

We are meeting indoors at Fishers of Men Bible Church in Bellevue, WA

- The state does impose some restrictions, so please email us if you plan to visit
- We are a new church plant, just getting started, we have a lot of ministry opportunities
- We would like to have a food bank, like to help homeless get connected
- As a long time member of the Visual C++ Team, now retired, we feel additionally gifted
- To give a leg up to those who have been left behind my technology

We do not take a collection, we do not accept donations

- We are self-supporting as a contrast to money driven Churchianity
- I have no plans of ever drawing a salary regardless how big we get

The Title of this Sermon: Christianity is Dysfunctional

- Self-Love Prerequisite to Loving Others
- Replacing Fundamentalism with a Mature Approach to Revelation

Reading Rev 14:1-13

- Christ Sets Captives Free, Idolatry as Addiction or Dysfunction
- Chronic Bondage leads to Self-Destruction
- Practical Life Recovery Approach to Xtianity, Temporal First

Our reading continues with the theme of the consequences of idolatry

- Especially political and religious idolatry
- The past few weeks we have called out how Xtians have been drawn into strife
- Exhorting Xtians to recognize their true citizenship and to get back to the first works
- To repent of political strife, anathematizing and dehumanizing opponents
- To love God, love our fellow man, and love our enemies

This week we will expound upon idolatry in application as addiction or dysfunction

- Xtians not able to care for others because they have neglected caring for themselves
- Since ch 9 have stressed a “choose love” motif for our fellow man and enemies
- Now we exhort Xtians to “choose love” for themselves

Matthew 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

- To love thy neighbour as thyself assumes that we love ourselves
- We cannot love our fellow man until we learn to love ourselves

Self-Love Prerequisite to Loving Others

- Instead of serving others, Xtians try to control and manipulate others

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

- Self-love flows from being yoked with Jesus, the Eternally Begotten Son
- Who by intervening into history, taking the form of the man born of a woman
- More fully reveals the nature of God to mankind

Jesus the Christ is the God-man, true God, True Man

- Those who recover from various addictions in 12 Step programs come to believe in a HP
- Believing in a God of their own understanding, they cannot relate to the God of religion
- Which is understandable given the scandalous witness of religion

Yet the person of Jesus as the Incarnate Son, provides us with a God we can relate to

- True God, that He has the power to set the captives free, to deliver us from bondage
- True Man, that He might represent us, as one of us, as that HP of our understanding

Loving Ourselves First is Not Selfish, but imperative for Selflessness

- In a life and death situation, a paramedic needs to secure his safety to save the victim
- We cannot help others until we help ourselves
- We cannot know true humility until we love ourselves

Total depravity's tendency towards self-deprecation is a false humility and a cop out

- Xtians just throw in the towel, I am just a guilty sinner, God have mercy on me
- Refusing the work to seek help due to fundamentalist view of natural revelation

Fundamentalism should be replaced with a Mature Approach to Revelation

- This is not meant to apply a broad brush, I know of a fundy that I respect
- Has a series of videos on science topics to encourage a healthy appreciation of science

We are applying this to those who lack a healthy reconciliation of faith and reason

- We are referring to a belief system with an immature understanding of revelation

What We Do Not Mean

- That if the bible contradicts a norm of the culture, then the cultural interpretation wins
- That we stress temporal needs in this world to avoid the accusation that Xtians
- Are dangerous because they do not value this life, which should have a lot of truth to it
- We should expect this kind of persecution because enemies are no longer restrained

Fundamentalists have faulty understanding of special & natural revelation

- Natural Revelation are God's truth revealed in creation and the natural sciences
- Special Revelation is God's revealed truth expressed by His mighty deeds and word
- Fundies are often threatened by Science, Medicine, Psychology
 - Treat the bible as literal science and history book
 - Deny any natural revelation they perceive as contradicting the bible

Fundamentalism can be used as a cop out

- Jesus cared for temporal needs initially, healing the sick, setting captives free
- He did not have an altar call at the end of the Sermon on the Mount

Too often fundamentalists emphasize eternal needs to the exclusion of all else

- No need to be concerned for temporal needs unless they come to church
- No need to be concerned about the environment, this age is coming to an end

Too often fundamentalists cop out on taking care of their physical and mental health

- Now we understand there are medical conditions that can lead to obesity
- But far too many fundamentalists are obese due to neglect and poor eating habits
- Yet they consider themselves godly based on their clean living traditions
- dysfunction goes unchecked because they are thought of as "loving people "
- when really they are dysfunctional enablers or fixers who try to control others.

Fundamentalism can be used as a form of escapism which is addiction, idolatry

- No need to deal with brokenness in self or in families, rely on traditions
- No discernment of taking advantage of God's natural revelation
- There is a suspicion of medical expertise, legitimate science
- No need for mental health professionals or recovery programs, bible enough
- Fall prey to conspiracy theories, flat earth, worried about the age of the earth, etc.

Fundamentalism often falls into biblicism

- Analogy of faith is rejected leading to private interpretation:
- me, my bible and HS, don't need to teacher, shallow proof text wars
- The bible is considered one big rule book no attempt to distinguish genre
- This leads to wooden literalistic interpretation, no regard to its original context or genre
- The bible is considered the source of all needed knowledge beyond the spiritual

The Bible is one big anthropomorphism meaning that the transcendent God

- Speaks to us in ways that can be understood in all eras, ancient and modern
- The bible consists of different genre of many books that must be read in context
- The Bible is replete with personifications and literary devices with this in mind
- The Bible is not meant to be a science or history book

Faith should not have to contradict reason, natural revelations should not be rejected

- The background and historical context must be understood
- It is a book of divine truths expressed at a particular time in history
- That must be historically contextualized for the present day

This concept of divine revelation as anthropomorphism no more apparent than Rev

- It is definitive book on spiritual warfare rich in symbolism & personifications
- OT citations are ubiquitous in the book of Revelation
- The OT is the inspired Word often written from the context of human experience
- OT times were brutal times of war, blood sacrifice, legalism, reflected life at that time

God intervenes to meet us where we are us, Jesus came to us in a historical context

- Jesus Christ the Law and Temple, there is no theocracy, no more animal sacrifice
- Good vs. Evil can be thought of as constructive vs. destructive behavior
- The symbols, figures, and personifications represent recurring concepts in history
- The recurring fate of empire and religion that oppress to gain power and influence

The Term Idolatry can be thought of as Bible speak for addiction

- Nothing intrinsically wrong with money, sex, possessions, fame, religion, politics
- Idolatry is the obsession of these created things as our highest pursuit
- That become our “god” taking control of our free will, in bondage
- That lead to habits and lifestyle that are destructive to self and others
- We can think of idolatry as addiction or escapism

Addiction is the use of created things or pursuits as means of escapism

- As a coping mechanism to avoid or numb pain
- instead of going through the process of working through the pain to heal
- Continuing in escapism is destructive to self and others
- Escapism, addiction, these are all forms of bondage we can name as idolatry

Think of God’s laws as guides for health physical, mental, & spiritual

- There were food laws, mostly just common sense for a time with no refrigeration
- The leper laws and laws regarding touching the dead teaches social distancing
- God’s moral laws are not just a bunch of legalistic do’s and don’ts, for our well being
- Continued digressing God’s law can lead to spiraling down a vortex of no return

E.g. the bible makes a distinction between mere same sex attraction vs. the orgy lifestyle

- Many use hookup apps to engage in sex with strangers, multiple times per week
- One could argue that use of such apps is sexual objectification that dehumanize
- It is fair to assert that the orgy lifestyle is likely to be an expression of sexual addiction
- That leads to a downward spiral of degrading health and self-destruction

The Punitive Symbolism in the Book of Revelation Describes the Pain of Bondage

- The book describes cycles of 7 that represent God’s reaching out to us incrementally
- The punitive symbolism represents the pain we will incur if we ignore his help
- Final judgment is the fate of chronic bondage that has crossed the point of no return
- Reprobates, those who have crossed that point are separated from the love of God

Now to our Reading