

What Your Lost Friend Doesn't Have Ephesians 4:17-19

Intro: Last Sunday I made a comment that Baptist Churches aren't growing today like they were up until the last 20 years or so not because Baptists have become outdated or obsolete but because the members of most Baptist Churches have lost their passion for the lost; lost their passion for personal evangelism. I would go so far as to say that the vast majority of Christianity has lost their passion for personal evangelism.

There was a time that when Christian men and women would get together socially their conversations would ultimately be drawn to their most recent encounter with a lost person and their attempt to present the gospel. Why most churches, especially Baptist Churches, had a "Soul Winning" night each week in addition to the Sunday morning, Sunday evening & midweek services, and visitation.

These men and women didn't meet this often because they didn't have TV to watch or because there wasn't some other form of entertainment available. No, they met this often because they understood what it meant to be lost and they could live with themselves if someone they knew didn't know about their need for a savior.

Today, we have lost our passion because we have lost our vision of what a lost person is. Satan has so slyly caused us to become so wrapped up in our own personal lives that we can't find the time to attend services more than one hour each week let alone be involved in some personal soul winning program at church. Our attitude is ***"What does this pastor want? For me to be at church every day? What about my time; time for my pleasure?"*** Friends, God's doesn't have time to care about your

time and pleasure, He has chosen His followers to win a lost and dying world before it's too late.

Today, I begin a sermon series titled ***Lost?*** Jesus said that the only reason He came to the world was ***"...to seek and to save that which was lost"*** (Luke 19:10). And I believe that we have taken our eye off the target; winning souls.

In our text for today Paul, in challenging the church at Ephesus to not walk as the lost do, gives us the most descriptive picture of just what our ***Lost Friends and Family members who are lost look like.***

[Stand/read Eph 4:17-19/pray/dismiss Jr church]

In our text today the word GENTILES is Paul's way of describing the inhabitants of the lost world we live in. We may have so many things in common with them: same office or school, job similarities, family ties but what we live for should be radically different because of our relationship with Christ.

Consider the condition of a lost person for a moment; why do we refer to them as lost? What is it that they have lost? May be it is better to ask, what is they actually have that is of any lasting value?

Paul's command to the church that we live lives different from the world is one that is hard to follow if we don't know what a lost person, a Gentile looks like. Let's look at our text today and see just how the Holy Spirit leads Paul to describe a Gentile; the description of our Lost Friend or Family member.

According to the Lord a Lost person's...

I. ***Intellect is Profitless*** V.17

- A. The phrase ***In the vanity of their minds*** literally means: morally *depravity, profitless, empty headed, mindless*.
1. The NKJV translates VANITY as FUTILITY and futility means, *'that which never succeeds'*
 2. Bottom line is this, when it comes to things of the Lord; and after all isn't that all that really matters in the view of eternity; in their lostness they are never going to come up with the right answer
 3. Their thinking will never lead anywhere of eternal value
- B. In Rom 1 Paul says this in describing the condition of the lost mind, ***"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools"*** (V. 22)
1. If they are them fools because they are empty headed the psalmist says that a fool says ***"...in his heart, There is no God"*** (Ps 14:1)
 2. Solomon in all his wisdom says this regarding his personal quest for the best
 - a) using his wealth and power to pursue every pleasure that came to his mind
 - b) He concluded that all of life is ***"vanity and vexation of spirit."***
 - c) The phrase vexation of spirit actually means ***"grasping for the wind"***
 - d) What Solomon said about life was that trying to reach God with all his wealth, power and wisdom was never going to succeed [vanity] and was like trying to catch the wind
- C. That lost friend of yours; that family member who isn't saved, you if you are here today without a personal relationship with Christ are simply empty headed when it comes to their knowledge of God

According to the Lord a Lost person's *Intellect is Profitless, Their ...*

- II. ***Understanding is Darkened*** V. 18
- A. Paul told the Corinthians, ***"...god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"*** (2 Cor. 4:4)
- B. The nonsense some men believe shows how darkened their understanding really is
1. Christian Scientists, for instance, believe that death is not real and that pain is an error of the mortal mind
 2. Mormons believe that they can become gods
 3. Hindus believe that, depending on how we behave in this life, we might come back as a cow, rat, or a cockroach
 4. The scientific community embraces the theory of evolution – choosing to simply add a zero on to the end of the age of earth every time they come across a new discovery that can't possibly have taken place in the currently believed age of the earth
 5. The humanist thinks that man is essentially good and quite able to cope with moral problems given enough time and money; in fact, however they do nothing but licenses lawlessness & lust
 6. The global warming crowd are convinced man is evil and the cause of the gases that cause the earth's temperature to rise but rejecting any evidence that points to the truth that the earth seems to warm and cool itself on a cycle and humans can have little affect on that cycle
- C. Commenting on this very verse John Phillips in his commentary on Ephesians says, ***"Lost people proclaim lies as truth, immorality as morality, high-sounding nonsense as science, and philosophical speculations as religion"***

1. Their lack of understanding results from **“being alienated from the life of God”** (V18)
 2. The opposite of life is death
 3. Men without God are spiritually dead
 4. No wonder they are unable to think straight in matters of faith and morals.
- D. Man was created to be inhabited by God; he intended for the human spirit to be inhabited by the Holy Spirit
1. The indwelling HS was to enlighten the intellect and energize the will
 2. In doing so the life of man would express, in human terms, the life of God
 3. Unfortunately the fall ruined all that
 4. Sin entered and the Holy Spirit left
 5. Without the life of the indwelling HS the natural man is spiritually dead and **“alienated from the life of God”**
- E. The understanding of the lost is darkened because they are cut off from the life of God and being blinded and cut off from God they have...
1. No Life – **“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life”** I John 5:12
 2. No Peace – **“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;”** Eph 2:14 Without Christ there can be no peace
 3. No Strength – **“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly”** Romans 5:6
 4. Eph 2:12 alone tells us 5 things the lost doesn't have: **“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having**

- no hope, and without God in the world:”** Ephesians 2:12
- a) No Savior –
 - b) No Citizenship –
 - c) No Promise –
 - d) No Hope –
 - e) No God –
5. No Remedy – **“shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation”** Hebrews 2:3
 6. No excuse – **“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”** Rom 1:20

According to the Lord a Lost person's Intellect is Profitless, Their Understanding is Darkened and finally their ...

III. **Inclinations are Depraved** V 19

- A. The next step downward from willful blindness and wicked beliefs is wanton behavior, a theme Paul developed in Rom 1
1. Here, in verse 19 Paul writes that people gave themselves up
 2. In Rom 1:24, emphasizing this same thing from God's perspective, Paul writes that God gave them up
- B. The word translated here as **“past feeling”** is found in this verse
1. Those who are past feeling have lost their sense of pain
 2. The sense of pain is vitally important to a healthy body
 3. At Christmas one morning Sally got up and was cooking breakfast for all the older kids. She just finished using the glass top stove and turned and told the kids to be careful because the top was still hot. Before she was able to begin to cook her own eggs

- our grandson Tyler walked up to the stove and put his hand flat down on top of the burner she had just turned of.
4. If it weren't for Tyler's sense of pain he could have ruined the lost of his left hand – as it was the split second his hand was on the stove caused 2d degree burns
 5. Many of the terrible wounds that lepers suffer are the result of insensitivity to pain caused by their disease
- C. People who embrace wicked philosophies soon lose their sensitivity to evil and put their precepts into practice
1. They give themselves up to lasciviousness in order to **"...work all uncleanness with greediness"**
 2. The word translated *work* here in V.19 describes a regular, gainful occupation
 3. This word is used to describe how the slave owners used the demon-possessed girl they had in their power in Acts 16:16, 19.
 4. This word is also used in Acts 19 to describe how Demetrius and the silversmiths of Ephesus **"brought no small gain"** to themselves by making shrines of the pagan goddess Diana
 5. The word is also found in Luke 12 where the Lord denounces the blind leaders of Israel, **"When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him"** (v. 58)
 6. In the Luke reference the word means **"work hard, take pains, do your best"**
- D. So in V19 Paul was saying that those who are past feeling work hard at their vileness
1. They hope to gain from it and many do
 2. People who run prostitution rings, sell drugs, and enslave people in hellish lusts are so greedy for gain

3. That they disregard the effects their work has on others
 4. Likewise, those who write, print, and sell pornography and glorify homosexuality and all other kinds of perverted sex are greedy beyond description
- E. Listen to this account of a 2005 World Cup Soccer qualifying match:

Enraged Mali soccer fans set cars ablaze, looted shops and destroyed monuments early Monday, hours after rushing onto the field and forcing the suspension of a World Cup qualifying game against Togo.

The fans at the sold-out 70,000-seat stadium were angered Sunday after Togo took a 2-1 lead late in the game. Dozens of fans rushed the field, and police fired tear gas. Officials stopped the game, and state television immediately cut its live transmission. Togo later was awarded the victory by the African Soccer Confederation, although FIFA will have the final say.

- F. We may marvel at such depravity over a soccer game but who hasn't watched as some major city in the US finds fans in the streets burning cars, breaking windows and literally tearing down the city when their team wins a Super Bowl, World Series or National Championship.
- G. No wonder the Holy Spirit moved Paul to write that Christians should not walk as "Gentiles walk"
1. We must never copy the beliefs, thought patterns, convictions, and codes of conduct of the unsaved
 2. To be sure we don't we must realize that all who are not saved fall into the category that Paul describes in these two verses.

Conclusion: If we are ever going get our passion back for winning lost souls we need to develop a broken heart for those

around us who are lost because they are unable to do anything about their state. When a lost person behaves badly we need to remember they are behaving just like they should, because, ***Intellect is Profitless, Their Understanding is Darkened, and Their Inclinations are Depraved*** how else would you have them act?

The challenge today is this; if you are heard today and you heard something that might define you then you need to ask yourself, *“Am I saved?”* If you aren't sure then let's take care of it right now, don't let another day go by without getting right with the Lord.

If you are absolutely sure of your salvation; there is no inkling of doubt that you would go to heaven if you died right now, then you need to ask yourself. *“Am I walking like the Lost? Have I been corrupted by the world so badly that you can't tell the difference between me and them?”*

Maybe you are sure of your salvation and after a good soul search you know that you never “Walk in the ways of the Gentile” but you know someone who this message describes then you know someone who is lost. That carries an awesome responsibility because God has placed that person in your path for a reason; He intends for you to be a witness.

We will be starting a soul winning club in the not too distant future and you need to be praying about being part of it. Part of our 2008 direction is we are going to become a soul winning church.