

VOTC. Feb. 5, 2017

## What Is Wrong With The World?

*Mark 7: 14-23*

Hello Dear Listeners;

Here's a question that still keeps many minds busy. This one, "What is it that's Wrong with the World?" The answers are a mind-boggling collection of often serious, and sometimes, foolish, stabs in the dark.

Meanwhile time moves on and the hopes for mankind that were broadcast a generation ago are buried under mountains of disappointments. I only think of the euphoria surrounding the establishment of what was called The League of Nations in 1920. It was the first international organization whose principal mission was to maintain world peace. It was supposed to prevent wars through collective security and disarmament. International disputes were to be settled through negotiation and arbitration, and not through war. Countries participating were to be committed to just treatment of native inhabitants, deal effectively with human and drug trafficking, the arms trade, global health, prisoners of war, and protection of minorities in Europe.<sup>13</sup>

Ultimately that League proved incapable of preventing aggression by the [Axis powers](#) in the 1930s and forties. Germany withdrew from the League, as did Japan, Italy, Spain, and others.

Things have not gone all that much better with the United Nations. This organization set up to promote international co-operation was a replacement for the ineffectual League of Nations . It has now been in existence since October 1945. One of its primary aims was to prevent another conflict such as the Second World War. At its founding, the UN had 51 member states while there are now close to 200.

In both instances people dreamed of increasing prosperity, freedom from hunger and of nations living peacefully with one another.

Yet these dreams have largely turned into nightmares. The United Nations has had some limited success in dealing with outbreaks of war and its agencies have indeed helped to alleviate hunger and misery. Yet while I'm speaking there are more than twenty violent conflicts going on in the world.

One only has to think of the outbreaks of terrorism, the scourge of dictators and the millions of displaced persons on the run to know there is a great deal wrong with the world. In the United States of America there are more than thirty thousand gun-related deaths every year. In many so called democratic countries the violence in schools and on the streets is utterly deplorable. And I haven't even mentioned the blight behind many a closed door as marriages and families break up, and poverty and loneliness as well as rejection of races as well as of Christians and others is rampant.

Violence appears to be in vogue and is welcomed in many homes it appears when you consider the graphic, violent content of many movies and T.V. programs,

What then is wrong with the world? Not that long ago a learned and Noble Peace Prize winner was of the opinion that "Yes, the consequences of violence are often bad for individuals but they might yet be beneficial for

members of the species as a whole!” “One example”, said this learned person, “ Is dispersion. If members of the same species fight with each other it gives them incentive to avoid each other, and in consequence migrate to areas where there are no enemies.” “ One problem” . however, he said, is” That since humans have colonized the whole world there are no more empty spaces to migrate to so this instinct is no longer useful.”

There are others who chalk up the violence and misery in the world to imbalances in the brain or the disparity between rich an poor. Another one says that the violence in our world erupts out of the pain and trauma we experience in our childhood and bury deep within us. We bury the pain itself, along with our feeling responses to the pain, like fear, anger, hurt, confusion, sorrow, hopelessness and more.

While these “others” may even put their fingers on what are surely contributing factors to the over-all malaise of violence in the world yet they too so often miss the mark.

Is it not time, dear listeners to listen to what the Lord Jesus Christ in His Word has to say about what’s wrong with the world? Christians know His Word to be faithful and true. And it is a Word for all ages and places.

In the Gospel of Mark ( ch. 7) we hear Jesus answering a charge of the Pharisees, leaders of the Jews in Jesus’ day. Theirs was a legalistic charge based on their man-made laws. Laws which insisted on a strict outward conformity. Yet laws which were not aimed for the hearts and souls of people. Sadly the Lord Jesus accused them, “ You have let go of the commandments of God and are holding to the traditions of men.” ( Mark 7: 8)

Then Jesus called to the crowd to listen to Him. He said,

*Listen to me everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a man can make him unclean by going into him. Rather it is what comes out of a man that makes him unclean. ( ( v. 14, 15)*

He then proceeded to list some of the evils that arise in a person's heart: evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly." Said Jesus, " All these evils come from inside and make a person unclean." ( Luke 7: 21-23 )

That means it is not the environment in which we live that causes us to be evil. No not that Jesus would discount what the bible teaches elsewhere about bad company spoiling good morals. ( 1 Corinthians 15:33) Occupy yourself with evil companions, spend your time luring at pornography and there's a likelihood you end up having a ruined character yourself.

Yet the evils that are promoted in our society are a direct product of people's hearts. Those hearts, said the prophet Jeremiah ( ch. 17:9) are " *Deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*" The Preacher who wrote Ecclesiastes 9:3 said the same, " The hearts of men are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live."

I know, that truth is not eagerly and quickly embraced by people. While billions are spent annually by committees appointed by government agencies and medical or psychiatric organizations their conclusions will not put their finger on this state of mankind's heart and soul. Not while the current opinion is that a person is born with a blank slate that only gets messed up by the environment.

Yet it is so. To be sure, there was once a time, at the beginning of history when not only that environment but mankind, placed in the world as a keeper, and ambassador under God was pure and holy as well.

But then sin entered the world and mankind fell for the lies of that fiend Satan, who tempted our first parents, Adam and Eve. The moment they fell all kinds of horrors took over in their lives. All those evils Jesus listed in Mark 7 arose in people's hearts, including your hearts and mine.

Yet God did not put up with that spiritual terrorist attack on His goodness and His Holy Law. He promised not only to send One who would crush the serpent. He acted on his promise and sent that Son, Jesus Christ. He took our place as a substitute for God had said that those who sin must die!

Jesus died not only but was raised and lives and sent His Holy Spirit. That mankind might have real hope, and a genuine anchor for their souls, their lives. He poured out the Holy Spirit on His church. He gave them His Word and a most reliable roadmap, a living one that we might be rescued from all the lies and innuendo and weak excuses for our sins that are making the rounds.

That Word is still proclaimed in faithful, God-honoring churches. People are still coming to repentance and sure hope in believing in Jesus Christ.

Let us then not lament with never ending, "What is Wrong with the World cries of despair. Turn to the Lord who is able to change the most miserable situation into joy. By changing your heart and mine. By filling us with what the bible calls, "The oil of gladness." And then, even using us, in one's family, one's community, as lights in the world. That others too might live a thankful life of obedience to the Lord. Thankful for the forgiveness of sin and for the strength and courage to live, a Christian life on the expectation

of the coming King.  
you.

Amen, and may the Lord be with