

Perspective Matters

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Have you ever noticed how people from up north talk about winter like it is just normal? I remember talking to John Reiss and he is describing weeks of temperatures hovering around freezing, like that is just part of life. I just laughed and said, "Yeah, I don't think so." Now, to be fair, they probably look at our summers and think we are all crazy down here. And from their perspective, they just might be right.

But that is the point. It is all about perspective. What feels normal to one person might feel unbearable to someone else who sees things completely different.

Now there can be a more serious side to this. I was reading this book a while back called *Misreading Scripture Through Western Eyes*. The main idea presented is that people from different cultures can read the same Bible and walk away with completely different understandings. They both read the same words, but because of their culture, they can come to completely different conclusions. And I remember thinking, well, yeah, that kind of makes sense. And then it kind of hit me. That includes me. Because when any of us open the Bible, we do not come in neutral.

We all like to think we are just reading the Bible for what it says. But we each bring our culture. We bring what we have been taught since we were kids. We bring the voices we have trusted for years. And whether we realize it or not, those things shape what we think God is saying. They influence how we understand or misunderstand God's commands, His promises, and His warnings.

Now, sharing perspectives is not necessarily a big deal like preferring summer over winter. Nobody is losing salvation over air conditioning preferences. But when talking about obedience, grace, and salvation, that is not just preference anymore.

Let us turn over to Proverbs chapter 3, please.

Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

And that sounds straightforward. But here is the part we do not always think about. If we keep putting our own filter over that lamp, it is not going to light the path very well.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.

Which, if we are honest, is exactly the opposite of what we tend to do.

Proverbs 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.

So really, the question becomes, whose understanding are we trusting? Because whether we realize it or not, choosing whose perspective we accept as truth can become a life-and-death decision. And brethren, it is a choice.

Now, let us bring this a little closer to home. Being a Christian is not just a one-time decision. It is something we choose every day. We choose what we listen to and how we respond. We choose how to speak. We choose how we act. And we choose whose voice shapes our thinking.

And here is where things get tricky. A lot of people genuinely believe they are following Scripture. But what they are really following is what they have been *told* Scripture means. Those interpretations might come from respected teachers. They might go back generations, but over time, they can stop feeling like interpretations and start feeling like unquestionable truth.

Have you ever noticed how something can start as an idea and after enough time, it just becomes the way it is? Nobody questions it. Nobody even thinks about questioning it. That is how perspective turns into authority.

So instead of asking, what does the Bible actually say? we start asking, what have I always heard? And without realizing it, we are no longer testing our traditions by God's Word. We are reading His Word through our traditions. And maybe that is what Jesus was getting at when He talked about people worshipping God but teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.

These people were not rebels or atheists, no. They were religious people who would have told you, "No, no, we are doing this right, we are worshipping God." And if you ask them why they were doing it a particular way, they probably have an answer ready. But it just might not come straight from Scripture anymore.

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

When you think about it, this captivity does not always feel like chains. It can feel like certainty or faith. But it can also be dangerous. That is why John says to test everything to see if it is from God. Now the Bereans, they did not just take Paul's word for it because he sounded convincing. They searched the Scriptures daily to see if what he was saying was based on truth. For them, even Paul had to line up with God's Word because the truth of the Word of God was their foundation. Because even sincere people can be wrong. And if we are not careful, we can accept someone else's perspective and never realize it is not God's.

This is not just theoretical for me, no. Growing up in the Catholic Church, I believed it was the one true church. It was not even debatable because that is what I was taught. That is what the nuns and the priests taught. Mama and daddy believed that. Grandma and my great aunts believed, so why would I even question that. They were the authority figures in my life.

But I remember talking to a friend who was Baptist and realizing something that made me think. If I had been born into his family, I would believe what he believed. But there is something that always challenged me. If we read the same Bible, why do we have such different beliefs?

So now the question changes. It is not just what is true. It becomes, how did we get here? If we all claim the same source for our foundation of truth, why are we so different? Do these differences come from Scripture? Or do they come from perspective? And if they come from perspective, whose perspective established them? And when did their perspective become the standard or the rules that define how we approach God? Because at some point, perspective stops being personal. Interpretations stop being flexible. It gets organized. It gets taught. And before long, it becomes a system of belief. And that is where things start getting dangerous.

Back in the first century, this exact thing was already happening. People believed in Christ but started adjusting what that meant, teaching that if you believed in Christ, that was enough, yeah. Because obedience was not really binding anymore. Justification by faith meant freedom from the requirements of the law. Others were redefining what faith meant, that it is more of an idea than a way of living. Grace just kind of covered everything.

And here is what makes it tricky. They did not reject Christ, they just *redefined* Him. So now it does not look wrong. It just looks like a different version of truth. And this is where we must remember something important.

God has never been vague about how He wants to be approached. Brethren, we have already talked about this principle before. In their minds, Nadab and Abihu were not offering pagan worship. They were priests. They offered something God did not command. They just decided to do it their way. They may have been sincere, but God had already said how it was to be done and they chose their perspective over His. They chose their interpretation over His authority and it did not end well for them, no.

Now fast forward into the New Testament and something shifts. God's standard did not change, but how people handled it, not by outright rejection but by blending His truth with their own reasoning. And this mixture made it a lot harder to recognize clearly His truth. Paul says in II Thessalonians that the mystery of lawlessness was already at work. Now that word mystery does not mean confusing. It means something hidden, something hard to spot.

Paul's describing a perception that was growing inside the church itself. That is why he calls it a mystery. God shows us what it looks like. It is not people

saying forget God. It is people saying, "Let's understand this a little differently." They were not in open rebellion, were not shaking their fist at God. They were much more subtle than that. They talked about grace, about freedom in relationships, but slowly, the foundation shifted. Instead of grace leading to obedience, it replaces it, making obedience flexible or negotiable. So now you have got something that still sounds right but instead of being anchored in the truth of the Word of God, it is now anchored on interpretation.

John makes it very plain sin is lawlessness. And then he says, if we claim to know God but do not keep His commandments, something is off.

Brethren, we need to recognize that the pattern of this mystery system speaks the language of obedience, of a system of belief that talks about grace and love. It talks about spiritual growth. It sounds right. But quietly it shifts the foundation without appearing to reject Christ. It moves away from obedience to God's revealed will and replaces it with selective submission and personal interpretation.

So a person can feel sincere, spiritual, even deeply devoted and still be operating inside a system that has set aside covenant obedience. It is obedience in appearance, but lawlessness in structure. Instead of asking what did Christ command, it starts asking, how should we interpret that today? This system does not throw Scripture out, it just reinterprets it.

II John 9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God.

You can almost hear how that would sound today with claims of it is deeper, more advanced, growing beyond the basics, and more spiritual. But John explains that adding more to what Christ taught is not growth, it is departure. He says if you move beyond what Christ actually taught, you simply do not have God. In I John chapter 4, he connects this to the spirit of Antichrist already at work. Jude says these men crept in unnoticed. And Peter says they despise authority.

This is not about weak Christians struggling, no. This is about a system of teaching that reframes grace so that obedience becomes optional, even

inferior. A system that says multiple perspectives are healthy and enlightened. Jesus addresses this inside the churches in Revelation 2 and 3. He praises Ephesus for rejecting this system. Then He warns others for tolerating it, and His message is simple:

Revelation 2:16 "Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth."

Brethren, that is not a minor correction. That is a life or death warning. Repent is a warning to reject this system, this mystery of lawlessness. And here is where it hits us today. When God's authority gets loosened, something fills the gap and it is usually human systems. The church does not become openly lawless, it becomes selectively lawful. Once perspective hardens into tradition it feels like truth. And when that happens, lawlessness does not look like rebellion anymore. It looks like faith.

Some commands get softened, others get emphasized. New systems are built and suddenly you have got something that still uses Scripture, still talks about Christ, still feels spiritual, but is not anchored the same way anymore. And the danger is it does not look like rebellion. It does not look wrong. It looks like Christianity. Paul warns that this system would continue right up until Christ returns.

So brethren, this is not history. This is *now*. And the danger is not that we just walk away from Christ. The danger is that we would slowly accept a version that deceptively changes our understanding of what it means to follow Christ. And we never even noticed the shift.

Let us close by looking at II Timothy chapter 4.

II Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Brethren, Paul is not warning the world. He was warning the church, both the first century along with the congregations today. The sobering reality is

when someone becomes deeply rooted in a system built on inherited perspectives, voices from outside that system rarely carry enough authority to wake them up. Only God's calling can wake them up. This mystery system is deceptive, tricky, so convincing that as Jesus warned, if possible, even the elect could be deceived.

And that is why we have to keep coming back to what is written. Only the inspired Word of God can be trusted as our source of absolute truth from God's perspective. It must be our only foundation of life. Because choosing God's perspective over that of the mystery system remains a daily life-and-death decision with consequences that come sooner than we think.

Many people today have been convinced that any religious perspective is acceptable, so they feel comfortable accepting this preacher's view or that priest's interpretation as long as they speak of Jesus.

But that is why perspective matters. Not my perspective, not your upbringing, and not inherited systems. Only God's perspective matters. His Word is still the only lamp that shines a light on His true path convinced.

So the real question becomes very simple. Will we remain stubborn in our own perspective, or will we let God's perspective correct ours? Because in the end, only His perspective leads to life.