

Overcoming the leaven of Herod
(Government imposed religion and the unanchored mind)

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Introduction: In Christ we do find a life filled with purpose and identity!

A. What is my purpose in life? In what do I find fulfillment and am passionate about?

1. The first step to a “anchored mind” is found here! **(Col 3:1-3)**
2. We also have a need to belong! In our digital world we are bombarded with another purpose that offers fulfillment. Are we being pulled by the culture?

B. Jesus knew the influence that men of power can have on people! **(Lk 12:1-3)**

1. The “the leaven of Herod” is deception from a political system of thinking.
2. Today, in western societies, a philosophy called postmodernism is being taught.

I. Satan and the political culture of our times

A. Satan is the accuser of our brethren! **(Rev 12:10)**

1. He is filled with wrath and even accuses us before God! **(Zach 3:1-4)**
2. Satan did not anticipate forgiveness through the sacrifice of Christ.

B. Satan tried to destroy God’s people through accusations! **(Ezra 4:6)**

1. How does Satan use accusations? He uses them to destroy! **(Jn 10:10)**
2. Satan does not care if accusations are true, but he wants it to spread!
3. How far does it spread? Wise men with integrity will not be fuel for such a fire.

C. How were God’s people instructed to respond? **(Psa 109:2-4)**

1. Is it weakness to respond to accusations with love and prayer? NO!
2. Satan tempts us to take on personal vengeance. **(Rom 12:19-21; 1 Pt 2:23)**
3. When we refuse to do this we will become like our accusers.
4. When we refuse mercy we will be destroyed! This poison will enter into our very “body” and “bones.” **(Psa 109:16-18; 1 Jn 3:15)**

II. Drinking from the wells of postmodernism.

A. This is a philosophy that at its core rejects reason and, as a result, denies that truth can be found. Those who claim truth can be found are viewed as bullies.

1. How do you describe a system of thought that denies reason?
2. Most who are strongly influenced by this will not see it. Emotions are the driving force and thus there is great inconsistency.

B. Consider how secular scholars define postmodernism.

C. Consider the impact on the “progressive” movement in churches of Christ!

III. All justice and purpose must be rooted in the character of God

A. God character does not change! **(Mal 3:6; James 1:17; Heb 13:8)**

1. The universal truths found from God’s holiness is to be imitated by all men.
2. Those that deny a universal standard of truth do not know God.

B. What does it mean for God to be holy? **(1 Sam 2:2; Isa 40:25; Hosea 11:9)**

C. God appealed to His holiness to teach His people how to have a relationship with Him. **(Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26)**

1. Consider how you might begin a relationship with another. What must you learn?
2. God wants us to know what He is like so that we might change!
3. What is justice? Whatever God says that it is. **(Mic 6:8)**

IV. How God's character teaches us about justice

A. What does it mean for God to be just?

1. All of God's ways are right and thus is always based upon truth. **(Deut 32:3-4)**
2. He will give others what is their due. **(Job 34:11-12, 6)**
3. The foundation of God's throne is justice. **(Ps 89:14)**

B. What does God teach us about accountability and justice? What is really fair?

1. Justice begins with individual responsibility. I am not guilty for what others have done. **(Ezk 18:20-21; 2 Cor 5:10; Rom 14:11-12)**
2. Accountability demands evidence and a just process. God promises that all men will be judged individually in a righteous process. **(Rom 2:5-6)**

C. Why do men love justice?

1. Being created in the image of God we have in our nature a recognition of fairness and a hatred of those that cheat and steal. Children say: "That's not fair!"
2. If we do not fear God, that desire can be perverted. **(Acts 26:9-11; 23:1)**
3. A person who seeks to be just must act on principle (universal law) in all things. If he does not, Satan can take one's desire for justice and emotionally turn them into instruments of great injustice. (Grace can be used as a cover for injustice!)

D. A country will fall when it turns it back on true justice.

1. Rome had just laws, but cowardly men that denied justice. **(Acts 25:16; 8:33)**
2. God's law became powerless when it was not enforced with justice. **(Hab 1:3-4)**
3. Even though a righteous law may exist, if moral people are not involved in the enforcement of it then it becomes powerless.

V. How our current "political leaven" is impacting the church

A. We are currently seeing a series of dogmas that are being force-fed by the power of government. Resisting this teaching has denied many their jobs and much more. **(Rev 13:16-17, 11-13; 18:23; 19:20; 20:10)**

1. The dogmas that are bred from this philosophy are used to accuse innocent people of both motives and behaviors without evidence or due process.
2. If one wants a job or seeks a public education, they will be exposed to these teachings and through direct threats are expected to accept them.

B. These teachings are bred in cynicism and blossom into blind hatred.

1. Hateful attitudes towards males in general and the role of men are being promoted. We are seeing a collapse of male leadership both in schools and in the church. They face a hostile world simply because they were born a male!
2. Hateful attitudes towards local churches and their leaderships without evidence of wrongdoing or ever having ever approached brethren with their concerns is being promoted. Many cast off their brethren in bitterness.

VI. How should we respond to unjust accusations and persecution?

A. How did the Apostles respond? **(Act 5:40-42)**

1. We do not need to put our passions into politics but into teaching the gospel!
2. It is crucial we do not take on that which is in God's hands. **(Rev 2:27; 19:15)**

B. In times of persecution, genuine faith is a bright light! **(Lev 19:18; Mt 22:37-40)**

Conclusion: Through Christ we will always be "more than conquerors!" **(Rom 8:35-37)**