

The Four Voices: How to Think Like a Christian

The Voice of the World

Rough Transcript

Patrick Morley

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Good morning, men, please turn in your Bibles to Romans 1:20. The series is **The 4 Voices**. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart for everything you do flows from it." The subtitle for the series is how to think like a Christian, the premise for the series, the four voices in your head in addition to your own voice, in other words, we all have self-talk that we do all the time. But we're not the only voice up there, there are four other voices up there too that are trying to influence what we think, say and do. And so, the four voices in your head are the world, the flesh, the devil, and the Holy Spirit. Your job is to figure out which one is speaking and make the adjustment.

Today we want to take a look at the voice of the world. One of my favorite authors is Pascal. This is his most well known book, perhaps *Pensée*, which means thoughts in English. And as you can see, I kind of own this book, or maybe the book owns me I'm not sure. Thought number 148 says this, "All men seek happiness." This is without exception. This is the motive of every action of every man even of those who go and hang themselves. He teases this out a little bit. One man goes to war, one man does not go to war, but they both do it for the same reason because they think that that's the thing that's going to make them happy. So, I want to go ahead and give you the Big Idea for this session. And it's what the voice of the world is saying. The Big Idea... **The world says, "It's going to take a lot more than Jesus to make you happy."** It's going to take a lot more than Jesus to make you happy.

HOW THE WORLD IS TRYING TO GET INSIDE YOUR HEAD

And now I want to take a look at how this came about by first talking about how the world is trying to get inside of your head. Romans 1:20 tells us how it began, for since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen being understood from what has been made so that people are without excuse.

And then it goes on to say that, although people knew God, they didn't glorify Him and they didn't give him thanks. And as a result, their minds became futile and they're thinking foolish. And they exchanged the glory of God for idols. The truth of God for lies, they worship created things instead of the creator. The cumulative effect of all that, what Francis Schaeffer calls the domino effect of the fall, all of these hundreds of millions of small decisions that have been made as we worship created things. As we believe the lie, as we make the idol, leaves us with the world that we have today. And we look around and the culture that we have today is very far from God. Just look at the racial injustice that we're dealing with, the disease that we're dealing with. Think about sexual violence.

The institution of marriage has been virtually gutted. According to pure research, 85% of Americans today think it's fine for a man and a woman to live together and not be married. In fact, 69% of them think it's okay if they plan to live together and never get married. It's a culture that's moved very far away from God. I wrote in the book, *The Christian Man*, about the world in this way, the fallen world is a never sleeping juggernaut that relentlessly crushes everything in its path without pity.

So, at some point, a man begins to feel the gravity of all this, the weight of all this. And he cries out to God, looking for help. He hears about the gospel of Jesus. The world fights back and the world basically speaks with this voice. The world says, "It's going to take a lot more than Jesus Christ to make you happy. Look at how I can make you happy?" says the world. Money will solve your problems. Success will make you happy. A dynamic career will give you meaning, you're doing this for your family. Oh, by the way, if you're a Christian, you can have the best of both worlds. You can have your cake and eat it too. You can have the best of both worlds. And even if you're a biblical Christian, the world will still try to convince you that whatever happiness that you do have, you need to perform in order to deserve to continue to get that grace. So, the world is basically filled with lies on the foundation of moving away from God's invisible qualities, his eternal power, his divine nature.

Next, the reason that this voice works is because often men don't understand that this is not the problem that Jesus came to fix. Jesus did not come to change the fallen world. Jesus did not come to restore the fallen world to its pre-fallen state. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost. Jesus said, "My kingdom is from another place. My kingdom is not of this world." Jesus did not come to restore the kingdoms of men. That doesn't mean that we should not work for the betterment of this world, Jesus certainly did. He healed the sick. He fed the poor. So by all means, let's try to find a solution to racial injustice and bring reconciliation. By all means, let's try to find a vaccination for COVID-19, by all means let's build houses, settle down, marry, have children and work for the peace and the prosperity of the towns where we have been exiled.

But restoring the world to its pre-fall state is not what the gospel is all about. The purpose of the gospel is to help men make sense of what's going on in the world and then give them hope through Jesus Christ. The creation has been groaning since the very beginning, it's been subjected to futility and the purpose of the gospel is to liberate you and me from our bondage to decay and bring us into the glorious freedom of the children of God. And so here's the question for you, is that enough for you? Is that gospel enough for you? The world says, "It's going to take a lot more than Jesus Christ to make you happy." But the truth of the gospel is, is that you're not going to find the happiness that you're looking for in this world.

Anyway, most of us are familiar with a famous serenity prayer that's used in alcoholics anonymous. It's from Reinhold Niebuhr, he is a professor at Unions College, Union Theological Seminary, rather. He died in the last one third of the last century, in 1950 they finally published his prayer. I'm going to give you the first verses of it, which you will recognize. God, give me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference. But then the rest of his poem goes on and says this, living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time, accepting hardship as the pathway to peace, taking as He (meaning Jesus), taking as He did this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Trusting that he will make all things right if I surrender to his will, that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with him forever in the next. The world says though, "It's going to take a lot more than Jesus Christ to make you happy."

HOW TO KEEP THE WORLD OUT OF YOUR HEAD

Next, I want us to talk about how to keep the world out of your head. The verse that we overviewed last time for the world was Colossians 2:8 which says, "See to it that no one take you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than in Christ." So how do we do that? How do we do that? Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world." What Colossians 2:8 is describing the hollow and deceptive philosophy, is describing the pattern of this world. What we talked about beginning with Romans 1:20, and just how the world is evolved into a culture that's very far from God, that's the pattern of this world.

Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." That sounds a lot like guard your heart for everything you do flows from it, doesn't it? So, do not conform to the pattern of this world, be transformed by the renewing of your mind and then watch this, then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1 John 2:15 also helps us to understand how we can keep the voice of the world out of our head. It says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in them. For everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life comes not from the father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever." So we keep this voice of the world out of our heads by understanding that everything in the world comes not from the father, but it comes from the world.

And then second Corinthians 10:5 says, "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ." So, how do we keep the voice of the world out of her head? Well, we do it in the word of God, taking our thoughts captive, not being taken captive by hollow and deceptive philosophy but rather to the obedience of Christ. And we don't conform to the pattern of the world, but we allow the gospel of Jesus to transform our lives. So Jesus said that we're in the world in John chapter 17, when he's praying to his father. He said, "Father, I'm not taking them out of the world, I'm leaving them in the world." So we are in the world, but not of the world. Another way of thinking about this is that we are aliens and strangers. We are pilgrims, we're passing through. This is not our real home, this is a temporary abode for us. Our bodies are referred to as tents, we're referred to as jars of clay.

It's against this backdrop that the world is trying to convince you that it's not enough. It's not enough. I can give you money. I can give you success. I can give you prestige. I can give you power. I can even give you a religious credibility. I can make people think you're really special because you know so much about God. But at the end of the day, the Big Idea is that this voice of the world is not from God. **The world says that it's going to take a lot more than Jesus Christ to make you happy.** My question for you courses, is that true for you? Is it going to take more than Jesus Christ to make you happy?

AFFIRMING CHRIST IS ENOUGH TO MAKE US HAPPY

Let's finish up today by affirming that Christ is enough to make us happy. If you would look at Ephesians 2:1, and what I want to do is I want to just invite you to humbly and fully once again embrace the gospel of Jesus, or if you have never have embraced the gospel of Jesus to go ahead and do that now. Here's what Ephesians 2:1 and following says, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us at one time lived among them, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy has made us alive in Christ. It is by grace that you have been saved."

Just a reminder that when we were in the world and when we thought that money would make us happy, success would solve our problems, that we were doing all that for our family, you remember the emptiness that that brought into your life. It's because we were believing the voice of the world, the voice that said, "It's going to take a lot more than Jesus Christ to make you happy." The gospel is, is that because of his great love, God has made us alive in Christ. So, if you've never embraced this gospel before, let me encourage you to do that now. You just can simply say, "Jesus, I confess my sins and I ask you to come into my life with this grace and be enough for me."

Finally, I want to just close it off with a few words for men who maybe have been bruised by the world. It's a Psalm by Asaph, Psalm 73, I'm not going to read all of it, but some of the most important words in

it. Surely God is good to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped for I envy the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles, their bodies are healthy and strong. Therefore, pride is their necklace. They cloth themselves with violence. Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. That is what the wicked are like, always free of care. They go on amassing wealth. Surely in vain, I have kept my heart pure and that's the voice of the world speaking. The world says, "It's going to take a lot more than Jesus Christ to make you happy." This almost says, "Surely in vain I've kept my heart pure. Surely in vain I've been trying to push the voice of the world out of my head."

When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply until I entered the sanctuary of God. Then I understood their final destiny. When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant yet I am always with you. You guide me with your counsel and afterward you will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. The sovereign Lord is my refuge, I will tell of all your deeds. So men, when the world says, "It's going to take a lot more than Jesus Christ to make you happy," remember that you can reject that by not being conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. You can take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. You can allow the lament here like Asaph has done in this Psalm, and then reaffirm that you have all you need in Jesus Christ to make you happy more than happy.

Let's pray, our dearest Father thank you for your scripture. Thank you for the affirmation that you have come to not fix the broken world, but rather to bring your gospel to us so that we might be liberated from our bondage to decay and death. Lord, when the world says, "It's going to take a lot more than Jesus Christ to make you happy," give us the ability to reject that thought because we have above all else guarded our heart. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen. Thank you, men. Next week, Brett will give a second lesson on the world and then we'll move on to the flesh from there. Thanks, God bless you. Have a great day.