What is a Worldview? Memory Verse: Galatians 1:11

April 16th Scripture Reading: Psalm 24

**SLIDE 1 - TITLE**

 Easter, the greatest of all holy days was a week ago, but we continue to celebrate the victory of our Lord Jesus as we gather before him today. Our hearts revel in gratitude at what he has done for us and we can survey the landscape of this broken world, acknowledge fully the pain that comes to us as humans, and yet rejoice in the hope of eternity because of the cross and because of the empty tomb. Hallelujah!

 All throughout Lent and into Easter we discussed our move from being people who are dead in sin to now being people who are dead to sin. A very crucial and wonderful distinction. And to be a person who has been made dead to sin means that we are made alive in Christ! And someone who has been made alive in Christ is acquainted with the truth! As Christians, we have a particular worldview, a worldview rooted in truth, that is, God’s word. So that is our subject for this current series. It’s called, “New Inventions: Tinkering with Worldviews”. And because we will being going through a lot of information this series, I wanted to help keep us all on the same page with a fun little worksheet. If you follow along, answers will be up on the screen. Hopefully that will help you absorb some of the info, plus you can always go back and reference it later. Now with “New Inventions: Tinkering with Worldviews,” there is actually quite a bit packed into that little title, but we are going to start with the end of it first by asking what is a worldview?

**SLIDE 2: Rose Colored Glasses**

 I’m sure you have heard the phrase “rose colored glasses.” If we say someone is looking through rose colored glasses, what do we mean? It means that person is optimistic right? They see the good aspects of a situation, but the phrase can also indicate a naivety. Maybe the person is not thinking through the situation or maybe they don’t know all the information. It is good to be optimistic, but not at the expense of truth. We might say that rose colored glasses are nice, but it might be unwise to live all of our lives wearing them. Then you get people like my dad. And some of you have let my dad. He is a wonderful, helpful man, but sometimes when you get off the phone with him, you feel a little…paranoid. My dad is a worse-case-scenario kind of guy. He tends to fill you in all the things that *could*  happen. He means well, he wants your plans to work out and he hopes for the best, but he just wants you to know, no matter how statistically improbable, that things *could* potentially go south and much damage and harm *could* result. I admit, there is wisdom in that. It is good to be aware of certain outcomes, but it does make planning harder when you have the worst-case scenario looming over your head.

 But whether we are optimistic or pessimistic, whether we are joy filled or crabby, whether we are generous or stingy…all of these distinctions point to our worldview.

 To help me along in this discussion, I have employed the help of Christians author and professor James W. Sire. He shares some very helpful thoughts on what a worldview is and the first thing to note is that everyone has a worldview. Now, it’s clear that most people you run into on the street or in the grocery store do not consciously consider themselves to be philosophers or theologians. Most people are just trying to get through the day, but everyone must have some semblance of an answer for the basic questions of life. Who am I? Why are we all here? How did this all come to be? Most people might answer, “Well, I don’t know.” And that very well could be an honest and forthright assessment of their position, but “I don’t know” is still an answer and that answer speaks to one’s worldview.

**SLIDE 3: A worldview is a commitment to a set of presuppositions, or assumptions about reality.**

A worldview is a commitment to a set of presuppositions, or assumptions about reality. What is really real? Is God real? Are ghosts real? Are we all just stuck in a grand computer program called the Matrix and none of this is real? We live in culture where answers to these question are going to greatly vary. All sorts of worldviews are represented in our families and neighborhoods and probably even in this room. We all have a take on reality, but I want to argue for a biblical worldview. For me, the Bible lays out the only consistent and viable worldview. And just to show my cards, I think everyone should subscribe to a biblical worldview – that’s one of the reasons I’m a pastor. Only in the Bible do we get a true and actual explanation for all of reality. That is my worldview commitment, that is what I presuppose. Whether I live that our consistently is another question, but as Christians, I want to help us adopt a full and vibrant biblical worldview. And in order to do that, we have to take a little time out to think clearly. Our culture is really good at keeping us busy and or numb. We deal with a lot of flashing lights and noise. We deal with a world class computer, a portal to untold amounts of information available in our pockets, and what do we tend to do with it…scroll Instagram, play Candy Crush, check our Facebook, watch mindless Youtube…It’s all too easy for us to be distracted!

**SLIDE 4: “The unexamined life is not worth living.”**

The great Greek philosopher Socrates (who had the time to sit around and think) is credited with saying, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” And through I do not claim to have some sort of corner on the examined life market, I do want to use this series to help us slow down for a few moments and think through the things we assume about reality.

Back to the title. I’ve called this series “New Inventions: Tinkering with Worldviews” because I think there have been many who have come along, taken a biblical worldview and tweaked it, changed it, amended it. They have tinkered with it so much so that it has become something else; a new invention. The apostle Paul says in Galatians 1:6-12 READ.

**SLIDE 5: Galatians 1:6-12 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God’s curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God’s curse! Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ. I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.**

Now, at the time, the church in Galatia was being pressed by Jewish Christian teaches to commit to living out the old Jewish customs. They were basically teaching that Jesus’ death on the cross was not enough on it’s own, other things were required to be saved. So responds to this situation with this letter and lays out clearly that this message is not the gospel. Things like circumcision had it’s place and time, but now, through faith in Jesus we are saved. Paul is clear,

**SLIDE 6: “Don’t follow another gospel.”**

“Don’t follow another gospel.” Don’t believe some new invention. And even though the push for circumcision was nothing new, I think the tinkering of the gospel we see today is nothing new either, it’s simply repackaged, rebranded.

But before we dive in too deeply, I want to first ask some basic questions of life. These are the questions our worldview needs to address. Dr. Sire has helpfully laid these out in his book “The Universe Next Door”. Some of these questions we will find we can easily answer, some will make us pause and some, we may have to confess that we do not know the answer. But these are basic questions that can and should be asked of any belief system, any religion and even of those who claim they don’t believe in anything. All people have a worldview, inconsistent or not, well thought through or not, we are all wearing some sort of lens through which we view reality. And that brings us to our first question:

**SLIDE 7: What is really real?**

What is really real? Or prime reality? What came first? Christians would say God constitutes the primacy of all reality. He came first – or rather, he always was. Others might offer up the cosmos or the universe as an answer. Maybe some would say we can’t actually know what it real. This question is particularly important because our answer here will affect the answers to all the following questions.

**SLIDE 8: What is the nature of this world?**

2. What is the nature of this world? Again Christians point to God and say he created this world with a sense of order, others might say this world is random and chaotic, and people argue about how well or how much we can know about this world to begin with.

**SLIDE 9: What is a human being?**

3. What is a human being? A random accident? A civilized ape? A complex machine? Or a person created in the image of God.

**SLIDE 10: What happens after death?**

4. What happens after death? Many people who simply say that it is impossible to know. And that could very well be an honest answer, an answer that reveals part of that person’s worldview.

**SLIDE 11: How is it possible to know anything at all?**

5. How is it possible to know anything at all? As humans, we all claim to know something, even if it is just answer a question about how we feel. In any conversation, we are putting forth some sort of information that we think is true. But what is the source of that knowledge? Is it our senses? Or maybe the scientific method? How can we be sure our knowledge is actually reliable?

**SLIDE 12: How do we know what is right and wrong?**

6. How do we know what is right and wrong? This question addresses the crux of our current cultural debates. Everyone seems to have their own take on what is moral. Not so long ago, at least in this country, we had a sense of a shared authority that helped us determine right from wrong. Now, that authority equals me, my personal feelings and opinions. Right and wrong then seems to be determined by each individual person.

**SLIDE 13: what is the meaning of human history?**

7. Lastly, what is the meaning of human history? It could be that there is no meaning to our history and with that said, it could also be the case that there is no goal, nothing we are working toward. Often, with the fast-paced innovations of technology in our context, we are quick to regard those who have gone before us as hopelessly archaic and ignorant. There is a strong sense of distain for the ways of the past, what C.S. Lewis called “chronological snobbery.” So, a worldview asks, “Is there any meaning in our past?”

 These questions, as you can see, serve as a catch all. If we think through each one, we will end up with a coherent a logical view of all of reality. We will have all our bases covered so to speak. Now, the task of working through each question is no small order. And to try an get our answers to each question to line up with one another may actually be impossible, unless you have a little help. Or rather, a lot of help. The Bible gives us answers to these questions. Not always in a straightforward and easy way, but always in a way that can withstand scrutiny and can remain consistent.

**SLIDE 14: A biblical worldview can withstand scrutiny and can remain consistent.**

 The Biblical worldview is a perspective that I believe has been gifted to us by God himself. If we tamper with it, if we tweak it, if we massage it, we destroy it. Like an airtight submarine that has been carefully engineered for submersion, made to withstand the pressure of an ocean sitting on top of it, so is the worldview the bible offers us. It is airtight, it is carefully constructed, it is able to withstand the pressures of our culture, or any culture for that matter. But one change in it’s construction, one modification to the specs that tinkers with this or that, makes for a faulty submarine. The integrity of the whole depends on each of the parts. And so as we consider carefully a biblical worldview, we keep in mind these important questions. We want to be able to put pieces together to form a strong and coherent whole.

 So what how do we get at these questions from a biblical perspective?

I want to close today by taking a look at Psalm 24. I want to show how we can bring these important questions to the Bible and how it truly can shape our worldview. I’ll read the whole psalm and then walk through our seven questions. So Psalm 24: READ

**SLIDE 15: Psalm 24**

This little song goes a long way in shaping our understanding of the way things are. If we ask our first question, “what is really real?” we get the answer right in verses one and two: God. He has established creation, everything belongs to him. He is the source of it all. The end of the psalm relates that this God ought to be worshiped and hailed as a glorious King! This is vital information that is asy for us to take for granted because we have largely adopted a biblical worldview, but I think we can appreciate how these words shed light on the darkness of an unknown universe. Question two: What is the nature of this world? Well, we’ve already established that it has been created and we can also say it was made to be inhabited. Three: What is a human being? We see from this psalm that humans are meant to be in some sort of relationship with this God. We are to stand before him in a certain manner, and this God gives out blessings. According to verse 6, humans are meant to seek out this God to the point of seeing his face! This is not an elusive God! This is a God who reveals himself in relationship and is even connected to the name of a man…He is referred to as the God of Jacob. Question four: What happens after death? This song may not lay it our specifically, but we can be sure there is a God in heaven as he is proclaimed the glorious king and Lord of heavenly forces. Five: How is it possible to know anything at all? This again goes back to a God who reveals himself. Six: How do we know what is right and wrong? The psalm talks about having clean hands and a pure heart and the psalmist ties such things to truth. We learn from verse four that we should not be dishonest or make false promises and further, such a person will be made righteous by God who saves. So we are informed that truth is right and lies are wrong. That sounds pretty basic, but it is a truth that not all worldviews can acknowledge. And our last question; what is the meaning of human history? Again, the answer here may not be specific or scientific, but we have already seen the relational aspect of God in this passage and the end of the psalm clues us in to the fact that there is a glorious and mighty king that is coming. So history is moving toward some great event, some sort of homecoming that involves a heavenly king entering in. Now all of this that can be better described and is more fully explained throughout the rest of the bible, but my point is that even from this small psalm, written by a man named David, insipered by the Holy Spirit, even from this psalm alone, we see a a very deliberate and unique worldview emerge. A lot of questions are answered.

Now you can do this sort of analysis with any well-made piece of art ancient or otherwise; be it music, or a painting or literature or movies…the things we create reflect a certain worldview. That worldview, whatever it might be ought to be scrutinized, it should be run through this little questionnaire. Our goal in this series is to properly explain a Christian worldview and take note of how our current culture has tried to change it into something new. How can we be aware of this tinkering and then, in turn, faithfully and lovingly respond to those who certainly will diasagree. That is the work we will begin next week. For now, we stake our lives on the truth of God’s word, and let it dictate for us our view of the world. Amen.