

The moral compass

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[0:00] Yeah, thank you, Mike, for sharing there on unity. I feel like that goes real well with what, if I can put it all together.

Sometimes I feel like, I don't know if I can get it together where it's understandable or not, but if I can, what my thoughts are this morning, that that goes real well together with it.

What moral choices today and the lies our culture tells us, and with this what I'm wanting to look at is, I would come from a Mennonite background.

A lot of y'all would probably come from the Amish background. And how that so much of that is entailed in rules. In rules, it almost is like a box.

And what happens when we take that away. And I'm not saying this to be critical or start arguments or any of that stuff.

[1:03] It's actually so that we can, I want to look at this, that we can be more understanding and compassionate. And even for ourselves, understand where we are at this point in our lives.

If we're still, you know, if we're settled where we are or still unsettled in this. But it's just when you take away all these rules.

Well, first of all, I want to go ahead and read John 4. From John 4, verse 13 and 14. This is kind of the crux and the basis, I would say, for what I want to say this morning.

And Jesus here is talking to the woman at the well. And he says, and Jesus said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. He's talking about the physical water there at the well that she was drawing.

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst. But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

[2:09] And that's what I want to be the focus this morning. Do we have that? Do we have that well that's springing up? And I think this is a very telling sign that, like I say, when we come out of these settings.

And all of a sudden, we're used to these rules and everything around us. And all of a sudden, they're taken away. What happens? Where do we go? So I think, and I say this, you know, because we'll make comparisons, whatever it does.

But I think I would compare rules to crutches. And crutches can be a good thing. They can, like say I hurt my leg really bad. And I'm on crutches.

That can be a good thing temporarily. But if I just stay and keep using those crutches, refuse to use my leg, refuse to, eventually it becomes useless to me.

And I'm just relying on the crutches. And that's what I think I see so often in looking at these things. I guess this last couple weeks and talking with a lot of people is what kind of really brought this to my mind.

[3:17] But the more we rely on these things, the more we rely on rules as our crutches, sometime or another, those crutches are going to be kicked out from under.

And if we don't have a moral compass, and that moral compass has to be in Jesus, has to be in this well that's springing up from inside. If we don't have that, don't have that moral compass, we're going to fall flat.

And that's what I want to look at today in these lies that culture tells us. One of the greatest lies we are told is that in pleasure lies our fulfillment.

That's what the culture, they want us to catch these things. Pleasure unbounded by God's boundaries will leave you emptier than before. It's always a fact.

When we go outside of God's boundaries for these pleasures, it's always going to leave us emptier than before. And in thinking about these things and thinking about the rules, the boundaries, this morning it made me think about, and if you all can just get this picture, word picture in your mind, I always loved when spring came there on the dairy farm and I could turn my cows out to pasture.

[4:38] I could turn them out to this nice, lush, green pasture out there. And so they were, you know, always when they'd see that pasture, they would head to it, you know, run to it.

But usually it was mostly the older cows, the more whatever, they'd go in and they'd, you know, run a little bit, but then they'd start eating and they'd settle down. But you would always, and it may be so aggravated, you would always have this group of them that would have to follow that fence the whole way around the field, run and jump and tearing up the field, tearing up grass, good grass.

Had to follow that the whole way around the field, not even halfway, the whole way around and make sure. And if they would either, if there was a gap or they'd make one, make a hole in the fence.

And here they were, this lush green field, and then they'd end up out in the briars to brush the stickers because they jumped the fence. And they're still out there tearing around thinking they're having a good time.

They're not in the field. They're not, you know, where the good is. They're not, where I say this, the well of springing water. Can we get, if we can get, and so often how do I get this picture in my mind, God looking down on us.

[5:51] How often are we that God has given us everything we need, this big green pasture, and instead of being content and being, we're ripping around, looking for the edges.

And I think so often that, that was probably me, well it was me. When I was that, you know, left, and you just, these rules are gone, and then you're, you're, where are the boundaries?

You're looking. And so often that's, and the devil loves that. He can get us out here into the briars, and we're still telling ourselves, oh, I'm having a good time, but we're just stomping around in the briars out there somewhere.

But we're telling ourselves, oh, this is, you know, I'm having fun. But it, like I say, it never brings fulfillment. It never brings that true fulfillment. And what I wanted to, the other thing I wanted us to picture is that the older cows, the ones that, that went and laid down or, or just were, were grazing there, that, that to me, the word picture I wanted to give is that those are the ones that are enjoying that well of springing water.

They, they are satisfied, and they're, again, in that, if we're, if we are that person, we'll probably get accused of being religious.

[7:05] You know, you're all, you just, you're, you're content, you're whatever. And there is a side of looking for, you know, seeking more of God, I guess, or, or a closer relationship with Jesus.

But in that, we go back to what is it, the, the well of, it's his word, the, the well that should, should be inside of us. We go back to that. We don't have to go running, looking for the allurements, running the fences is what I would call it all the time, looking for those things.

And we will, I, I've come to the conclusion, we will get accused of being religious. And, and I'm, I'm okay with that. I'm, I've come to the point. I'm, I'm fine with that. We're going to get accused of that.

But I believe God is looking for that person, the, the, the group. And there again, it goes to this unity that, that Mike was talking about that are content and just willing to stay there in where he has forced.

And the, the, also I wanted to say too, and along with that unity, where we find that true unity, Mike, as I'm convinced is here at the, when we have that well of Jesus springing up inside of us, when we have that life, that's where we're going to find it.

[8 : 20] I'm not going to find it trying to convince Mike that everything I think is right, or Aaron trying to convince me that everything he thinks is right. That's not where we're going to find unity. It's where, where we're going to find it is in Christ.

And, and when we come together and we, as brothers and sisters, we're going to see some things differently. But anyways, that was just a side note. I, I really appreciated what you had said.

And that's where we're going to find unity. Um, first Peter, uh, three, I want to look at some verses here in first Peter.

Um, starting at verse eight there again, the other side of this thing, and this is where I'm saying, I want us to, to, as we're thinking about these things and, and understanding what is causing this, what is, uh, because I don't have this moral compass that, that comes in Christ.

When I'm just relying on these rules that I don't just, when I see somebody go off, I don't just write them off. I was there. We, I think if we're all honest, we probably pretty much all were there at one time.

[9 : 31] Let's remember that. Let's have compassion and let's not just, uh, uh, write these, uh, you know, people off. It's easy to, you know, because hurtful things will be said, um, and all those things that go with it.

Verse eight, finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another. Love as brethren, be piteous, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrary wise blessing, knowing that ye therefore thereunto called that you should inherit a blessing.

For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no evil. Let him eschew evil and do good.

Let him seek peace and ensue it for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are upon their prayers. But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

Um, this first part here that I was looking at, you know, so often we get and we see some of these people that, that get what they think.

[10 : 40] They think they're ultra spiritual, I guess, or whatever you want to call it. Um, and, um, they, they can't, well, in this first verse here, he says, be all of one mind.

It goes with what Mike was saying about unity. But then what's he say here? He says, having compassion one for another. Um, can we love each other even when we see things a little different?

Uh, and, and in that, try to understand where that person is coming from, where, where, why we're seeing things different, where, where they, they have a different upbringing.

And that's one thing that I've seen so much too, is that our upbringings, I've brought up a whole lot different than a lot of y'all here.

And we have to have understanding for each other because, um, just because I was brought up different than you doesn't put any of us on any different level than each other.

[11:35] But that I can understand and have that. It says, love as brethren, be pitiful. And it doesn't mean that, that means be, you know, pity other, pity others.

Don't, um, not pitiful of yourself. Be courteous. Um, not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing. And that's one there that, that, um, I think comes closer to home than we often want to admit is the railing for railing.

Because somebody else says stuff and maybe a piece of it's true, but they go way beyond truth. And boy, you just want to go back and, and let them have it.

Um, that's not godly. That's, for one thing, the person is probably not going to hear what you're saying anyway. But you need to understand in your own heart, be settled with that either that person was going through something or they're not at a good place in their life.

And you, and you got to pass that, those things off. Don't rail back, um, because, uh, we have, we are called, he says, to inherit a blessing. And, uh, he that will love life and see good, good days, let his, reign his tongue from lips, from his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile.

[13:00] And I thought about that one too. You know, how easy is it for us to, to go around? And, and I guess most of the time it seems like it's to make ourselves look better or make us look more right.

But we go around, we make all kinds of excuses for it. But I go around and tell people things about Mike that they don't need to know, don't need a whatever. And so, like I say, some of the time, usually in those things, it's twisted.

There's things taken out of context, but that we've got to sometimes, somehow run others down to make ourselves look better. And that, that is just so backward.

It's so, he talks about having compassion. And I, I'm getting a little bit off, but what I'm, I'm trying to bring this in is when we're dealing with people that have, that have left, or a different point than we are when they've left a situation where there was rules around them, that we can be understanding, that we can, um, um, try to understand where they're coming from.

Another thing, and this is something that I forgot to mention is back when I was talking about the cows and the pasture, Chesterton once said years ago, he said that always when, always, whenever you move a fence, always pause long enough to figure out why it was there in the first place.

[14:24] And, um, we just, we just, we just go and we don't have any, any, like I said, that moral compass.

We don't know where to stop. And we need to pause and, and figure out, um, why that was. And especially we need to pause.

God has boundaries in his word. And we need to be sure that we're not in thinking that we have freedom and all we don't need this fence that then running and overstepping the boundaries in his word.

Cause that's the ultimate one. I, I never, I guess, really finished the ultimate picture of that pasture that I wanted to give is the, the, the, the fence, the outside, you know, that there is boundaries.

God has boundaries in his word. And so that, that's the, the boundaries that we, that we want to, to stay inside of is, is the boundaries of God's word.

[15:29] I'm not worried about man-made rules or fences, but that we don't in, in moving, getting so excited and moving them and running over them that we run outside of God's boundaries.

Just because we see that this, in our minds, isn't something, um, for us. Um, see, 2 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 12.

Another thing that the, um, world wants to, uh, uh, wants us to tell us and wants us to believe is that, um, that, um, serving God is this drudgery and, um, yeah, that, well, you have Jesus now and you have freedom that, that come enjoy some of these things outside and outside of that.

And meaninglessness does not come from being weary of pain. And we're going to see here from Paul in just a little bit here. Meaninglessness in life comes from being weary of pleasure.

And you, first you might think, uh, that's not, but if you stop and think, then look back at your life. Look back when you thought you were having the most fun times of your life.

[17:08] And after that, what it brought you, um, 2 Corinthians 12, 9 and 10. And he said unto me, and this is Paul talking here.

Um, it's, it, it, he was, uh, Satan. Well, God had given him the thorn in the flesh to, to keep him from, um, being overly exalted in himself above measure because of, of, uh, all the gifts that he had given him.

And then he says, so he's talking about, uh, he's talking about God. And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee. My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my firm infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

You know, I for myself yet haven't come to that point. I don't believe where I want to be that I can rejoice in my infirmities.

I, I, I want to be, I, I, I can look back in the past and, and I see where I have benefited and whatever. But Paul here, he was, he said, I take pleasure in my, in infirmities and reproaches and necessities.

[18:22] Um, so he had come to that point, but that's the point where, that, that I would like to get to because, like I said, meaninglessness does not come from being weary of pain.

If we're, if we're, uh, uh, uh, suffering for Christ, there is always that underlying Christ, uh, the, the, the, well, like we talked about the well of, uh, uh, uh, of everlasting water that's inside, springing up inside of us.

We have that, but meaninglessness will come from being weary of our pleasures, from, from just looking and running from the next one thing to the next.

Um, what we think we can find pleasure and fulfillment in. Um, uh, Philippians 4.

Verses, um, 11 and 12. Not that I speak in respect of want, for I've learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.

[19:38] I know both how to be a base and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

And so, yeah, like I say that we, as we're coming out of these things and that we're, we're, um, trying to build that moral compass that Jesus, uh, through Christ, that he wants us to have.

That we don't get caught up in this thing, this lie that the, that the, uh, our culture wants to tell us. That, that we're just, you know, out there, always out there as that is the, the pleasure, the next, um, um, fun thing.

And it's always out there. It's always around the corner. It's always elusive. It just keeps taking you farther. Like I was saying, the picture of the pasture, it just takes you farther and farther. And then it takes you farther out in the brush, out in the, in the no man's land wilderness.

Um, one thing, and I getting off subject here just a little bit, but I do want to say then too, is in the verse 13, he talks about, he says, I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me.

[20 : 49] And that's a very true verse, but that right there brings up where, how people use verses so much out of context. We see it all over t-shirts and everything.

Look aware in context of what Paul's talking about. He's talking about following Christ and suffering for Christ. And then he says, I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.

It doesn't mean I want to go out there and win a golf game or, or whatever. And so I grabbed this verse and I can do all things. Um, it's just very frustrating to me. I have just a little side note there that, um, it's so very frustrating to me how people use these verses.

And in context, it's very true. Um, when we're suffering, uh, uh, through Christ, in Christ for, for things, he will be there and he will take us.

Um, another verse that, that I like, and I want us to take through the week is, uh, Psalm 37, verse 4. But it's another verse that, that is so often twisted and used wrong.

[21 : 52] Um, delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Right away, we want to latch on to the last part of it. And he shall give you the desires of thine heart.

Now, what's it say? Delight in the, uh, in the Lord, also in the Lord. When we truly delight in the Lord and we want the things that are going to be, uh, um, be, uh, fruitful for eternity.

I don't know exactly the words I want to say, but that'll, that'll have, uh, uh, eternal consequences. And so, if, you know, we're not going to, our desires, our heart aren't going to be for a new car, new truck, or, or whatever.

But anyway, it's getting a little off. But I do want us to, uh, to think on that. Delight thyself also in the Lord, um, as we go through the week. Um, 1 Timothy 6.

1 Timothy 6, 6 through 12.

[23 : 09] But godliness with contentment is great gain. And that's one thing that the world can never understand. The world will never understand that.

Um, another verse that I wanted to mention earlier, and I forgot that it goes with this here, is 1 John 3, 1. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God.

Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. And what I wanted to draw, when I was giving the word picture, what I wanted to, um, pull out with that verse there, was the picture of the cow that, that's, that's content us, when we're content, when we're in, in the green pastures where God wants us and we're content.

The world is going to make fun of us. They're going to laugh at us. They're, they're going to say, you know, like I say, you're religious, or they're going to say, um, you know, all the things that you could be doing.

But it's obvious, God, he says here in the last part, the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. And so as long as they don't know and understand God, his word, they're not going to understand us.

[24 : 26] They're not going to understand why we can be content. And here in, uh, 1 Peter, he's talking about godliness with contentment is great gain. And that there again, that's another verse.

You have to focus on the first part, but godliness with contentment is great gain. Um, contentment is a great thing, but when we're content, when we're a godly person and content, that's when it's great gain.

For we brought nothing into this world and as certain we will carry nothing out and having food and raiment, let us therewith be content. But they that will be rich fall into temptations and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is the root of all evil. And while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. And we see this so much in today, um, the, the name it and claim it religions that are out there.

And it is so sad because so many like that, that have come out of the, the box where the, the rules were holding them in.

[25 : 39] They tend to run for something like this. It sounds glittery. It sounds, uh, you know, that that's where, you know, they promise. They make all kinds of promises. God wants you healthy all the time.

He, he wants you to be rich. And look what it says. And it says that they have erred from the faith and eventually, and they'll pierce themselves through with many sorrows.

It's a, it's another lie that our culture wants to tell us, um, wants us to believe in these things. But then what I want to hear end with on this, on, uh, on this passage here is verses 11 and 12.

And here he tells us, but thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life. Whereunto thou art called and have professed a good profession before many witnesses. Um, what is he saying here?

[26 : 41] He's saying now to follow after what things? To follow after that I'm setting everybody straight, that I'm, you know, this person out there, this apostle or whatever they want to call themselves.

No, he's saying follow after righteousness. Um, if I follow after these things, I'm going to set my life straight. Follow and godliness, faith, love.

And, and Mike talked a lot about in, in, with his unity, uh, of talking about unity. A lot of that was included in love. We forget that so much in, there is times to talk to a brother and, and whatever.

But if we don't do it in loving and don't have love in our hearts, we've failed from the beginning. Patience, meekness. How many of us are, are meek? Um, we remember there what Paul said that, um, uh, in his, in his, uh, um, uh, weakness.

That is when we, that is when we can truly be strong is, is in our weakness. Um, and fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold of eternal life.

[27 : 49] Um, I think so often that is something we forget in all our running to and looking for the next, um, spiritual high or buzz or whatever.

We're looking for, uh, sometimes we don't even know what we're looking for, but we forget that the most important thing is to lay hold on eternal life.

And that is, is where it's at. And, you know, there is nothing greater than having the eternal life, but somehow we let ourselves get programmed to where we want these, these highs and, and these things that, that can take us, I guess, you know, whatever and along.

And that, that, that is a lie of, of the world, the culture, um, in, in Christ, we can be content. We can, we can have true contentment and godliness, and we don't have to be constantly running and running for those things that, um, that are out there and elusive.

And, uh, and, uh, and will never, never bring us, uh, true contentment. We'll never, uh, and they'll always take us where we don't want to go. You know, when we, when we leave that pasture, when we go outside, it's never where we want to go.

[29 : 16] And, um, yeah, there again, I just want us to focus on what I'd started with in, in John 4. For, um, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be to him a well of water springing to everlasting life.

And I think if we truly focus on the, on that, like Mike said, it'll, it'll bring that unity that Mike was talking about. And also, it will, for me, bring compassion when I'm dealing with others.

For one thing, to know that I will, I'm far from right, perfect where I am, for one thing. But also, yeah, it'll truly bring that compassion that I don't just look at them as, well, they're just kind of dumb or, or whatever.

Um, I was there. Um, and, and, and that we truly have the compassion to try to help them. And, and, and sometimes, yeah, they, some, some of them, when they run, they want to run free.

And that's, you know, that is the way it is. But there's, there's a lot of people that can, I believe, can be helped out there if they see true compassion and not just us coming with the right things and beating them over the head and, and just telling them where they are.

[30 : 37] But when we come with compassion and understanding, um, I believe there's a lot of people that we can still help out there. And, yeah, that's just my, uh, heart is that for myself, it's just easy to give up that if people don't see things my way and, and, uh, don't understand, it's just kind of easy to write somebody off.

And, um, I just don't want to be that person that, that wrote somebody off, but the understanding person to try to help them to see these things of where God's boundaries are.

And, uh, sure, man-made boundaries, they'll only do us a certain amount. But when we understand and, and want to obey God's boundaries, that's where we can have that true freedom.

And thank you for listening. Thank you.