

## Going Against the Flow

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Discernment for the Last Days

**Text: Matthew 24:12 (NKJV, NIV, NLT)**

Those who live for Jesus are always counter cultural no matter what culture they live in. This will certainly be true of those who live in the last of the last days. One key sign that Christ gave of what life would look like on earth right before His coming is that sin or iniquity would abound. Some texts say that wickedness will abound. The Greek word used here means to be without law. To have no legal or moral standard. This is why it is often translated as lawlessness. It describes a people with no fixed moral standards.

Those who live this way have no standards, or a ‘moral’ standard that is for everyone. This is a society that will throw out and disregard all previously understood and agreed upon moral standards and will depart from God’s laws. **Galatians 5:19-23, Matthew 22:36-40**

While many will be given to delusion, those who refuse to be deceived will be part of a society, a new world order, that will have few if any, hard and fast rules of what is morally right and wrong. It will be a world without law. (This does not mean that there will not be laws, but that those laws will be arbitrarily chosen and enforced. This primarily refers to God’s moral law.) For many during this time the Bible and its standards will be deemed outdated and archaic. What used to be commonly accepted will now be commonly rejected.

We are witnessing this happening today. Those who hold to Biblical truths are being labeled as bigoted, intolerant, hateful, narrow minded and prejudiced. We are seeing a last-days generation with no fixed principles. The Bible says that this would abound. The word abound means excessive over the top, or abundant. It describes a river that is overflowing its banks. Society as a whole will be disregarding formerly well-established morality and absolute truth and throwing off all restraint to pursue a path that is opposite of the law of God.

**Psalms 19:7-11 (AMP)**

Paul explains in the book of Romans what happens when a society turns from God.

**Romans 1:21** The word ‘knew’ indicates a general knowledge or an acquaintance, but not a personal knowledge and a familiarity that comes with relationship. It is a picture of a society that possessed a previous general understanding of God. A society that once had a God-fearing attitude. These were not authentic Christians, but they at least recognized God and His blessings. Notice that Paul uses this word in the past tense, “When they knew God”. It describes people who have moved away from God and not only moved Him to the side but have actually moved Him out of sight. Remember the saying is true – “out of sight – out of mind”.

As people move away from their dependance upon God and His ways it results in consequences that cause spiritual and moral wandering that becomes more evident as time goes on. Paul points out that when a society decides not acknowledge God and that He is no longer intellectually fashionable that they are given over to vain imaginations. The Greek word used here means ruined. **Romans 1:21 (KJV, AMP)** The way that people think, the process by which they make decisions and think becomes error-filled and futile. When God is set aside error is released that leads to ruin on many levels.

The Bible tells us that the fear of the Lord and the knowledge of God is the beginning of wisdom. **Proverbs 1:7** When a person or a society respect and recognize God it results in enlightenment. The reverse is also true. When a society moves away from God it produces an environment of diminished intellect and increased spiritual and intellectual nonsense. (Non-Sensical thinking patters and conclusions). This will eventually spill into all spheres of a country- courts, education, business, government, and religion. This deceptive process continues until man's intellectual reasoning taints all of its decisions, calculations, and the way the general population thinks.

It is not that unbelievers are unintelligent. While people can be intellectually brilliant once they drift from the truth, they cast off intellectual restraint and pass into the realm of deception and foolishness. **Romans 1:22** When you remove God from the equation of thinking spiritual darkness, chaos and confusion come to fill the vacuum. The foolish heart becomes darkened or filled with darkness. Someone who is wise is a person so mature in their thinking that they can accurately see the entire picture. Someone who is foolish is someone who has lost their intelligence and ability to reason correctly. When people turn from God, they do not get smarter they get more preposterous in their reasoning.

What Paul is conveying in such a brilliant way is that a society that moves away from God moves towards a more ludicrous, defective, and wicked way of reasoning that is dominated by spiritual darkness. Paul says that their foolish hearts were darkened. Just as a heart pumps blood to every cell of the body, this type of foolish reasoning will infect every part of society. From adults to children, the rich and the poor. The healthy and the unhealthy. It will flood society with darkness. This represents spiritual depravity, immorality and many ungodly behaviors.

Notice that in order to justify and explain this insanity they will assert that what they are doing is actually a good thing. Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools. They will present themselves as the enlightened, the educated, the so-called experts. They will present themselves as the "super" intelligent. It depicts a "class" of people who believe that they know better, are more clever, sharp, astute, and brilliant than most other people. These are the "progressive thinkers." Always remember that when someone says that they are "progressive" they are insulting everyone else. These people are intellectual snobs. They are prideful and arrogant. These are impudent people who walk with "superiority". They think that they have the right to decide what is wrong or right and what is antiquated and out of fashion.

Paul described these people as fools. The Greek word here describes one who is mentally ill, or mentally deranged. It is the same word from which we get the English word for moron. These people who claim to be wise are actually intellectual morons. Paul uses this word intentionally and makes no apologies for it.

Something happens to a society once they have known God and reject Him. **Romans 1:28 (NKJV, NLT)** Because they no longer wanted God in their thoughts and lives God gives them over to a debased mind.

This does not mean that God gave up on them or abandoned them. He simply released them to follow their own desires. It isn't permission, He simply steps out of the way and allows them to reap the consequences of their wickedness. He did not give them a reprobate mind. He allowed them to pursue the things that they wanted and it results in unimaginable depravity.

**Romans 1:24** He God will allow people at some point to exchange His blessings for their own mess. **Proverbs 26:11, 2 Peter 2:22**

The word reprobate describes a person who is sick, disgusting, twisted and perverted. Paul used this word to describe an entire society. The word describes people who are unfit, disapproved, unreliable and untrustworthy. It describes people who have been exposed to negative spiritual influence for so long and so often that it has become compromised and impaired. It has become so hardened, so tainted and so spiritual and mentally compromised that it no longer has the ability to arrive at sensible Godly conclusions.

This is why it is so imperative that we guard our hearts and minds. **Philippians 4:7, 1 Peter 1:13-16 (NKJV, NLT)** We need to guard our minds and protect our children and grandchildren from immoral and negative influences. Satan dulls our conscience so we open our minds which he then can establish strongholds in our lives.

The seducing spirits of our day have undertaken a modification process bent on creating a way of thinking that is absent of any moral restraint. Even people who have grown up in the church are changing their minds in how they view things that should be set in stone. This demonic strategy uses the unrelenting bombardment of wrong information and wrong spiritual influences. The goal of this is to distort the minds of people to such an extent that they can no longer understand or see what is wrong with wrong. This results in people choosing sides that are opposed to those of us who adhere to long-held and established Biblical truths.

Often, we look at the world and we are in disbelief at what we are seeing. What we are witnessing is a society that is seriously sin-damaged and are now doing things that are not morally right and fitting for any society. Satan's strategy is sound. The book of Proverbs tells us that as a person thinks in their heart so are they. **Proverbs 23:7** We must remember that people's actions follow their thinking.

As God's people we must be alert, awake and aware of the fact that Satan has unleashed hordes of seducing spirits with doctrines of demons to lead an entire generation into delusion. He is after all minds but especially young minds. It has been prophesied that a day was coming when society at large would have lost the ability to discern right from wrong. **Isaiah 5:20** This day has come to pass already in many seasons of history. It happened in Israel, with the Mayans, with Germany and Japan during WWII. What sets this season apart from others is that this is happening on a global scale.

The construction of a New World Order is not simply a political construct but spiritual and moral as well. It is a collective mindset in society that no longer feels the pain or sting of conviction of sin and has grown numb and indifferent to the consequences.

We must never lose sight of the fact that a society is made up of individuals who God loves and who are impacted by the unrelenting assault of negative and wicked influences. Even individual believers have allowed themselves to drift so far from God's ways that they lie, steal, fornicate, live as couples outside of marriage, and watch entertainment that they once knew grieved the heart of God.

In the onslaught of this assault the minds of Christians are being modified to accept more and more compromise in their own lives and the lives of their families. Unfortunately, many of our churches look more like the culture and use cultural influences and entertainment to attract people to the church. When the church looks less like Jesus and more like the world, we are not attracting them to Godly things but just more of the same. **Romans 12:1-2**

A church ceases to be transformational when it simply conforms to worldly patterns. There can be no repentance from sin if there is no remorse for our sin because our hearts have been so hardened that there is no conviction of our sin.

We must never lose sight of the fact that even if a person is in error and has been tolerating and yielding to sinful behavior there is hope. **1 John 1:9** Forgiveness and transformation is possible when a person chooses to submit to God. If a person's mind has become debased it is still possible for them to be renewed in the spirit of their mind. This renewal in the spirit of our mind is a deep work that is possible when we work in cooperation with the Holy Spirit and meditate on the Word of God. Only God can take a sin damaged mind and renew it into a fit, sound, and holy condition.

The Bible warns us that in the last days there would be a great falling away or a departing from the faith. **1 Timothy 4:1, 2 Thessalonians 2:3** The term 'falling away' is where we get the word apostasy. This falling away is not simply a drifting off course it depicts a mutiny against authority, Biblical and natural authority. Remember lawlessness will abound. **Matthew 24:12** This is the reason that we are seeing so many things that do not make sense developing in our world today.

To swim against the tide of the current culture is not for the faint of heart and will require that we depend on the strength and the filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We must remember that God has placed us here on the earth at this time for a reason. We are a part of this strategy generation of believers at this time in history. Because of this, as believers we must humbly seek the face of God for wisdom, understanding and insight concerning His plans for our lives. We must not give in to fear but seek His power so we can do the work of eternity. It is important that we always keep before us that the way to combat the lies and doctrines of devils is with the truth that is found in God's Word. Most people today are ignorant of the truth and just need to be exposed to it.

The fires of hell are burning all around us. Like anyone trying to save people from a fire we must protect ourselves from the smoke of the fire. Most people do not die from the actual fire, they die from breathing in the toxins that the fire produces. More people are overcome by the fumes and the smoke.

Like a firefighter we must protect ourselves and others before we rescue others from the flames. Just like smoke filters through a house, the smoke from hell is filtering through our societal systems. (Education, courts, entertainment, politics, science, medicine and even our religion and churches) How do we do this?

- ❖ We must reinforce our minds with what the Bible teaches on vital subjects that are currently under assault.
- ❖ We must be courageous to challenge what we hear when it is opposed to Biblical truth.
- ❖ We must learn to think rationally, soundly and soberly even in the midst of a world that seems to be losing its mind.
- ❖ We must wisely use our minds to analyze what we hear, in order to distinguish the truth from a lie.
- ❖ We must be willing to be at odds with society if it has taken a position that is contrary to God's ways.
- ❖ We must aggressively pray for wisdom and grace to rescue those who are being victimized by this last day's deception.

We can no longer just sit back and fold our hands and just shake our heads in disgust and dismay. We must not become indifferent or lacking in compassion to help and bring healing to people.

Knowing that we are in the last days, have you ever thought about what this might require of you and your family?

The Bible says that there will be an increase in wickedness and in persecution and in the harvest of souls for the Kingdom. How are you personally preparing your walk to deal with the emotional and spiritual ups and downs that you will face?