

OMG!

What's going on this morning church? Man, it's great to be here with you, my name is Darrell and I am excited to be here with all of you today. Now, there are lots of reasons for that, but mainly I'm just excited that I get to hang out with the adults today. Normally, I'm with the kids making sure there's learning about Jesus, but every once in a while, I find myself here with you beautiful people. The adults, the people who don't get play dough all over the floor, markers on the classroom table, or need me to help you wash your hands because you just made a mud pie on the playground. Now, that we are a little more familiar with each other you should also know I really enjoy baseball, like really enjoy baseball. If you know anything about baseball or watch much professional baseball or sports in general, you know that it is really easy to critique sports judgements, outs, penalties, fouls, turnovers etc. I know this because I've been there many times. Almost every time I'm right and the official is wrong and if he had just seen things my way, he would have gotten the call right and everything would've been fine. You see more than any sports has taught me that it is hard for me to admit that I am just **plain wrong** about something.

Now, as I look around the room, I am willing to bet that I am not the only person who struggles with this thought right? Nobody really wants to be wrong, whether it comes to sports, politics, religion, relational dynamics, pizza toppings, whatever the case we all want to be right and many of us have such a deep desire to be right that many times it is impossible for us to admit that we are wrong. There have been enough events in our world recently that have created some very polarizing discussion that I am sure I'm not the only person who feels this way. Right? I mean you can't hardly make it through a day without some shouting from a TV, computer, and phone screen about why their opinion on the country, gun control, marriage, finances, sporting officials, education, or even religion is right and yours is wrong. It has become so prevalent in our way of thinking that most of us can no longer get along with people who see the world differently than we do. We just walk around with this deep seeded need to be validated for having the "right" opinion that we let this compulsion become something that is no longer helpful, but merely a **distraction** that keeps us from impacting the world we live in. We get so wrapped up in the culture and the climate we are in that we forget what is important and we **miss opportunities** to make changes in the arenas of life that **really matter**.

Today, we are going to be looking at a story from the bible where a group of people, probably much like you and me, who also got caught up in a culture of RIGHT! and WRONG! . In fact they got so caught up in their culture, that the message that could have solved their problem was right in front of them and they missed it! Let's take a look at Mark Chapter 15 this morning.

Mark 15 (ESV)

What we have going on right here is an excerpt from the crucifixion story. The Jews have turned their back on Jesus and asked the Roman authorities to execute him. Despite their best efforts to convince the public of Jesus' innocence, the Romans eventually sentence Jesus to death. They torture him and force him to carry his cross to Golgotha, a prominent hill outside of Jerusalem. Too weak to carry his own execution device, Jesus trudges up the hill. Finally at the top, he is nailed to the cross and

forced to endure ridicule from all sides. Roman soldiers gambled for his clothes and the Jews shouted insults at him, with nowhere else to turn Jesus shouts out to God in a moment of utter despair. The people making fun of him were so blinded to his identity that they thought he was calling out to the prophet Elijah, not Yahweh. The text also states that some pretty exciting scientific anomalies took place during this time as darkness appeared during the middle of the day and a temple tapestry was torn in two from top to bottom. Now with all of this going on there are three things taking place that we have got to pay attention to.

1. The World View of the Jewish people

These words and interactions are important for us to recognize because many of us who call ourselves “Christians”, despite our best efforts often approach situations with a similar attitude. In this moment the Jews were so concerned with proving who Jesus wasn’t, that they couldn’t pay attention to who Jesus was. (REPEAT) They were so set on proving that Jesus was a phony that misunderstood him calling out to God, rejected the beliefs of their own faith, and essentially mocked and murdered a man to prove they were right. Those are some pretty extreme lengths to go to, especially just to maintain some comfort, influence, and prove a point. They were so set on making Jesus look bad, making sure that Jesus was wrong, that they missed the whole point to begin with. Had they been following the code that God had set before them they would have probably handled the situation differently. Instead of committing murder, they would have at the very least, learned some new ideas about relating to God and the surrounding community.

2. The World View of Jesus

This part is important because this is where the central message of our story lies. If you don’t listen to anything else I say today, listen to this. Jesus willingly embraced separation from God so that all people might have the opportunity to know God. Jesus never tried to prove anything, he did not have to preach to prove he was right, he simply followed through on what God asked him to do. He let his love for God and his compassion for all reveal the truth. From his time in the temple as a little boy to the moment where he took his last breath, Jesus let truth be exposed through his love for God and his compassion for those around him. You see it was his love for God that motivated him to take on the torture, ridicule, and execution he faced. He embraced his fate because it was the will of his Father in heaven and it was the only way he could show the true extent of the compassion that he had for all of us. Jesus didn’t need to prove he was right about his relationship to God, he simply let his reality do his talking for him. He didn’t need to convince people, people could see he was right based on the way he lived and interacted with all people, even those he disagreed with. In his final moments Jesus endured separation from God so that even the Jews who mocked him, might have an opportunity to know God.

3. The World View of the Roman Soldier after Jesus died

We are now entering my favorite part of the story. You see along with the Jews there were a lot of Roman citizens and soldiers watching the execution of Jesus or, as his charges read, “The King of Jews.” Now the soldier in this story was most likely emotionally uninvolved, he was simply doing his job and outside of a few liberties, his greatest concern was following orders. That is what makes his opinion so

great, he was neutral. He isn't going to try and convince us that Jesus was right or that the Jews were right. He probably doesn't care, he just makes a statement based on what he has seen. His statement is short and sweet, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" In all reality this man probably knew who Jesus was, witnessed his torture, ridicule, and execution. After all of these events, granted combined with the scientific anomalies we mentioned earlier, he came to be of the opinion that Jesus was who he said he was. His honest observation led him to this conclusion, it didn't take someone preaching the answer, it didn't take someone calling out the injustice he perpetrated as a soldier, it took someone being so secure in their beliefs that they sacrificed everything to see it come to fruition. The soldier witnessed two very passionate World Views and ended up choosing the one that was backed by innocent and consistent action, not the one that was motivated to prove the other wrong.

Now What? We've taken and examined a text and discussed how the worldviews in this story intersect, connect, and depart from one another. What comes next is, you have to decide what you are going to do about it. See, I believe that anytime a person examines scripture, that scripture should then make a small tangible change in your life. What that change is differs greatly based on the world view you walked in here with today. For Christians we should be able to look at scripture and identify one small tangible change we can make to our life so that we can move into closer relationship with God. The hope being that moving closer to God impacts how you express your worldview. For someone who is a skeptic or may be "doing the Jesus thing" it's my personal belief that this can still influence your life in a positive way. Even if he wasn't God, Jesus still knew how to treat people well and live a life worth imitating. I'd be willing to bet that even the staunchest opponents of religion can look at Jesus and find something to impact their world view. What that change is differs greatly based on the world view you walked in here with today. The way I see it people today share their World Views in one of three ways:

1. The Blower - Convinced We Are Right
2. The Shrugged - No Opinion
3. The Hopper - Open to Interpretation

All three of these categories have benefits and all three have faults. Essentially what this means is that all of us in this category have the ability to use our world views and beliefs to help people know God or to keep them from knowing God. We all get caught up in our beliefs, opinions, and convictions believe me I understand. I can't tell you how vindicated I was when, last week, the NFL ruled that Dez Bryant really did catch that ball in the 2015 NFC Divisional Playoff Game. However, our beliefs about our ideology and theology are very different from our beliefs about a sports game. What side of the coin you fall on will depend on what category you fall into and how you handle your opinions and beliefs. Your challenge for this week revolves around the flaw in your world view.

1. The Blower (Convinced We Are Right)

If, like me, you are one of those people who are convinced that you are right about most things, or maybe even everything, then you have to decide if your opinions are based on objective fact or if you are so passionately convinced that like the Pharisees in our story you are missing the truth that is right in

front of you. This was the problem the Pharisees had. Their beliefs were so wrapped in their personal desire that they forced them to forsook their true beliefs for what was ultimately selfish gain. In doing this, they **deceived themselves** and they **deceived others** in a very powerful way. Therefore you have to decide if your beliefs and opinions about things like our country, gun control, marriage, finances, sporting officials, education, or even religion are keeping you from truly knowing God or helping others come to know God. Folks, please don't be a deceiver, don't allow yourself to get so wrapped up in having the right opinion that it ultimately leads you and the people who you interact with away from God. Before you express your opinion about any issue, consider what you know to be true of God, ask yourself if this opinion achieves the ultimate goal of drawing you and others into closer relationship with God. Try it for one week, before you speak on any issue, ask yourself "Does what I am about to say have any hope of drawing me closer to God or drawing someone else closer to God?" If so, go ahead and let 'er rip, if not, then maybe you should hold back your thought in that situation.

2. The Shrugger (No Opinion)

Now, apart from Blowers, we also have a group of people who just kind "Shrug." They tend to not formulate opinions and often try to stay neutral on hot topic opinions. Some even think that having a strong opinion is pointless because they can never influence the way people think. Folks don't give in to this **lie**, we all have the ability to develop a deeper relational experience with God and we all have the ability to help others connect with God as well. Our opinions strong or not, are a key part of this process. When I was growing up one of my favorite old country songs had a chorus that said, "You've got to stand for something or you will fall for anything." If you don't have any opinions on key issues surrounding our country, gun control, marriage, finances, sporting officials, education, or even religion maybe it's time you developed some. The only thing worse than deceiving **another person** is allowing yourself to be deceived because you are not willing to **put in the effort** to generate a well-informed opinion. Your challenge for this week is to think through some of the key issues and find some sources you trust to begin creating an informed opinion on the topics you choose. Then, if you want to get really bold, ask God to give you an opportunity to share that systematic opinion with someone in an encouraging way.

3. The Hopper (Open to Interpretation)

Our final group is "The Hopper" and this is going to be those of you who are always changing your mind without ever really developing a true world view. Now, before I go any farther, let me say there is nothing wrong with **changing your mind** if you come across a well-informed argument that convinces you that might be wrong. I would argue this is a very healthy thing to do. This is not what I am talking about here, what I am talking about here is a personality where your opinion changes week to week based on what events take place, what internet articles you read, and the quote you saw from that celebrity on twitter. The deficiency with that type of world view is that people no longer **value your opinion** because they know it is will **rapidly change**. If you do not have a set world view on some of the key issues surrounding faith and other morality than maybe it's time to educate yourself well and formulate a solid stance. Instead of allowing yourself to be swayed to and fro by what's cool and relevant that week, formulate some well-informed opinions that you can stick to and find some ideas to get passionate

about. Your challenge for this week is to identify a topic you are passionate about and take 1 month or 30 days without changing your opinion, stand by it, defend it, vocalize it in an encouraging way. See how you feel after that and then decide if you need to alter your opinion.

Now, I know, it is a lot simpler to say all of this than it is to actually do it. However the benefits are there because no matter what conclusion you come to, you will realize that your world view isn't just about you. It is partly about you because you need a foundation to stand on, but you also need to be a thinker, you need to question the status quo, you need to be able to look at the way you influencing people and determine if you helping people come to know God or if you are preventing them from really knowing who God is. You need to be a house that's built its concrete foundation on the truth revealed to us in Jesus, but also be ok with venturing off into all the bedrooms and exploring the rest of the house. That way when people come to your home you can show them all the different rooms, but the foundation on which your house is built will always stay the same. Your **world view** should work the same way, it should be founded on the **truth of Jesus** and then expand from there. That way no matter what topic or opinion you find yourself expressing, the message of Christ will always be the foundation of your view.

Church, we all have a responsibility to be thinkers and influencers in the world we live in. Most often our problem is not a lack of education or a lack of effort. Often it is a lack of commitment to our core values, to our foundation. We get so wrapped up in being right that we become over bearing, or we don't care enough to actually formulate opinions on issues that can impact others, or we simply can't stand firm in what we think and we fluctuate like leaves in the wind. If you walk out of here and have not sensed call to act, one of two things has happened: Either I have not done my job or you have not done yours. We simply do not have the option to **avoid communicating** our core values, beliefs, and opinions. What we do have an option in how we communicate these things we can choose to be deceivers like the Pharisees or we can choose to passionately and sincerely express what we believe to be reality. That reality being rooted in our values is this: God loves all people, he loved them so much that he sent Jesus to die for them. Jesus has equipped us to **receive his grace, believe in his world view, and commit to his movement.**

Imagine what our church could be like if we all were secure enough in our beliefs that we lived like Jesus. We believed in and held firm to a moral world view, but freely dished out compassion to those who needed it. We spoke with honesty and sincerity because we so valued the people around us and we offered up encouragement to all people. If we could simply, with as little distortion as possible, carry out the message of Jesus to hurting world think about the impact that could have? Think about how this neighborhood would change, think about how our city would change, think about the lives that would be impacted simply because we decided to be faithful to the only world view that matters for eternity. The Rapper Lecrae said it this way,

"Rather than thinking about the world in the categories of simply good and evil, a biblical worldview helps us think in categories of good and redeemable."

The rest of our opinions are important, but when faced with the shadow of the cross they become invisible because our view of Jesus is the only thing with the super natural power to truly change a life.