

Eternal Lives Matter – Have you thought about yours??

As I see it, the biggest problem the USA faces today is its insistence that God doesn't exist, and that people are basically good, and they will do the right thing if: 1. Given the right environment 2. Given enough money 3. Are properly educated about issues. The other part of it is the elitist idea that most people are pretty incapable of making these right decisions for themselves, so the government should make them for them. This is especially true in areas where a person's individual health is concerned. This idea leads to the burden of the public to shoulder blame when an individual acts in a criminal way. An individual isn't capable of making his or her own choices, he or she is just a result of their environment, so the environment must be changed (by the government) so that everyone will be good.

This viewpoint is called Humanism. It is the belief that man is basically good. People are born a "blank slate" and the circumstances of their lives control the outcome of their personality. There is a little bit of debate about hereditary traits as well, but the key aspect is that everything is completely out of the control of the individual. He or she is just a product of the environment and is helpless to make decisions that would make life better for them. This is of course mostly phrased in terms of a person who finds herself or himself a victim of crime or falsely accused or on the wrong side of the law with a "good reason" to be there (bad background, not their fault). The accuser or the person who wrongly accuses the victim somehow is responsible for his or her actions, which is a little confusing, but either way, the "bad" person (the one who treated the victim wrongly) is an example of wrong thinking. This wrong thinking can be exposed and corrected, and then theoretically no bad things would ever happen again in the world.

People who think that is true have fallen into a few fallacies. The first is not looking at history. Never in the history of the world has there been an absence of crime, false accusations, ill treatment of segmented people groups, oppression, slavery, murder, etc. If it could possibly be eradicated, it would have been by now, right? The second is ignoring personal responsibility. I guess this goes with point one. If the "worst" characters in history were let off the hook because they are just victims of circumstance, they would not be infamous. Why are we outraged by what we feel is injustice? Because we feel like the "bad" person should have not done the bad thing. But, on the other hand, if he or she is just a victim of circumstance and is a product of his or her environment, how can he or she be held accountable for bad actions? This leads to the third fallacy – that my way of thinking is the right way. The problem is that our nation has 300,000,000 people. If each person's way is the right way, which right way is the actual right way?

Wow, how confusing! Fortunately for us, there is a way to clear up the confusion. If we just acknowledge that there is indeed a God, and that He has something to say about all this, we can shine a light on this situation and understand it quite clearly. The first thing we have to understand is that the Bible clearly teaches that man is not good. Actually he is born bad. Because the first man, Adam, chose to sin, all of us have inherited the sin nature. This means that instead of being basically good, our natural tendency is to always be bad. There is no inherent good in anyone. The Bible puts it this way, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God", Romans 3:23. In other words, we have all done wrong and no one is righteous or good. That is pretty depressing if you think about it. But God was not satisfied to leave us wallowing in our sin. Sin keeps us separated from God, and God loves us, His creation, so He made a way for us to be freed from our sin nature. This requires a conscious choice on our part to choose God and refuse to worship the sin nature.

When Adam, the first man, chose to sin, he chose to believe a lie. This lie came from the devil, Satan, who is the enemy of God, and of man. The lie he chose to believe was that God was not really telling him the whole truth and that if he just did things his own way, he would have access to so much more than God was allowing him to have. This lie is that man is actually on equal footing with God intellectually and can make as good or even better decisions than God can. It is a rejection of God's goodness, kindness, sovereignty, omniscience, and wisdom. The devil is not only the father of lies, but is also the one who seeks to steal, kill, and destroy. He

especially wants to steal our joy, kill humans, and destroy us for all eternity by deceiving us into rejecting the One who loves us most. To believe his lies is to destroy ourselves, in this life and in the life to come.

Sin has a price, which is something else the devil doesn't tell his victims. The price of sin is death. When Adam chose to sin, death entered the world. Before that, nothing died and there was no corruption of anything at all. God made a covenant with one nation of people on the earth, the nation of Israel. If they followed a strict ritual of sacrifices and rules, they could temporarily cover their sins. The problem was that no one could follow the rules perfectly. God knew this, so in His perfect plan, in the fullness of time, He sent a perfect sacrifice into the world. He sent His one and only Son, Jesus, born of a virgin, to redeem all of mankind for all time. This wasn't just for the nation of Israel, but for all people, from every nation, tribe and tongue in the entire world. God did not send His son because people were good, or that they deserved it. In fact, He sent His Son because people were bad, and were not able to be good. If God did not pay the price for people's sins, they would be separated from Him for all eternity. God loves us, so it was not His will that any should perish.

Just sending Jesus into the world was not enough to atone for our sins. The price of sin is death, and Jesus, who was God's own Son, and was perfect, and did not sin at all, had to go through death to pay for the sins of all mankind. It wasn't an easy death. He was only 33 years old. He was falsely accused by the Jewish leadership, then turned over to the Roman government. The Romans didn't just scream and talk and make laws, they tortured people then executed them in the most excruciating ways imaginable. Jesus was severely beaten, then nailed to a wooden cross to die of asphyxiation. He was ridiculed and even one of the two criminals crucified with him insulted him. The other, though, recognized that although he was a criminal and deserved to die, Jesus was not, and asked Jesus to save him. Jesus replied that the man would be in paradise with Him that very day.

Wait a minute, there were two criminals, one on either side of Jesus. One insulted him and hurled abuse at Him. The other begged Him for mercy and received it. The second man realized that he was a sinner, worthy of death, and that Jesus was able to grant him eternal life. He made a choice, a different choice than our first father, Adam, or the other criminal. He made a choice that led to life for all eternity. Did the other criminal's life not matter to God? Of course it did, but God in His great mercy and grace leaves the choice up to each of us. You see, we are all criminals in one way or another. In our hearts we are all as evil as any person you can think of. None of us can have eternal life in heaven with God unless we submit ourselves to the authority of God and humble ourselves and ask for forgiveness. We can't do what is right here on earth, and we can't be in the presence of God for eternity if we don't allow God to rule in our hearts.

So, to God, all lives matter for all eternity. If you just believe in being good and following a set of rules that you or some other person made up, you will not live for all eternity with God. Unfortunately, you will live for eternity either way. God made us to be eternal beings and after we leave this life, we will live on. Those that love God and have submitted themselves to Him, will live with Him in a perfect place for all eternity where there is no sickness, death, sin, or tears. But, those that have rejected the free gift of eternal salvation that God offers will be thrown into the fiery hell which is reserved for the devil and his angels. God loves you. He sent His only Son, Jesus, into the world to be a perfect sacrifice for your sins and mine. All He requires of you, is that you submit yourself to Him, accept that Jesus is the only Way, and turn from your wicked ways and live according to God's truth, as recorded in His Word, the Bible. It seems so easy, yet so many refuse this free gift. Why would you choose death when you could choose life? Why would you choose to live in misery and deception when you could have freedom and life? Perhaps you haven't seen that God is love and He desires to save you for all eternity. The devil is the liar that tells you that you know best and that if you work hard enough you can save yourself. You don't need God, you know better than Him. That is a terrible deception, and the price is higher than you realize if you believe it. Trust God today. Trust that eternal lives matter to God, and He wants you to spend yours in peace, joy and life with Him.