

*What's going in the world?*

*This is what I see:*

*In the news this week, a report from the University of Queensland was telling a very sad tale that abortions aren't as easy to get as what they should be. The killing of unborn children is not as convenient as it could be, and we really should do something about that.<sup>i</sup>*

*This week I heard that:*

*Come November, Lyle Shelton will appear in court because he's being sued for saying that it wasn't appropriate for Drag-Queens to be invited to lead "story-time" and to be reading stories to kids in a public library in Brisbane.<sup>ii</sup>*

*What else do I see?*

*In many locations, if a man decides that he is a woman, it is a legal requirement that everyone has to go along with his lie. He is quite within his rights to frequent a lady's changeroom or toilet. And if anyone dares to give a biological definition of what a woman is, woe to them... They'll be cancelled. They'll be written off. People will abuse them online for daring to say that a man isn't a woman....*

*And I see this:*

*The world increasingly frowning upon Christians. You can see it in the media. If a Muslim lives in a certain way because of their beliefs, "Well, good-on-them." But if a Christian does it, "you're intolerant; you're legalistic; you're hateful" ....*

*And I see:*

*Some children are becoming more and more uncontrollable. I was talking to a shop-keeper in Dirranbandi. There's one kid that will blatantly steal stuff in front of him, and say, "You can't do anything to me"... I think he said he's got 30-odd offences, and no consequences...*

*In some towns, youth crime is out of control.*

*In some indigenous communities, swearing at your kids; beating your wife and kids; and abusing them in all sorts of ways, isn't a rarity – it's become normal...*

When we look at the way the world is, it's wrong/evil/crazy. It's all up-side-down...

- What is evil gets called "good";
- What is good is called "evil";
- What is obscene has become "normality";
- God's word and His righteous laws are despised;
- While a new morality, of "tolerance" and "love of self" becomes the new virtue

We are living in what the Bible refers to as "the last days", and so we should expect this. But there's been other periods in history where it's been like this too.

Tuesday night, our men's Bible Study were reading about the flood of Noah. And things were getting so bad, and men had become so wicked. **every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.** The earth was filled with violence. **Genesis 6:6** And the LORD regretted that he

had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.. And so God came in judgment and only Noah and his family were saved...

And it was like that in the time of David.

Psalm 53: (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."  
They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity;  
there is none who does good.

<sup>2</sup> God looks down from heaven  
on the children of man  
to see if there are any who understand,  
who seek after God.

<sup>3</sup> They have all fallen away;  
together they have become corrupt;  
there is none who does good,  
not even one. ....

And so it will be, in the last days.

You know, sometimes we think of "the last days" as the period **immediately** before the return of Jesus. And in a way it is, but biblically, "the last days" began with the ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Paul sorta understates it a bit when he says to Timothy, “**But understand this**” – alright, this is something you need to know: **that in the last days there will come times of difficulty.** (a bit of an understatement)

He is explaining to Timothy, why (as Christians) they are being persecuted. And he’s **also** building on what we talked about last week, why (in the church) some are not rightly handling the word of truth, and so they believe all sorts of crazy stuff – it’s because **they** were living in “the last days”, and so are we.

Ahh, well that explains it.

And as we read this, oh, my-oh-my...

<sup>2</sup> For people will be:

- lovers of self,
- lovers of money,
- proud,
- arrogant,
- abusive,
- disobedient to their parents,
- ungrateful,
- unholy,
- <sup>3</sup> heartless,
- unappeasable, (unwilling to be reconciled – you can never make them happy.)
- slanderous,
- without self-control,

- brutal,
- not loving good,
- <sup>4</sup> treacherous,
- reckless,
- swollen with conceit,
- lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

Now, do you realise, all of those horrible, horrible traits are bracketed by “wrong love”. When you **love** the wrong thing, this is what you become.

At the start of the list:

- lovers of self, and
- lovers of money,

At the end of the list:

- lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

When a person's love is for themselves; for money; and for pleasure,, all of these horrible things, they become:

- proud,
- arrogant,
- abusive,
- disobedient to their parents,
- ungrateful,
- unholy,
- <sup>3</sup> heartless,
- unappeasable,
- slanderous,
- without self-control,

- brutal,
- not loving good,
- <sup>4</sup> treacherous,
- reckless,
- swollen with conceit,

All because they love the wrong thing...

They love:

- themselves;
- money; and
- pleasure

Rather than Loving God; and loving Good...

And if I love the wrong thing, even my religion is defiled.

Paul describes it in this way, he says:

<sup>5</sup> having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.

When you love self; pleasure; money, your religion might have an appearance of godliness, but it's **robbed** of its true godliness, because it's robbed of its power.

Charlatans, false miracle workers, and many false teachers, will talk a lot about "power". And they'll labour on about the power:

- of healing  
(that appeals to my love of self);
- to overcome my poverty and bless my finances  
(that appeals to the love of money);

- to overcome my circumstances and free me from troubles (that appeals to my love of pleasure)

Do you know what the Apostle Paul talked about when he talked about Godly Power???

- The Power of the resurrection (Romans 1:4)
- The Power of God for Salvation (Romans 1:16)
- The Power of making God known and God judging the wicked (Romans 9)
- The Power to save an unbeliever (Romans 11:23)
- The Power to, of Holy Spirit hope through faith (Romans 15:13)

And of course, the pinnacle of Godly power, is found at the cross. So much so, that Paul didn't want to have clever words to explain it. It wasn't his words that were to have power  
1 Corinthians 1:18 (ESV) <sup>18</sup> For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Religion that has an appearance of Godliness, but denies its power, is that which appeals to love of self; love of pleasure; love of money... because it diverts us from where the **true** power lies. Where's the power?

- The death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ;
- Repentance of sin;
- Belief in Him; and
- the transformation of the Holy Spirit...

True Power, is about

- turning to truth when we once believed a lie;
- holiness, where there once depravity;
- forgiveness where there once was sin;
- love, where there once was hatred;
- a selfless love for God and love of others...

That's the sort of Godliness that takes power...

Sadly, something that is way too common in the church today, is the power of the cross is being twisted by Satan, into something perverted. Love of self; love of pleasure; and love of money, is grotesquely catered for, by religion that is pretending to be godly and pretending to be of power, but it's nothing of the sort...

And I'm going to be really blunt and say, if the teaching you are listening to appeals to a love of self; money; pleasure,, you are not listening to the Word of God. It might have an appearance of godliness, but it's nothing of the sort. Assess it for yourself: is this teaching I'm listening to appealing to my love of self/money/pleasure?

And so Paul speaks of how **people** will be<sup>5</sup> **having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.**

And he says: **Avoid such people.**

And there's one group that he has particular concern for:  
He says:

Avoid such people. <sup>6</sup> For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions,

Now, he's not saying all women are weak. Some are very strong in their faith. But just like there are weak-willed men, there are weak-willed women, and he has particular concern for them. Why? Because they're preyed upon, by creepy false teachers, who are willing to tell them, just what their passions want to hear.

And he says that these women are: <sup>7</sup> always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

In my experience, in the church community, some of the keenest learners are women. But some of them are not very discerning in who they learn from. And some of them are always looking for the latest new thing:

- Wanting to read the latest book;
- Hear the latest speaker;
- Be on the forefront of whatever's new & cutting-edge;
- Don't want to miss out on the latest 'spiritual blessing'...

And they're always wanting to learn more and more, but in their quest for learning, they never arrive at the simple Godly truth.

Their quest might begin with a love of God, and they **want** to know more, but the material they read, and what they've been getting taught, has been taking them further and further away

from the truth... And they're being led to teachings that appeal to wrong love.

And so, I want to say to everyone today, and particularly to the women, be careful. Be really really careful... It's great to have a desire to learn and to be always learning. And I pray that the men would have such a desire...

But be discerning, because a lot that masquerades as godliness and has an "air" of godliness, (and very common and very popular to hear), is teaching that appeals to wrong love:

- love of self;
- love of money;
- love of pleasure...

Now, in V8, he tells us that the people who teach this sort of stuff, are just like **Jannes and Jambres** who **opposed Moses**. Their names didn't get into the Bible, but in other Jewish literature, that's the names of Pharaoh's sorcerers who did their magic tricks to mimic what Moses did:

- Threw down his staff and it became a snake. These sorcerers did the same thing. But then Moses' snake went around and gobbled up the others;
- Turned the water to blood, and the sorcerers did the same thing.
- Frogs on to dry land. And the sorcerers did the same thing.
- Gnats infested all of Egypt. But the sorcerers couldn't do it...

But Paul's point is, they opposed Moses. Their false miracles were imitating God's miracles, and they were the basis of

Pharaoh not following God's word of truth. And just like them, false **teachers**, have an appearance of Godliness. And Jesus told us that false prophets would even do false miracles to lead (even God's people) astray...

So, they have the appearance of godliness, but they **oppose** the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith.

Alright, those who oppose the truth (wrongly handle the word of truth) are corrupted in mind, and that disqualifies them regarding the faith...

But then he says:

<sup>9</sup> But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

The sorcerers ran out of puff. There's things that God could do that they could not do... And if people are willing to look for truth and to open their eyes, false teachers who lead people astray, will eventually be found out... If we simply love God's word of truth and stick to that, it's easy to recognise crazy lies when we see them.

Which is why Paul could say to Timothy <sup>10</sup> "You, **however**"... Timothy's not going to get led astray...

He's had the example of Paul. He's had the teaching of Paul. He's seen the persecutions that Paul has suffered. Timothy and Paul were together on these missionary trips – in some

places they were run out of town. In other places, Paul was arrested...

In V<sup>12</sup> Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, <sup>13</sup> while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

It's what we've been saying over the last few weeks, "Suffering, is a normal part of the Christian life." How does that fit with the love of self/money/pleasures?

And if your theology cannot handle that, then there's something wrong with your theology — You're not thinking like Christ. And if you're not hearing this in Scripture, then you're not correctly handling the Word of Truth, because Scripture says this plain and simple. Christians will suffer. It's a normal part of the Christian life....

You know, many people are being taught today, "Come to Jesus, and your life is going to be so wonderful. Things will go so well for you. Your suffering will disappear; your trials and tribulations, no more... You're going to become a person of influence/successful/prosper..

What a load of rot...

Jeremiah complained to God: **Jeremiah (ESV) 12** .....

Why does the way of the wicked prosper?

Why do all who are treacherous thrive?

Disciples of Jesus, will suffer... While those who are evil, and those who have an appearance of Godliness, will get worse and worse, and their deceit will increase... (even in the church community)

But Timothy, you stick with the truth. Continue on with what you've learned, and what you firmly believe in...

In many cases and in many ways, the Gospel that's being preached today, is nothing like the Gospel of old. And yet, that's what so many believe...

How do we know what teaching to reject, and what teaching to relish???

Well, Paul tells Timothy that the sacred writings, ... are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

And then he goes on to say:

<sup>16</sup> **All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,** <sup>17</sup> **that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**

Now, for Paul and Timothy, Scripture would've been the Old Testament... The New Testament didn't exist. Paul was writing it, when he wrote this letter. But there's already what

he calls “sacred writings” – probably early copies of the Gospels and other letters that we now have in our bibles.

For us, our whole Bible is “sacred writings”. Our whole Bible, is Scripture that’s been God-breathed. Paul told Timothy that the Sacred Writings **make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus**. What does that for us? Bible (Old Testament and New Testament). And this, my friends, is the power of God... The Power of God is **salvation through faith in Christ Jesus** our Lord.

**<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God ...** That’s why we call it “God’s Word”

And because it’s “God’s Word”, it’s **profitable** – That means it’s useful **for teaching**... But as we learned last week, Scripture’s only useful for teaching, if we correctly handle it... If we start wandering off, we’re going to end up **way** off course. So it’s useful for teaching.

Scripture is also useful for **reproof** and **correction**.

If you’re hearing 2 versions of the Gospel – if you’re hearing one message from one preacher and another message from another preacher, and another message from one book, and so on, go to your Bible. It’s breathed out by God. Your Bible will reveal what is true... And those who have been led astray, can be corrected by God’s word...

## And Scripture trains us for righteousness.

Let me ask you a question, “Do you really want to know what true righteousness is?” I mean, some of us would rather be able to say, “I didn’t know. And ignorance is an excuse, right???”

And that’s an example of loving the wrong thing. If I love self/money/pleasure, then I would probably rather **not** know how God wants me to live righteously (because it won’t be for self, money or pleasure).

But if we love **God** and if we **do** love what is **good**, then of course we’re going to want to know what is right.

Scripture trains us, you see. Scripture trains us, to know what is right, in every situation, so that we can grow and be equipped in every good work. And we’re going to want to do that. Why? Because we love God and we love what is good.

You see, being wise for salvation, isn’t only about “getting saved”. It’s about “**being** the saved”. It’s about “**living** as the saved”... And Scripture trains us and equips us, to be the children of God that He’s saved us to be...

How much we value that, will depend on what we love. If we love self/money/pleasure, being Godly is going to be pretty low down on our list of priorities. But if we truly love God, and we love what is good, we’re not only going to read God’s word – we’re going to study it and know it, because we love Him.

Let's pray.

Oh Heavenly Father,  
We thank You that you love us so much,  
that You sent Your Son.  
To live, and Die,  
That we might experience the power of the cross.

Lord,  
Your Power is demonstrated in our salvation.  
And what a blessing this Power is.

Lord, forgive us for having a wrong love –  
Forgive us for loving:

- ourselves;
- money;
- pleasure

instead of loving You and loving good.

That's the way of the world,  
and that wrong love is finding its way into the church.

Lord, fill us with a love for You.  
That we would love You so much,  
that we would love Your  
God-breathed Scriptures,

so that we could be trained in righteousness,  
and be complete – equipped for every good work.

in Jesus' Name,  
Amen.

---

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/barriers-that-block-access-to-compassionate-qld-abortion/news-story/c4c2e91ce30894687c0600cc00cb108e>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.lyleshelton.com.au/drag\\_queen\\_free\\_speech\\_case\\_finally\\_goes\\_to\\_court](https://www.lyleshelton.com.au/drag_queen_free_speech_case_finally_goes_to_court)