



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: SEPTEMBER 2022

by Lee Shipp

WHY IS THE CULTURE NOT IMPACTED BY THE CHRISTIAN GOD

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul attributes the moral collapse of humanity to their refusal to worship God. Paul opens his letter to the Romans with a warning about neglecting God's worship. He concludes the same letter with the call to worship. At the end of his letter to the Romans, he actually begs believers to worship God. Amazing! Both translations, the ESV and the AMP refer to worship as your spiritual worship. *"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship"* Romans 12:1 (ESV). The ERV adaptation calls it the way of worship, *"So I beg you, brothers and sisters, because of the great mercy God has shown us, offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him – an offering that is only for God and pleasing to Him. Considering what He has done, it is only right that you should worship him in this way"* Romans 12:1. The CSB translation defines worship as our true worship, *"Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship"* Romans 12:1.

The motivation for worship is the mercy God has shown us. How tragic that Paul would have to beg believers to worship God. However, I find myself constantly having to beg believers to worship God as well. I honestly do not understand the calloused neglect of our gracious Lord, who has shown us such abundant mercy.

I do not understand how many believers can withhold what is their spiritual worship, their way of worship, and their proper worship of God. This is all God has ever wanted from us, and yet those who are called by His name continue to draw near to Him with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him. And still, we want to blame Democrats and Republicans for the chaos in our nation.

Is the lack of worship consequential? Absolutely. Paul shows that the failure to worship God appropriately will lead to the collapse of society. The reason for cultural decay is the lack of worship. There are four refusals Paul points to that explain the reason for social confusion, political confusion, gender confusion, moral confusion, educational confusion, and religious confusion, or, might I say, perversion.

THE REFUSAL TO GLORIFY AND THANK GOD

The first declension is the refusal to glorify and thank God (Romans 1:21-22). This refusal is not from those who are lost but those who know God. This neglect of God, the ruin of praise, will lead to empty thoughts, tragic imaginations, depression, and hopelessness. It will lead to a gross deception of pride whereby they think themselves to be wise when they are actually fools. This is very prevalent in the church today.

The overwhelming majority of people in the church do not glorify and thank God. Look at the majority of worshippers in any given church during any given service; they are not praising God as the Bible instructs us. Yes, they have come to church. Yes, they draw near with their mouths, but their hearts are far from God. There is no passion, no animating love burning within the worshipping heart. The body is moving, but the heart is empty. There's no wonder that the number of believers who are depressed and need stimulants and drugs is equal to those who do not know God. Paul said it would happen.

If believers do not glorify and thank God, they will think they know best when they don't know at all. They will be tormented with troubling thoughts and constantly battle depression. This refusal will lead to the second refusal, which will bring a more significant consequence.

"THE REASON FOR CULTURAL DECAY IS THE LACK OF WORSHIP."

THE REFUSAL TO KEEP GOD HOLY

The downward declension will become the refusal to keep God holy (Romans 1:23-24). People will begin to think that God is like them. Have you ever heard someone say, "Well if I were God ..."? They are making God like themselves. This is the practice today. Many are comparing God to themselves. The tragic result is the rise of immorality and homosexuality. Could sexual perversion possibly result from believers refusing to glorify and thank God? The Bible says that it is. A person who does not have lofty views of the holy God will easily betray the image of God in man and pervert the natural use of man. Who is going to change the image of the uncorruptible God but those who refuse to glorify and thank Him? It stands to reason that if one is willing to change the image of the uncorruptible God, they will indeed have no problem degrading the image of God in man.

Anyone who cannot publicly demonstrate the worth of God is someone who has no understanding of His majestic worth. If one does not have a concept of God's holy worth, they cannot possibly esteem the worth of the man made in God's image.

THE REFUSAL TO WORSHIP GOD

The downward spiral continues to the next stage of declension by refusing to worship God (Romans 1:25-27). Once man refuses to keep God holy, he

will not keep God's word holy. If believers can change who God is, they will change what God says. They will twist God's truth to accommodate their perversions and lusts. Instead of worshipping God, they will worship themselves.

Many leading denominations today are compromising to the "Woke Culture;" they are changing God's truth into a lie. Many churches and preachers today are too ashamed of God's truth to preach it lest they offend.

The consequences of this are tragic. God gives them up. What else is He to do? They refuse to glorify and thank Him. They think they are wise. They have forgotten His holiness. They have changed His truth into a lie, so God gives them up; God gives them up to vile affections of homosexuality with the added consequence of incurable diseases. Is this not a pandemic problem in our world today?

THE REFUSAL TO THINK ABOUT GOD

The next step of declension is obvious, the refusal to think about God (Romans 1:28-31). How could the people mentioned above want to think about God? They have so offended Him, turned from Him, and despised Him that the very thought of God is offensive, much less His truth or His worship.

All this began with the simple refusal to glorify and thank God. This horrible treatment of God's person, God's truth, God's dignity, and God's rights has devastating consequences. People today do not want to feel accountable to God, so don't talk to them about Him.

People think they are wiser than God; therefore, why even bring Him up in a conversation unless it is to curse Him? And the tragic results follow God, hands them over to a reprobate mind. Men begin to practice all sorts of lewd behaviors, filled with sin, greed, and hatred. They have an insatiable appetite for murder, fighting, lying, and assuming the worst about other people. They gossip. They slander. They are rude. They hate God. They are proud. They do not obey their parents. You cannot trust them to do what they say. They are cruel and lack mercy.

Oh, that we had ears to hear what the Spirit is saying and eyes to see what is so clearly happening in our world. This describes our world today; it describes America. It all begins because people who know God refuse to glorify and thank Him.

THE TURNAROUND

Believer, you may try to get yourself off the hook by saying, "Well, I don't murder. I don't practice homosexuality." Paul has a word for you, *"Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them"* (Romans 1:32). Maybe you don't actually do this, but you support and like to watch those that do. You approve by enjoying these behaviors as entertainment: movies, music, and books that exploit this God-dishonoring behavior.

Is it possible to turn this around, to save ourselves from this perverse way of life? Is it possible to lead multitudes of this generation out of such confusion and pandemic immorality and into truth? Yes, it is if believers would once again glorify and thank God for who He is. If believers would lay down their pride, stop thinking they are wise and realize they have been foolish to treat

God the way He has been treated in our churches, this turnaround could occur.

Is it that simple? Yes! 1 Corinthians 2 says the natural mind thinks the things of the Spirit are foolishness. Why? Because they are wise in their own eyes but fools in God's eyes. They can't understand how people worshipping God the way He wants can solve the problems in America. And thus, the dilemma will continue because men are too proud and proper in their own eyes to see their need for the Holy Spirit.

If we would come to Him the way He asks, if we would praise Him the way He asked, if we would worship Him the way He asked, then our minds and hearts would be filled with truth, light, joy, and hope. This revival in the church would change and rescue our culture.