

Utmost Folly

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the folly of hiding from God and the consequences of rejecting Him, highlighting the design of creation and the necessity of a creator.

Duration: 38:08

Scripture: Isaiah 29:15

Topics: "Folly"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages the audience to read their Bibles regularly and emphasizes the importance of studying the Word of God. The speaker uses the analogy of a potter and a clay vase to illustrate the idea that creation requires a creator, highlighting the design and purpose behind everything. The sermon then focuses on Isaiah 29:15-16, where the prophet warns against those who try to hide their plans from the Lord and think they can go unnoticed. The speaker concludes by praying for God's intervention in the world, asking for His justice and for the nation to repent and seek His face.

Transcript

Let's pray. Father, as we look at the world in which we live and we see how that the wicked are in such prominent places in our world and are having such a detrimental influence upon our world and upon our nation, with the psalmist, Lord, we often cry, how long, oh Lord, before you take vengeance? How long, oh Lord, before you act? Father, we pray that you will help us to realize that you are a God of patience and that in your time you will deal with these issues that cause us concern today. We know, Lord, that we can trust in you and that you will work your work of righteousness in this land in which we live.

We pray, Father, do speedily bring our nation to its knees that we might repent before you as a people and seek your face. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. And you may be seated.

Tonight, Skip will be leading us through the Bible as we study Isaiah chapters 29 through 31. Again, we encourage, urge, exhort, whatever we can do to get you to read your Bible. Read it through and what an excellent opportunity and how easy it is to just keep up with our reading each week, three chapters a week, as we go through the Bible and then gather for Pastor Skip's excellent study on the passages that we have read, as he gives us such interesting background and interesting facts concerning the text.

So we would encourage you, read and then join with us as we go through the Bible together and find out what God has to say about our lives, about the world in which we live, about how we can have a

meaningful relationship with him. Tonight, studying Isaiah 29 through 31, but this morning we'd like to just draw your attention to Isaiah 29 verse 15 and 16. Here the prophet Isaiah says, Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, who seeth us and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed like the potter's clay, for shall the work say of him that made it, he made me not, or shall the thing that has been framed say of him that framed it, he had no understanding.

Isaiah is speaking of the folly of the people who turn against God. As I was thinking on these passages this week, I thought to myself, for a person to turn his heart and mind against the Lord has to be ultimate folly. Isaiah speaks of the foolish things that the people were thinking.

Woe, he said to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord. They thought that they could hide their plans or their actions from God. But in Hebrews chapter 4 verse 13, we read, Nothing in all of creation is hidden from God's sight.

Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give an account. You can't do a single thing but what God knows all about it. In 1 Chronicles 28 9, David said to Solomon, And thou, Solomon, my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a complete heart and a willing mind.

For the Lord searches all hearts and he understands all of the imaginations of the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you. But if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.

But David is saying to Solomon, God knows you, Solomon. He searches your heart and he even knows the things that you imagine in your mind. You can't hide anything from God.

Solomon, later as he prayed at the dedication of the temple, he said, Lord, when people come here and they pray unto you, hear from heaven your dwelling place and forgive and to render to every man according to his ways, whose hearts you know. For you only know the hearts of the children of men. Lord, you know our hearts.

Job said, For his eyes are on the ways of man and he sees everything that he does. God is watching you. There's nothing that can be done without God knowing it.

In Psalm 44, 20, David said, If we have forgotten the name of our God or stretched out our hands to a strange God, shall God not search this out? For he knows the secrets of the heart. In Proverbs 15, 3, Solomon said, The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good. So why would a person think that they could sin in secret, God not knowing it? How could a person be deceived into thinking that they can actually do something that God is not aware of, that they could actually hide their sin from God? I think that one of the reasons why people are deluded into thinking that God doesn't see them is that they can often hide their sin from other people.

And seemingly, they are getting by with it. It seems like people don't know. And so they think because they can hide from man that they are actually also hiding from God because God doesn't bring instant judgment upon them.

But that God often in his patience and long suffering allows us a lot of rope, so to speak. And he doesn't bring instant judgment upon us for our wrongdoings. But Paul writing to the Romans said, Through your stubborn and unrepentant heart, you are only storing up the wrath against yourself that will be revealed in that day when his righteous judgment shall come.

The wrath of God like water being stored up behind a dam. And one day the floodgates will open and you will be consumed. You have not hid your sin from God.

He knows exactly everything you have ever done. Paul in his writing to the Galatians said, Don't be deceived. God is not mocked.

Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. We reap in kind. God sees what we sow and what we sow, we shall reap.

They thought that if they did their works in the dark, God can't see them. This is sort of an anthropomorphic concept of God in which man sees God as man magnified. And because we can't see in the dark, we sort of presume that God can't see in the dark.

But what absolute folly to think that I can do something in the dark and God doesn't know it and God doesn't see it. In Psalm 139, David said, If I say that surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness does not hide from you, but the night shines as the day, the darkness and the light are both alike unto you.

Jesus said, Therefore, whatsoever you have spoken in the darkness shall be heard in the light. And what you whispered in the ear in the closets will be proclaimed from the housetops. Isaiah said, The people are turning things upside down.

Woe to them, he said, who call evil good and put darkness for light and light for darkness and put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. We are living in a topsy-turvy world in which we are just what Isaiah described. People saying good is evil and saying evil is good.

They say today that for you to accept and tolerate evil, that's good. You're broad minded. But if you speak out against evil, you say that is wrong.

That's a sin. Oh, that's bad. That's bad to say that you're very intolerant.

We realize, though, that when we start calling good evil and we start calling evil good, that it brings total confusion in the minds of people to where we don't really have any concept of what is good or what is bad, what is right or what is wrong. In our public schools here in the state of California, to advocate homosexuality to the children, oh, that's good. They need to learn to be tolerant.

But if you would say, oh, homosexuality is a sin, oh, that's bad. You shouldn't judge a person for what they're doing. So you see, good becomes evil and evil becomes good.

Here in California, in our public school system, when the children are in seventh grade, they now have to study the Muslim religion. They study Muhammad. They study portions of the Koran and are required to memorize certain passages out of the Koran.

They even are encouraged to sort of dress in Muslim garb. And they're saying, oh, this is good. It is helping them to understand the various religions of the world and what people believe.

However, it is bad to teach the children concerning Jesus Christ and the teachings of Jesus Christ. They might get a wrong impression because Jesus said that we're to love even our enemies. Oh, we don't want them being confused that way.

And thus, if we seek to teach Jesus Christ and the scriptures, then immediately the ACLU is filing a suit against the school and your principal will be knocking at your classroom door and asking you to resign or offering you your termination notice. How is it that it's good to teach Islam, but it's bad to teach Christianity in the California public schools at the present time? America was not founded on the beliefs of Islam, but it was founded on the beliefs of Christianity. And if you go back to the founding fathers and you read the quotes and the statements from the founding fathers, you'll realize what a strong impact the Christian influence had upon those men who established the constitution and the bill of rights.

If it were established upon Islam, you would not have the freedoms that you enjoy today. We wouldn't be able to be here today talking about the Bible. If America was founded on the teachings of Mohammed and upon the Islam religion.

In fact, we could all be sentenced to death under the Islam religion. If we sought to convert someone to believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and savior, that is a capital offense in their community. So right now there is an effort by our government to force the Christian schools to use only their approved textbooks in our classes on US history and world history.

The books that they want to force us to use here in our Christian high school are books that are revised history. In the US history books that they want us to use, there is no mention of the Christian influence that existed in the establishing of this nation. They've removed all of that.

They've removed in our world history books that they want us to use in our school, any mention of the influence of Christianity in the establishing of Western civilization. And they have actually said that if we don't use their schools that we could lose really the authority to offer to the graduates the opportunity to go on to higher public education. Calvary Chapel is involved in a suit against the federal government over this particular issue because we feel that the children have a right to know the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Jesus said you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. And where Christianity is a religion of liberties, freedoms, and it has allowed us to want and to enjoy the liberty and freedoms that are not allowed under communism or under many other religions. China and those nations controlled by communism, Cuba, and those nations that are controlled by the Islamic beliefs, they don't have the liberties that we have or enjoy the freedoms that we know.

Why is the turning of things upside down like potter's clay? He said surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay also. Because it's ultimate folly and foolishness. It's like this clay vase declaring to the potter you did not make me I made myself.

Now wouldn't that be rather foolish for this little vase to say to the potter you didn't make me I made myself. Actually I was just clay and there was a bolt of lightning several billion years ago. It hit the clay caused it to spring up.

The subsequent fire actually went ahead and glazed it. So here I am. You didn't make me.

We chuckled because we realized the idiocy of such a thing. Now that's what Isaiah is saying. It's like clay saying to the potter you didn't make me I made myself.

Now we know that clay jars don't make themselves. This shows design and it shows that you know it's something that just didn't happen. There was a creator.

There was a potter. He put the clay on the wheel. He turned the wheel.

He formed then he put these little ear things on the side and then he colored it and then he fired it and created the glaze and all. And we recognize that and we recognize this doesn't just happen by itself. It was created by a potter.

Now this little vase is an inanimate object. It hasn't any ability to think or to reason or to compute. It's just a lump of clay that's formed into a vase.

Thus it's very very simple. Just inert clay formed into a shape to create some kind of utility purposes for it. But to think that this just came into existence apart from a potter is folly and we immediately recognize that as folly.

We know that there was someone who created this. It doesn't just happen. When you add intelligence or when you add life actually, the DNA molecule with the codes for the forming of the whole body in this little DNA molecule.

All of the information to form the whole body and all when you realize the information within a single DNA molecule is so vast that if it was written in the Encyclopedia Britannica it would take 22 different separate volumes of the Encyclopedia Britannica just to write out the information in one little DNA molecule. And when we have discovered the vast complexity of a DNA molecule, we've come to the realization and the acknowledgement that it just could not have formed itself. It's a mathematical impossibility that life could have been spontaneously generated here on planet Earth apart from design and intelligence that is built into that DNA molecule.

So where did life come from? Well we are spending billions of dollars trying to find out. Presently we have a couple of little rovers up there on Mars and they're going around to see if perhaps there was one time water deposits there on the planet Mars. Maybe life developed on Mars and there was a rock that flew off of Mars and came through space, entered into the gravitational influence of the earth, and it survived through the fiery descent through our atmosphere.

And this little molecule of DNA then began to replicate itself here on the planet Earth. And after billions of years of these fortuitous occurrences of accidental circumstances, here you are. Or maybe it happened on one of the moons of Saturn and so we've got up there the probing of Saturn.

And what are they looking for? What are they telling you that you're looking for? We're looking for perhaps some clues for the origin of life. But just a minute. If the DNA molecule is so complex that it could not have just been spontaneously generated here on the planet Earth, what makes us think that it could be spontaneously generated on Mars and have survived the fiery descent through our atmosphere? Or what makes us think that it could have maybe started on one of the moons of Saturn? If it's an impossibility here, it should be an impossibility there.

And of course, that's exactly what Isaiah is saying. People are turning things upside down and they're like a bit of clay saying to the potter, you didn't make me. I made myself.

Or as he went on to say, or shall the thing that is formed, that is that vase, say to him that framed it, he had no understanding. For me to say, well, God really doesn't have any understanding. No, the design of the human body and all of its complexities force us to the conclusion.

There had to be a designer. It doesn't just happen. Things don't happen that way.

And thus to try to say that is ultimate folly. As the prophet Isaiah is pointing out, ex-president Clinton appointed a man by the name of Robert Rice to be one of his advisers serving on the cabinet as the secretary of labor. Robert Rice recently has declared that people who follow God pose a more significant threat to the modern world than terrorists do.

Terrorism, he said, itself is not the greatest danger we face. As he wrote in a column in America Prospect, American and he began the column by criticizing the Bush administration as he pushed for a liberal understanding of America's separation of church and state. He wrote of the religious zealots who, he said, confused politics with private morality.

Concerning those who believed in God, he said that the great conflict of the 21st century will not be between the West and terrorism, for terrorism is just a tactic, not a belief. The true battle will be between modern civilization and anti-modernists, between those who believe in the primacy of the individual and those who believe that human beings owe their allegiance and identity unto God. Between those who give priority to life in this world and those who believe that human life is just a mere preparation for the existence of life beyond.

Between those who believe in science and reason and logic and those who believe that the truth is revealed through scripture and religious dogma. Terrorism, he wrote, will disrupt and destroy lives, but terrorism itself is not the greatest danger that we face. It's those people who believe in God.

So you are one of the greatest threats to America's future if you believe in God. But notice how he likes to equate those that believe in God as sort of unscientific and unreasonable and illogical. So it's very unscientific for me to say that this vase created itself.

That's very illogical. Because I believe that if you have something like this, you've got to have a creator. Be it a potter or, you know, a pottery shack or someplace.

It was put together by intelligence and by design. And of course, that classifies me as a very dangerous threat to the future of America. And it makes me very illogical and unintelligent.

The clay vase would be one of the simplest forms of creation because life is not involved. The moment you add the dimension of life, you're adding complexity that is just, well, it's just astronomical as far as chance factors. In any chance factor.

I think that it's important for us to realize that this man, Robert Rice, who was Clinton's advisor, is expressing the opinion of the liberals within the Democratic Party. You who believe in God, according to these liberals, and that you who believe that the scriptures were inspired by God and should be a guide for our life, obeyed and followed. You are a greater threat to America's future than the terrorist ever could be.

Remember that Clinton appointed this man to be one of his advisors as the Secretary of Labor. But incidentally, if you look at the voting record of the senators, Hillary Clinton and Ted Kennedy are conservatives. If you compare their voting record with two men who are presently desiring to have the office of president and vice president representing the Democratic Party, they are first and fourth in their voting in the Senate as far as liberal causes are concerned.

The liberal mindset is that Christianity has to go. Christian influence has to go. The Bible concepts have to go.

We're a threat to the America that they want to create. It's ultimate folly to say that God has no understanding, that the Bible, the Word of God has no relevancy to our lives today, and that we are self-existent apart from any activity of God. That's folly.

God does no He knows everything about you. He knows everything you have ever thought or everything that you have ever done. He knows what has been done in the dark as well as in the light.

He created you, and God sent his Son to redeem you from the power of sin. The greatest threat to America's future are not those who believe that the Bible is the Word of God, but those liberals who believe that the Bible has no place in modern society. They are the greatest threat to the future of America.

The Bible tells us that one day, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. This fellow, Robert Rice, who wrote this, one day he'll bow his knee, one day he'll confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Everyone will.

You will. But if you wait until that day that is prophesied in the Scripture, your confession of Jesus Christ as Lord will not be to salvation. It will be to condemnation, as you are condemning yourself, declaring he is Lord, but you never submitted to him as Lord.

And thus, you're acknowledging the righteousness of God's judgment in keeping you out of the kingdom of God. To confess it today is a confession unto salvation. For Paul wrote, if we will confess with our mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in our heart that God has raised him from the dead, we will be saved.

Today it can be a confession that will bring salvation. If you wait until the day when it is forced, it won't be to salvation but to condemnation. I would encourage you, receive the authority of Jesus in your life today.

Bow your knee. Confess Jesus as Lord. Let him become the Lord of your life.

Realize that it is a very relevant thing and a very wise thing to turn the reins of your life over to him, to let him guide you and let him be Lord over you. Let's pray. Father, we read Isaiah as he speaks of the ultimate folly of these people who thought they could hide from you, who thought that if they did something in the dark you couldn't see it, who thought that you didn't know what they were doing.

Those people who were like that clay pot that said to the potter, you didn't make me, I made myself. That clay pot that said, the one that framed me doesn't have any understanding. Lord, we realize that you understand all things and you understand the future.

And so Lord, we want to just submit ourselves to you today. We confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and we wish Lord that you would just guide and direct us according to your will, your wishes, your desire. Let us become Lord instruments created by you to bring glory unto you.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Shall we stand? The pastors are standing down here at the front and they're here to pray for you who today would like to make that confession that Jesus Christ is Lord and to submit your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Wisest thing you could ever do is turn your life over to his control. And I would encourage you take this opportunity today. One day you're going to make that confession.

Guaranteed. If you refuse to do it now, one day you you'll have to. And I'll be there saying, I told you.

But you see, it won't be of any benefit to you at that time. Today it can be a world of benefit, an eternity of benefit by doing it today. And I would encourage you to do so.

They're down here to pray with you and to pray for you. And so I would encourage you just as soon as we're dismissed, make your way forward. And just tell these men, I want to receive Jesus as my Lord today.

I want to turn my life over to him. I've really messed things up. Things are in a real turmoil.

Things are upside down. As the prophet said, you know, your world is topsy-turvy. Things are upside down, but the Lord can put things right side up for you.

He can bring great transformations into your life. He can mold and shape you into an instrument that he can use for his glory by your surrendering yourself to him. The Lord bless thee.

And keep thee. The Lord make thee his.

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