

Sunday, June 27, 2010

The Big Picture

Our desire is to know God and to learn the truth about our existence. We want to understand what life is all about and where we fit into the grand scheme of things. We can get so busy with life that we don't pause long enough to ask ourselves the question, "Am I on track?" We need to work to pay the bills, do maintenance around the house, take care of the kids, help with this, pick up that. It doesn't seem to slow down, yet the Lord calls us to "rest" in him. As I meditated on this morning's message other titles came to me like: **The Aerial Perspective, The Grand Design, The Ultimate Reality, The Right Way, and even: As a Man Thinketh.** This last one is taken from the King James Version of the Bible Proverbs 23:6-7 *Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: 7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.* The line I took from that text has always grabbed me. Our lives are shaped by the way we think. Proper thinking is essential to right living. Knowing where we're going and why we're going there is key to a successful life.

I once heard a message that impacted me and serves to illustrate this quest to understand life. It went something like this: *We try to shape our lives according to the picture we have in our mind of what it means to be the best "Me." It is like putting a jig saw puzzle together. The picture on the cover of the box shows us what the thousand pieces inside look like when put together properly. Our job is to patiently get them into place. The problem we have in life is that the picture on the cover of the box has been confused by distorted perspectives and self-centered designs. What we need to do is first find out what the picture looks like. Then fit it together.*

The picture on the cover of the box is Jesus. God sent his son to not only die on the cross for our sins so we could have a restored relationship with God and live with him forever, but also to reveal what it looks like to truly be human. Jesus lived life as a man and demonstrated what we would be capable of if we would allow his Spirit to come and dwell within us by receiving him as Savior and Lord. That simple, yet profound prayer, "Jesus come into my life. Forgive me of my sins and make me like you" is all it takes. When we pray that prayer God immediately responds and gives us the gift of eternal life. Now it is up to us to live that life by daily looking at the box cover and making decisions that are in keeping with it. It is not lived out by rules and regulations, but a living relationship with God through Christ our Lord. From the smallest detail to the most complicated task or crisis keep Jesus at the center. Let it be real, not some religiously contrived outward appearance of things, but a genuine heartfelt relationship with the Lord. He cares for us. If it matters to you, it matters to him. We need to wash ourselves with the water of God's Word to be cleansed of the distorted pictures we have of God that have been culturally imposed on us. God is good! Make sure you are spending time with the Lord in prayer, reading his word, and gathering with other believers in church. It's amazing how the subtle attacks of the enemy can slip in and distort the picture on the box cover. If that's happened to you don't let another second slip by. Pray right now and ask the Lord to give you a fresh touch from heaven to clear your vision and enable you to see the Big Picture clearly again.

Colossians 1:16-20

16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; **all things were created by him and for him.** 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (NIV)

Colossians 2:1-10

1 I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. 2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, **3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.** 4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. 5 For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is. 6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. 8 **See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy,** which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. 9 **For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, 10 and you have been given fullness in Christ,** who is the head over every power and authority. (NIV)

John 1:1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (NIV)

Ephesians 4:11-19

11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. 17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. (NIV)