



THE SAD CASE OF VANISHING VALUES

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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The Sad Case of Vanishing Values

SERMON REFERENCE: Judges 17:1-13, 18:1-4

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1809

Our nation is in a battle for values; the morals and ethics that made this nation great are eroding before us.

Judges 17 shares an eerily similar sad case of vanishing values. “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6).

As a result, there were families without foundations.

In America today, we are drowning in religion, but none of it is rooted in biblical truth. Our families are morally and spiritually bankrupt. The ethical standard we’ve liberated ourselves from is what’s held society together.

There was also during the time of Judges a lack of principle in their pastors.

Those who preach the Gospel must live the Gospel, and there is an especially high standard for those in vocational ministry.

John 10:12 warns, “But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees...”

Third, values vanish when the government separates itself from God.

Our generation wants what belongs to somebody else; we believe we have the right to take what doesn’t belong to us. We are motivated by greed, materialism and selfishness. We are biblically instructed to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves. But the Bible is also against the misappropriation of other people’s goods through covetousness and dissatisfaction.

Adrian Rogers says, “The Bible teaches that we are to worship God, love people and use things. But what we do is worship things, use people and forget God.”

Romans 1 gives clear warning to the nation whose values begin to vanish. Substituting science for God, practicing idolatry, and developing uncontrollable lusts of the flesh will lead to a death of conscience. The mind becomes morally useless, as every man does that which is right in his own mind.

We must know what the Bible says about values, be active members of a Bible-believing church, and pray for our nation.

Life Application

We are in desperate need of a moral and spiritual revival. Begin by building your family on biblical values; get plugged into the ministry of a God-appointed church and pray for our nation.



The Sad Case of Vanishing Values

SERMON REFERENCE: Judges 17:1-13, 18:1-4

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1809

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) We have had in America an erosion of the values that made this nation great.
- b) What happens when values vanish?
 - i) Judges 17:1-6
 - (1) The name “Micah” means “Who is like the Lord?”
 - (2) There was no authority, except every man being his own authority doing whatever he wished.
 - (a) What is right for me is right, and what is right for you is right.
 - (3) This passage doesn’t say that every man did what was wrong in his own eyes, but that every man did what was right in his own eyes.
 - (a) That is precisely the condition in America today.
 - ii) America is sick, and unless we have a moral and spiritual revival, we are gone as a nation.
- c) We need to bring back the glory to America.
- d) What happened so long ago in Israel and recorded in the book of Judges gives inspiration and information for today.
 - i) In that day as in this day, every man did that which was right in his own eyes.
- e) Today’s message will look at the results of, the reasons for and our response to vanishing values.

2) THE RESULTS OF VANISHING VALUES (Judges 17:1-13, 18:1-4)

- a) Families without foundation.
 - i) Judges 17:1-6
 - (1) This passage tells of an event that took place within a family.
 - (2) Micah had stolen eleven hundred shekels from his mother.
 - (3) Micah’s mother did not know who the thief was and pronounced a curse upon the thief.
 - (4) When Micah found out about the curse, he became frightened and brought the money back.
 - (a) He brought it back out of fear, not conviction.
 - (5) Rather than scolding him, Micah’s mother blessed him.
 - (6) Micah’s mother said that she was going to give the money to the Lord, but she wanted to make some idols out of that money.
 - (a) She took the money to the foundry, and they made an idol.
 - (7) Micah took the idol and put it in his god collection.
 - (a) He had a shelf full of idols in his house, and he added this new idol to that collection.
 - (8) Micah decided that he needed a priest, so he appointed his own priest.
 - (a) All of this was absolute, unmitigated moral confusion.



- (b) They thought they were serving God.
 - (c) They had an aura of godliness about the family.
 - (9) Here was a family with coveting, stealing, cursing, blessing, dishonoring parents and idolatry.
 - (a) They were morally and spiritually bankrupt.
 - (b) They were idolaters thinking that they were serving the Lord.
 - ii) The story of Micah and his family is what is happening in America today.
 - (1) It's not that we don't have religion; we are drowning in religion.
 - (a) We don't have Bible truth or Bible morality.
 - iii) We are seeing a lack of discipline, lack of values and a lack of standards that go right down into the very best families in our churches.
 - (1) We have "fuzz buster" dads who are teaching their sons how to break the speed limit just by their example.
 - (2) There are moms and dads sneaking their thirteen-year-olds into movies, pretending their kids are only twelve years old in order to get a cheaper ticket price.
 - iv) We have a generation that has lost its values.
- b) Pastors without principles.
 - i) Judges 17:7-13
 - (1) The Levites were the priestly people, the clerics of their day.
 - (a) They were the counterpart to today's pastors and ministers.
 - (2) According to the law of God, the Levites were to assist the priest and teach the law.
 - (3) This young Levite was without a place and needed food and clothing.
 - (4) This was a man of God who, purely for money, was going to be the appointed priest of an idolater and wicked man.
 - (a) He was a hireling.
 - (i) Judges 18:4
 - ii) John 10:12-13
 - iii) We have prophets in America who are hirelings.
 - (1) They have not been called of God.
 - iv) Of course, pastors ought to be paid.
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 9:14
 - (2) 1 Timothy 5:17
 - (3) But no man has the right to be a hireling.
 - v) This Levite forsook (if he ever had it) God's calling and authority.
 - (1) Being a hireling, he told the people what they wanted to hear.
 - (a) Judges 18:5-7
 - (i) He told the people to go on in their wicked ways, that it was fine.
 - vi) There isn't much wrong in America that could not be radically and quickly changed if we just had a generation of preachers who would stand in the pulpit and, without fear or favor, preach the Word of God with the anointing of the Holy Ghost upon them.
 - (1) Preachers need to stop trying to win popularity contests.
 - (2) Preachers need to stop being hirelings.
 - vii) A hireling is committed to the one who pays their salary.



- (1) A called man of God is not responsible to the people but to God.
- (2) A minister who is called by God is committed to Jesus Christ and not hired to be a Christian on the people's behalf.
 - (a) We can't hire anybody to serve God on our behalf.
- (3) The hireling flees, but the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.
 - (a) John 10:11-13
- viii) We have a generation today of man-called preachers rather than God-called preachers.
 - (1) Because of that, they will not preach the Word of God.
- ix) Preachers are to preach the Word of God.
 - (1) They may be seen as troublemakers for doing so.
 - (2) Proverbs 27:5-6
 - (a) Dr. R. G. Lee stated that he had rather be called cruel for being kind than to be called kind for being cruel.
 - (3) Galatians 4:16
 - (4) Ecclesiastes 7:5
 - (a) People today are trudging to churches hearing the song of fools by men who are hirelings.
- x) The duty of a pastor is not to make the Gospel palatable so that it doesn't offend people.
 - (1) The responsibility of the pastor is not to fill the auditorium but to fill the pulpit.
- xi) We have pastors today without principles because our values are gone.
- c) Government without God.
 - i) Judges 18:1-4
 - (1) The fathers of the tribe of Dan did not like what they had.
 - (a) God had given them an inheritance, but they did not possess their possessions because of their own sin, their own laziness, cowardice and unbelief.
 - (2) So, they became dissatisfied and covetous.
 - (a) Rather than having what God had given them, they wanted what belonged to someone else.
 - (b) They came against the people who lived in the town of Laish and plundered that city.
 - ii) We have a generation in America today who wants what belongs to somebody else.
 - (1) And they think they have a right to take it.
 - (2) This is because we have a loss of value.
 - iii) 2 Thessalonians 3:10
 - (1) This verse is not talking about those who cannot work.
 - (a) The Bible tells us over and over again that we are to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves.
 - (2) The Bible is against misappropriation of other people's goods through covetousness and dissatisfaction.
 - iv) When you so lose your values that one half of the nation gets the idea that it doesn't have to work because somebody else will work for them, and the other half gets the idea that it does no good to work because somebody else gets what they work for, then everybody is out of work except the government.
 - v) Greed, materialism and selfishness motivate our government and many businesses today.



- (1) The gambling industry is based on getting what belongs to someone else in my possession.
- (2) True business is win-win.
 - (a) A good business is when one individual is blessed and the other is blessed, and they mutually help one another.
- (3) Gambling is based on win-lose.
 - (a) You cannot have winners without having losers, and it is antithetical to the law of God and the law of good business.
- vi) In our nation today, we are trying to get what belongs to somebody else and failing to give when we ought to give.
- vii) 2 Timothy 3:1-5
 - (1) In the last days, people will be lovers of their own selves, living for self and self alone.
 - (a) Me-ology rather than theology.
 - (2) They will be covetous, living for what they can get and grab, not for what they can give.
 - (a) The Bible teaches that we are to worship God, love people and use things.
 - (b) What we do today is worship things, use people and forget God.
 - (3) We have raised a generation today that does not respect authority inside or outside the home.
 - (4) “Unholy, without natural affection” means perverted love, without family love.
 - (5) “Trucebreakers” means that a man’s word means nothing.
 - (a) Whether it’s a treaty between nations, a political promise, a marriage contract or a business contract.

3) THE REASONS FOR VANISHING VALUES (JUDGES 17:6)

- a) Judges 17:6
 - i) God had blessed them incredibly, but they forgot God.
 - ii) America is the great nation that she is because she has been blessed by Almighty God.
- b) It begins with foolish speculations.
 - i) Romans 1:18-21
 - (1) In this passage, the Apostle Paul goes back even before the day of the Judges and shows how a nation and how people lose their values.
 - (2) The word “hold” in verse 18 means “to smother, to repress,” to hold down the truth.
 - ii) Rather than turning to God, they turned to science.
 - (1) There is plenty of evidence that God exists, but they did not want God.
 - (2) They were willingly ignorant.
 - iii) When you reject the light, you’re left in darkness.
- c) The death of common sense
 - i) Romans 1:22
 - ii) Our generation is a foolish generation.
 - (1) We think we’re intelligent, but we don’t even discern between truth and error.
 - (2) We cannot teach the Bible or morality in schools, but they give children instructions on birth control devices.



- (3) Baby animals have more rights than the unborn infant in America.
- (4) Courts today are more concerned about protecting the criminal's rights than the victim's rights.
- d) Religion becomes corrupted.
 - i) Romans 1:23
 - ii) Man, by nature, will worship something.
 - (1) When he refuses the truth of God, he will get a god of his own making.
 - (a) He creates idols.
 - iii) The idols in America today include material idols of money, prestige, success, philosophy, health, pleasure, sports, entertainment and possessions.
 - iv) Anything we fear more, love more, serve more and value more than God is an idol.
 - (1) Whatever we put in first place in our lives is our god.
 - v) America is saturated with false religions.
 - (1) Hinduism has come from the East to the West.
 - (2) Astrology, spiritism, occult religions, druidism, and devil worship are practiced throughout our nation.
 - (3) People are worshipping the creation rather than the Creator.
 - (a) Children in schools are taught to worship mother earth rather than Father God.
- e) Uncontrolled lusts
 - i) Romans 1:24
 - (1) Greed, gluttony and sexual perversion.
 - ii) Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn stated that your judgment is only as good as your information.
 - (1) If they are controlling your information, then they are controlling you.
 - (2) If you want a nation of hot heads, sex maniacs, alcoholics, psychos and maddening mobs, then keep laughing at things like dirty movies, filthy books and crude, cheap and profane language.
 - (3) In keeping silent about evil and burying it deep within so that it appears nowhere on the surface, we are implanting it; and it will rise up a thousand-fold in the future.
- f) Sexual perversion
 - i) Romans 1:26
 - ii) Those practicing sexual perversion are becoming bold and even arrogant, saying that America must approve this lifestyle.
 - iii) Unless you believe the Word of God, you have no authority to stand against this because you have no set standard for right and wrong.
- g) A death of conscience
 - i) This is the next step in the progression.
 - ii) Romans 1:28
 - (1) In Romans 1:24, God gave them over to impurity.
 - (2) In Romans 1:26, God gave them over to degrading passions.
 - (3) Now, God gives them over to a depraved, reprobate mind.
 - (a) The mind is morally useless.
 - (b) Every man does what is right in his own mind.



- iii) Romans 1:31
 - (1) They are without natural affection.
 - (a) We have today mothers who abandon their children or sometimes kill their unborn children in the womb.
 - (b) Husbands abuse their wives.
 - (c) Children despise their parents.
 - (d) Fathers molest their own children.
 - (2) Romans 1:32
 - (a) People take pleasure in the vile headlines of tabloids and take pleasure in them who do the same.
 - (b) We have a generation of people who cannot blush.

4) OUR RESPONSE TO VANISHING VALUES

- a) We need to learn what the Bible has to say about family values.
 - i) If parents do not build their home on the Word of God, then they will be building on shifting sand, and the storms will sweep it away.
- b) We need to get under the ministry of a God-called, God-appointed and God-anointed man of God where the Word of God is preached without fear or favor.
- c) We need to pray for America.
 - i) We need to stand up, speak up, and understand that they will not like us when we do.
 - ii) Don't be intimidated or bullied.
 - (1) We have a right to speak up and stand up.
 - (2) We have a right to put our ideas in the marketplace.
 - iii) It's time to wake up in America.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) With God and because of God, there is hope.
- b) Have you given your heart to Jesus Christ?
 - i) Are you saved?
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Would you take God's Word and be turning to the book of Judges chapter 17. And actually, we're coming today to the last message in this series on, "Bring Back the Glory." And I pray God that we've learned some things and we'll learn some things today that will help us as God's people to Bring Back the Glory to this nation.

Today we're going to be talking about the battle for values. We have had in America today, in this generation, an erosion of the values that made this nation a great nation. The title of the message, "The Sad Case of Vanishing Values." Now what happens when values vanish? I'm reading here in Judges chapter 17 verse 1, "And there was a man of Ephraim, whose name was Micah," and by the way the name Micah itself means "Who is like the Lord." A man named Micah. "And he said unto his mother, 'The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it.' And his mother said, 'Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son.' And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, 'I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee.' And he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image and they were in the house of Micah. And the man Micah had a house of gods, and made an ephod, and a teraphim and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest."

Now all of that may not make a lot of sense to you right now, it will in a moment I trust. But now we come to verse 6 and look at verse 6, which is key and pivotal. "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." No authority, except every man being his own authority doing whatever he wished and saying, "What is right for me is right and what is right for you is right." Notice it doesn't say every man did that which was wrong in his own eyes, but every man did that which is right in his own eyes. And that is precisely the condition in America today.

U.S. News and World Report had an editorial; now this is a secular magazine, this is not a Sunday School quarterly. But here's the editorial. "Where have our values gone? The fraying of America's social fabric is fast becoming a national obsession. Three out of every four Americans think we are in moral and spiritual decline." Did you hear that? 3 out of 4 say we're on the way down. "2 out of 3 think the country is seriously off track. Social dysfunction haunts the land. Crime and drug abuse. The breakup of the family. The slump in academic performance. The disfigurement of public places by druggies, thugs and exhibitionists. We certainly seem to have lost the balance between societal rights and individual freedoms. There are daily confrontations with almost everyone in authority. Blacks against the white power structure. Women against patriarchy. Feminists against feminism. Gays against homophobia. Children against parents. Mothers against matrimony. Fathers against child support. Churchgoers against the church. Students against the universities. Instead of a culture of common good we have culture of constant complaint. Everyone is a victim. The "have not's" claim victimization at the hands of the successful. Crime is sanctioned by the fact, real or imagined, that the criminal had an unhappy childhood. Gone are the habits America once ad-



mired: industriousness, thrift, self-discipline, commitment. The combined effects of these sicknesses rooted in phony doctrines of liberalism has been to tax the nation's optimism and sap its confidence of the future. And it is the young who are strikingly vulnerable. They're being deprived like no previous generation of the emotional comfort and moral nurturing provided by the traditional family. Instant gratification is the new order of the day. Personal impulses, especially sexual, are constantly stimulated by popular music and television with other mass media not far behind. TV and music often seem to honor everything that the true American ethic abhors: violence, infidelity, drugs, drinking. And to despise everything it embraces: religion, marriage, respect for authority. No wonder it is difficult to sustain parental values and parental continuity."

Now, that's about half of this editorial. Now folks I want to remind you that's not a Baptist preacher writing, that's a national news magazine saying that we as a nation are in serious trouble. Now, if you don't believe what I've just read to you is true, get this morning's newspaper or any newspaper in any major city and consult that. America is sick and unless we have a moral and spiritual revival, we are gone as a nation. Do you understand that? We need to bring back the glory to America. And what happened so long ago in Israel and recorded in the book of Judges gives inspiration and information for today. In that day, as in this day, every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Now number one, what was the result of that? Let's look. First of all, **Families without foundations**. Now I just read to you a story that took place in a family. And this man Micah whose name means "Who is like Jehovah" had taken eleven hundred sheckles of silver from his mother. His mother evidently was wealthy. And he went in and stole from his mother. Now, she did not know who the thief was and so she pronounced a curse on whoever the thief was. Well, when little Micah found out that a curse had been pronounced on the thief, he got frightened and brought the money back. Not out of conviction, but he brought it back out of fear. And he said, "Mama, I took the eleven hundred sheckles of silver."

Now rather than scolding the naughty lad, she blessed him. She was so glad to get her money back she said, "Well son, I'm glad that you brought the money back. I tell you, I have dedicated that money to the Lord." Well, that sounds pretty good, that she was going to give it to the Lord. But she said, "I wanted to make some idols out of that money. And that's the way I had dedicated the silver to the Lord. So we're going to make some idols." And so she took the money now that's given to the Lord and takes it over to the foundry and they make an idol. And Micah takes the idol and he puts it in his god collection. He has a shelf full of idols there in his house and he just adds this new silver idol to that. And then he says, "I need a priest. I'm going to make my son the priest in our house." And so he just appoints his own priest. Now folks, whatever all of this is, it is absolute, unmitigated, moral confusion. And these people are thinking they are serving God. I mean, they have an aura of godliness about the family. It is weird. Here's a family with coveting, stealing, cursing, blessing, dishonoring parents, and idolatry and all of the rest of it. And they say, "Well this is the way we want to do it." They were morally and spiritually bankrupt. Idolaters thinking they were serving the Lord.

Now this is what is happening in America today. It's not that we don't have religion in America, we're drowning in religion. We're up to our ears in religion. But not Bible truth. Not Bible morality. This family was morally and spiritual bankrupt. Today, we think we have been liberated. Let me read you a passage from Cal Thomas. "Americans today think they have been liberated from the traditional family. Women were liberated from the home, from their husbands and from their children and from having to bear children at all. Fathers liberated from their authority and responsibility. Children were liberated from limits and from rules. The entire population was liberated from moral and ethical standards. Yet it turns out that these were pre-



cisely what held society together. Family values have been so scorned that we're left with neither families, nor values. What do we have? Rampant illegitimacy and sexual disease. Wide-spread divorce and a generation of unloved, undisciplined and uncared for kids." Now, the sad thing is, that this lack of discipline, this lack of values, this lack of standards goes right down into the very best families in our churches.

In a small town in Missouri, a little dog wandered up where two boys were playing. They were preacher's boys. And they liked the little dog. The little dog was very friendly. It was solid black with a few white streaks on the tail. They took the dog to their preacher daddy and said, "Can we keep him? We really like him." The preacher himself liked the dog and he said, "Well yes, we can keep him." Then they found out that a new family had moved into the community and the family had lost a dog, a black dog with a few white streaks on the tail. It's obvious whose dog it was. They came looking for the dog.

The boys thought that they might lose the dog so they took some shoe polish and turned those white hairs on that dog's tail black. When the family moved in said, "We believe that's our dog, the preacher daddy said, "How can that be your dog? You said your dog had some white streaks on the tail. This dog's tail is black." And the family went away and said, "Well, that must be your dog then, not our dog."

Let me tell you the names of those two boys. Frank and Jesse James. You ever heard of the Jesse James gang? Have you ever heard of the two most notorious criminals perhaps in America? Frank and Jesse James, preacher's kids. Had a dad who kept a dog and lost his boys. There are fuzz buster dads today who are teaching their boys how to brake the speed limit. There are moms and dads sneaking kids into schools, or into movies and with the prices, say, "Tell them that you're that you're only 12 when you're 13. We can get a lower price." Folks, I'm telling you that we have a generation that has lost its values today. Families without foundations.

And then to make it worse, here's the second thing that was taking place in this chapter. Not only families without foundations, **but pastors without principles.** Look now in verse 7 if you will of this same chapter. "And there was a young man out of Benjamin Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there." Now who were the Levites? These were the priestly people. These were the clerics of their day. These were the counterpart of today's pastors and ministers. "And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehem Judah to sojourn where he could find a place: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed."

Now you know Micah, we've already met old Micah, the thief and the idolater. "And Micah said unto him, 'Whence comest thou?' And he said unto him, 'I am a Levite of Bethlehem Judah, and I go to sojourn where I may go to find a place.' And Micah said unto him, 'Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and victuals.' So the Levite went in. And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then said Micah, 'Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.'"

This is amazing! Here's a preacher out of a job. He's trying to find some food. He's trying to find a place to stay. Now remember, the Levites were to help in the Aaronic priesthood. The Levites, according to the law of God, were to assist the priest, they were to teach the law; they were to lead in praise. And here's a young Levite without a place. He needs food, he needs clothing and Micah says, "Hey, I've got a deal for you. You can come and live in my house. You can be my personal priest and if you will be my priest, I will feed you. I will pay you and I will dress you well." And so he hired him, according to verse 10 to be his own priest. Now,



here's a man of God, for money, going in to be the appointed priest of an idolater and a wicked man, purely for money. Here was a man who was hired. There's no doubt about it. He was a hireling.

If you want even further reference, go to chapter 18 and look in verse 4. And here's the words of this Levite. "And he said unto them, 'Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, he hath hired me, and I am his priest.'" He was a hireling. Not a man of God. A hireling. And what does Jesus say about a hireling? Look in John 10, put this in your margin. John 10, beginning in verse 12, "But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep."

Do you know what is wrong in America today? We have prophets whose title is P-R-O-F-I-T, profit. They're hirelings. They have not been called of God. "Are you saying Pastor, you don't think the pastor out to be paid? Of course he ought to be paid. The Bible says, "They that preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel." The Bible says, "The elder that rules well is worthy of double honor." But no man has a right to be a hireling. A professional in the ministry.

Here was a man who forsook, if he ever had it, God's calling and God's authority. Being a hireling, he told the people what they wanted to hear. Look in Judges chapter 18 verse 6. There were some people who wanted to go about something that was very wrong. God was not in it at all as we're going to see. And so they went to this priest. Look if you will in verse 5. "And they said unto him, 'Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous.' And the priest said unto them," now remember, this is the hireling, "Go in peace: before the Lord is in, before the Lord is your way therein ye go.' Then the five men departed, and came to Laish." And we could tell you more about that later on. But they said, "Is God with us?" And he said, "Surely God is with you. Peace, peace, go on in your wicked ways. It is fine."

I am convinced that there's not much in America that could not be radically, dramatically, and quickly changed if we just had a generation of preachers who would stand in their pulpit and without fear or favor, preach the Word of God with the anointing of the Holy Ghost of God on them. I believe that with all of my heart. Preachers need to stop trying to win popularity contests. They need to stop being hirelings.

Now what's the difference in a hireling? A hireling is committed to the one who pays his salary. I want to say this very carefully because you pay me and I'm grateful that you pay me. But in the truest sense, you don't pay me. And I am not responsible to you. Now if that makes you angry just come up and apologize to me afterwards and I'll forgive you. You give your money to God. God pays me. Do you see the difference? Now I'm not ungrateful for what you do. And you're very loving and very generous. But I am telling you folks that I am not committed to you, I am committed to Jesus Christ. And you have not hired me to be a Christian on your behalf. You can't hire anybody to serve God on your behalf. You're going to serve God and I'm not a surrogate. I'm not a paid mercenary to serve God for you. The hireling flees. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.

Today we have a generation of man-called preachers rather than God-called preachers. And because of that they will not preach the Word of God. Preachers you ought not and you probably won't be elected clergyman of the year. As a matter of fact, you'll be seen as a troublemaker. But the Bible says in Proverbs chapter 27 verse 5, "Open rebuke is better than secret love, and faithful are the wounds of a friend."



Dr. R.G. Lee, the former pastor of this church said, "I'd rather be called cruel for being kind, then to be called kind for being cruel." The apostle Paul said to the Galatians in Galatians chapter 4 verse 16, "Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" Ecclesiastes chapter 7 verse 5 says, "It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools." People are trudging to churches today hearing the song of fools by men who are hirelings. And whose responsibility is to those who pay their salary rather than to Almighty God. And like this priest they say, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.

I want to quote to you what a well-known, one of the best-known ministers in America said. He is from California and I'm not talking about him, this is what he said and wrote in a letter to the editor in Christianity Today. Listen to it, quote, "I don't know of anything that has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality and hence counterproductive to the evangelism enterprise than the often crude, uncouth, un-Christian strategy of attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition." If I were to call his name, you'd recognize it instantly. This same preacher said, quote, "My number one role is that I don't want to do anything that would turn somebody off so they're not open to listening to my invitation to accept Jesus Christ," now listen to this, "as their best friend." Friend, we're sinners and we need a Savior before we ever find a friend.

And, oh, the idea that somehow we're going to offend people. The idea that somehow that we need to make it palatable. Friend, our duty is not to make it palatable, our duty is to make it profitable. My responsibility is not to fill this auditorium, but to fill this pulpit. And I hope you'll like it, but whether you like it or not the hireling flees. And what is wrong in America today we have families without foundations because our principles have gone. And we have pastors without principles because principles and our values are gone.

Here's a third thing. **Government without God when we have no values.** Look in chapter 18, "In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for to that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel. And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valor, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land and to search it; and they said unto them, 'Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there. And when they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man, the Levite: and they turned thither, and said unto him, 'Who brought thee hither and what makest thou in this place and what hast thou here?' And he said unto them, 'Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me and I am his priest.'"

Now, what on earth is all of this about? Well, the people from Dan, the fathers of the tribe of Dan said, "We don't like what we have. Now God has given us an inheritance, but we weren't able to possess our possessions. We weren't able to claim our inheritance." And the only reason they did not claim their inheritance and possess their possessions was their own sin, their own indolence, their own cowardice and their own unbelief. But then they cast their eyes over somewhere else. They said, "We need a place to live. We need some possessions." And so they became dissatisfied and they became covetous and rather than having what God had given them, they wanted what belonged to somebody else and we're going to see that they came against some people who lived in the town of Laish and they plundered that city.

Now what is wrong in America today is this, we have a generation today who wants what belongs to somebody else. And they think that they have a right to take what belongs to other people. And it's because we have a loss of value. The Bible says, "If a man won't work, neither should he eat." I'm not talking about those who cannot work. The Bible tells us over and over again that we're to take care of those who cannot



take care to themselves. But the Bible is against this appropriation of other people's goods through covetousness and dissatisfaction.

And when you so lose your values that one half of the nation gets the idea that it doesn't have to work because somebody else will work for them and the other half gets the idea it does no good to work because somebody else gets what they work for, then everybody 's out of work except the government. That's about where we are today.

And you look around today. Look in America today. What motivates our government? And what motivates business? Greed, materialism and selfishness and especially in the area of drugs, pornography and gambling. What is that all based on? Getting what belongs to somebody else in my possession. True business is win-win. A good business is when one individual is blessed and the other is blessed and they mutually help one another. That's the way business is built. Gambling is based on win-lose and you cannot have winners without having losers and it is antithetical to the law of God and the law of good business. But here we are in this godless set of values that we hold here in our nation. Trying to get what belongs to somebody else and failing to give when we ought to give.

Now these people got a false prophet to front for them also as I've said. This hireling told them, "Hey what you're doing is just fine." And I'll tell you, we're hearing all of this about the religious right, the religious right, the religious right, what about the religious left? Who is going to say something about the religious left that says that abortion is alright, that says that gambling is good, that says that this governmental greed is good?

Oh my friend, there's a passage I want you to put in margin. Second Timothy chapter 3, Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit looked down through the corridors of time and he saw our day and this is what he wrote in Second Timothy 3 verse 1 through 5, "This know, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." "Lovers of their own selves." Living for self and self alone. Me-ology rather than Theology. "Covetous," living for what they can get and grab, not for what they can give.

The Bible teaches we're to love God. The Bible teaches that we are to worship God, love people and use things. What we do is worship things, use people and forget God. "Boasters and proud," this verse says. We're boasting about civilization while we're marching to Armageddon. "Blasphemers," you cannot even turn on the television today without hearing the name of Jesus Christ and the God we serve dragged through the muck and filth and slime of the sewer. We amuse ourselves today with profanity and pornography.

"Disobedient to parents." We've raised a generation that does not respect authority inside or outside the home. "Unholy, without natural affection." This means perverted love. Without family love. It's a generation up to its ears in filth and perversion. "Trucebreakers." A man's word means nothing. Whether it's a treaty between nations, a political promise, a marriage contract, or a business contract. "Incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good." In our city, drive by shootings, rape, mugging, right here and we have run out of space to warehouse the criminals. And our politicians say we can solve it with midnight basketball. As good or bad as that may be, that may do some help. But friend, it's like throwing a snowball at the rock of Gibraltar hoping to move it. We are in serious trouble and the trouble is that we have lost our moorings.



Friend, we have families without foundations, pastors without principles, and government without God and we wonder why we're in the trouble that we're in. The sad case of vanishing values.

Now what caused this? Look again in verse 6, chapter 17 verse 6, "And in those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Now God had blessed them and God had blessed them incredibly, but they forgot God. Like America has forgotten God. Why is America the great nation that she is? Because America has been blessed of Almighty God.

Now I want you to leave the book of Judges for a moment and I want you to open your Bibles and we'll finish with this, go to the book of Romans and Romans chapter 1. Because in Romans chapter 1 we see how the people of that day and the people of this day got in trouble. Because in Romans chapter 1 Paul goes back even before the day of the Judges and gives a history, a sad history of mankind. Now how does a nation, how do people lose their values? Well look at it here, it begins with foolish speculations. Romans 1 verse 18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness," that word hold means to smother, to repress, to hold down the truth, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 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."

First of all, rather than God they turned to science. And there's plenty of evidence that God exist according to these verses. His power and creation, His order and the inward witness in the heart, they're clearly seen. But these people stuff the truth. They say, "We don't want God. No God." And they are willingly ignorant. And when you reject the light you're left in darkness.

Now first of all, foolish speculations. Then the death of common sense. Look in verse 22, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Our generation is a foolish generation. We think we're so smart but we don't even have a way of discerning between truth and error, right and wrong. Any politician will talk about values until you say, "Whose values?" And then he shuts up.

In our public schools, we cannot teach the Bible or even morality, but we instruct children on sex technique and birth control devices. In the student clinics, in the schools you cannot dispense an aspirin without parental permission and yet little teenage girls are led off to abortion clinics and nobody knows anything about it. "Professing themselves to be wise they became fools." Baby seals and baby whales have more rights than the unborn infants in America. And the courts today are more concerned about protecting the criminal's rights than the victim's rights. "Professing themselves to become wise, they're fools."

And then religion becomes so corrupted. Look in verse 23, "And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things." Now what is all of that about? Well friend, man by nature is going to worship. And so when he refuses the true God, he gets a god of his own making. He creates his idols. And what are the idols in America today? Material idols of money and prestige and success and philosophy and health and pleasure and sports and entertainment, possessions. You say, "These are not idols to me." Anything you fear more, love more, serve more or value more than God is an idol to you. That's a god. Whatever you put in first place in your life is your god.



But now wait a minute. You say, “This talks about people worshipping things though like animals and all. We don’t do this.” Look in verse 23, “And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things.” Friend, America is saturated with this kind of religion. Hinduism has come from the East to the West and now we’re wrapped up in Astrology and Spiritism and occult religions and voodoo and druidism and devil worship. People are worshipping today the creation rather than the creator. We’re worshipping today spotted owls and dolphins and whales. We have earth and creature worship. And your boys and girls in school are taught to worship mother earth rather than Father God. It’s happening suddenly but surely.

And then what happens? Uncontrolled lusts. Look in verse 24, “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies between themselves.” Greed and gluttony and sexual perversion. Lust is big business in America. Alexander Solzhenitsyn said, that brilliant Russian dissonant, listen to this. This is a Russian talking to Americans. “Your judgment is only as good as your information. If they are controlling your information, they are controlling you. If you want a nation of hopheads, sex maniacs, alcoholics, psychos, and maddening mobs, then just you and the rest of your American population keep on laughing at things like dirty movies, filthy books and crude, cheap and profane language. In keeping silent about evil, in burying it deep without us so that it appears nowhere on the surface, we are implanting it and it will rise up a thousand fold in the future.” That’s what Solzhenitsyn said.

We don’t realize what is happening to us? Verse 24, “And God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own bodies.” And then it goes on to sexual perversion. Look in verse 26, “For this cause God gave them up to vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lusts one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.” Sexual perversion.

And the perverts are becoming bold, even arrogant. Saying that America must approve this lifestyle. And unless you believe the Word of God you have no authority to stand against it because you have no set standard for what is right and what is wrong. Is a man free to choose his own lifestyle? Is he free to choose bestiality and cohabit with animals? Is he free to choose brutality? Is he free to choose child molestation? Is he free to choose incest? Are you going to say that your sexual orientation is nobody else’s business?

Then what happens? Let’s move on. Then there becomes a value vacuum and a death of conscience. Look in verse 28, “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” In verse 24 it said God gave them over to impurity. In verse 25 God gave them over to verse 26 to degrading passions and now God gives them over to a depraved, reprobate mind. The mind is morally useless. Every man does that which is right in his own mind.

And he goes on to say here in this passage that they are “Without natural affection,” in verse 31. Do you know where we’ve come to America today? We have mothers who abandon their children and sometimes kill the children in the womb. We have husbands who beat their wives. We have children who despise their parents. We have fathers who molest their own children. All of that is wrapped up in this word, “Without natural affection.”



But it's not finished yet. Now look in verse 32. It speaks of a generation, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

In the supermarket when you check out, look at the tabloids. Don't buy them, just look at the headlines. What is it that sells? Crime, rape, bestiality, incest, immorality, drunkenness, fraud, deceit, murder, violence; that's where we get our jollies. We have pleasure in them that do the same. We have a generation of people who cannot blush. They will get on talk shows, on talk shows before the whole nation and talk about their values. And they could not get on those talk shows and talk about their values if there were not a lot of silly men and women glued to their set watching it. Because they do what sells. And not only do they do these things. You say, "Well I don't do these things," no you just have pleasure in them that do them. And all Hollywood has to do to fill up a movie theater is to advertise sinful, sexy, lewd, X-rated, and the people will flock in.

I've talked to you about the result of vanishing values. I've talked to you about the reasons for it. Let me talk to you dear friend about our response. Listen to your pastor today. We need to find out what the Bible has to say about family values. That's the reason we've said that the church is a family of friends and a friend to the family. And we are going to treasure family values and you as mom and dad better begin to build your home on the Word of God or you're building on shifting sand and the storms are going to sweep it away.

Number two, you need to get under the ministry of a God-called, God-appointed and God-anointed man of God where the Word of God is preached without fear or favor. And I'm not simply talking about myself, but I'm talking about whoever you are and wherever you are and those of you who may be listening or watching on television. We have families without foundations and pastors and preachers without principles.

Number three, we need to pray for America. We need to stand up and speak up and understand they're not going to like us when we do. And don't get intimidated and don't get bullied. We have a right to. We are Americans and we have a right to put our ideas in the marketplace. And don't let these people tell you that because we love God that we ought to be silenced. Now folks it's time, it is time to wake up in America. Amen?

Bow in prayer, Father God, I pray that you'll seal the message to every heart. Lord I thank you that while the message seems dark we know, dear God, that with you and because of you there is hope.

Now while heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you've never given your heart to Jesus Christ and you want to be saved, would you pray a prayer like this? "Dear God, I'm a sinner. I cannot save myself. I need to be saved. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You, Jesus. Right now." Tell Him that. "I do trust You, Jesus. Come into my heart. Forgive my sin and save me Lord Jesus." Pray it and mean and he'll save you. For the Bible says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." To be saved means that every sin is forgiven. To be saved means that Jesus lives in your heart and to be saved means that when you die you'll go to Heaven. Say, "Save me, Lord Jesus." And then pray this, "Lord Jesus help me not to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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