

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE GODLY AND GODLESS Psalm 14 and 15

Having a *Biblical worldview* is *critical* and *essential* if we are going to *accurately assess* the world around us. Only with the vantage point that comes from the *truth* found in God's Word will we be able to *correctly appraise* the *spiritual condition of the world around us*...to *correctly appraise* the *spiritual condition of the world in which we live*.

In *turning aside* from God, people show themselves to be *fools*. Their problem is rooted in the *sinful nature* of their *heart*. Only God's Word provides the *cure* for that *deadly plague* that has infected people. The problem is *sin*...the *futile attempt* to live as if there is *no* God. The *sinful condition* of man longs for the *salvation* that only God *can provide*.

I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GODLESS: (Psalm 14)

David's assessment of man: (vs. 1-6)

- Their insanity:

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." (vs. 1a)...

The **fool** is a person who is *morally perverse* and *immoral*...not *mentally deficient*. The term is a synonym for *sinner*...and it *describes everyone who has no place for God in their life*. They aren't an *intellectual atheist* ...denying the *existence* of God. They are a *practical atheist*...*living* as if *there were no* God.

"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God,' they are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice; there is no one who does good."

~Psalm 53:1

- Their corruption:

They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; there is no one who does good (vs. 1b)...

Describing one *without God* as **corrupt**, means *their human nature is fouled with sin*.

Corrupt...means *to sour like milk*.

The result is their **deeds** are **abominable**...*spoiling* whatever they do. This is to say that their *depraved character* bears *rotten fruit* of *unrighteous* and *unholy behavior*. What they *do* flows out of who they *are*.

This isn't to say that everything that they do *isn't good in the eyes of man*...but everything they do *in the eyes of God has no eternal worth*. Their *good works can't earn them righteousness*...*can't earn them salvation*.

The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one (vs. 2-3)...

As the Lord looked down from heaven and *surveyed* man, he *searched hearts* to determine if there were any who *spiritually understood* or who had any *spiritual affection* towards Him...to *seek after* Him.

The sad reality is that **all have turned aside** and are **corrupt**.

The bottom line is that **there is no one who does good**. *Lost individuals* are under the *bondage of sin*, which leaves them *incapable* and *unwilling* to *do good*.

"All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way..."

~Isaiah 53:6a

Sin has *devastated* their *total personality* (their *souls*), leaving their *minds depraved* and *darkened*, their *emotions numb* and *misoriented*, and their *will misdirected*.

Paul cites these verses in support of the *universal* and *perennial sinfulness* of man.

“As it is written, ‘There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.’”

~Romans 3:10-12

- Their ignorance:

David then turned to the *outcome* of such *corruption* and *depravity*. He *surmised* that they *devoured* God’s people just as they would *eat bread*...and they failed to *call upon the Lord*...to *pray* for *repentance* or *saving faith*.

Do all the workers of wickedness not know, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon the Lord? (vs. 4)...

To *oppose God’s people* is to *oppose God Himself*.

“Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said,

‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting’...”

~Acts 9:1-5

There they are in great dread, for God is with the righteous generation (vs. 5)...

God is *present* in the midst of His people. The *wicked* will be in great dread when the Lord *judges* them for *persecuting* His people...the *righteous generation*.

You would put to shame the counsel of the afflicted, but the Lord is his refuge (vs. 6)...

Shifting from the *third person* to the *second person*, David increased his *intense confrontation* towards the ungodly. Addressing them directly, he proclaimed that they *continued* to *frustrate* God’s people, but God will be their *protector* because He is their *refuge*.

Refuge...means *shelter from danger* (a word used of the Lord *9 times* in the *Psalms*).

David’s appeal to heaven: (vs. 7)

- For their deliverance...their salvation:

Expressing the *heart cry* of God’s *oppressed people*, David cried out...

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! (vs. 7a)...

David longed for God’s *deliverance* of His people from the *corrupt evildoers* who *attack* the *righteous*. He longed for the time when the Lord would *establish* His *kingdom* here upon the earth.

“...Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

~Matthew 6:10

- For their restoration:

When the Lord restores His captive people, Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad (vs. 7b)...

In *anticipation* of that *final day*, a day marked by *divine conquest*, God's people will **rejoice** and be **glad** because He will *ultimately establish* His *righteous rule*.

Psalm 14 reveals the *true spiritual state* of the *human race*. Apart from *divine grace*, the *heart* is *plagued* by the *corruption of sin*. If anyone is to be *acceptable* to God, he must *confess* this problem of *personal guilt* and *repent of his sin*, and receive God's *forgiveness*.

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GODLY: (Psalm 15)

This **Psalm** was one that *ancient worshiper* would *quote* and *meditate* on as they arrived at the *gate of the temple court* to *worship* God during one of the *four annual festivals* that they were *required* to come to Jerusalem for each year.

This **Psalm** begins with **David** asking *two simple questions*:

- The searching or probing questions:

O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? (vs. 1)...

The issue addressed here is the *question* of *who may come before God* and *remain* as a *guest* in the place where His *presence rested* (the **Tabernacle**). With God being *holy*...how can man *approach*, much less *abide* with Him. Another way of asking the question...*Who can draw near to God and worship in His dwelling place?* It's a question that calls for *meditation* upon

one's *spiritual condition*...the need for one to *search their heart*.

The *sanctuary* was the *appointed place* where God chose to *show His glory* to **Israel**.

- The spiritual qualifications:

Here **David** describes the *character* of the person who *qualifies* to be a *guest* of God...and to **abide** with Him. It's an answer that contains *twelve commands*.

The answer is that the person who approaches God must seek to be as *holy as God is holy*.

"For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy..."

~Leviticus 11:44a

"Like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'."

~I Peter 1:15-16

He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks in his heart. He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord; he swears to his own hurt and does not change; he does not put out his money at interest, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent (vs. 2-5a)...

He who walks with integrity...the word **walk** describes the *daily pattern* of a person's life and the *direction* of a person's life. **Integrity** describes one that is more than just *truthful*...it describes a person whose word has *reliability, genuineness, and authenticity...veracity*.

And works righteousness...describes a person who leads a life *marked by consistent conformity* to the Word of God.

And speaks in his heart...*speaks truth*...meaning he speaks what is *consistent* with his *heart*.

“The things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart...”

~Matthew 15:18a

He does not slander with his tongue...he *doesn't attack* others *maliciously* with his *tongue*. He doesn't *defame* others.

Nor does evil to his neighbor...he *maintains right relations* with others. He seeks to *do no harm* to others.

Nor takes up a reproach against his friend...he *doesn't discredit his friends* in the eyes of others. He *edifies* and *lifts others up*.

In whose eyes a reprobate is despised...He is one who *rejects the defiling influence of a sinner* in the sense that he *does 'ot associate with him* as a lifestyle (**Psalm 1:1**).

“Bad company corrupts good character. ”

~I Corinthians 15:33

But who honors those who fear the Lord...this means that he *affirms* and *associates* with those who *reverence* God with a life of *faith* and *obedience*.

He swears to his own hurt...he *keeps his oath* and *maintains the integrity of his word*...no matter what the cost. Even when it *hurts*...even if it means *personal loss* and *pain*...he *keeps* his *word*.

And does not change...he is *consistent*.

He does not put out his money at interest...he *lends his money* and *doesn't take advantage* of the person who must borrow.

Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent...he *can't be bought* by the world's system. He doesn't let the *potential for personal gain* influence matters of *principle*.

- The confident, strong assurance:

He who does these things will never be shaken (vs. 5b)...

The roots of a *righteous* and *blameless* life causes a person to *stand secure* and not *slip* or *shake* when the *storms of life rage*.

“He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.”

~Psalm 1:3

Many years ago, Queen Elizabeth of England paid a visit to the United States. Accompanied by her royal entourage, she traveled through a poverty-stricken neighborhood of Los Angeles. As she was being driven through that impoverished project area, the monarch of England, wanted to see what life was like there, so she asked her driver to stop the car. The queen got out and walked up to a tattered apartment and knocked on the door. The lady that lived in that apartment answered the knock, and to her amazement, found herself face-to-face with her majesty, the queen of England.

Unaware of the proper etiquette for addressing royalty, she didn't curtsy. Nor did she properly address the queen as *“her majesty.”* Instead, she naively approached the queen and wrapped both arms around her giving her a great big hug.

The royal entourage was appalled; the media was shocked; and the Secret Service was aghast. This common woman had no idea how to approach or address royalty. There was no reverence. No awe. No humility.

This is often true of the church today. Many of the Lord's servants have forgotten how to approach their Lord...the King of heaven...the King of kings.

There is a divinely prescribed manner given in Scripture as to how we are to approach God...and that is frequently forgotten in the present age. Believers must be careful not to enter His presence with a life filled with unholiness and sin. Instead, we must prepare ourselves with reverence, awe, and humble submission, knowing that we are entering the presence of the King of kings.

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- The **HEART** of the problem with humans is the problem of the human **HEART**.
- Scripture declares that no one is **RIGHTEOUS** in and of themselves. For that reason, no one can earn their salvation through **WORKS** or any **GOOD DEED**.
- As a believer, we must search (and prepare) our hearts as we prepare to approach God in **WORSHIP**.