

Wednesday Morning Devotional on July 10

Passage: Genesis 8:19-22

We all have different perspectives that shape our lives, such as our views on life, the world, and our careers. These perspectives are formed from the various influences we encounter as we grow up, and typically, our life view starts to take shape during our teenage years. For instance, if someone believes that "life is a competition," this perspective will influence how they approach life and how they interact with others.

While it is true that believing and accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord leads us to heaven, living according to God's purpose for us on earth requires more than just belief and acceptance. We need to shape our worldview, life view, view on marriage, and view on our careers based on the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. A person who does this is called a disciple of Jesus.

There are many people who call themselves Christians, yet their perspectives remain unchanged. This is something I have observed as a pastor. One of the main reasons for this is the lack of learning God's Word. Additionally, even when they learn, they often fail to practice applying it in their daily lives.

Therefore, it's essential to understand the true purpose of the church. Why do we attend church? The church exists to make disciples of Jesus. We attend church to receive training in God's Word. (A pastor acts like an instructor who helps train us.)

In today's scripture from Genesis, we see God's definition of who humans are.

Do you want to understand humanity? To do so, you need to know the Creator of humanity—God. What God says about humanity is revealed in today's passage.

You'll hear it from many places these days: People are basically good and unselfish. It's their environments that turn people's hearts toward evil.

Unfortunately, that theory just doesn't match with what we see in the Bible. Look at verse 21. **What does God say about our inclination?**

1. No matter what laws are created, there will always be people who exploit them. This is because human nature is inherently flawed. Ignoring the flaw and creating idealistic laws can lead to destruction.

Communism is a prime example. It is a system based on the ideal of shared ownership among all people. Despite efforts to change systems and institutions to realize this ideal, it only resulted in producing new dictators and forming new ruling classes. The countries built on this system eventually collapsed, reaching the brink of bankruptcy. This happened because human selfishness and wickedness were overlooked.

This is where the superiority of capitalist democracy lies. Unlike communism, capitalism acknowledges **human selfishness and greed**. It encourages productivity through self-interest while controlling excesses with laws to prevent harm to others.

The principle of separation of powers, considered the pinnacle of democracy, also recognizes the human desire for power. It divides governmental authority into legislative, judicial, and executive branches to ensure that no single person or group can concentrate power, thus maintaining checks and balances.

We as Christians must acknowledge human depravity. Although we become new creations in Christ, old habits and ways of thinking linger. We live as new creations when filled with the Holy Spirit, but old tendencies resurface when we are not. That's why we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit everyday through prayer and meditating the word of God, otherwise, we tend to go back to our old selves and old habits, living a life of selfishness, jealousy, hatred, bitterness, division, depression, etc.

All of you who participate in this weekly devotional, made a wise decision! God bless you!

2. "Why am I a sinner?" This is a common question from those hesitant to step into the church, often declining invitations with this very query. Indeed, for someone not accustomed to church, hearing "You are a sinner" can be off-putting.

It's understandable—someone who strives to live a good life, helping others and finding fulfillment, wouldn't take kindly to being labeled a sinner right off the bat.

However, in Christianity, calling someone a sinner goes deeper than surface-level actions. It refers to our inherent sinfulness. We all know deep down that we are not entirely pure.

It's uncomfortable to admit, but within us lie selfishness, jealousy, hatred, lust, and deceit. These hidden sins are more than we often want to acknowledge, and they

are difficult to control. This is why people frequently say, "I didn't know I was capable of that."

During the trial of Adolf Eichmann, a Nazi war criminal involved in the Holocaust, philosopher Hannah Arendt coined the phrase "the banality of evil." Eichmann was expected to be a monstrous figure, yet he turned out to be a seemingly kind, ordinary person outside of his crimes. One observer at the trial remarked, "Realizing that I was just like him, and that I could have done the same, was terrifying."

In this sense, none of us can claim to be without sin. But it's crucial to understand that God points out our sinfulness not to burden us with guilt or to punish us, but because He loves us and wants to draw closer to us. God knows that we are unhappy when separated from Him and extends His hand to restore our relationship.

However, God is infinitely pure and holy, and cannot come close to sin. He has, however, found a way to bridge this gap. The problem arises when people respond with, "Why am I a sinner?" Despite God's love and His efforts to forgive and accept us, our refusal to acknowledge our sinfulness leaves the gap unbridged.

Therefore, the relationship with God opens up with the simple realization and admission, "I am a sinner." The moment someone, who once felt confident in their righteousness, recognizes their own shortcomings and admits, "I can't do it alone," that acknowledgment becomes the key to encountering the Lord. Even those confident in their abilities, when faced with unsolvable problems, might find themselves saying, "I can't do anything about this," which can become the key to meeting the Lord.

In these challenging times, when worries and fatigue set in, and life feels overwhelming, listen for the voice that says, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."(Matthews 11:28).

When you hear it, try kneeling in prayer. That vulnerability might be your first step toward meeting the Lord.

Prayer To Start a New Day:

Heavenly Father,

As we reflect on the truths of Genesis 8 and the message of our inherent sinfulness, we come before You with humble hearts. We acknowledge that we are imperfect and often fall short of Your glory. We confess that within us lie flaws and tendencies that separate us from Your holiness.

Lord, we thank You for Your unending grace and mercy. Despite our shortcomings, You have provided a way for us to be reconciled to You through Jesus Christ. We are grateful for the sacrifice He made on the cross, bridging the gap that our sins have created. Help us to recognize our need for a Savior and to rely on Your strength rather than our own.

In this new day, guide us to live according to Your will. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit so that we may reflect Your love and kindness to those around us. Give us the courage to admit our faults and the wisdom to seek Your guidance in every aspect of our lives.

We pray for those who are struggling with the concept of sin and their need for You. Open their hearts and minds to understand Your love and the redemption available through Christ. Use us as instruments of Your peace and grace to draw others closer to You.

Lord, as we go forth, may we carry the message of Your love and the hope of salvation with us. Let our actions and words be a testament to Your transformative power. We trust in Your unfailing love and commit this day to You.

In Jesus' name, we pray,

Amen.