

Sermon: What if we're wrong?

A few blocks from my house is a school ... and that means, there is a school crossing walk. Have you ever wondered why the speed limit is 20 in a school zone? Why isn't it 18? Or 22? Why is it 20?

You actually can measure:

- **Mental reaction time** – from when your eye first recognizes someone walking across the street to when your brain registers “I should stop.”
- **Foot movement** – how long does it take to lift your foot off the gas, move it over, and depress the brake pedal?
- **Car weight** – more weight means more momentum, means slower to stop
- **Brake efficiency** – different kinds of pads, and tires, and parts

So, maybe for you and your car, on a good day, you could stop from 22 or 23 ... on a bad day, when stuff is going wrong, and you are running late. Maybe not. PS, people like even numbers, so after the engineers figure out the average driver, and the average car, and the average day. Then, they unscientifically round up ... and the rule is 20.

And if you ignore that rule, cuz you're in a hurry, someone could get hurt ... and not grow up to go to a camp like you are right now.

Another inconvenient rule, I like LEFTOVERS – but it takes so long to reheat. I don't mind if something isn't super-hot; I'm hungry. Anyone ever work in a kitchen? Or a dining hall? What temperature should chicken be heated to be safe? 165

Maybe 160 could kill the bad stuff one time: or not. Maybe 150? I don't know the real number and neither do you – but the smart folks did some science and then rounded up to help you stay safe.

Kind of a trend huh? **Someone knows stuff that you don't, so they establish a rule that is really to protect you or someone else, even if you might not like it.** Well, we're in church, so maybe you can see where we're going with it.

Here's another one, the Old Testament told the Hebrews to not eat pork. The New Testament clarifies that it wasn't about the animal itself (which is why many Christians enjoy bacon) – *mmm, repeat after me: bacon.* 😊 It was about protecting them from diseases as well as idolatry. God's reason was more complicated than just “*pork=bad.*” Let me give you a different example.

As a parent, you tell:

- A toddler “*Don’t touch the stove*”
- A Kid, “*Don’t touch, unless you’ve checked that its cold*” (context)
- A teenager, “*Use cold water on that burn. Hey, do we need to go back to ‘don’t touch’?*”

1 COR 13 explains “**When I was a child, I talked like a child, thought like a child, reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I put those childish ways behind me.**” – so God’s Law evolves within context like a parent teaching a child, based on what they need then and now.

In talking about the hot stove, maturity doesn’t always progress in one direction, hence why the teenager got burned. Sometimes you gotta go back to the basics, “*Don’t touch.*”

In our walk with Christ, sometimes we learned the rules for a better life when we were younger, but we forget ... or, we decide that maybe some rules are worth *bending*?

Maybe someone convinced us to *break* the rules.

Maybe a lot of voices *convinced* us — or are *convincing* us.

As Christians, we are outnumbered in the World.

What does the World say?

Unfortunately, in 2023, we live in times when the world would prefer to not talk about God. In fact, the world insists that we don’t talk about a living and loving God. The world doesn’t like that God, or anything else, would tell us what to do or think... so that the world can tell us what to do and what to think.

Even to those that try to practice an honest walk with God and live well, the world asks “**Did God reallllllyyyy say that you can’t do that? Are you sure that’s what God meant? Have you actually read the Bible? How well do you understand God’s word? Is that still true in this situation? In these times?**”

By the way, go read **Genesis 3** on what the snake said to Eve to convince her about the very simple and plain rules set by God. The snake introduced doubt and eventually the serpent convinced “**Why would God deny you something so obviously good or right?**” ... followed later by the serpent assuring Eve that “**you won’t really perish.**”

Now go watch the news or scan social media.

The persuasive arguments are nearly verbatim – and they’re everywhere.

But what if the World is right? What if there is no God?

If the world is right, “LIFE” is just a random event of scientific luck

- That spark in your heart, your mind, your soul – just chemicals and electric pulses. It just random noise.
- Trees, Water, Oxygen ... all random stuff that we’re lucky happened
- Our lives, and everything you’ll ever want or do, are over when they’re over – so do what you want while you can.
- And the only wisdom that you have to listen to is you – if you think its right, its right.

How dare you tell me not to touch the hot stove – I’ll touch it if I want to ... but its someone else’s fault if it burns me.

How dare you tell me not to drive fast in a school zone, you don’t understand that I’m in a hurry – it’s that kid’s fault or their parents for not dodging fast enough.

If there is no God, then there is no church, so I don’t have to tithe? I get a supersized fries or a bigger coffee. Admittedly, there are some folks that can’t afford food, *but that’s not my problem*. But I am a nice person, so I probably would give some to charities, if I had more money and time – but ...

If the world is right ... then either:

- There is no God, so there is no Heaven, live like you want.
- OR everyone gets in to Heaven, which nothing has ever documented. In fact, the only historical books that describe Heaven also describe how to get there – starting with God.

Which brings us to the other side of the argument.

What if the world is NOT right? If the world is wrong:

Then, there is a God.

Life is not random.

And all those other ‘rules’ – that don’t make sense to us? Kind of like a toddler not understanding why a parent sets boundaries.

- The parent says to the toddler, I love you so much ... so I don’t want you burned (by the stove)
- In this case, God says, I love you so much ... so I don’t want you separated for all eternity. So, He sent his only Son.

If the World is wrong, then there is an all-powerful, all-knowing God that loves you that much!

So, which is it? How do you know ... is the World right? Is God right?

Here's a few things to think about

Isn't it amazing that the World tries so hard to convince us that what they deem imaginary is so threatening. It'd be one thing if you were trying to convince someone that vanilla is better than chocolate, as two equal options. They literally want you to believe that vanilla is the only choice and chocolate does not exist. But we know that chocolate exists; amen?

In fact, the world's view is that the only one you have to answer to is YOU. That essentially makes you the God of you. And if I am the God of Me, then who are you to disagree – cuz my God (me) told me that I am right.

How do you respond to that?

- 1) Love them anyway (cuz God said so). We're all flawed in different ways; they just don't see it in themselves yet. Love them anyway.
- 2) Ask yourself (any time you are assessing someone else's opinion):
 - If they (or you) are right ... what is the Gain?
 - If they (or you) are wrong ... what would be the Cost?

Let's wrap this up with something actionable:

- If you've never accepted Jesus as your Savior. If today is the day that you are seeing that the Cost of listening to the World and being Wrong is too much. **Ask yourself, do you believe what the world is selling you?** Then, I or another counselor would love to visit with you.
- If you do know Jesus, but lately, some of your actions look more worldly. **Ask yourself, have you been listening to what the world is selling?** What do you need to change?
- If you are in a good season with God, then **ask yourself, How can I help those around me?** Cuz there's a lot of folks out there that need help.

Here is the good news – Our God is a God of fresh starts and new beginnings. He is literally waiting for you to say **“Here I am Lord – where you lead, I will follow.”** Maybe today is that day for you.

Let's Pray

Heavenly father, thank you for this chance to come together as believers.

Thank you for the adventure of Scouting that brings us together – and your love that binds us.

Please Lord, we need your help. The World is getting louder and more persuasive all around us. Protect us. Help us to see You. Help us to reflect you, so that others would understand that the World is full of serpents.

(quiet reflection) – music background

Right where you are – with your eyes closed – ask yourself, who are you listening to? What or who is leading your path? What can you do different? Do you need to make a choice – or a change?

This is your time to pray.

Order of service

Welcome & Opening prayer

Song – Here I am to Worship

Song – Mighty to Save

Message

Song – Here I am, Lord & Offering

Benediction