TITLE: LIVING IN A TOPSY-TURVY WORLD!

TEXT: **Eccl. 1:9 Judges 17:6; Pr. 14:12; Ro. 1:20-32; Is. 5:20-24; Is. 59:19; Is. 1:16-20; 2 Chr.7:13-15**

INTRODUCTION: How many would agree that the world that we live in seems to be topsy-turvy at times.

Topsy-turvy means to be upside down or inside out…Not as it should be but something else….

 The best example of this, I believe, is the moral values that many embrace today…They often seem to be topsy-turvy, upside down or inside out…

 And this is exemplified nowhere better than in the media or so called journalism of our day…

 A couple years ago there seemed to be a rash of animal abuse cases in the news…

 In one such case a mom & dad & their 4 year old son got out of their car to go into a small store in an urban area and there was a pit bull running loose on the side walk. The dog seemed friendly enough but as the little boy went over to the dog the dog viciously attacked him. The parents were finally able to chase the dog off but not until it had seriously injured their son. The parents rushed their son to the hospital and their little boy then underwent several hours of surgery….

 The dad then went back to see if he could find the dog. It was chained up by a house that was next door to the store that the attack happened at… The man had a baseball bat with him and the owner came out and unleashed the dog.

 The man killed the dog with the baseball bat when the dog attacked him.

 I understand what that father felt but I don’t necessarily agree with what he did…. But the point that I want to make is this… The way that the media covered this story was focused on just what the man did to the dog with little mention of what the dog had done to his little boy.. This man was arrested and brought up on charges, went to trial and was acquitted by a jury… yet there was more of an outcry from the media about his killing the dog then the dog almost killing his little boy!

 I don’t think that people should be cruel to animals but It bothers me when we seem to have become more concerned about animal abuse in our nation then the abuse of our children…

 Which seems to get the most sympathy from the main stream media? The plight of abused animals or the plight of our unborn children?

 How many times have you seen a journalist look concerned or appalled when talking about the taking of a human life through abortion?

 The abortion story very rarely will even make the news. But let someone mistreat an animal and it is all over the front page!

 More than once I have seen animal abuse as the lead story on our local news for like 3 days in a row when stories of human suffering may be buried deep within the newscast.

 This is just one area where we see the topsy-turvies of the world in which we live.

 Chuck Colson shares a true story about a reporter for the Washington post…

 A few years ago a group of teenagers got together and blew their minds out on the hallucinogenic drug LSD. They were all “nice” kids, the kind who get good grades and lead student councils.

 No one suspected that they were indulging in a very dangerous drug that night---not their parents, not their teachers, not the police… No one, that is except a lone reporter..

 A Washington Post reporter was there and stayed on hand all night to observe the party. She calmly watched as minor children broke the law and popped 4, 5 and even 6 hits of acid. She listened as kids described their hallucinations.

 The reporter simply observed and took notes. She made no effort to stop the teens. She offered no moral comment and when she wrote up the story for the post she concealed the kid’s identities…

 Public reaction was strong and swift and outraged, as it should have been!

 Was it right for a reporter to stand by and passively watch as teens took an illegal and dangerous drug? What was the ethical obligation of a reporter in a situation like this?

 Remarkably, the Washington Post ombudsman, a man by the name of Richard Harwood wrote a piece defending the reporter! He advanced the argument that journalism has no ethics anyway so what is all the fuss about! He said journalists are “in a business with no fixed moral or ethical formula. Their ethics just get invented as they go along!”

 To tell the truth he said, for journalist ethics is not even a concern---getting a good story is!

 Folks this is sheer pragmatism! Where the end justifies the means….

 This article is really an amazing admission. It reveals just how much journalists have rejected any transcendent, God given standards to guide their conduct.

 And this rejection of God given standards is not just confined to journalism in our nation. Society as a whole has seemed to go this route, and to a large degree, has rejected God’s standards.

 King Solomon once said:
**Ecclesiastes 1:9(NIV)**
**9What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.**

 This same thing happened within the nation of Israel in the time of the Judges….

**Judg 17:6 (NKJV) In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**

 What a fitting description of life in America today!

**Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**

 Many today are living as though there is no absolute moral standard for conduct and they are just doing what seems right in their own eyes!

 Kids blowing their minds on dangerous drugs---lets watch and see what kind of a story I can get out of it! Someone overdoses? It will just sell more papers!

 It seems right to me to be able to do whatever I want with my own body! I will have sex with whomever and whenever I want! If I become pregnant or I get someone pregnant then there is a simple solution….abort the pregnancy. In my eyes it is easier to abort then it is to abstain!

 It just seems right to me that a 5 year old can choose for themselves if they are a boy or a girl regardless of biology. I mean whatever makes them happy!

 In my eyes it is not right for you to impose your values or your God on me or my children so I want all prayer, I want all mention of God taken out of all schools and public places!

 Isn’t it right to respect all peoples values?

 I mean an atheist or a Satanist has rights too and we need to be, not just tolerant of them and the things that they do, but we need to embrace them and the things that they do!

 Folks, in our desire to do what is right in our own eyes have we traded the absolute truth of God’s Word for the subjective truth of secular humanism? If it feels right then do it!

 If something seems right in our own eyes then it must be OK to do! We are our own moral standard!

Prov 14:12 (NIV) There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

 To the alcoholic it is OK to abuse their body with alcohol.

 It is my body, alcohol is legal and if I want to drink until I feel no pain then that is my business! It only seems right to me that I do as I choose with my own body!

 Then after 20-30 years of substance abuse they find that the alcohol they have consumed has pickled their insides and they are dying from **Sclerosis** of the Liver!

 Society condones it by paying for their hospital bills because they have purchased boozer instead of health insurance.

Example: There was a 34 year old man that worked for me at Dahl’s on our night crew years ago.

 He had a drinking problem and we found out that he was drinking while at work at night. I told him we would have to let him go as he was a danger to himself and those who worked with him by his drinking at work. He was a nice guy so I told him if he would get help. Go into treatment that I would hold his job for him.

 He checked himself into Broadlawns Hospital and got the help he needed. He got dried out and started attending AA meetings. After a few months he came in one day to see me and the difference was amazing. I realized that I had probably never seen him completely sober before. He really looked good!

 I asked him if it was hard to give up the booze. He told me that while he was in the hospital they did the usual blood work up and after more testing found that his liver was about shot and if he didn’t quit drinking he would most likely be dead in a year or two. He said that was his incentive to quit.

 I hired him back and things went on pretty well for 2-3 months and then when he came to work one night I could tell he was intoxicated. He punched in and I went back to where the guys hang their coats and in his coat pockets he had two cans of cold beer.

 I called him to the front and asked him what happened.

 This is what he said: I was doing good and then one night my 15 year old son was over to my place with some friends and he wanted me to go get them a case of beer. I went out and got it for them and couldn’t resist drinking a few myself.

 This blew me away! I said: you are an alcoholic with **sclerosis** of the Liver and more drinking may very well kill you and you go out and buy beer for your 15 year old son!

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death!

 The Homosexual or transgender, says that it is their right to do whatever they want with their own body! That what the bible teaches as immoral sexual behavior is OK because it feels right to them, it is right in their own eyes.

 Many have fallen victim to their own desires and have contracted sexually transmitted diseases such as aids that end up killing some of them.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death!

**Roma 1:20 (NIV) 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 men are without excuse.**

**21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.**

**22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools**

**23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.**

**24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.**

**25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.**

**26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.**

**27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.**

**28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.**

**29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice.**

**They are gossips,**

**30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;**

**31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.**

32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

 Even those who have never entered a Church door, have never read a word from the bible are without excuse when it comes to Gods standards of moral behavior, of what is right and what is wrong!

 **Roma 1:20 (NIV) 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 men are without excuse.**

The reality of God and His holiness and righteousness can be seen in nature itself!

Even animals don’t prey upon their own young!

 Even animals don’t mate with animals of the same sex

 Even animals have the basic motivation to care for and protect their babies!

 Even tribes of people in remote areas of the world that have never had the gospel of Christ preached to them or heard a word of Scripture have a basic knowledge of what is right and wrong!

 They know that it is wrong to murder or steal or sleep with someone else’s wife or husband!

 How do they know this?

**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 men are without excuse.**

 Yet we who are so rich in Christian heritage in America where Gods Word is so freely proclaimed have turned our world upside down! We have made it to where many times good is called evil and evil is called good!

**Isai 5:20 (NIV) Woe to those who call evil good**

**and good evil, who put darkness for light**

**and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet**

**and sweet for bitter.**

**21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes**

**and clever in their own sight.**

**22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine**

**and champions at mixing drinks,**

**23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent.**

**24 Therefore, as tongues of fire lick up straw**

**and as dry grass sinks down in the flames,**

**so their roots will decay and their flowers blow away like dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel.**

Have we come to the place as a nation today where we call evil good and good evil?

 Many have embraced the lie that homosexuality is normal and even of God. God created me this way!

 Many have embraced the lie that the life of an unborn child is of no value, and in fact not even a life, so it is OK to destroy it in its mother’s womb!

 We have come to the place in America today that what was once the safest place for a child, the mother’s womb, has become the most dangerous place for a child!

 Tell me we haven’t come to call evil good in many cases!

 We have taken God and prayer out of our schools and public places!

 As a Nation we have told our children that God has no place in their life! That Gods values and standards for life are outdated or subjective, subject to how we may feel at any given moment.

 And then we stand amazed and horrified at what happens in places like Columbine Colorado.

There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end it leads to death!

 We have replaced God and the teaching of Jesus Christ with secular humanism in many of our classrooms! Teachers teaching kids that the only truth that they need to embrace is what is true to them at that time! If it feels good then do it!

 And if a young person feels rejected or left out and they feel like going into a classroom with an AK 47 and killing everyone in sight it must be the right thing to do!

 Why are we so baffled by this kind of behavior?

 It is what we have been teaching our kids! That there are no moral absolutes! No divine moral lawgiver!

 Probably the most persecuted person in the United States today is God! The most persecuted group of people are Christians!

 Notice the disdain on most news anchor’s faces when a prominent Church leader is interviewed or takes a public stand on an area such as abortion or homosexuality or inviting God back into our public schools!

Tell me that we haven’t often come to call good evil and evil good in America!

 Listen to what God has to say to those who have come to call good evil and evil good!

 **Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.**

**21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes**

**and clever in their own sight.**

**22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine**

**and champions at mixing drinks,**

**23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe,**

**but deny justice to the innocent.**

God says Woe to those who do these things!

 Woe comes from the Hebrew word:

**0188 'owy {o'-ee}**

**1a) passionate cry of grief or despair**

God says woe, as a passionate cry of grief and despair to those who have come to call evil good and good evil!

 Woe to you who have turned My world upside down!

**….as tongues of fire lick up straw and as dry grass sinks down in the flames, so their roots will decay and their flowers blow away like dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel.**

 Church, we have the answer for all America’s problems! We have Jesus Christ! In fact we are the answer for America! As born again believers God has placed His Holy Spirit within our hearts! As we allow His Spirit to guide and direct our lives we become representatives of Jesus within our world!

 As we live our lives in Christ, subjecting our lives to Him, we uphold His standards of moral behavior and rightness in the world in which we live.

 In fact it is to this that we have been called as a Christian- To be the moral standard of Gods values in our world…

 As a Christian we are to be a standard bearer. The standard that we bear is to be the standard of Jesus Christ.

 Example: In the times of Scripture a Standard bearer carried the flag of the king.

The flag represented the kingdom of the king. Represented all that the king represented. Represented not the values of the one carrying the flag, but represented the values of the one whose flag it was!

 Church we are standard bearers of the King! We are standard bearers of the King of all Kings and the Lord of all Lords!

 The standard that we bear is not to be our own-- but the standard of the one whom we represent!

 We represent Jesus Christ!

 Is it His standard that we are holding up in the world in which we live?

Isai 59:19 (NKJV) …. When the enemy comes in like a pent up flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

Folks the enemy has come in like a pent up flood against America!

 Our streets our being flooded with evil!

 Many on the left today will not enter a discussion on the issues of the day but instead will just call those who don’t agree with them names—You are a racist, a homophobe, a bigot, ect.

 They can’t actually enter a discussion on ideas because their beliefs are built on sand, they have no foundation for what they believe so they resort to name calling….And sadly it has seemed to be working for them.

 Church, we are the standard that the Lord wants to lift up against that evil!

 It is we, the Church that is to be the standard bearer for our King!

 Are we allowing God to rise us up as that standard?

 Are we allowing God to work His will through us?

 Are we allowing Jesus to so fill our lives that it is Jesus that people get a glimpse of when they see us?

Folks we live in a topsy-turvy world!

 How do we help right side up a world that seems to be upside down?

 By being the standard bearer that God has called and equipped us to be. Bear the standard of Jesus in the part of the world that He has placed us in.

 In closing this morning, Gods word to His people…

Isai 1: 16 wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong,

**17 learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless,**

**plead the case of the widow.**

**18 "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD.**

**"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson,**

**they shall be like wool.**

**19 If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land;**

**20 but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.**

Is it your desire to eat from the best of the land? Is it your desire to see America restored to the fullness of God’s blessing so it can once again be that beacon of the light of the gospel of Christ to the rest of the world?

God has said:If you are willing and obedient, If Mine is the standard that you bear; you will eat the best from the land and you will make a difference for My kingdom!

 Church, restoration for our Nation and our world has to start first with us!

 **2 Chronicles 7:13-15 (NIV)**  **13“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people,**  **14if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.**  **15Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.**

 Does our land need the healing touch of God today? If so, will we do our part, fulfill our calling as an ambassador of Jesus Christ, living by His standards of righteousness in the part of the world God has placed us in?

 A quote originally attributed to William J. Toms: "Be careful how you live; you may be the only Bible some people ever read."