

## #232 "Welcome to the Masquerade"

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*"For that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God."*

*-Luke 16:15*

Satan uses all kinds of things to fool people. After all, he was the most beautiful and bright angel in all of heaven (Ezekiel 28:13, Isaiah 14:12). He knows how to look good and feign to be good like God when all he wants is to bring us death, slavery, and pain. His masquerade as an angel of light is his main mode of operation (2 Corinthians 11:14). He uses deceptive tactics to blur the vision of the world and to make them focus on something else while he robs them blind. The devil's purpose is to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10), and that he does, though he certainly doesn't market himself that way. This roaring lion, seeking to devour his prey (1 Peter 5:8), sells himself as life, love, pleasure, and happiness. Our culture has sold out to him to the full.

America is now a world of randomness, vanity, and the pursuit of happiness over holiness more than it ever was before. Existentialism has fully taken root to the extent that few believe in any ultimate meaning, purpose, or absolutes, nor do they even care to think about the fact that this is indeed what they believe. They are existentially existential, one might say, not even bothering to bother, to think about thinking, to inquire about inquiring in the first place. The Bible tells us to seek that we may find, to knock so that it will be opened, and to ask that we may receive (Matthew 7:7). God calls for His created humanity to ask questions, to look for answers, and to inquire about ultimate meaning. Satan loves occupying minds with nonsense and vanity, from what is the latest with some celebrity to what is the latest fad diet to what is the latest must have item. In an existentialist universe, life becomes a wilderness of no meaning, no purpose, no morality, no absolute authority, no God, no eternal hope, no eternal consequences, and no guidebook for living. There becomes a total abandonment of right and wrong, and everything becomes about convenience and connections rather than truth and holiness. Millions want to sell their souls to be popular, millions more would do anything for a sum of money, and most enjoy debasement of diverse forms with no concern about the consequences and ravages of their sin. Society once cared about listening to the conscience, but now the conscience is irrelevant to them, if it even exists. For them, belief is no longer predicated upon what is true but upon convenience, pragmatism, and hedonism. Even religion, sometimes including their version of Jesus, becomes about what it can do for them rather than about what they should be doing for God. Satan has many dancing, singing, and celebrating at his masquerade party, and they don't know that the dance floor is a frying pan sitting atop the fire of hell.

Satan is well-versed in absolutes, and he hates them. He would do anything to destroy them, but he is bound by them. In convincing a near entire populace of his non-existence and the non-existence of God, he has delivered to them a world of self-centered randomness, a perfect combination of destruction. So where does this leave us as believers who must live in this place and who are called to evangelize in it?

Frankly, this is not the first time a culture has become this Godless (John 18:38). From Sodom and Gomorrah to Babylon to ancient Greece to Rome to the United States of America, all have had their pet gods and deities. They have all just been a little bit different. Some were made of stone, wood, or clay, while others are ideologies, passions, or behaviors. The gospel calls man to recognize his sin against the backdrop of the Law of God and His holiness and to come to appreciate the sacrifice of the Son of God. The gospel says that life is about glorifying God and not self, and it gives us commandments for everything, from how to earn an honest living, how to have a lasting marriage, and how to find true joy and happiness. Once we know Jesus and worship Him as Savior and Lord, He shows us how to live and operate in this world. It is not a random world but a world of order, from physics to chemistry to astronomy to anatomy to linguistics to any branch of science or method of inquiry. It all points back to a giver of absolutes, God Himself.

Even in our debauched society where even many churches have abandoned a concrete belief in the authority of the Scripture, God has not abandoned His belief in His Word. Jeremiah 23:29 says, "Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock?" Existentialism is just another rock that God's Word can pound into dust, and randomness is no match for the fire of God. Let us pray for opportunities to share with people where true life and joy are found and how to navigate this life according to the Scripture rather than according to the wisdom of the day. There is a right path, and the odds are strongly that it is not what most people think it is. Don't join the party.