

## **Week Eight – July 19**

### **THE HEART OF RESTORATION**

#### **PSALM 53:1-3**

**Overview:** Psalm 53 (which is very similar to Psalm 14) presents a significant question that relates to those who live as though God does not exist. Can you be good? David points out that we live in a depraved world. Without God, men are fools (v. 1), never doing good (v.1-2), straying, corrupt, and ignorant (vv. 3-4). The heart of the fool refuses to acknowledge God, and as a result, there is less and less good in the world and corruption and injustice spreads.

#### **What is the central focus of this Psalm? What is David telling us?**

David is turning his attention to those who ignore God. Those who fail to consider God, His existence, His power, His grace and His righteousness. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? Genesis 6:5 says, “The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” When God looks down from Heaven upon the children of men, he searches for anyone who understands and seeks God. But through His observation, He does not see anyone who is good. They have all turned away from God and together they have become corrupt.

So many people live foolishly. They live as if there is no God or standard of right and wrong. They think like fools, having all the right answers when they don't even know the right questions. Ultimately, they die like fools fearing death, knowing deep down that there is a God and a judgment. The Bible does not set out to prove God exists. He is simply announced, “In the beginning God...” In the first chapter of Genesis. And thus, the Bible begins. Yet today there is a growing number who claim to be agnostics or follow atheism. They are the fools David is referring to, those who walk in darkness. Solomon realized this when he “saw that there is more to gain in wisdom than in folly, as there is more to gain in light than in darkness. The wise person has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. (Eccles. 2:13-14) Physically speaking, without some form of light, try walking in darkness. You can't accomplish much without bumping into things and stumbling. The fool, according to Psalm 53, is the one who knows God, but does not look to God or walk with God. Paul expressed this in Romans 1:21, “For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

#### **Progression or Steps that lead to a deeper relationship with God**

“We see the certainty of God through the vast mystery of the universe. It is in creation we find the fingerprint of the Creator, yet many ignore God and become fools living in a depraved state making decisions that lead to wickedness and corruption. “There is no one righteous, not even one, there is no one who understands, there is no one who

seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless, there is no one good, not even one.” (Psalm 53:2-3) This is the state of the world, and without God, no one is capable of being good. No one can be good or righteous on their own. All have sinned and this is foundational concept to understanding the gospel message. No one can live up to God’s standard unless we seek Him and rely on His saving grace and power as provided through the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus.

### **How does this impact your walk with God?**

Knowing the sinfulness and corruption of man, God had every right to impose His judgment on such wickedness and turn away from those who walk in darkness. But because of God’s love He brought light into the world and made a way for redemption through Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:24) Jesus, the only perfect human to walk the earth, was presented as a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of His people. “He was pierced for our transgression, he was cursed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5) And because “there is no one who does good” (Psalm 53:5 and quoted in Rom. 3:12), Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice, suffering in the place of sinners. It is the people’s sin that Jesus bore on the cross. And through this act of immeasurable love, he gives hope and life to all who believe. That is the longing that our heart so desires.

What made Lot’s wife turn back and take a look back at Sodom in spite of having been told not to do so? Do you find yourself turning back or drawn back to who you were before accepting Christ? Do you live with one foot in the past and one foot in the transformed life that Christ has given you? With all that is going on in America today, is the church being pushed aside in favor of a more foolish way? How can we make a difference in this depraved and foolish world we live in?