

Current Affairs # 20 - You are the Light of the World, Part 1

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November 1, 2019

We have been speaking over several messages about how to overthrow the schemes of Satan in your life. We now are in a time in the world in which there is a quantum of lawlessness that is shaking the very foundations of human society. Lawlessness is not the absence of the law; lawlessness is the changing of the standard for evaluating what is, in fact, true. When the standard moves from an eternal standard to a personal one, we have moved from the fear of the Lord to lawlessness. It is not the absence of law, it is when every man does what is right in his own eyes.

With the advent of social media, we are observing an interesting phenomenon: a cultural shift, where society itself is being bifurcated into smaller and smaller units that require no more than how many followers you have on Facebook, or Twitter, or some social media platform to give you credibility. So, anybody can be a credible source to a certain constituency, and with the ability to attract followers to any idea from across the world, it is not all that difficult to acquire millions of followers. You just have to do something outrageous and have people agree that, because they disagree with the thing that you disagree with, that whatever you say now has become acceptable. Oddly enough, what is happening is that it is not so much that people are agreeing with what is being proposed by certain figures on social media, it is that they disagree with the status quo. Whoever is loudest in their disagreement with the status quo naturally attracts people from across the globe who also disagree with the status quo.

Some years ago this phenomenon was described as modernism, together with a litany of all the ills of modernism; and therefore, postmodernism was a way of articulating all of what was wrong with modernism. If racism was categorized as the product of the modern worldview, then to be against racism was enough. If it was viewed that corporate entities, or environmental entities, or entities that affected the environment were bad, then it was just enough to say that they were bad, and then one got a free pass. You did not have to actually articulate what the alternative was, all you had to do was to say it was bad. But, what has happened now is that it has gone beyond all that—whether it is talking about climate change, or wage disparity, or income disparity, or disparity between social classes, whether the issue is between men and women. Whatever the issues may be today, all one has to do to attract millions of followers via social platforms is to articulate those things that people in general seem to disagree with, and that you disagree with it.

But then it moves beyond that, where it is no longer just enough to disagree. The disagreement now is becoming increasingly championed by people who have a very different agenda than maybe even the people who agree that the thing is wrong. So when they say the thing that they all agree on is wrong, that is just a way of accessing the emotions of people and a way of lining up followers for the thing that they go on to say, with which people may or may not agree. But in the absence of actually thinking through what alternatives might be, people use these disagreements as just platforms for the advocating of horrendous ideas, which are no better than the very things they are criticizing—which is not to say that the things they are criticizing are bad, but when your ideas for replacing them are worse, you ought not get a free pass. But the point of it is not so much commentary on social media or the state of social media, it is to comment on the fact that there are no standards anymore, and this is how we have arrived at the place where there are no standards anymore.

At the same time, we are sailing into the most treacherous, difficult time in human history. One simply has to look around the globe and realize that the loss of standards is not just personal, in the manner in which I have described; entire nations are caught up in the collapse of standards so that they cannot do basic things, like forming a government, or govern, if they have a government. For example, at the moment, the United Kingdom is unable to have an effective government. In fact, the newest thing is that they are calling for new elections after just having had elections a few months ago, because they cannot come up with a consensus as to what to do about the Brexit strategy. It is tearing the United Kingdom apart. Some of you may remember that I said that a long time back, at the very time when they voted to withdraw from the European Union. Again, it is not that I am expressing a preference as to whether or not Britain ought to be in the European Union; that is for the Brits to decide. I am not offering a political opinion, I am simply saying that this is an example of how standards are being destroyed.

When the standards become personal, it affects entire nations. One might quickly recognize the country of Spain has not had a functioning government in three years. Israel does not presently have a functioning government, and sees no way forward to form one after a recent election. There is chaos in Lebanon. You pick the country in Latin America, and it is chaotic. From Argentina to Brazil to Mexico, the largest of the countries of Latin America cannot function. In fact, it is no surprise to anyone that the government of the United States is in solid gridlock. There is not even

a pretense of governing anymore in the US, because they cannot find commonality on the smallest things between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. They are fixated on what happens with this impeachment with the president. The fact that we are in this kind of condition cannot be disputed. The fact that we are in this condition globally cannot be disputed. The small city-state, like Hong Kong, is challenging the might of China. The Middle East is in a state of perpetual turmoil, with Russia and China angling toward trying to gain even greater effect and influence upon these governments and upon these regions.

We live in a time of lawlessness. The standard has been personalized: every person is doing what is right in his or her own eyes. So, what does this mean? Well, one of the things it means is that it set into motion a chain reaction. When people are struggling for security, for predictability, for normalcy, decisions made out of convenience become the order of the day. We are observing, societally, a degree of treachery that has never before been experienced—treachery on a personal level, where brother turns against brother, because everybody wants something for himself. The problem with reducing everything to personal needs and personal consumption is no one is expanding the base of things. Inevitably, things will shrink and what people need to survive will become scarcer and scarcer. At the same time, the legislation and the social structure that needs to support the expansion of opportunity is neglected, and economies will contract on that basis. They will shrink, and fewer and fewer people will be included in the overall prosperity.

This is not just a statement of doom and gloom, this is really a commentary on the way things actually are in this moment in time. Now, the Scriptures actually speak of these things. Jesus, in His role as Prophet, the greatest of the prophets, said that because lawlessness—which I have described as the absence of standards, the personalizing of standards where everyone does what is right in his own eyes—Jesus said because lawlessness shall abound, the love of most will become cold, and brother will turn against brother.¹ That is, in the fight for survival, your brother is not your concern. This will result, inevitably, in the shrinkage of economies and the fight for territories, so there will be greater and greater instances of violence, wars, and rumors of wars. Now, it is not just a litany of bad things. The question is that if God knew that all of these things would happen, and indeed He did and does—He knew it from before the foundations of the world, He knows the end from the beginning—what did He consider as the remedy? Or, is there even a remedy to be

deployed at that time, the time that we are in when these things that God foresaw and spoke about in Scripture are now the order of our day?

The answer is that God intends to raise up in the earth, like a shining city, a people who model the character of God Himself. And, He will raise them up in the configuration of a family. There are a number of metaphors that refer to this: one of them is a city; another is the mountain of the Lord's house; yet another is the army of the Lord; the people of God; and so on and so forth. But there is one description that is not an analogy to something else, and that description is the children of God, as the family of God. Those two descriptors, one being the compendium of the individual representation (the individual representation is to be a child of God), and the compendium of the children of God is the family of God. God intends to raise up His family in the earth. He calls that raised up family, raised up as a high mountain that is visible from the plains below: Mount Zion—*“From Mount Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines in glorious radiance”* (Isaiah 50:2). That is to say that the nature of God's character will be revealed in a people, and that people will be described as Mount Zion. That people, the family of God, will be the city on the hill.²

Now, we are noticing that present Christian religion does not even vaguely resemble a city on a hill. Indeed, whether we are talking about the historic expressions of Christianity, such as the Roman Church, the Episcopal, and others, they are mired in self-inflicted wounds. In fact, so mired that there is no reasonable chance that they will ever be extricated from these self-inflicted woundings. We are also observing that the evangelical church, in its decision to connect and be hardwired into the political system of the United States, is incurring the wrath of most of the people. Now even comedians late night are emboldened to speak of the hypocrisy of certain of the more obvious leaders of the evangelical church. Yet, the evangelical church continues to go about its business as if nothing is happening. The ship is sinking, but they are still arguing about who gets the best seats on the Titanic. This is the sort of myopia that led it into this debacle in the first place.

But, no one needs to be concerned about the demise of the present expression of church, because for a long time it has not expressed the nature and the character of God. In fact, in many instances it did not even know that it was supposed to express the nature and the character of God. It thought, most of the doctrines center around the Roman Catholic notion of going to heaven when you die—

not about being the image and likeness of God in the earth—so it was always an escape theory. The understanding of the purpose of church was always to include you in that group that was going to heaven when it dies. Again, as I have said before, please do not misunderstand me, I have nothing against going to heaven when you die, considering the alternative, but that is not the purpose for being saved.

Being saved means to be rescued out of the kingdom of darkness to be placed into the Kingdom of the Son of God, to be equipped as a citizen of this Kingdom—a maturing citizen of this Kingdom, who is also a son of God—to put on display the glory of God’s nature in the earth, so that the darkness that has encroached into the very heart of human culture since the time of Adam might be illuminated by the light and glory of the Body of Christ continuing on and perfecting what Jesus came to do. When I say perfecting what Jesus came to do, I do not mean that there is any shortfall in what Jesus came to do, but it was not the finished work. What He came to do was to provide reconciliation between God and man, and He fully accomplished that. So, any person could be reconciled to God. Now, the reconciled people to God are collected up, ordered, and arranged according to a spiritual family, and that family is called the Body of Christ. If there was no work beyond the cross to be done, why would Jesus even send the Holy Spirit to do what He described as, “taking of what belongs to Me and making it known to you”?³ In short, what Jesus did on the cross is complete in itself, but it is not the complete plan of God. It was the critical element of the plan of God to provide for the reconciliation of man to God so that the original intent for the creation of man might be pursued.

That original intent simply stated is: God made man, looking at Christ—looking beyond Adam to Christ. When He said, “*Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness*” (Genesis 1:26), His intent was to have a body, a body called the Body of Christ, in the earth who behaves in a fashion that reflects the image and likeness of God Himself. Image and likeness—so when you see *that* representation of God, you would see the complex nature of God, just like when Jesus came and through His appearance He modeled the character of the Living God and could say, “If you see the Son, you have seen the Father.”⁴ He deputized us and sent us out—He deputized His disciples, and by extension He deputized us—to go and make disciples, so that the disciplined learners would be acculturated to the pattern or the standard that was fully exemplified in Christ, to the end that a people might be gathered up from all the nations of the earth and assembled corporately into this

Man known as Christ. That said, this Man was intended to become functional by an order of arrangement that allowed each member to be connected to the whole in a particular fashion—bone, as it were, to His bone—each joint was to supply so that each member of this glorious Body of Christ would grow up into the image and likeness of Christ.

Together, the whole Body of Christ, according to Ephesians 4, would grow up,

till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.
(Ephesians 4:13-16 NKJV)

When this appearing happens in the earth, it will come at the time when gross darkness has come upon the earth. When it comes, it will be a burst of brilliant light—light from heaven, light beyond the realms of glory—coming into the earth to illuminate the path of mankind. At that point men will say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob. Perhaps they would teach us their ways.”⁵ Because, in this presentation of the image and likeness of Christ, in this corporate presentation—corporate, as in *corpus*, a body; not just individuals, but the assemblage of individuals into a corporate form—the glory of God will appear in the earth again in this corporate Man as it once appeared uniquely in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as God intended it when He created man in His image and likeness.

So, there is no real need for us to despair. The world is despairing because it does not know what to do. It does not even know how to analyze what is going on. It is failing to recognize—some of the leading edge commentators are now beginning to recognize—that we have lost social consensus. They have not known exactly why we have lost social consensus, and do not want to challenge any group of people who are insisting on the world turning, as Willie Nelson would say, his way. Everyone wants the world to turn their way. Everyone thinks that their point of view is the ultimate point of view. We are not in the time of the give and take, the compromise that allows

for the largest base of things to be. It is narrowing to the point to where, if you do not agree, you are the enemy. Oddly enough, it would appear that, because of their failure to live up to the mandate of Christ and because of the hypocrisy that now so deeply describes the church to the world, the church is actually in real danger of becoming victims. Before it just assumed that it was—that the world hated it—but now it is actually inviting the wrath of the world, and the thing it has feared will come upon it. But out of it, God is raising up a holy people who are in the image and likeness of God Himself, as modeled by the Lord Jesus Christ. They embrace the divine standard, and they are being shown and will be presented as the sons of God.

I am Sam Soleyn. We will continue this discussion. Thank you. Bye-bye.

Endnotes:

1. See Matthew 24:12 NKJV: “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.”; see also Matthew 10:21 NKJV: “Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.”
2. See Matthew 5:14 NKJV: “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”
3. See John 16:14 NKJV: “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you.”
4. See John 14:7-9 NKJV: “‘If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.’ Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?’”
5. See Isaiah 2:3 NKJV: “Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”; see also Micah 4:2 NKJV: “Many nations shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”