligation to mankind in general.

Dana? Yesterday I was put in my place, I was in line in the credit union, and there were 15, 20 people in line, and I was up close to the five or six in the front of the line, and then out the window I watched this older man get a stool out of the back of the pickup truck and set it down, and a friend or his father got out, and he was all hunched over, and he helped him in, and he got to the back of the line, and there was this girl, second from the front, and he said, sir, you're waiting in line, take my place, and see the ones at the back.

Well, that's the milk of human kindness, you know, that's a wonderful thing, and frankly, our culture could use a whole lot more of that.

It is the kind of thing that enhances life. I appreciate hearing that. That's neat. We need to have that. It's called a random act of kindness where you bestow an act of kindness upon a perfect stranger just because you have an opportunity to do so.

Joe? I think the scripture says that as you have opportunity. In other words, as things you run into during your life during the day, that's what you should be kind, the opportunity to get.

[37 : 39] I don't think God wants us to necessarily go out and search for things to be kind. We don't have to say, I'm going to go out and do ten different kind things today.

We may not want you to go out and do ten kind things. We don't want you to do one to the one person I put in front of you today. So I think that's where we get along sometimes. We sign up for all this committee and that committee.

We do this and this. We do too much. It's opportunities that we run into doing life. And I think we make that mistake that we've got to manufacture it. Yeah, I couldn't agree more.

There are spontaneous situations that arise that are unplanned and unexpected and it gives us an opportunity on the spot to render an act of kindness to someone just because they are a fellow human being and we are in a position to do it.

And it's an extension of the love of Christ. And it's a very, very valid thing and much in need today.

Okay, guys, enjoy your breakfast. Thanks a lot for being here.

[38 : 41] Sorry we didn't get more into the text than what we did, but I trust that what we shared was beneficial anyway. Thank you for coming.