



2020 IN 20/20

2020 (the year) IN 20/20 (seeing it clearly)

**Part 2: The Issues – The Sinfulness of Man
and Law & Order**

**Sermon Study Guide
August 30, 2020**

Introduction:

Last week, we discussed the challenges of 2020 - a pandemic, an economic crisis, racial tensions, civil unrest, an election year with a conflicting philosophical & ideological divide the size of the Grand Canyon. I used the terms conservative and liberal to identify these conflicting ideologies, not for political reasons, but rather to address the moral issues that are at stake.

I want us as Christians to develop a **biblical world view** that will help us to know how to address the moral issues of the day so we can see them clearly, with 20/20 vision.

We also talked about the fact that there are conflicting ideologies in America.

The basic principles of **Conservatism**, as stated in the Declaration of Independence are:

- **Belief in a Creator**
- **Belief in a Creation/that we were Created**
- **Belief in God-given Moral Absolutes**

The basic principles of **Liberalism**, as stated in the Humanistic Manifesto are:

- **No Creator**
- **No Creation/that we were not Created**
- **No Moral Absolutes**

These conflicting ideologies have created a growing and an insurmountable divide, which explains the present division in our country.

As your pastor, my focus for the next few weeks will be on the moral and biblical issues that are being battled for in our country today. I will do this from a biblical basis, that is, from the perspective that **there is a Creator**, that **we have been Created**, and that there are **God-given moral absolutes** that have been given to us in God's Word.

This morning, we will look at **The Sinfulness of Man** and **Law and Order** – from a biblical perspective and how it applies to us in 2020.

Read Genesis 2:15-3:24 The Fall of Man

I. The Sinfulness of Man

- God created man and woman, and gave them dominion over earth – what did that mean? What was the place that put them in and how would describe it? (vv.15-24)

- What was the one tree they had to stay away from and why?
- When they ate the forbidden fruit (not an apple), what were the consequences they discovered and experienced? (vv.3:1-20) Who did they blame when confronted by God?
- Sin came into the world through one man – Adam. Why are we declared guilty for something that happened thousands of years ago? (Romans 5:12)
- What does it mean there is “none righteous, no not one? (Rom. 3:10-12)
- All have sinned and fallen short of what? How does this affect you? (Rom. 3:23)

Question: How does understanding “**The Sinfulness of Man**” help us to see clearly in 2020?

I want to share a couple of thoughts:

- **There will be no utopian society or “heaven on earth” until sin is eradicated, because sinful man will always bring with him the propensity to be corrupt.**
- **For this reason, as Christians, we should not put our trust in human institutions, but we should put our trust in God.**
- **We should not be surprised when governments led by sinful humans let us down or even fail us.**

Seeing 2020 in 20/20 requires an understanding that nothing/no one in this world is perfect. We need to keep that in mind as family members, as church members, in our areas of work, and especially as citizens of our nation. **There are no perfect people, so there are no perfect governments and no perfect nations.**

II. Law and Order

As sinful man became fruitful and multiplied, God established ways for people on the earth to govern themselves. He called a good and righteous man (Abraham) to birth a nation through which God would redeem His Created people from their sin. That was the nation of Israel.

- God established Himself as their King/Leader (**Israel was a Theocracy**). He chose:
 - **Leaders** (Moses, Joshua) - to guide and direct the nation.
 - **Judges** (Gideon, Samson) – to protect and deliver the nation from oppression.
 - **Prophets** (Samuel, Elijah) to provide heavenly direction and warnings for His people.
 - And then, at the people's request, and much to His disappointment, God gave the people **Kings** (David, Solomon, Josiah)

As the world became more and more populated, nations and governments further developed. Some nations **tried** to be good, many were bad, and a few were flat out evil – like today.

Nations would, at times, try to be righteous and just. However, because of the sinfulness of man, few nations/governments reflected righteousness and justice, and inevitably would end up moving towards corruption.

When God determined it was time to send Jesus, His Son, to rescue the world from sin, the Romans were the world power.

Rome was the dominant world nation, and, not surprisingly, it was not built upon righteousness and justice. It was during the reign of this world power that Christ came. This world power was known to persecute and kill first century Christians brutally and mercilessly. At this time, the Apostle Paul penned the words of Romans 13, telling us how we as Christians are to relate to the governing authorities

Read Romans 13:1-7

- Why has God established governing authorities over us? (Romans 13:1)

- What happens to us if we resist the authorities established by God? (Romans 13:2)

Governments are given authority to bring terror to those who are bad, and to protect those who do good. (Romans 13:3-4)

- How does Paul describe the response of wrongdoers to governmental authorities and the wielding of governmental power?

- Paul tells us that one must be subject/yield to authority to avoid God's wrath, and also for the sake of our conscience. What is the value of a clear conscience? (Romans 13:5)

- How, as a Christian, do we treat these authorities? (Romans 13:6-7)

So, let's talk about the civil disobedience we are seeing in our cities in America so we can see this clearly - with 20/20 vision.

Let's look at this from another angle:

We know that we are all sinful. This includes those who are in positions of authority- more specifically, **the police**. **At times, police will do wrong by misusing their authority**, even here in a democracy like America, a country that desires to be good.

We are to protest peacefully with respect and honor. (The original civil rights protests led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were amazing examples of this against tremendous obstacles.)

Let's talk:

America is a Democracy and a nation that was founded with freedom in mind for all people. Though we have never been and will never be perfect (**remember the sin problem**), we were founded to be a nation led **by the people and for the people**. The founders of America wanted us to be a nation that was good. We have been and are a good, even a great nation. And thankfully, we are getting better in some areas. But because of the sinfulness of man, **we have made and are making mistakes**.

Though it has taken us time (sometimes, far too much time) to recognize some of our mistakes, we are getting better. Thankfully, we have a way to ask for and even demand that our country's mistakes be addressed and corrected, as given to us in our Constitution. Freedom of Speech and the right to peacefully protest are some of those ways.

Slavery and the mistreatment of black people, better known as **racism**, is one area of pervasive mistakes (sins) that needs to be admitted and corrected. **Unnecessary police violence** is another one of those mistakes that needs to be addressed and corrected as well. Let's not forget the unfair ways we have treated **women** and **Native Americans**.

The proof that our country wanted to be good is that we have ways to make these things right, and that it is slowly but surely happening. As we work together, we can see these changes take place, but we must do it in the right way. As Christians, we must demand justice for our fellow citizens, but we must do it with honor and respect.

Let's look at the Civil Unrest we are presently seeing in some of our cities and try to see this clearly – with 20/20 vision

Some people claim that America is a bad nation and that we need to revolt and reject our past and build something brand new. That we need to start over. The term "**white privilege**" has been thrown around, making people feel guilty for the circumstances they were born into or even earned for themselves.

- I'd like to address how **Christians living in America perhaps should be looking at these things in 2020 so they can see them with 20/20 vision?**

Let's me illustrate this for you with an analogy:

- There are children who are born into and grow up in wealthy families, having at their disposal anything and everything money can buy. It is easy for that child to grow up thinking that his/her wealth is a right. Today we call that "a life of privilege". I choose to call it a "life of blessing". Should we hold that blessing against a person, as is they have done something wrong?
 - If so, then at least let's be consistent.

- All of us live in America. That means we were born in a wealthy country. You have at your disposal more opportunity than people have anywhere else in the world. You most certainly have “a life of privilege” (I’ve been to impoverished places like Africa, parts of Mexico, Haiti). Should the fact that we were born in America be held against us?
 - Let’s take it one more step.
- Are you a part of the family of God/are you a Christian? That means you are the child of the King of the Universe. You are wealthy spiritually. You have at your disposal the presence and blessing of God. You truly have a spiritual “life of privilege” (and a really bright future). Should the fact that you are a child of God be held against you?

Let’s apply this to life as Christians in America

If you are well off financially, be grateful for what you have, use what we have to help others, help everyone you know find the life of financial blessing that you have, with the priority of helping them find Christ and becoming part of God’s family.

As people who live in America, let’s be grateful for the nation we live in and for the blessings we have, even though it’s not perfect. Let’s identify the inconsistencies and injustices that exist, and, while respecting and honoring the governmental authorities, do everything we can to help our nation to improve and become better, or I would say greater.

If you are aware of mistakes/injustices that exist in our country, address those things in a respectful and honorable way. Become informed of who our leaders and potential leaders are, and make sure to cast your vote to place people in leadership that pursue righteousness and justice. And if necessary, use your American right of free speech and the right to peacefully protest to see things change. But keep in mind the blessing that you have because you are in this country.

Closing Prayer

God, help us as your people to live our lives according to your Word. Thank you for the freedoms we have to speak our mind and help us to bring about change so that we can be a nation where righteousness and justice are pursued and experienced.

God, please help our nation in these difficult times to be a country set on a hill – shining brightly and giving hope to the nations.