

Romans 1:19-23

Sunday 3/23/2008

We have been in a study on the Book of Romans, and we are in Romans chapter 1. I know today is Easter, but I could not... First of all, let me introduce myself to you. My name is Bob, and I am a preacher. I want to tell you that because if you go out of here this morning and you say, "Wow, what was that?" That was a preacher. Everywhere you go, people are introducing themselves. I go to a restaurant, and the guy will come up and say, "Hi, my name is Jim, I'm your waiter." And I will say, "Hi, my name is Bob, I'm your eater."

When a policeman pulls you over, you know that he is going to do it as a policeman. If your house is on fire and you call the fire department, you certainly hope they do not send out the dog catcher. You want a fireman, and you know the fireman is going to do his job. Everybody, I am a preacher. As a preacher, I have a job to do, and that job is preaching. So I want you to understand that that is what I do, and that is what all preachers are supposed to do.

I am not very big on holiday messages, and we will talk about that in a little bit. But I cannot tell you a better message for Easter today than where we just happened to be. I did not orchestrate this or anything, but this is a great passage today that we are going to talk about that will help you understand maybe a little bit better what we do and why we do it and what the Bible says. It maybe will help you put some things together in your life.

Last week, my people, you remember we were in Romans chapter 1. One of the greatest passages anywhere in the Bible that really helps unlock the scriptures was Romans chapter 1, verses 19 and 20, where he says, "The invisible things...". It was a great key. The invisible things that God made, the visible things that God made, that we clearly see and understand by the physical things that God made. We had a great time with that, and we showed you how that God is the perfect pattern for everything that He created. Now today we are going to move on to the next passage, and we are going to break it down as we continue our study. Again, it will help you kind of put it all together where we are at and where we are going.

I. Understanding the Gentile Mindset

Let me just say this to you. In Romans chapter 1, what Paul is trying to get across and lay out is why Gentiles do the things that they do, think the things that they think, and get involved in things that they get involved in. When I say that, I say this: we are all Gentiles by birth here, probably for the most part, unless somebody here is a Jew. I do not know. But if you are just a garden variety person today, that your parents go back four or five generations to this and then go over to Europe someplace and whatever, you are a Gentile. I am a Gentile.

We know that the moment we get saved, the Bible says that we basically quit being a Gentile and now we become a Christian. Let me explain that. It does not mean that you suddenly disown your parents or your heritage. No. My heritage is English Welsh, Alexander. If you would take my genealogy and run it back, you would find that my ancestors have been in this country from about back to 1700, and then it goes back to England and back to Welsh. My family were coal miners. My grandfather was a coal miner, and all my mom's brothers were coal miners. My dad's

family were connected with coal mining from West Virginia and Maryland. That is where we settled when we came back.

When I got saved, it does not mean that I disown my heritage as far as my family, but what changed about me when I got saved was my perspective. Now I understand that though I may be a Gentile by birth, the Bible says the day I got saved, I became a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things were passed away. All things become new. The Bible says when a man or a woman gets saved that in the body of Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile. Because once I got saved, I began to look at the world differently.

Somebody said it years and years ago, and it is kind of a cute little thing, but it is so true: once I got saved, I now am still in this world, but I am not of this world. Something changed about me, and what changed about me was the day I trusted Christ and the day you trusted Christ, you became that new creature in Christ Jesus. Now the Bible says that though you are still a Gentile by your physical birth, your new birth in Christ Jesus has now put you into God's family. Now you go back to this world, the Gentiles, the Jews, and you do not have to take anybody's side in any kind of conflict or any kind of discussion.

When I deal with people, whatever their problems may be, if you have a husband and wife, or boyfriend or girlfriend, or maybe just two people that struggle and cannot get along, I have learned early on, never take sides. The reason why you do not ever take sides is because you know both have got problems. I have never met a scenario in my life where both did not have problems. Now one may have had more problems than the other, but at the end of the day we all got our issues, do not we? I learned early on that when you deal with people that you do not take sides.

As a Christian, the moment I got saved and I look back at the world, my dog is not in this fight. I mean, I do not care what the Republicans or the Democrats do. I am neither a Republican nor a Democrat. I am a Christian. Because the moment I become political and I say I am a Democrat, then I am not going to be able to win the Republicans because they do not want to hear me. The moment I am a Republican, then the Democrats are not going to want to hear my message because I have taken a side. I am neutral. My Bible says that I am seated in heavenly places. My Bible says that I am an ambassador back to this planet. My job is to take not anybody's particular side other than God's side. That is my job.

When I stand up here, I do not preach politics. I may make fun of it. We may laugh about it and have a good time, but I do not take sides. Because my job as a pastor and really your job as a Christian is to take God's side. That is what we do. I tell people what God can do for them. I tell people what the Bible can do for them. I help people find the things of God that will help them fulfill their lives. Some of you are already involved with me in dealing with people. One of the things that you are going to find that is going to be of great benefit to you is what we are talking about in Romans. Because the Book of Romans is a book that shows you how Gentiles think.

I do not know of any other place in the Bible that helped me when I am dealing with people because most of the people we deal with are Gentiles. I do not know of any other place in the Bible where I got more help in understanding why people do the things that they do. Why do

they go to the places they go to? Why do they have the mindset that they have? Why do they get themselves in some of the most ridiculous circumstances that you ever find out in life? The answer to that is understanding how Gentiles think. Romans chapter 1 is what he does; he lays that out, and we have been coming through that.

Now I want to begin this morning in our next passage, and that is chapter 1, verse 21. He says this. Let us pray.

Now Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We ask You today, Lord, to be with us. Help us, Lord, to put aside anything in our lives that would take our focus away from today. We love You. We ask You, Father, for those that are here today that do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior, that Lord, this would be a time that they could sit back and reflect on where they are at in their own life. Lord, I know that anything I have to say could not be of value to anybody. Yet I ask You, Lord, to take what we have got today and through Your Spirit touch the hearts of these, Your people. Every man and woman in this place, Lord, may they leave today getting the message that not that I have for them, but that You have for them. Use this unworthy vessel today, use this broken tool to be able to convey the holy words of a holy God, an uncorruptible God to us. Lord, I will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it, Amen.

II. The Gentile Problem: Rejecting God's Glory

As you come through history, you see this great concept about Gentiles. Gentiles, and we are Gentiles, we all have this same problem, and it is laid out right here. This is what we are going to talk about this morning. It says, "When they knew God..." and we talked about that last week, that in reality there is no such thing as an atheist. An atheist may claim to be an atheist, but the Bible says in John chapter 1 that He was the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The fact that a man wants to reject the knowledge of God or reject God never means that God does not deal with him. We talked about how God reveals Himself through the creation that He made.

Romans 1:21

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Now this is man's basic issue. It was Voltaire, the great humanist and the great secular mind of Europe that came out of Europe in the late 1700s, and the mindset that produced him. You know what he said? Voltaire said one time, "God created man in his own image," which is a quotation from Genesis chapter 1. And then he said, "and then man returned the favor." That is exactly what Voltaire thought about God. But you know what? We just do not get upset with Voltaire. All Gentiles think that way. Gentiles, and I hope that you see this by the end. We are going to have some fun this morning. It is not all going to be, you know, you really do not need your airbag. But I want you to see some things today because that is how Gentiles think.

You and I as Gentiles in our world before you were saved, and unfortunately many times God's people even after they are saved, they follow this same line of thought. They follow this same line of reasoning. The thing that I want you to understand this morning is that Gentiles will always take the glory of an uncorruptible God and will try to make it like corruptible man. That is what they do. I want you to see that, and the first thing he says here, "they glorified him not as God," because man's basic problem is that he wants to take God's glory and wear it himself. That is what man does.

You are going to find that most people today do not give God the glory for anything anymore. You are going to find that many of God's people, and a lot of these things splash over into Christians' lives. I mean, even though you are a Christian does not mean that you cannot live by the world's standards and get yourself all messed up. You are going to find that most people think the first sin in the Bible started with Adam and Eve. Of course, that is not true. The first sin in the Bible that is recorded in the chronology of the Bible is Adam and Eve in the garden. But the first sin in your Bible took place before that, between Genesis chapter 1, verse 1 and verse 2, which is defined in Ezekiel chapter 28 and Isaiah chapter 14, where Lucifer, who became the devil, said in his heart, "I will, I will take my throne and establish it before the size of God." The Bible says the first sin in the Bible was pride in Lucifer's heart, that he was not satisfied with what he was. He wanted to take and get the glory that God had and give it to himself. You know what? That is all of our problem to a certain degree.

Now when you get saved, you want to always give God the glory. But you have to understand this: God as the supreme God, and if I guess if you want the greatest chapters in the Bible that declare God as the supreme being of the universe, it will be Isaiah chapter 41 through 48. Those eight chapters are the greatest chapters I know of in the Bible that declare God as the supreme being and there are no other gods beside Him. You are going to find that God created everything that He created for His honor and for His glory.

Somebody asked me one time, "What is God's main purpose? Why did God do things the way He did it? Why does God have an unending plan that obviously starts from eternity past and winds up in eternity future with a little parentheses in the middle as we know time? What is God doing?" Well, I will tell you the number one thing of God is this: because He is the supreme being in the universe, God demands honoring from everything in His creation.

Did you ever notice how that in the Gospels and throughout the Bible everything that God created obeys Him? You know the animals have a law by which they follow. You never find an animal rebelling against God. Never. God set patterns for those animals, and those animals go by that pattern. Why back there in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John when the little disciples were on the ocean and they were tossed to and fro, Jesus stood up and He told the sea to be, and it quieted the sea in that moment just with what He said. You know what the disciples said? They looked at each other and they said, "Even the seas obey Him." Because God created everything for His honor and glory.

You know the only thing that God created that is His creation that does not give Him the honor and glory? It is you and me. It is man. The animals obey Him. The wind obeys Him. The sea

obeys Him. The trees obey Him. The birds fly south and north. They obey Him. The only one of God's creation that refuses to obey Him on a regular basis is us. God wants the honor and glory for everything that He created. The Bible says that God has vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. You choose which one you are going to be as far as what you are going to do with your life for God.

III. The Gentile Problem: Lack of Thankfulness

Then he says in verse 21, toward the middle of the verse there, it says, "neither were they thankful." I will tell you another problem Gentiles have, and this splashes over into some of our lives: we take God for granted. We take God for granted. Now this is my big gripe with Easter and Christmas because you know what? I am not saying this is true about anybody here this morning, but I know it is true across the board. People show up for Easter and then they go back and they never think about God again until Christmas.

They do not think about the fact that the One who puts air in your lungs is God. They do not think about the fact that the One whose hand guides you through life is God. What we do, we all do this, we wind up taking God for granted. How do you think God feels when you sit down and shovel your food in your mouth and never thank God for the food that He gave you? I watch God's people do that. I watch them sit down and just shove stuff in and never one time stop and thank. How do you think God feels? I mean, He is the One that grew it. He is the One that brought the rain and the sunshine enough in the right order to grow it. He is the One that gave you a job so you would have enough money to buy it. He is the One that gave the men strength of labor to harvest it and produce it to get it to you. When you look at all of that, how do you think God feels when you and I just sit down and just shovel it in and never say thank you? That is what we do. It is so subtle.

I have a thing in my own personal life, and you hear me talk about it many, many times, and it is a little phrase that is really not found in the Bible in the phrase, but it is found in the Bible as you study it, a simple little phrase: God consciousness. This is what God's people cannot do: God's people cannot stay conscious of God in their lives. Now we do not expect the Gentile world to be able to do it, and they do not. But I am telling you, you ought to have in your life how many times a day do you go through life and never think and never thank God for the things that He does.

You see God consciousness. God consciousness is when you get up in the morning, you are aware of Him. You go through your daily life, you are aware of Him and what He does and what He brings into your life, and you never lose sight of the conscious fact that God is there for you every moment of the day. Yet we forget that. We forget that. We come to the point in our lives as Gentiles where we struggle with that.

IV. The Gentile Problem: Vain Imaginations and Foolish Hearts

The last part of verse 21 says this: “and became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” Now there are two key words there that are absolutely essential for us understanding not only where the Gentile mindset is, because when you start to work with people and you start to help people find God or deal with the issues of their lives, these are the kind of things that you are going to come up against. How many times have I sat down with a young man or a young lady and the issue in their life was something that they loved something more than they loved God? How many times was it that in somebody’s life God was way over here and everything else was in front of them? This is where the rubber meets the road with Gentiles on planet Earth, and if you are going to help people find God, it is these kind of issues that you are going to have to help them work through. Boy, Romans chapter 10 lays it out so very clearly.

The two key words here in the last part of verse 21 are “vain” and “foolish.” You know, in your Bible, certain numbers mean certain things. In the theology world, they call that Bible numerics, Bible numerology, that the number eight is consistent with something in the Bible. We know that in the Bible the number seven is a number of perfection, so you are going to find over and over and over and over and over and over again that when God does something, He does it by seven. You are going to find that the number three in your Bible is a number of completion. A number five in your Bible is a number of death. You know why number thirteen has always been portrayed as an unlucky number? Because that is the number of Satan in the Bible. Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Christ, had thirteen letters in his name. Babylon, great mistress of religion back there, thirteen parts to that. You are going to know the devil left heaven and got kicked out and took some angels with him, he took one third, one slash three, thirteen.

There are certain numbers that just mean certain things. Now I know you can prove anything with numbers, and I am not saying that every number means something, but there are certain numbers that do. The number ten in your Bible is a number of the Gentiles, that is you and me. You are going to find the first Gentile kingdom found in your Bible is in Genesis 10:10. As a matter of fact, you are going to find the father of the Gentiles in the Bible is Noah, and if you counted up his genealogy, he is tenth in the line from Adam. You are going to find that in Genesis chapter 24, Isaac goes to get a Gentile bride. You know how many camels they take? Ten. Ten camels. Acts chapter 10, the Gospel goes to the Gentiles. Romans chapter 10, the missionary called the Gentile. John chapter 10, he speaks of Gentile sheep not of this fold. The last Gentile kingdom in your Bible laid out in Revelation and defined in Daniel chapter 2 is represented by the ten toes of Daniel and ten nations. Ten is the number of the Gentiles.

You are going to find that he says in Romans chapter 1, verse 21, that he says, “they became vain in their imaginations,” and that vain in their imaginations leads them to a foolish heart. Now the book in the Bible that deals with Gentiles in a greater way than any other book I know of in the Old Testament is the Book of Ecclesiastes. When you come to Ecclesiastes, the Book of Ecclesiastes is a book that talks about the vanity of life. In fact, I gave you those list of ten because in the Book of Ecclesiastes, which is written primarily to Gentiles about Gentiles, the way they think, there are ten vanities listed. The Bible says that when these Gentiles became vain in their imaginations, and then because of that their foolish heart was darkened, this is where

Gentiles think, and this is as Christians, this is where you and I struggle. We have this affinity that we want to take God's glory from Him and we want to wear it ourselves.

Now the word "vain" or the word "vanity" simply means it is worthless. It means that there is no value to it. Something that is vanity is of no substance. Something that is vain is not worth anything. When he comes through the Book of Ecclesiastes, and I have got to give you just a little heads up of how this book figures into all this. The Book of Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon. Solomon is the wisest man that ever lived. Solomon is a man that when he writes the Book of Ecclesiastes, he does it from a very unique perspective. If we had time this morning, I could bring you through the Book of Ecclesiastes, and I would show you every psychology or ology that a Gentile man comes up with. We would find pragmatism, capitalism. We would find existentialism. We would find all the great philosophies that Gentile man puts together and to portray as some kind of truth. When Solomon writes this great book, he goes through and details all of these philosophies of man, and he says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." When he lays these things out, he shows you that these things are all vanity when it comes to the Word of God. These ten things are exactly where Gentiles, and unfortunately many of God's people, put their trust.

- 1.) The vanity of wisdom without God (Ecclesiastes 2:13). Knowledge without God is going to be a disaster. You know what? You can have wisdom. You can have wisdom in your life. You can have wisdom in people that were pretty wise as far as the world is concerned, but they did not have any ability to connect it back to God and the Bible. That is where it really needs to go.
- 2.) The vanity of labor (Ecclesiastes 2:19). Most people go to work and do not really understand the process of why in the world... I mean, let me ask you, is this life a lot like my granddaughter's got a hamster? Some of you have kids have hamsters. I do not know if you have ever been around a hamster, but a hamster sleeps during the day and stays up all night. All night long that hamster does one thing. It gets in its wheel and it runs like it is going somewhere. I mean, I just look at him and I think, "Well, we are training him for the hamster Olympics. He is going to be really good." That little sucker will just run around that thing all night long, then he sleeps all day. I look at that and I thought to myself, "Boy, if that is not a picture of most people today." We are running around in a little cage, in a little circle, running like we are going somewhere. We have got a lot of movement, a lot of action, but at the end of the day we do not know why we are doing what we are doing. Boy, if that is not life on planet Earth. You know what? You have got to stop and ask yourself sometime, "What is it? What am I doing? Where am I going? I work all day, I come home, I do this, I cut the grass, I have to do this, I have to do all the errands, I have to feed the dog, I have to walk the dog, I have to take care of the kids, I have to raise the kids." And at the end of my life, what was the purpose? If there is not more to God than us just running around in a little rat like a maze, then we have all been deceived. You know what that is called? That is called the vanity of labor.
- 3.) The vanity of purpose (Ecclesiastes 2:26).
- 4.) The vanity of ambition (Ecclesiastes 4:4).
- 5.) The vanity of fun (Ecclesiastes 7:6).

- 6.) The vanity of fame (Ecclesiastes 4:16).
- 7.) The vanity of money (Ecclesiastes 5:10). I never forget a guy, I read this story years and years ago, this guy had more money than he knew what to do with. He had all kinds of things that he just, I mean his whole life was built on things. If anything shows you, if anything shows you the truth and the vanity of the way we think sometimes, he had this favorite car, and it was back then, this was back in the 60s, it was early 70s, it was some collector's item car, I forget what it was. But he loved this car so much that when the thought of dying and being separated from his car was just too much. So he made arrangements that he was buried in his car. They dug this big hole, they set him behind the steering wheel, and lo and behold, they buried him in that car. His family looked at that and they thought that they had done him some faith. Like he is happy now. You know we look at that and we think, but when the Egyptians, you know what, when they buried their pharaohs, they used to put him in a boat, put all kinds of food for their journey on. They take their servants and they bury him alive, what a good job to be a servant back then. They would seal him in the crypt, and the servants would just sit down and they would say, "Well, when he goes to the journey in life, we are going to still be his servant." And he has got a boat there so he could cross that big river or that big ocean that gets him to wherever he wants to go, where it is all going to be, where he is... It does not work that way. It does not work that way. Let me tell you something. When you die, you go to heaven or hell, it is just that simple. There is no Valhalla, there is no Purgatory, there is no intermediate place between. The closest place to hell and earth to earth would be Topeka, Kansas, where dead men still walk the earth, I guess, I do not know. But there is no, there is no, there is no dressing for it. You do not take your favorite car. You may get buried in your favorite dress, your favorite suit, but it is going to stay there. And 60 years after you are dead, it is going to be full of wormholes. It is going to deteriorate, but Gentiles think that they are going somewhere when they die. Well, you are, but not where you think you are going.
- 8.) The vanity of selfishness (Ecclesiastes 6:9).
- 9.) The vanity of covetousness (Ecclesiastes 6:9).
- 10.) The vanity of reward (Ecclesiastes 8:10).

Somebody said one time, and it is so true, "Life without God is a hopeless end." Boy, that is the vanity that he talked about. You can have all of these things. You can have, put all these things in your life, as we do with Gentiles. We can build us up as we are somebody great. Yet at the end of our lives, I want you to know something. Life without God is a hopeless end. Because all is vanity. But on the other hand, the man says, "Life with God is endless hope." There it is. If I could talk about the whole concept and the mindset of Gentiles, it is just like that. Life without God, ladies and gentlemen, is a hopeless end, and life with God is endless hope. There lies where the Bible says that all is vanity outside of the Lord Jesus Christ, is what God has to do.

Bubba preached a message last Sunday night at the mission. Where are you at, Bubba? Did a good job, Bubba. In starting in that message, he got up there and he said, "There are over, there are 200,000 characters in the Bible." That is how he opened his sermon. Good sermon. 200,001, Bubba. That is all right. You missed one. He said there are over 200,000 characters in the Bible. Then he said he was preaching at the mission. He was trying to make the point to a bunch of men

in the mission who were homeless, had drug addictions, alcohol addictions, and all kinds of serious problems. We tried to go down there and minister to them. He was trying to get them to see the reality of where their life was at. He did it in a great way as most of the guys do when you go down there. So he started out with an analogy that I thought was a very good analogy. He said there are over 200,000 characters in the Bible, yet in reality when you study them, they all fall into one or two categories. He says, "You are either here tonight and you are a wise man or you are a foolish man."

Then he took the passage over there in Matthew chapter 7, which I thought was brilliant. He tied it all together about the foolish man that built his house on the sand and the wise man that built his house on the rock. In that little story, the Bible says the man who built it on the rock, when the winds came and the rain came and the disasters came, that house withstood on the rock, it was firm on the rock, and it did not get blown away. The guy who built his house on the sand, sand is always moving. Sand is fluid, it blows with the wind, it shifts, it changes. It will bury something today, it will unbury it tomorrow. There is nothing stable about sand. He made the analogy that when a wise man will build his house on a rock, the rock being the principles of the Word of God, a foolish man will build his house on the sand, the principles of this world. He says every man in this place, every man in this place is either a wise man or a foolish man. He says the thing that determines that is the choices that we have made in life. I thought to myself, "Wow, that is a great analogy." That is exactly what the Bible says happens, when a man's heart becomes vain, he becomes foolish in his heart. He then takes the glory to God and tries to put it onto himself. That is when we get into problems that we think that we are better than we are.

I have dealt with people all my life, and I have seen them coming in all shapes and sizes. I have seen them come in all kinds of conditions. For 36, 37 years of my life, I have sat down and listened to people tell me about the scenarios they have gotten themselves into. Some of them were pretty easy to fix. Some of them, very frankly, were unfixable. Sometimes the longer you let a problem go without dealing with it, it gets to a place where you cannot fix it. Just that simple. That does not mean that God cannot fix it. It means that you can get so far from God that you will not let God fix it. That is what I am talking about. In every one of those scenarios, I have seen them come in young. I have seen them come in middle-aged. I have seen them come in, you know, young married couples. In every situation, it goes back to one concept, and that is the choices that they have made in life.

I have seen young kids before, you know, make bad choices. Make some choices that they should not have made. They have to bear the brunt of those choices for the next 25 years of their lives. You know why so many, you know why in America, the divorce rate is off the scale? I will tell you why it is. One simple thing. Young kids today make some really bad choices when getting married. That simple. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure it out. Why this divorce rate of 20 years ago was half the adult population in this country had been divorced one time, and half of them had been divorced again. That was 20 years ago. Now, if you are sitting here this morning and you find yourself in a divorce situation, I am certainly not speaking down to you. I am just telling you and telling everybody that it is the choices that we make. Maybe you never had anybody to help you figure it out. Maybe you never had anybody to sit down and talk

to you the way it really is. But I have learned all down through my life that when you are dealing with people, it all comes down to the choices that they make. My goal as a pastor, your goal as a counselor, when you start to work with people, it is one thing: get them to quit making bad choices and start making good choices.

I had a man call me one time when he was a young kid, and he said, "I am going to commit suicide." He had done this many, many times, and this was his way of getting attention. You are going to probably take this wrong, but I am the last guy to call to tell me you are going to commit suicide. Especially if I have been working with you. I mean, do not be surprised if I am working with you and you do not want to do it. Because you know what? If I work with you and you do what is right, suicide will be the farthest thing from your mind. I will get you plugged into the Bible, plugged into God. I will get you looking at the real value of life and what God wants you to do. But I have had people I have done that with that do not do what is right, and they always want the attention focused on them. They will call you up and say, "You know what? I am going to commit suicide." Well, okay, but you better take two bullets. You are not a very good shot.

This guy called me up one night and he said, "Bob, I am going to commit suicide as soon as I hang up the phone." And he says, and like he was, and he almost said, "What do you think about that?" See, he wanted, what he wanted me to do, he wanted me to get down on his knees and beg him not to. He wanted me to run over the house and break down the front door, take the gun out of his hand. You know what? Here is what I told him, because it is the truth. I said, "You know what? I do not want you to commit suicide. I think it is a terrible thing if you commit suicide knowing what you know. But I do have to tell you this before you pull the trigger. You may commit suicide tonight, but, and you need to know this, your choosing to commit suicide will just be another choice and a long list of choices in your life that were bad choices. Unfortunately, this will be the last bad choice you make." Hung up the phone from me, never committed suicide. You say, "Well, what would you have done if he would?" I had a greater illustration than the one I just gave you. But I am telling you, the bottom line is this: life is choices. We make our choices.

Somebody says, "Well, I got a rough thing in life and it was not fair." When is life ever fair? When is life ever fair? You want to talk about a rough time in life that was not fair? How about Job? How about Noah? How about Jesus Christ Himself? See, I am not responsible for the bad things that I have no control over in my life. I do not have any control over that. Somebody rear-ends me on the way home today. That is not my fault. I do not have, I cannot take responsibility for the bad things that come into my life. I am not responsible for them. I am responsible how I react to them based on the Word of God. Choices, choices, choices.

I have seen them in all shapes and sizes make bad choices. I have seen young couples make bad choices. I have seen older people make bad choices. I have seen young singles make bad choices. I am telling you, it all comes down to the principles. You are either a wise man or a foolish man. You know how you become a wise man or a foolish man? The Bible says it over there in Proverbs 13. It is who you hang out with. You hang out with wise people, you become a wise guy. I do not think I meant that the way it came out. You hang out with fools, you become a fool.

It is the association you keep. That is why the number one person you need to hang out with in your life is the Lord Jesus Christ. He will always lead you the right way. He will always get you where He wants you to go.

V. The Definition of Wise vs. Foolish

Romans 1:22

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

I told you this a couple of weeks ago. The longer you are a Christian, the longer I am a Christian, the longer we live, the less important we ought to think we are. Boy, have I seen the reverse to that. I have seen people that have been saved 10, 15, 20 years, that in churches, that they think they run the church. That they think that everybody, they get some little power in their life, and boy, they hold it over everybody's head. That is not the mark of true biblical spiritual Christianity. True biblical spiritual Christianity is the longer you serve God, the longer you live, the more worthless you understand we are, and the greater He is.

Just as the Book of Ecclesiastes defines vain and vanity, the Book of Proverbs then defines what a wise man and a foolish man is. That verse I gave you about the company you keep is Proverbs 13:20. Now, not only does the Bible define for you in the book of what the world portrays it as, the Book of Ecclesiastes, what vanity is, but then you come to the Book of Proverbs. I know of no greater book than Proverbs that in one consistent book lays out the issues that you and I will face and shows us what they are and what our should be to it. Honest to goodness, if there was one book in the Bible, folks, one book in the Bible I could learn, one book in the Bible that I could get total recall on, that I could live it 24/7 in any situation, be able to pull the principle out, hey, it would be the Book of Proverbs. I think that the Book of Proverbs is the issues of life and everything else in the Bible, every story, every illustration, and everything you find in the other 65 books are built around a principle of life and choices in life around that book. It is an incredible book. If there is any book that I could get total recall on, it would be the Book of Proverbs. That will never happen, but I would like it to.

You are going to find, just as Ecclesiastes defines what vanity is and being vain is, the Book of Proverbs defines what a wise man versus what a fool is. In the Book of Proverbs, a wise man is defined this way. First, and these are not in order, so if you ever put them in your Bible, you can put them in the order, I did not put them in order.

- 1.) A wise man wins souls (Proverbs 11:30). Now, I know the standard teaching by most of God's people today, and the idea. You know, most people, most saved people have been saved for 10, 15, 20 years. Never won a soul to Christ. Never won a soul to Christ. They go out and they try to get all these techniques on soul-winning. Buy this guy's book, this guy's set of tapes, get all of this stuff. And then, maybe in that technique lies the ability to win somebody to Christ and learn how to do it. Let me tell you something. Soul-winning is a natural act that comes about because of your intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit of God. I do not know what to tell you. It goes back to what I said a couple of weeks ago that we like to be legends in our own mind. Now, you know I am saying this, you young

Christians that have just been coming for the last, you know, I give you four or five years and tell you, do not ever apply this directly to you. You just learn from it. But I am telling you, I am telling you, and I am saying all the time, if you have been saved five years or more and you look back at your life in the last year, two years, and you have not won, God has not used you in some point of person's life to win that soul to Christ, you can pretend all you want. You can go out and buy a 65-pound King James Bible. You can yell, "Amen," louder than anybody else. You can get up and jump and shout and run around the room. You can pretend in your mind that you are doing what God wants you to do, but there is something wrong with your intimacy level. Now, I do not know what to tell you. I do not know what to tell you. It is just that simple. Now, I know you do not like that because I do not like that this week. My man Clayton got saved Thursday night. I prayed for him forever, and I love him. Got a new Bible with you, do not you? I love you, buddy. I am praying for you, and he came up to me. He came up to me. I mean, he is going to knock me over after Bible study because I had talked a while back. You do not care if I tell this. I do not want to tell it anyhow, so you might as well keep your eyes open. I had talked with him a while back, and he had some issues that he was not sure of. No, I could have done the standard Baptist preacher technique, put a double hammer lock on him and got him down on his knee. And made him get saved. I probably could have done that. Then I could have walked out, put a notch in my pistol, said I got me another one. But I knew he was not ready. As much as I wanted you saved, God wanted you saved a lot more than I did. Here is not my end. So I just shut my mouth, kept preaching. There are times in these services when I give a notation, you would raise your hand. I would pass right over you. He would tell me I am not saved. Thursday night, there was no passer over him. I said, "Amen," looked thing on up, he is coming around on me like a linebacker, coming over me. He runs up to me and he says, "Bob, I am ready to get saved." In fact, what he said was, "I am ready." And I said, "Ready for what?" He said, "No, brain lapse. I am ready to get saved." Now, I just told you that story. I did not win him to Christ. I just took him in the room there and showed him the Bible, showed him what God said. You know who won him to Christ? Mike, right there. You know what he said to me, Mike? I am using it. I do not care if you like it. He said, "I want what you got. I want what Mike's got. I want what he's got. I see the difference in his life. There is something different about him. I want that. I do not have that." He did not say he is the only difference in me. He did not say, "Bob, you are the greatest Christian in the world." He said it was Mike. Glad I got that out of my system. It has been bothering me all week. See, I am not so stupid to think that I had anything to do with it. I was just the tool that God used to get into that point when he was ready. There is the man who made the difference. How long have you been coming, Mike? Six months. Boy, six months. Six months. Six months. Six months. Now, I say all that, and I do not mean to put you boys on the spot, but I am telling you. I am telling you. You know what I see in some of you that I do not see in some of you? We are off the message now, never to return. But you know what I see in some of you that I do not see in some of you? I will tell you what I see. Some of you are so hungry for truth. Some of you are so hungry for God to use you. Some of you, that is all you think about all night long. All you think about all day long. Wanting God to use you. Wanting God, wanting to learn this. Wanting to do this. And God, it is things like that. I can tell that story over and over again in this church, but this

just happened last week. I want everybody to know, I had nothing to do with it other than praying for it. The man that he saw the difference in his life. You know why? Many times people do not want to get saved. They do not see any difference in our lives from everybody else. I do not know what to tell you. I apologize for putting you on the spot, but I do not apologize. But I am not such a fool as I walk in there with my Bible or running through Romans 3, Romans 6, Romans 10. Winning Christ. Lead him into sinners' prayer and walk out saying, "I won somebody to Christ." I did not win anybody. He won him. All I did was be in the right spot to show what somebody else had already done to work on. I am telling you, it is an intimacy factor. You kid yourself all you want. You kid yourself all you want. You can get that legend in your own mind syndrome all you want. You can pray it around and talk about how spiritual you are. But you know what? The truth of the matter at the end of the day is the intimacy in your life with the Holy Spirit of God. Let us just face it. You know what Gentiles do? They get more intimate with human things than they do with spiritual things. What can I tell you? What can I tell you?

- 2.) A wise man inherits glory (Proverbs 3:35). You know what he does? A wise man or a woman, however you want to put it. A wise man looks beyond the circumstances. A wise man or a wise woman looks beyond. They know that there is a judgment seat of Christ coming. They know that the people they hang out with, the things they read, the things they do, the person they marry is going to, the church they go to is going to affect in a great way their eternal reward as a judgment seat of Christ.
- 3.) A wise man receives commandments (Proverbs 10:8).
- 4.) A wise man hearkens to counsel (Proverbs 12:15). A wise man is willing to change what he needs to change. A wise woman is willing to change what she needs to change about themselves.
- 5.) A wise man guards his tongue (Proverbs 29:11).
- 6.) A wise man seeks knowledge (Proverbs 18:15).
- 7.) A wise man dispenses knowledge (Proverbs 15:7).
- 8.) A wise man fears and departs from evil (Proverbs 14:16).
- 9.) A wise man will hear and will increase in learning (Proverbs 15:5). You know what? There are different levels in learning. You know that? There are different levels in learning. All the time that I have been with people in the ministry, all the time that I have dealt with people, I have watched people choose what level they were going to go to and choose what level they were going to stop at. One of the most amazing things, that is one of these days I will write a book on it. Watching human nature as Gentiles. You all get the same Bible. You all have the same Holy Spirit. You all have the same Bible. You all have the same access to me as anybody else does. Why do some of you get the higher levels than others? Choice. Choice. Your first level is discipleship. From that point you choose whatever level you get to. I have seen so many of God's people get to a level and say, "This is where I am going to stop. I am not going any farther than this." Many reasons for it. Many reasons for it. But there are levels in learning, and a wise man will hear and increase in learning. There will never be a time that they do not want to go to another level. There will never be a time that they will choose to let anything, anybody, or anything else in this world come in that will take them from that learning level.

Now a fool on the other hand:

- 1.) He despises wisdom (Proverbs 1:7).
- 2.) He mocks sin (Proverbs 14:9).
- 3.) He meddles in other people's business (Proverbs 20:3).
- 4.) They slander (Proverbs 10:18).
- 5.) They are like a dog; they return to their vomit (Proverbs 26:11). Talked about that last week in probably more graphic detail than you needed.
- 6.) They are unto the end of the earth (Proverbs 17:24). Never satisfied. Always want something else. Always want something more.
- 7.) They resist punishment for correction (Proverbs 17:10).
- 8.) They trust their own heart (Proverbs 28:26).

That is a fool in the Bible. You know how you know when I am dealing with people? I have people all the time. People all the time will come, and if you are a parent out here, this is how you know what you got with your kid. Because this is how I know what I got with my church. There are some people you get along with just fine, and everything is cool, and you are best of buddies, and she is a great little gal, and he is a great guy, until you have to deal with him on an issue. Then you find out they are not your friend anymore. You got your children a lot the same way. You know how you are going to know if you got godly children or not? The first time you have got to correct them. The first time you say, "You cannot do this, this is not a good choice." If they respond to you, do you know what you got? If they reject it, then you know what you got.

Life is choices. The Bible says we are Gentiles, the thing that we do. We take the glory of God and change it to something that fits our lifestyle. In doing that, we become vain in our imagination. What does that mean? It means that our imaginations, we still think, were something great with God and serving God when we are not. Our foolish heart becomes darkened. Now I need to say this, so you understand the context, just getting saved does not keep you from becoming a fool. Some of the biggest fools I ever met in my life were parents that were saved. Some of the biggest fools I ever met in my life were pastors that stood in the pulpit and preached. Some of the biggest fools I ever met in life were people that had been saved, and they were on their way to heaven, but somewhere in the process they quit going through the learning levels, and they were satisfied, and then they started taking the glory that was God and putting it on themselves, and the rest is history.

VI. The Gentile Problem: Idolatry and Degeneration

Romans 1:23

And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

Note verse 23 says the word, "into an image as idol." I like American Idol. Like the idols we all have in America. Like the things that we hold up that we spend more time with than God. Idols. That is Gentiles. I am not mad at anybody. That is what Gentiles do. Gentiles, when they reject

God, they will always replace Him with something, and then keep on pretending it is God even when it is not.

I will tell you something. If you would have showed up about six months before Christ made His entry into His public ministry, if we could go back in time, and we could all go there and dress in the garb of the day, so we would be inconspicuous, but we would turn your cell phones off so that they do not get ourselves away. We would be down there, and here we would be, in the land of Palestine, right outside Jerusalem. Christ is only a few short months away from declaring Himself in His public ministry. He is alive now. For 30 years, He has walked that area over there, and now He is getting ready to declare Himself to be the Jewish Messiah. If we would be there those last six months, you know what we would see? I will tell you what we would see the first couple days. We would see a nation that claimed to love God. We would see a nation that was doing all the things that they thought God wanted him to do. We would see a nation that was talking about God all the time. We would see a nation that they read their Bible every day, much more than any of us in this room, including me. We would see a group of people that went to great lengths to do everything, to cross every T and dot every I when it came to the law. We would see a group of people that, when you looked at them from a religious standpoint, how could they be wrong? If you would walk into their temple, you would hear them talk about the Old Testament passages. You would hear them talk about Hosea and Jeremiah and Ezekiel. You would hear them quote Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. You would hear them on every turn, men and women in their homes, teaching their kids about the great lessons in the Old Testament. When Christ showed up, they rejected Him and they killed Him in three and a half years. You know why? All up here. It was all a game. It was all, "Let us pretend we are spiritual, but we are really not. Let us keep the facade up that we are all okay. We are all doing what is right." Oh, but there was no intimate relationship with God. I think it summed up best that they had a form of godliness, but they had denied the power thereof. When the real God showed up encased in flesh, when the Lord Jesus Christ came to His own people and revealed Himself to them as their Messiah, these good, godly, dedicated men and women who studied the Bible, gave alms, raised their children, strict disciplinarians, killed Him on the cross. Well, the Bible says He came unto His own and His own received Him not. They rejected Him. Do not you ever doubt for a minute that many of God's people are the same way this morning. Same way this morning.

Gentiles always, when they reject God, they will always replace it with something else and then pretend it is God. In Exodus chapter 12 through chapter 32, there is a great story there where the children of Israel came out of Egypt in bondage. God tells them in Exodus chapter 20, they are not to make any other gods, clearly, when they got the Ten Commandments. If you did not believe me, it was on television last night. Oh, you all knew that, did not you, huh? How many watched, to be honest? Oh, I love it. I love it. I love it. Right up there with Wizard of Oz with me, I love it. That is what I love about Easter and Christmas. You always got the religion. I am sure sometimes today, Ben Hur will be on. Well, that is what I am talking about. Oh, man, that chariot race is something else. If it comes, Wizard of Oz and Ben Hur comes on this afternoon, Ben Hur is winning out over that one. But I am telling you, oh, then that is it. Everybody, you know, they brought him out and he said, Exodus chapter 20, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." What happened? Chapter 32, Moses goes up, excuse me, Charlton Heston goes up

on the mountain to get the Ten Commandments. But what do they do? They make a golden calf. Why? There is not two weeks passes between this time. They make a golden calf. When Moses finally comes down and looks at it, Aaron says, and they all look at him like, "You got a problem here? We love God." Now, you know where they learned that? Because Jews, Shemites, do not think like Japhethites, Gentiles. You know where they got that concept of golden calf? That is not a Jewish thing. They got that from Egypt. That is a Gentile thing. That is what Gentiles do.

You talk about evolution, only a Gentile could come up with evolution. You know why? Because Gentiles always take God's creation and want to bring it back down to some kind of man, some kind of animal. So we got evolution. It comes from an animal. "I once was a tadpole, my tail tucked in, then I was a frog when I began to begin, then I was a monkey in a banyan tree, and now I am a scholar with a PhD." That is how it works. That is Gentiles. That is Gentiles. That is Gentiles.

Verse 23 says, man changed the incorruptible glory of God to the corruptible man, and the birds, and the four-footed beasts, the creeping thing. That is the guy who went out with it last week. That is Gentiles. That is what we do. The greatest joke that God ever played on man is to get man to get the idea that he is evolved up. When in actuality, if you know your Bible, you are evolving down. Man is not going from here up. He is going where God had him in the garden, down. Man did not come from an animal, but he is going into an animal when he departs from God.

You know what? We do not have time this morning. But you do not see this. The way you see this so clearly is if you just study the history, the greatest one is Europe. Then you look at America. You know what? Did you ever see, and you probably have not, but sometime in your life you ought to take what I call a Biblical study of music. One of the greatest single studies that shows you how it starts and then how it gets to where it is at today. It is incredible. You can take music and you can put it basically into five different categories coming through history. It starts in Europe. I mean, the real music we find starts in the Bible. You come through our own history. You have in the history of Europe what they call the Baroque period. That is where music is beginning to get its form. They begin to get its concepts. Harmonies begin to come in. The melodies begin to be formed. We find at the end of the Baroque period, which runs about 1100 to 1400, a guy by the name of Bach. He ends the Baroque period and enters in what we nominally know the next period is the Classical period. You know what the music, the great composers are in the Classical? It is men like Bach, Handel, Mozart, Gluck, Haydn. You know what their music does? Their music glorifies God. Everything, why even today, when they come around Christmastime, the great song they sing Handel's Messiah. "And He shall live forever and ever." That is Revelation chapter 19. That is Handel, the Messiah. To this day, it is called Classic.

Now, you want to take that? You will find that Bach comes on the scene, who writes his music glorifying God with another contemporary of his, Martin Luther. What Martin Luther does for the German Reformation, of bringing the Bible through Europe, Bach does with the music that glorifies God. You can trace through history in Europe how they treated the Bible and what they thought about the Bible as where the music went. Because as the Bible fades off and the whole thing goes dead in Europe, we move into the 1750s into the Romantic period. Now this is where

Gentiles who have lost the power of God in their life, lost the work of God in their life. The churches that once came out of the Reformation that were on fire for God have now become dead, and the music goes dead. You are not only seeing it in music, you are seeing it in architecture, you are seeing it in literature, you are seeing it in the sculptures, you are seeing it in the painters. It shifts from the glory of God now to the glory of man. The art now portrays the human body. The painters now paint the human body. The music now portrays the natural movement of a man's expression of himself. We have Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Tchaikovsky. Why by the time he writes his 1812 symphony, you can listen into that thing, you can actually hear the canons going off. You can actually hear the guns, it is all expressive of man's feeling, no more glory of God. By that time the Bible had ceased to be the impact in Europe, it all began to go downhill.

Around the 1900s we have the modern period. This no longer appeals to the expression of himself, but appeals directly to the spirit in a physical sense in every way, to the flesh. Now we begin to see the degeneration of man as into the natural period. This is basically bringing man back to the animal kingdom, where now the music is all about the perversionist. Why you can hear Wagner's Ride of the Valkyries, which are demons, and begins to open up. You can actually visualize the demon flying through space. You hear the Sorcerer's Apprentice, and you can actually see the black magic and the witchcraft by music being performed. It is all sensual, it is all in the flesh. It is all desired for man's because man, when he has been touched by God, Gentiles, he will always take the glory of God and make it like the man, or the animals.

By the time this thing moves into the 60s and the 70s, all the rock groups, all the music groups, you ever wonder why they all take animal names? You ever wonder why Rock and Roll started with a group called Beatles? Those are creeping things. Three Dog Night, The Animals, The Monkees. Then it moves into the satanic, The Grateful Dead, Twisted Sister. When they get up there and they cannot just play music, they have got to now kill chickens on stage. Music degenerates like Gentiles, like everything else when he loses God.

There is a church in this city not far from here that boasts they have a jazz group. Let me tell you something. If I told you what the word jazz originally means, and where it started, and its real contents, I would not say it in a mixed audience. It is the most filthy, godless, depraved sort of word that connected with a godless, depraved sort of music. I would not even say it in a mixed group. Some of you guys asked me what it means. I will bless when I tell you. I mean, what do you think was the mindset behind Rock and Roll? Well, that is a long way from when Benny Goodman wrote "In the Mood." Was he talking about a prayer meeting?

We come to the place as Gentiles, where we lose sight of how the Bible impacts everything. Yes, we as Gentiles in this country, we once had God and the Word of God. But as we dump God, God dumped us. Now we find this world, America, just like all the other nations in Europe, totally depraved. The music degenerating itself now to the animals with a sexual context and everything that goes on. I will tell you something else. You see the same thing in churches. My philosophy in life is simply this: never have less doctrine in your songs that you sing than you do in your sermon. We have a little hymnal down there. It is called Great Hymns of the Faith. You know why? Because they are written during a period of time. Check it out sometime. Look at the

dates of those hymnals. Every one of them were written when the King James Bible was supreme during those 300 years. They are the songs that were forged with Bible doctrine.

I heard Roy last week get up and sing his song, “Ganny This Morning.” He sang his song. You sit back there and brother, there is no expression. There is no feeling. There is no emotion that comes into it. You hear somebody talking about Mount Calvary and Christ dying on the cross or the blood of Christ. There is no room for any impure thought in that. There is no room for anything that will conjure up anything but my Savior dying on the cross. I am telling you, we see it in every aspect, every aspect. We have churches today where they have praise bands to help you praise. I had a pastor tell me one time, “Well, I just cannot get into preaching without that praise band firing me up.” Well, let me tell you something, Buster. If you need some fleshly band to fire you up before you get up and preach, and the power of the Word of God in your heart is not enough to do it, you better go to Barber College. Here, J Truck Driving School. Call it. But that is where we are at today. We need something to jump start us in our relationship with God.

VII. Gentile Holidays and Symbols

Is not what this is all about today? Easter? The word Easter is the word Ashtar. God of fertility. I will give you a million dollars. You show me anybody in that Bible that is having an Easter service before 400 A.D. with Constantine. You say, “Well, you could not get that much money together.” Pow, I would get it together before you find the place. Now, you know why it is colored eggs? Rabbits? Because Easter, Ashtar, was the God of fertility. In your Ashtar bonnet with all your frills upon it, in the Ashtar parade. So you have rabbits, fertile, and then some. Who lay eggs? Eggs is the Egyptian symbol of fertility. Now, do I look like some pious gas bag? No. Do we not have the Easter bunny running up and down here this morning, roasting a bunny suit for the kids? Yeah. I am not so hard to get along with. We are burning her at the stake as we speak out back. Did you not see me bring these little kids up and give them Easter presents? Did you not see all the colored eggs that they had? My own granddaughter had 89,800 eggs. You are going to tell me I am against Easter? Do not go out here and say, “Well, I am not against it.” We have the whole concept today. I am against you not knowing the difference.

Christmas? You really think Christ was born on December 25th? That is the birthday of Baal the sun god. I take you back to Jeremiah chapter 10, show you a Christmas tree back there, set up to the pagan idols that Israel was involved in with the Gentiles long before Santa Claus ever got his first birthday. I guarantee you, we have a Christmas tree in our house. We call them Baal poles. I may know it is wrong, but I like presents. Seventeen and a half, thirty-three length. Hey, I am smart enough to know that you are not going to change it. You have got pastors are out there. We do not have Christmas. We do not do Christmas. I always thought it was funny. I always said, “Well, we do not do Christmas as pagan.” Then I asked them, “Do you do Easter?” “Oh, we have got the greatest cantata you ever had in your life.” Did you say a hot cantata or just a what kind of cantata was it? You do not do Christmas, but you do Easter. Ashtar. She is goofy people are. How do they tell me one time? “Well, you know, I do not let my kids do how you are Christians.” Gentile Christians are the screwiest people in the world. Notch.

I knew a church one time that they had all these rules that if a woman wore slacks, you were out. You got slacks. So you got slacks. I get a pastor's wife. What are you doing? You hussy. You know what? They get up all these rules for you to keep. When I preach, I never preach a set of rules. You know why? Because I learned that human nature always gets around the rules. I do not preach rules. I preach to your heart. You got the right heart with God. You got the right stuff on today. This church was so screwy that the girls could not wear slacks. So when they went out to ski someplace in Montana or wherever they went, the girls had to wear snow suits. They had to wear dresses over the snow suit to make God happy. Right? I am guaranteed it is right. We get the screwiest ideas.

I was making an announcement one time years ago in a church I was at and I got up and I made a cardinal mistake. Because it was New Year's Eve and we were going to have a movie. One of those Bob Jones University monstrosities, you know. I got up and made the announcement and I said, "Now New Year's Eve, the movie is going to start at 7 o'clock." Oh, I got pulled and the pastor's off towards me. You know what he said to me, Ray? He says, "Never call it a movie. It is a film." I learned the great truth. See, when you get up and you make announcements, you say it is a movie, God goes [sound]. But when you say film, God goes [sound]. I learned. We are the screwiest people on planet Earth. We like to take everything. Oh, hey, let me tell you something. This is what Gentiles do. When they know God, they take Him and make Him into something else.

You go back 1,000 years to the Roman, 2,000 years to the Roman Empire, you know what it was? It was Saturday night at the Colosseum. Today it is Saturday night football. Same thing. Back then they took Christians, put them in the arena and let wild animals tear them apart, eat them up. Like somebody walked in to the head groundskeeper to the Colosseum back in 2000 or 200 A.D. And he said, "We have got to do something with all these lions." He said, "Why is that? They are eating up all the prophets." Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I am just as hip as anybody. Get my hair a little fluffier in the back. You are going to think I am Joel Osteen. Yeah. Back then they got Christians and they fed them to the lions. Now, when we go down to the Chiefs' Cathedral, it is the same thing. It is just more sophisticated. You think that in the cathedral down there? You know what a person said one time? He said, "You know what I like about you, Bob?" And I said, "What is that?" I said, "You are about God. You are a fanatic." And I said, "Okay, I am sorry." No, I am not sorry, but I am a fanatic. Okay. Then I watched him in a Chiefs game. Talk about fanatic. I watched him in a Chiefs game. Talk about fanatic. He was yelling, screaming, "Go, go, go, go." Every time somebody did the wrong thing, he was yelling everybody. Now that is, you know where the word, you know where the word fan comes from? It comes from the word fanatic. You got football fanatics. I just happen to be a Bible fanatic. What is wrong with that?

A lot of you are Gentile because Gentiles like to make things like animals. So that is why you will go down there to Chiefs Stadium and you will watch them play the Broncos, the Dolphins, the Lions, the Bears. You notice the Jews will never name their sports thing after animals. That is what Gentiles do. That is what Gentiles do. Why? Because they are always taking everything that came from God and they have got to make it into some kind of thing with animals. They have

got the Bears, the Eagles, the Rams, the Buffalo Bills, the Seahawks, the Jayhawks, the Longhorns. Well, that is what Gentiles do.

Deuteronomy 4:15

Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire:

Deuteronomy 4:19

And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.

You know why he told him that? Because that is what the Gentile nations were doing. That is what they were doing. We as Christians, what part do not we understand about that? But that is what we do as Christians. We follow that same trap. We follow the same line of reading down the road.

Romans 1:23

And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

When you talk about a Gentile nation, America, our national bird is an eagle. Russia, it is a bear. England, a lion. Italy, plate of spaghetti, I guess. I never looked up Italy. We are all got to fashion ourselves like animals because that is what Gentiles do. You know what Israel's national symbol is? It is an olive branch. Out of Romans chapter 9 and 11. Oh, I know, I know, I know, I know. No, no. Israel is the five-pointed star of David. Yeah, right. You know what they got the five-pointed star of David? They got it from Gentiles. You know what the five-pointed star of David is? It is their God, Rephidim, in Acts chapter 7, verse 43.

Acts 7:43

Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

I will never forget. Show you how Gentile Christians get, how whacked out they get. I will never forget. Years ago, I was in Europe and we had a group of people with us and there was another pastor, or several pastors and their wives. I was minding my own business. We were on a train going to Dusseldorf or someplace. I will never forget. She was sitting across the way and I was reading the Bible. She had around her neck one of those little five-pointed star of David, star of David, you know, had around her neck. It was nice. We were back and forth there. She was asking me some questions about the Bible. I was talking to her and she said, "Oh," she said, somehow got into it. She says, "Oh," she says, "I am a Jewish Christian." And I said, "Oh, really?" She said, "Yes." She said, "This is why I wear the star of David. Because I want to identify with the Jews." I was kind, but I said, "You know, that is a demon you got hanging around your neck." Do you know the five-pointed star of David? First of all, the same million

dollar deal, show me the star of David anywhere in the Bible. David was not associated with a star. I bet you do not even know who was associated with a star, do you? It was not David. You know where the star of David comes from? The star of David comes from Acts chapter 7, verse 43 when it talks about the demon God that Israel had, or the God of Remphan. You know what his symbol was? Five-pointed star. So I said that to her, figuring that she would want me to help her out. Do anybody here that wants a demon around your neck? Do not put your hand up. I do not want to know that. If you were a Christian and you had a demon on your neck, would you want me to swat him off? Well, she got mad. She got mad. Like, I made this up. And I said, "Ma'am, I just thought you would want to know." She says, "Well, you have desecrated my belief." And I said, "Well, if that is the case, open up your Bible. I want to desecrate some other things for you that I see you are wearing too. We will get that all taken up." It was not a good journey. Not a good journey. Dusseldorf was a long way down the road. Long way down the road. I felt like somebody was going to come in any moment and say, with a big black leather overcoat, with a big hat on, saying, "Your papers are not in order." Come back to the train.

She had a crucifix around her neck. No, I do not get off on these things. But since we were all in our neck, I asked her, and she said, and I said, she says, "I guess you have something to say about this." And I said, "Well, now that you brought it up," I said, "you know that the Bible says that in Galatians, that a cross, cursed thing. Cursed is he that hangs on a cross?" You realize there is nothing. I can see I am going to lose my crowd now. I just want you to go, the wind is going to go out of here. I said, "You know," I said, "you realize that the cross comes in at Constantine in 400 A.D. and there is not. And it is not a Christian symbol." And she said, "Well, it is the mode by which my Lord died." And I said, "Well, I am sure glad he was not electrocuted in electric chair. You wear a little electric chair around your neck then? How about if you were shot with a firing squad, little M16 around your neck? Or maybe it was a bolt-action Mauser back then. I am not sure." You know what? Let me tell you something. You realize, and I am not fighting any of it. I have not even got into little fish pins that come out of First Samuel 5 with Dagon, the half God, half fish man. We will get into that some other point. But you know what? I do not care about that stuff. My point is this. That is what Gentiles do. They always take the glory of God and try to make it like some kind of animal or man or creeping thing.

I do not care. I really do not. But I want you to get this. If you got a Star of David at home, please do not throw it away. Do not sell it on eBay if you want to, but do not throw it away. If your grandmother, and here is the other problem right now. I know some place in this room, somebody's grandma is up in heaven right now. God bless her soul. Gave you her crucifixion. You hold it as the nearest, dearest thing to your heart. Now I have desecrated the memory of your grandmother, your cross, and I will tell you what. You know what? Keep it. Keep it. You never know when you are going to run into a vampire and it will burn a little sucker down the forehead. But keep it. Keep it. But here is the bottom line. This is all I want you to get. None of those things make you spiritual. None of those things make you spiritual. You know what makes you Christian? Not the junk you wear around your neck. It is what you have got inside your heart. It is all I am trying to tell you. Real Christianity is not about what we wear. It is not about what we wear.

I have seen pastors, I know pastors today that think that if you do not wear a suit when you preach, that you are out of fellowship with God. A pastor friend of mine was so off the wall on that, he went out in Colorado skiing one time with some friends and he wore a three-piece suit and tie underneath his ski suit so he could stay in fellowship with God. Now you know what? The only one that can help a guy like that is Western Missouri Mental Health. Three rivers. It is two rivers but it will be three when he gets there. I do not know what to tell you. Nothing that you wear makes you spiritual. What is spiritual about you is not what you have got on. There is nothing more holy about you than the look you have in your face right now. What is really God about you is what is in here. But we are Gentile. We change that. You ought to be like Moses when he came off the mountain. We ought to be able to turn the lights out in a dark room and the place just shine. Because when Moses had been with faith shown like the sun and the people came down and they said, "Whoa," I mean before he ever got down there, "Whoa, is that a mini-bus coming down the road there?" No, we do not have mini-bus in back there. "Well, what is that?" It was Moses. His face because he had been with God. Moses, you did not see him coming down with a big old cruiser.

I was driving down the road. We were coming up from someplace downtown the other day and there was a man. He had a big... I mean, this cross was probably... It was not a bar. This cross had to be 20 feet long in a big cross and he is going down the freeway dragging it. He wants everybody to know that I guess that Christ died on the cross. I guess, I do not know, I wanted to stop and ask him if he really wanted to do this, get the little wheels off the back. The back of the cross had a little set of wheels on it so it would go. I never read in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John where the Roman soldier never gave me a little set of wheels. I must have missed that. I thought to myself as we drove by, I do not even know the guy, but I knew this. That is exactly what we do as Christians. We want to bear His cross. We just want to add some wheels to it, do not we? Yes, we do. Yes, we do.

Romans 1:23

And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

You ever notice the four main holidays we have as Gentiles? This is why this message is so important today. It says the first day of the glory of God, they make a lack of an incorruptible man, be Santa Claus. You know what Santa Claus over in Europe is? He is dressed like Christ. You know what Christ-kringle means? Chris-Kris-kringle? Christ-Christos? The anointed one? Christ? He is called St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas. That is the Roman Catholic part in St. to the children. I mean, where in the world do you find a story about a man who lives eternally, who comes once a year and brings presents to everybody, who lives north, that seemingly lives forever, who is eternal, who is a nice big grandfather type, and he gives good gifts to people? Like the Bible says, "If you being evil know how to give gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good gifts to none than ask him?" You know what we do with Gentiles? We take that and we make Christmastime. That is why when people go to church, it is not about Christ's birth anymore. You think Macy's, Penny's, and

Saks, and Fifth Avenue and all that, they think they care about the birth of Christ? No, it is kaching, kaching, kaching to them. That is what it is about.

He said, he said, “changed the glory of an incorruptible God like corruptible man.” Then he says, “birds.” So we have Thanksgiving. You ever notice that is our national holiday of Gentiles? Thanksgiving, America anyhow, Thanksgiving? You know that it has nothing to do with the Pilgrim Fathers, they did not have turkey to eat. Do you know what they had to eat back then? Well, it was not what we have to eat. Now we say, “Give Thanksgiving.” Thanksgiving for what? We do not remember anymore. So he says, “change the glory of an incorruptible God, make unlike the corruptible man and the birds and four-footed beasts.” That is today. That was that little rabbit running up and down out there with little covered eggs. Then he says, “under creeping things,” there is your Halloween.

Why is it that Gentiles have this obsession of taking the glory of God, making it from God’s birth, if you want to take it that way, and make a Santa Claus? To the resurrection, make it a rabbit. To Thanksgiving, make it a turkey. Then to go to the creeping things for Halloween. Ladies said to me one time, Christian, you know Christians are death on Halloween. It is all right. It is all right to have the pagan Christmas and Easter, but boy Halloween. She said to me one time, she said, “My kid is not dressing up like a demon.” I said, “You have not obviously worked down in nursery with your cub down there, have you?” I said, “You cannot dress him up to make any better demon than he already is when he is down there in the elementary division.” Ha! People are nuts. Another lady said to me one time, she said, “Well, I am not having my, I do not believe in Halloween.” I said, “Oh, really?” She said, “Yeah.” She says, “I am not having my kid dress up pretending he is something and he is not.” I said, “Oh, you like you and your husband? Come to church every Sunday? Never won anybody to Christ? You mean like that?” See how goofy we are?

Now, you know what? Hey, I do not have a problem anything as long as I understand it. As long as I know what the score is. As long as I understand this is what Gentiles do because I have got to work with Gentiles. I am not against any of those things. I just know the Colossians chapter 1, verse 16 and 17 was written to the New Testament church. The Church of Colossae tells me that there are no holy days for me as a Christian today. Now, if you want to throw some in for good times, I am all for it. My family gets together. We have a great time. Your family gets together. Hey, you know what? Christmas and holidays and all getting together was found in the greatest times in the world. You have more fights and good knockdown dragouts with your in-laws you have not seen for so many years. It is a great time to have. I am all for it. I do not care. I just know that is not where my spirituality lies. That is where your spirituality should not lie. It is just that simple. A wise man, the Bible says, will increase knowledge. You will learn these things. But this is what Gentiles do. Take the uncorruptible image of God and make it like corruptible man. I am not out to stop it. I just do not want to be deceived by it.

Paul was writing Romans chapter 1 to us as a church and believers so we might have some fruit among the Gentiles. What I just gave you today, and even though some of it was funny, some of it probably made you mad. I hope all of it made you think. You know, and I had people, you know, they walk away from something like this and say, “Well, he is just a cult leader.” A cult

will tell you what to think. I never want to tell you what to think, but I hope what I say makes you think. That is the difference. I do not want to tell you what to think. I am not into micromanagement. I preach the Bible. I already told you early on life is choices. Good ones and bad ones. Wise, a foolish man. Vain and wise. Those were the choices lie. I just want you to be informed. I want you to understand when you work with people and I work with people. This kind of information is absolutely invaluable. It tells me why people look at the things the way they do, why they say what they say, why they go the places they go. I am not out to change it. I am out to better understand it so when I get a chance to talk to them about God, I got an insight into where they are at. For your information, well, happy Ashtar.

Every head bowed, every eye closed. Father, we thank and praise You for the Lord Jesus.