

SHEPHERD'S STAFF

A newsletter for "Pastors who pastor."

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Recovering from the 2016 Election Part #1

I am starting up the Shepherd's Staff again, and I am going to kick it off with a couple of issues on "recovering from the 2016 election". Actually as a pastor, I find a tremendous amount of things that have happened over the last 12-18 months troubling. As I write this, it is still before the election (8 days before). I will refrain from making my comments political, and I want to look at what has happened in America politically, and reflect on the moral implications for those in the ministry. There are a lot, A LOT, of moral principles that we as preachers need to "re-establish" with our people, and I want to look at these issues in the light of Scripture.

Calling Good Evil, and Evil Good The Willful Confusion of Moral Standards

Isa 5:20 *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

One of Satan's favorite tricks is to flip the table on people. His purpose is simply to keep people from being godly, celebrating worship by imposing God's character into their own lives. It makes no difference to Satan's purposes if you are another Adolfo Hitler, or simply an "amoral person", he has won. For Satan, one sin is as good as another as long as you are not following God's will (**Mt 7:21-23**). Our world is seeing this big time. **Immorality is glamorized in Hollywood; slothfulness is rewarded by the government; and dishonesty is the respected way of living life.** Purity is scoffed at and made fun of, godliness is unpopular, and Christianity has somehow become the menace to society instead of the great blessing that it really is.

What Isaiah was reacting to was false prophets that in hearing the declarations of God condemning Israel's sinful conduct (and the subsequent judgment of God on that sin), they refused to accept the evil they did, and absolutely refused to repent of it. So they made their own declarations basically standing opposite to whatever God had just declared. They pit themselves on a personal basis with God, declaring themselves "better", "wiser", and stronger than God in imposing their will over God's will.

We are defined by our doing good, or doing evil. **1John 3:10** *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*

Prov 8:36 *But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: **all they that hate me***

love death. To oppose God is death, misery, and destruction, but to love God and all He stands for is life (Isa 33., liberty, and blessing on us (and eternal life **1Jn 2:15-17**).

1Pet 3:10 *For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: **11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.** 12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but **the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.***

Good, real good that lasts for eternity, will come to them who seek the Lord, and pursues those moral qualities of goodness that God represents. Evil, harm, hurt, etc. will come to those who oppose God, and seek the opposite, who seek to overturn God's morality.

First, we define "good". Good would appear to be neutral in a way, but it is not. It is pro-active to benefit somebody. People who love good, do good. The principle is still in force of what you give away through your life will eventually come back to you.

Being good and doing good is only seen in the attitudes of the heart, and the actions of our lives. This has to be moved off of and away from any selfishness of acting solely for one's personal benefits. A good person does what is right, and we refer to this as being righteous. He pleases God in his life, character, attitudes, actions, speech, etc.

Moreover a "good person" demonstrates God's character of goodness (1) as the basic foundation of his own life (this is also considered "love"), and (2) it is seen in his good works and good will towards other people, first and foremost his wife, his children, his family, his church, his nation, and then everybody else.

1Pe 3:13-16 argues that only good will

come to those who dedicate themselves to good. Even if we suffer for doing what is good and righteousness, God will repay us for what we lose or suffer. **14** *be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; 15... be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.... 16* *Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."* **1John 3:13** *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*

Satan wins when people feel that their sinful desires are no longer "sinful". **Gal 6:7** *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

Now we define "evil".

John 8:44 *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

We now learn that evil, moral wickedness lies at the heart of Satan, and he is the prince and crown of it. As Christians, and much more as ministers of God, the entire realm of "good" and "evil" are spiritual elements that are at war/against God, and for/against Satan. **Isaiah 5:18-24** pictures our day. Men have attached themselves to evil v18, and defy God and his judgment v19. Nobody can rebuke them nor restrain them v21. They are drunk and incapable of solid discernment v22. They "justify the wicked", and "take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!" **Isa 5:23**

2Tim 3:1 *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,*

4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (Compare the spirit of these people in the last days to Israel in **Isa 5:20-24** "which justify the wicked for reward")

God advises us that in the last days, sin will increase greatly, and the extremes of sin will also increase. What we see in this list of evil-doers is that everything seems self-centered, and a gravity pointing towards things that are evil, or against God's will. Anything that would define a person as "morally upstanding" or noble seems to produce the opposite in evil people.

There is a disposition towards or an affinity towards evil that is in the heart of these people. They also move away from God and his moral principles. **2Th 2:9-12** makes the observation that all of this evil is under the domain of "the lawless one" (Satan), and that his followers are not saved, because "they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved... but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

The Power of an Example

In my tract, **CH24 The Power of an example** (see cocontracts.com/church/) I explain how God has instilled the principal of an example. People are impressionable, much more so than anybody realizes, and by seeing or hearing an example (morality or immorality, good or evil) that thing becomes easier to imitate and for them to "take the plunge" and do that very thing.

2Pet 2:7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, **in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds**;) 9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

The key element here is in understanding that what is observed is in a way vicariously lived. That is why people who undergo trauma (experience something bad) have personal problems afterwards as they relive that experience over and over again in their minds and memories.

We as Christians live through hearing and seeing other people's lives. That is why God prohibits gossiping or tale bearing (**Lev 19:16**). **Pro 18:8; 26:22** says that these "tales" are like "wounds" that "go down into the innermost parts of the belly".

God goes so far as to bless those who refuse to observe evil. **Isa 33:15**.

Declaring God's View

Christians are to declare God's view on

these things. They are to condemn evil and wickedness, and they are to promote and encourage "goodness". **Phil 4:8** we are to concentrate and fill ourselves with good and noble things.

Gen 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Satan's logic with Eve is a good example of this twisting of what God has said. His whole point was to turn God's good warning into evil. To flip the thing. God warned Adam and Eve not to hurt them, but to protect them from hurt. Satan comes along and maligns God, presuming that God's intentions were evil, and overturning God's warning making it almost an imperative to eat of the forbidden tree.

Consequences of "declaring"

Matt 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. See v15

We need to understand that when we stand for moral principles of good, practicing them, opposing and refusing, even denouncing wickedness and evil, we are fulfilling God's imperative for us.

1Pet 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; **that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:**

Our purpose on earth is highly involved in declaring that light of God (principles of good) and denouncing and living against the principles of evil. We are God's voice on earth (especially for those who never read God's Word, and refuse to sit under the good preaching of God's Word). In good and evil, we must never confuse the two, and we must not let others who are influential in getting away with flip-flopping these two things, essentially confusing them for the world's understanding. We MUST HOLD THEIR FEET TO THE FIRE.

False prophets always will proclaim "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" **Jer 6:13-17**. They wanted to burn people consciences against the Holy Spirit's conviction on their sins. This is the direct attack on God.

Flip-Flopping on Good and Evil

Simply put, this is to do the Devil's work. This is what Satan has done, and is doing. Anybody that aids Satan in this falls under the condemnation of God.

We have seen our country embrace homosexuality lifestyle as "good" and acceptable. God never allowed for that. God denounces that lifestyle. There is

nothing "good" about it.

Behind the "good" that God declares and establishes (**Heb 13:4**) is the genius of greatest mind in the history of all the worlds. God has made the principles of 1 man and 1 woman forming a family with no other people involved except their own kids, as the principle of "good". With that moral pattern God has instilled elements that work, and work to the benefit of all interested and involved. God has "cursed" all other alternatives including homosexuality (**Rom 1:18-32**). Besides eternal condemnation, it simply is cursed with not working in a practical sense in this life. The bad consequences are abundant in the here and now. Love is at the base of this, and this love is to deny self for the good of those you love. Homosexuality is "bad" because it is founded in improper self love, self satisfaction. Instead of love, it thrives on worldly sensationalism. Homosexuals do not really care for each other. Historically their relationships are extremely brief, and not sincere. They are broken and reformed with others as easily as they are originally started. There is disadvantage and hurt associated with homosexuality. Their is sexual abuse, and to allow a homosexual couple, or a lesbian couple to adopt a child, which is in turn going to have a high probability of child abuse from these parents, is simply "not good for that child".

God's genius protects his "good", and condemns Satan's "evil". We can never get away from that reality. By switching and calling something good, or condemning something that God says is good, we never truly get away from God's blessing on HIS GOOD, nor God's curse on what is HIS idea of EVIL or bad.

Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. 9 Let love be without dissimulation. **Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.**

We must take clear and strong positions on what is right, and what is wrong. We cannot allow wrong or evil to stand unchallenged. It is extremely dangerous to listen to people who flip-flop truth and evil. It is insanity to put them into government to make laws along the same lines.

Suggestions and Questions

If you have questions about anything in this newsletter, questions outside of this newsletter that you would like for me to address, or doubts or problems, please send me an email with your thoughts: davidcoxmex@gmail.com