

Last week and this week and next week form this kind of singular idea, this singular push in the book of Habakkuk. Since I'm not allowed to preach for two solid hours, I've had to break it into three weeks. So I need to review just a bit of last week so we can then compare and contrast with this week so we can make our point next week. Last week, out of the book of Habakkuk, we shared the chipper reality that, although you and I live in a culture that celebrates the unlimited potential of man, we are in essence unbelievably limited. So we talked about man's limitations in two veins. Number one is we are limited in time. If we took all of recorded history and condensed it into an hour, you're here for a couple milliseconds. Now that's going to create a certain perspective and a certain way of seeing that may or many not have anything to do with ultimate reality. So if you took all of history, condensed it into an hour, you're here for a couple of milliseconds, not even a full second are you on earth. So we are very limited in regards to time. We are slaves then to our own cultures, to our own positioning.

On top of being limited in time, we are absolutely limited in scope. You have no idea what's going on behind you right now. If you're in Dallas, you don't know if somebody is about to stab you. There are crazy people in Dallas. If you're in Denton, you don't know if they're passing around something for you to sign to get rid of inoculations. That could be happening right now behind you. If you're in here in Flower Mound, you don't know if somebody brought their Golden Retriever because he would have gotten lonely at home by himself. You have no idea what's going on around you. You know much less what's going on in the rooms around the buildings, much less what's going on around the cities and the burbs that we're in, much less what's going on around the state, much less what's going on around the country and much less what's going on around the world. And this limitation is present despite all the technology we have that can bring different parts of the world into our living room, onto our phones. We're still limited in scope.

So we're limited in time, and we're limited in scope. And then we walked through the Scriptures and also through the halls of history and present reality to show that, because of man's limitations, man has no ability to fix the real problems of man. Even the Greeks spotted it years ago, that every time a man solves a perceived problem, he almost always creates a newer, more serious problem than the problem he solved. So we walked through history and even to day, and we pointed out some things out about technology that are good. God bless them. Thank You, Jesus for them. But in the end, they have this dark edge that creates a lot of issues. We looked at how food works today, and we looked at the good things about that and some of the issues concerning that. We looked at other aspects of human ingenuity where "we did it, we overcame it, we conquered it" only for it to come back and create even bigger problems. One of the big ones I mentioned is even if you look at antibiotics and how they work, now you've got these strains of bacteria that are too strong for the antibiotics. Now how are we solving that? We're creating stronger antibiotics. That's the whole point that we made in Habakkuk. Man cannot solve man's greatest issues, and even when he likes to celebrate the fact that he has overcome this one, he has just created more problems in its place. And then we ended with the chipper reality that no one has lied to you, abused you, deceived you or failed you more than you have. You can't point to anyone in your world that is more of a liar to you than you are. So for all of the applause that man gets about man, he is his own worst enemy.

So with all of that said, we need to look at God's response to Habakkuk. Just to catch you way up on this, Habakkuk sees that God's people are acting in an idolatrous, wicked manner, and he goes, "God, why are You going to idly watch this and do nothing about this." God responds, "Oh, I'm going to do something about it. I'm going to send the Chaldeans to Jerusalem to judge and to destroy you." And then Habakkuk kind of sweet talks God and goes, "Surely that's not going to

happen. Surely You're too holy for that. Surely You wouldn't do that. No way You're going to do that." And he kind of tries to butter up God. "No way are we going to die. No way will we be judged like this. No way that's going to happen." And then at the beginning of chapter 2, Habakkuk has got this little swagger to him. He's like, "I'm going to stand out on the watchtower and see what God will say to me concerning these things." Well God is going to answer.

Habakkuk 2, starting in verse 2, "And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it."" Now follow that verse in context. "I'm sending the Chaldeans to judge you." "No, You can't. You wouldn't do that because of this, this and this." God goes, "Oh no, write it down, bro. . .and not on paper. Get you some stone and chisel it into stone." And this is one of those things that should always encourage us about our God. He doesn't try to hide His promises. He doesn't try to change them. In fact, He always wants to remind His people, sometimes hundreds of years later, and He's like, "No, I said this was coming, and I told you this is how it was going to end." But God tells Habakkuk, "No, write it down on a tablet, bro. It's coming." And then look at what He says next. "For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay." Now you see in this verse some of the seeds of how God is very much different from you and me.

Flip over to Genesis 15, and we'll show you a clear spot where this takes place and how God talks is so far beyond what you and I can comprehend. In Genesis 12, God comes to Abram and says, "I'm going to make out of you a great nation of people, and out of that great nation, all the nations on earth will be blessed." That's the promise in Genesis 12. Abram doesn't have any children, and he asks about that. He's like, "Look, I'm old and wife is even older. I don't know how this is going to be possible." So let's look at Genesis 15. We're going to pick it up in verse 1. "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir."" Here's basically what Abram is saying. "God, You keep telling me this, but here's reality. I don't have any children. My crazy cousin from Damascus is going to be the heir to all of this. So You're saying this to me, but this is not my reality." And then look where God takes him. Verse 4: "And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness." I want you to notice something here, because it's something that, in the moralistic deism that is most of evangelicalism, we have forgotten. God just justified Abram because of faith, not because of action.

You see, Abram is a shadow of what is to come. Paul quotes this verse in Romans when he says that Abraham was justified by his faith, that he believed and it was counted to him as righteousness. So for all the works-based nonsense that leaks into our faith, even here in the earliest stages of God's calling His people and working out the reconciliation of all things, He's setting the standard of being made righteous by faith alone, not by acts but by believing and trusting in God's grace. Well how is that possible since Jesus hadn't died yet? The book of Romans is also going to tell us that Jesus died on the cross, not just for you and me in future grace, but also as a propitiation for sins that have been looked over in the past. So Jesus dies for Abraham just as much as He dies for you.

Let's keep going here. Verse 7, "And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."" Now go to verse 12. The next section is about the sacrifice he gives to the Lord. Verse 12 is where it starts to get interesting and where we'll start to dig into this point of God being so different than you and me in regards to perspective. Verse 12, "As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for yourself, you

shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” Now I could camp out here for hours, but let me just give you the highlights that pulls God out from time and puts Him not in a knowledge of the past and the future, but actually puts Him in those places. God just said, “Not only are you going to have as on, but his son is going to have sons, their sons are going to have sons and you’re going to become a nation. But that nation is going to go into captivity for 400 years. And at the end of those 400 years, they’re going to leave that oppressive nation with the wealth of that nation, and I’m going to bring them back to this land. Because right now in this land, the Amorites are here, and they’re iniquity is not full yet.” This is one of those lessons that God always gives people rope to run. In fact, Romans 1 would say that a sign of the wrath of God is not active, but it’s passive. It’s you going, “I’ll do what I want, go where I want and say what I want,” and God goes, “Okay, go ahead and do it.” A sign of the wrath of God is indifference in regards to your rebellion. And in the end, it’s not indifference. It’s wrath which in the Greek means “steadily building opposition against.” Which is God just going, “Okay, run. But you eventually hit that line.” So when the iniquity of the Amorites is full, He crushes them with His people. And then people who don’t understand the Old Testament and how it works go, “Oh, God is so cruel. He just wiped out that entire people.” They are a people to whom He gave hundreds and hundreds of years to repent and quit being wicked. So you’ve got this God who is really outside of time. Who can do that? He literally just said, “For 400 years, this is what’s going to happen.” And then exactly what happened? They’re going to end up in Egypt, they’re going to end up slaves in Egypt and then after Passover where the firstborn male is killed, He leads them out. And Pharaoh not only lets them them go, but he lets them take whatever they want and they plunder Egypt. They take the wealth of Egypt with them out of Egypt. God calls this spot on 500 years before any of it happens. Now keep in mind how young our country is. God just went, “400 years.”

And throughout the Scriptures, God is going to talk like this. He’s going to talk like one who already knows tomorrow, and not just tomorrow like you and I can kind of see this coming. It’s not like a prognosis of “This might occur.” But God is going, “This is what’s going to happen. So in Matthew 24, the disciples go, “Isn’t the temple nice?” And Jesus is going, “It won’t be long until not a stone of this temple lays on top of another stone.” In 70 A.D. Rome lays siege to Jerusalem and destroys the temple. What we see in the Bible is a God who is outside of time. So if all of time has been condensed into an hour and you’re a couple of milliseconds of it, He knows the whole hour. He sees the whole hour. So we can continue to do this. Take a hour long show on television, give you a millisecond to glance at it, let me watch the entire show and then let’s argue about what the show is about and see who wins. Because that’s how the Scriptures are setting apart your ability and God’s ability.

Now we said not only are you and I limited in time, but we’re also limited in scope. We’re only aware of what’s right in front of us, and even then we can miss things that are right in front of us. God is not limited like that and we learn that also in the Bible. Look at 1 Kings 8:27. “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!” Now in 1 Kings, Solomon had just built the temple and the Jews had been in this understanding that God dwelt in the tabernacle with them, despite the fact that in Genesis 12, God tells Abram, “This is going to be about the world, not just about you. But through you, I’m going to bless the world.” So when Solomon finally builds the temple, he goes, “I know Your presence is going to be here, but surely this house can’t contain You. Surely nothing can contain You. You are everywhere.” And we’re going to see that happen in Psalm 139. We’ll start in verse 7. “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,” even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.” So this is David, and notice his use of personal pronouns. “Wherever I go, there You are are.” So he’s not saying, “If I go up to the mountains, You’re authority and dominion is there.” No, he says, “You’re there.” He’s not saying, “If I go to the depths of the sea, Your angels are there.” He’s saying, “You’re there.” Now don’t go

Avatar on me. Don't go pagan on me. Don't go, "So God is the trees. He's the wind. He's the mountain." No. He's there. There is nowhere in all of the creative order that God's presence and authority isn't present. He fills every crack and crevice. There are no hiding spaces. There is no darkness that He does not see as light. There is nowhere to go where God isn't. So you'll see the Bible talk about this all the time. You see Jesus talk about it. He encourages His disciples by going, "Hey, a bird doesn't fall out of the sky that God doesn't know." The prophet Isaiah says, "If a man moves from here to here, God knows he moved." It's not like God can lose you. He is everywhere.

So once again, if you watch this compare and contrast, you've got this unbelievably limited time frame and this unbelievably limited scope, and God sees it all and is everywhere at once. Do you see that there's going to be some friction between the two perspectives? Do you ever argue with your children? Why do you argue with your children? Isn't it this on a much smaller scale? My daughter wept when she got disciplined for playing in the street after being told not to. Like I'm such a wicked father. How horrible am I to her. I even took her and showed her a squished squirrel. "Is that what you want? Do you want to end up like that on the street? Daddy doesn't want you to. That's why you're not allowed to play in the street." So in the end, there's going to be this rub because we see for two seconds, He sees all of it and even what we see is limited because of our scope, where He sees the interplay between it all. And He does all of this without the least bit of strain on His brain. He doesn't sleep, He doesn't slumber and He doesn't grow weary. This is the God of the Bible.

And then that brings me to a point that's going to create some tension. I'm going to create the tension all I can and then just completely leave you hanging. You've got a God who knows everything, sees everything and is everywhere. And even in our wildest fantasies, we haven't even thought up how to even be outside of time. Like all our movies are about time travel. God is like, "Oh, that is so 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Time travel, ha! Be in all of them at once. Do that." We couldn't even figure out how to communicate that on a film. We have no way to do it. We have no way to even comprehend that tomorrow isn't a place that God knows about but that it's a place that He is. Now think about the implications of that for those of you who struggle with anxiety, those of you who are dominated by fear. It's not that God knows what's happening tomorrow. It's that He's already there and He is a loving, faithful God who will prepare you for whatever is to come.

And that moves us to our third point. Not only does He know everything and see everything, but He is good and He does good in all of His work, in all of His governance, which is complete. Every year in our family, we do a Bible reading plan. So we're doing one this year that has some verses for Lauren and me, and then there are another four chapters a day that we read. Every year, year after year, when walking through Genesis, I'm always blown away by Joseph's life (Jacob's son). I'm just absolutely blown away at several aspects of his life. One is that he's so brilliant and has so much of the favor of God on him, but over and over again, he has these bone-headed decisions that he makes. It gives me hope for myself. I'm like, "Man, if this is a favored one of God, praise His name." Because he makes these mistakes that seem so far beyond what someone would make, and it brings me hope. So let me outline this. You've got this promise to Abram in Genesis 12 and 15 beginning to come into fruition. You've got a lot of sons, you've got a clan forming and you've got this mass of people who will be Israel. In fact, Jacob (Joseph's father), is renamed by God "Israel." Jacob's favorite son is Joseph, and he doesn't even hide it. So Joseph will notice that his brothers aren't working hard in the field, so he'll come home and go, "Dad, my brothers aren't working hard in the field." And then they'll get in trouble. They don't like Joseph. Jacob gives Joseph the coat of many colors, and the brothers are like, "We didn't get a coat of many colors." And Jacob's like, "Well, I don't really like you. You're just not one of my favorites. This is my boy. I just put up with you because your mom gave birth to you." And the Bible is clear that Jacob's favor on Joseph had made the home extremely combative. The temperature at Jacob's manner was a hundred billion degrees Fahrenheit. There was always fighting going on. And this leads us to bone-headed Joseph move number one. He has this dream that his brothers bow down to him and become his slaves, and he shares that at breakfast. So they're in this environment that is already super combative, and

he sits down and goes, "Did anybody have any cool dreams last night? Because I did. I dreamed that I was in a throne and you guys came in, bowed down and worshiped me and became my servants." So the brothers are like, "We've got to kill him." At that point, there had been some hesitancy before that. You've got sweet Benjamin going, "No, we can't kill him." After breakfast that morning, Benjamin is like, "I'm in. Get the rope." So we find out that they throw him into a pit, lie to his dad and say, "Oh man, an accident happened and he is dead." So our boy Israel (Jacob) mourns the loss of Joseph when instead Joseph is sold into slavery.

He gets purchased by Potiphar and you immediately see the favor of God in Joseph's life. Potiphar immediately sees his giftedness, his skill, his brilliance and gives him charge of his entire household. Now the Bible tells us that Potiphar's wife finds Joseph attractive because he is chiseled. If you go read the Bible, it literally says that he had good form. So Potiphar's wife continues to throw herself at him, and Josephs not having it. He does this great job of going, "I would not sin against your husband who has entrusted me with all of this, and I would never sin against my God." And he just keeps giving her the Heisman stiff arm. Now, Jacob doses bone-head move number two. There is a day when Potiphar is out and there are no servants at the house. And for whatever reason, he goes in there. Why would you go in there when the woman is crazy? Crazy women are crazy. Don't go in there, bro. You've got to know this. He goes in and she grabs him and literally tries to rape him. He does like a swim move around her and gets out. She rips off his outer cloak and then she begins to scream "rape." The servants come in and she goes, "The Hebrew that Potiphar loves tried to rape me." Potiphar gets back, and she tells him, "This Hebrew that you love so much tried to rape me." As any man would be, Potiphar is enraged that someone he would trust like he trusted Joseph would try to rape his wife.

So Joseph is put in prison, and the Bible says that it was a pit. But once again, in that pit, he immediately wins the favor of the guy who ran the pit. So the guy who runs the pit puts him in charge of the other prisoners. In there, you've got the baker and cup bearer of Pharaoh in prison at the same time in the pit with Joseph. They all go to sleep one night, the baker and the cup bearer have horrible dreams. They wake up, tell what their dreams are, and Joseph goes, "Hey God's giving me an interpretation for your dreams. Do you want to hear them?" He tells the baker, "You're going to die. They're going to hang you by the end of the week. Sorry, bro." He tells the cup bearer, "You're going to be restored to your position. You're going to be back in to Pharaoh's court soon. Don't forget me when you get there." By the end of the week, all has occurred like Joseph said it would occur. The baker is hung and the cup bearer is reestablished in Pharaoh's throne room as the guy who has to drink before Pharaoh to make sure it's not poisoned.

Now, the cup bearer absolutely forgets about Joseph after he is released, and two years go by. Pharaoh then has this terrifying dream. Even if you read it and think about it, it would wig me out too. He has this dream that there are these really fat cows in the Nile chewing grass, and then out of the Nile come these really emaciated, skinny cows. They eat the fat cows, but they don't get any bigger. So he wakes up all sweaty and screaming. He calms down, goes back to bed and has a similar dream and wakes up completely wiggled out. So he calls his magicians and sages into the throne room and says, "What's this dream about?" No one can give him an interpretation. Then the cup bearer goes, "Oh wait! I know a guy. . .if he's still alive. There was a guy in the pit with me who told me my dream. We should go and check to see if he's still with us." So they run down, Joseph is still there and they bring Joseph in front of Pharaoh. He immediately goes, "God has given me an interpretation of your dream. Here's what's going to happen. The fat cows represent abundance that will be ours for the next few years. The skinny cows represent seven years of drought, and they are going to devour all of the excess that we have." And Joseph once again throws out his plan. There's that brashness in him that you've got to love. He says, "And here's what I would do about it. I would begin to stockpile grain, I would begin to store all of the excess. These should be lean years for us in preparation for the seven years of famine where no plow will plow and no harvest will be had. We should build barns and storehouses for that grain so that we might survive the famine." So Pharaoh goes, "That's a brilliant idea. Bring my signet ring. You run it. You are now above all my other princes. You

are the prince of Egypt." The brother just got out of Alcatraz that afternoon. He was just released from the pit, and now he's running Egypt. Who else does that happen to? That's beyond the lottery. So Joseph runs Egypt.

Now remember that little promise that God had made in Genesis 12 and 15? That little clan outside of Egypt is now beginning to starve and die. So Jacob says, "I hear there is food in Egypt." And he sends his sons into Egypt with gold to get food so that the clan might survive. You see, the promise that God made in Genesis 12 and 15 is now in jeopardy as they are starving to death. So the brothers of Joseph head into Egypt to get grain. Joseph recognizes them at once, but he doesn't let them know who he is. They think he's dead or gone so they don't recognize him. He gives them food, sends them on their way and when they come back, Joseph can't hold it together anymore and he lets them know that it is him. And that's where we're going to pick it up. Genesis 45, starting in verse 4. "So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt." So he's saying, "You didn't do this. God did this." God did what? "Through slavery, through false accusation, through prison and now through appointment as prince of Egypt, God has put me in this position to fulfill all He prophesied to our great-grandfather, Abraham." God did this in order that His promise made would be revealed. And if you know the metanarrative, Christ comes out of the stump of Jesse, Christ comes out of this line and then you have the Holy Spirit fall at Pentecost and the gospel begins to spread all over the world. And you and I are in this room, loving and worshiping Jesus, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ because God sent Joseph to Egypt.

Now as Jacob dies, his brothers get a little worried. Flip over to Genesis 50. They get a little bit worried that all of this mercy that Joseph had been showing his brothers is simply because he doesn't want to break Jacob's heart by killing his brothers. And so now that Jacob is about to die, his brothers are real nervous. So that's what we're about to read starting in verse 16. "So [Joseph's brothers] sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died, 'Say to Joseph, Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.'" So Jacob dies and then the brothers go to Joseph and say, "Hey, right before dad died, he wanted me to tell you that you shouldn't kill us, hurt us or harm us in any way and that it would make his soul at rest if you would just forgive us of all that junk that happened back in the day." So that's what just happened in verses 16-17. Now look at Joseph's response. "But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.'" Now what Joseph got to see in his lifetime is what a lot of us are not going to see in ours, that God, in His goodness and grace, allows into our lives seasons of difficulty and sorrows and pains, not because He is punitive and trying to destroy you, but because in regards to perspective and scope, He sees what's actually happening. And you simply don't see that.

Let me show you one more. Let's go to Romans 8. Verse 28, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." So you and I are a part of this larger story that we're not the point of. I think that's one of those places that Evangelicalism has been hijacked. You're not the point. So when you read texts that are weighty and they feel like they crush down on you, it's because you're not the point. You're not the pinnacle. You're not the prize. That's not true. All things work together for those who love Him for good. And then look at verses 38-39. "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." So not only are all things working together for my good, but then nothing can separate me from the love of Jesus Christ, nothing. And that list is pretty extensive. Not life, not death, not angels nor demons.

Nothing is going to be able to separate me from the love of Christ Jesus. Now think what would happen if we could just meditate on that, think on that, dwell on that and think through all the implications of the reality that, no matter what comes into my life, God knew it was coming, no matter what comes into my life, God had in His loving providence begun to prepare me for it and no matter what comes into my life, God was there and it will not sever me from the universe's greatest reality. It's not going to happen.

God is outside of time, God is not limited by scope and God is good in all His dealings. And this is where the tension is created. If this is true, then what do we do with all the atrocities that we see around us. If you come to a real hardcore, atheistic belief system, you'll find that this is one of the first arguments that is made. "Well if God is so loving, then explain the world." I lovingly just go, "Well if man is so great, explain the world." Because we have been trying to fix the same problems since the beginning of time, and we're nowhere near solving them. So in the end, if God is everywhere, if God sees everything and if God knows everything, then what do we do with all of the atrocities that we see in the world around us?

I've been writing some things and working with some other churches in the area to get us involved in some aid to those who are trapped in sex trafficking and who have been lured into the sex trade. Lauren and I have talked some about it, and she came home from Women's Bible Study on Tuesday night and she was like, "I want to watch this documentary on it because I just want to understand it." So I said, "Here's the deal. Watch the documentary as long as you just don't get seething angry and want to take it out on the whole household. So you can watch it if you want, but just don't get super angry. Because we're working on outlets to combat this, but they're not built yet. So my recommendation, knowing you as a loving husband, is for you to hold off on watching it until we have avenues that you can go, 'At least we're fighting it.' Because what I think you're going to do is watch this and get all angry, and there's not going to be anything you can do with your anger except take it out on me. So this is a selfish kind of request here." So sure enough, she watched the video and then she got all angry. So what do we do with that? There is dark, horrific stuff out there. And even for us in Dallas, there is a seedy, wicked undercurrent here, and most people don't want to acknowledge it. There is a level of adultery and sexual sin, there is a level of just white-collar wickedness and all under this rouse of, "Yeah, we're Christians and we love Lord," you've got this real disjoint between what our faith is and how it works out in life.

So there was this theory around secularization where we watched Europe and said, "That's the future of the church in America." Now they're wrong. Secularization hasn't worked out that way here. Secularization has worked out in the Bible Belt, not by people not coming to church, but by them coming to church and then having a life that is no different than those outside of church. That's how secularization has worked out here. It's why our churches are filled. You can look all around the metroplex to find buildings that are full but not lives that are being transformed with no real impact on how we live our lives, how we treat our wives, how we view our sexuality. So we're like, "Oh, that's nice. . .that's great. . .I love that on Sunday." And then there's this complete disjoint the rest of the week. It's secularization. That's how it works in the Bible Belt. So we are becoming secularized to where the church has no real authority, neither do the Scriptures and neither does how we have historically interpreted the Scriptures on our lives. So then culture becomes what defines what's right and wrong, not the Scriptures. Because they might be old and outdated, and, "I love Jesus, but I love Jesus as I want to love Him. And I'll serve Him like I want to serve Him. What I want to take from the Scriptures, I'll take from the Scriptures and won't listen to anything I don't like." And that's how secularization has worked in the Bible Belt.

So what are we to do with this tension? We'll talk about that next weekend. Let's pray. "Father, for the tired, the weary and the anxious, I pray that the truths of Your timelessness and the extent of Your knowledge would create in us peace. Regardless of circumstance, You have not betrayed us, abandoned us or failed to prepare us. In fact, You have promised us that there will be nothing that comes into our lives that is more than we can bear. So we thank You for Your grace. We thank You that You deliver what You promise. We thank You that You are enough to satisfy the deepest parts of our

hearts and lives. Forgive us, Father, for seeking trinkets elsewhere. So may Your sovereignty and impassibility sink to the deep parts of our soul and create in us worship and relief from sorrow, from anger and bitterness. And may You give us much more the heart of Joseph and much more the heart that understands that there is a perspective issue here that is going to cause some tension and that You're good and You can be trusted. Help us. It's for Your beautiful name I pray. Amen."

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