

Lawlessness

As your pastor, I want to address what is happening in our culture and look to the Scriptures to access and react. I don't care what politicians, sports stars or Hollywood celebrities are saying. I don't care what political pundits and talk show hosts say. You do not want to hear my opinion nor do I wish to give it. We as Christians have to see what God has to say. First, we trust God in times of trial, unrest, and chaos whether it's in our personal lives or in our nation or community. Trials build trust. We have learned this in James.

What may have started as a genuine address of grievances has escalated into complete chaos. What concerns me the most and is what I want to address today, is governmental leaders who refuse to protect the public's interest, private property and goods. In fact, some have gone so far as to say we don't need laws or those to enforce those laws. It's known as "defunding the police." The question I want to ask today and find the answer from the Word of God is who is responsible for this?

First let's look at a time where the rebellion from God was taking place 700 years before Christ. Isaiah 5:20-21 "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And clever in their own sight!" We can see this being played out over the years. Marriage has been redefined. Sexual immorality is now the norm, even for professing Christians. More and more people are living together outside the bonds of marriage because it has been deemed normal and sin rationalized. We call murder bad but kill millions of unborn children every year since 1972. Minority babies are the most aborted babies of any ethnicity. Recently they say you can't go to church but you can burn one down. You can't shop but you can loot. You can't eat at a restaurant but you can destroy one. How did we get here?

- Danger and chaos ensue when we call evil good and good evil
- Danger and chaos ensue when we exchange darkness for light
- Only problems will come when we do things we think are right in our own eyes and by our own sinful standards

Let's take a closer look. And let's keep in mind why and where we get the truth from. Romans 3:4 "Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be found a liar*." Whenever a leader or leaders are calling for no laws nor true enforcement of laws you will have lawlessness. The word itself suggests the idea of contempt of Divine law. Or in a modern secular sense, contempt of any law that restricts what one desires to do.

- Matthew 7:23 "And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." They don't know God because they don't obey His commands.
- Matthew 13:41 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness." A gathering of those who aren't believers, those who refuse to obey God's commands.
- Matthew 23:28 "So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

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- Matthew 24:12 "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold." When lawlessness abounds, men's answer to righteousness is flawed. The love which should abound is cold and non-existent.
- Romans 6:19 "I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification." Speaks of two different lifestyles. Lawless behavior leads to further lawlessness. But if you obey God you are being refined and sanctified by His holiness and ways.
- 2 Corinthians 6:14 "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?" This refers to partnerships, both business and personal.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7 "Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way."
- Hebrews 1:9 "You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness above Your companions." It's profitable to love the righteousness of God.
- 1 John 3:4 "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." Sin literally means to "miss the mark" and "a violation of divine law." Lawlessness manifests disobedience.

In all of the verses of God's word we see that lawlessness is sin, disobedience and is destructive. It's always been around, but what we have seen in our country lately is rampant open display of wickedness and evil being fueled by men's own view of justice, not God's. We grind the world to a halt because of a virus, but a far worse virus (sin and lawlessness) is allowed to go on. It's bizarre.

Let's pause for a moment and see the difference between lawless behavior (of who we once were) and why Christians are restrained from this. It is because God's redemptive work rescues us from this. Romans 4:7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered." Titus 2:14 "who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." Hebrews 10:17 "And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

We have defined lawlessness as rebellion and disobedience and doing what is right in man's eyes. Let's ask this question. What if we had no laws? What if there were no boundaries? No limits? Remember in the beginning there were only four people and 1/4 of them were murdered. God set boundaries for our first parents and sin broke those boundaries and the consequences resulted in

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death. Why did God give a law and why does He establish laws and people to enforce those laws today? 1 Timothy 1:8-10 "But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching."

We see the acts of unredeemed people and why. This is easily found in the Scriptures the answer to this question. Cf. Romans 3:10-18

There are three aspect to this diagnosis in Scripture that we see as an answer for the chaos, not only now, but really always has been.

First, we see the character of man, none righteous, no not one. Yes, there is human goodness, but there's no righteousness acceptable to the Lord. This is why the redeemed have the imputed righteousness of Christ. He is worthy. He is the only one worthy to appease God's wrath. No one who understands, no one who seeks for God and no one who does good.

Second, is their conversation. Their throat is an open sepulcher or grave. The fact is an open grave will give a horrible smell after a while. This describes their words and conversations. Proverbs 10:32 "The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked what is perverted." There's a clear difference in the words of the redeemed and the unredeemed. Ephesians 5:4 "And there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks." Their tongues keep deceiving. Their mouths are full of cursing, and bitterness. Many of you may have seen videos of protestors and when they face someone who doesn't hold their beliefs often cursing ensues.

Third, we see their conduct. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Congress cannot even pass a law that will act to save a baby that born alive after a botched abortion. If you allow people to kill, they will kill. If you allow people to steal, they will steal. Nothing will bring about the depravity of the human heart more than the 55 million people killed under the Nazi regime. Planned Parenthood kills more unborn children, and the majority are black children in the USA, yet they say that lives matter, hardly.

Romans 13:1-7 we see clearly that God established leaders (whether they are saved or not) to restrain evil. If you remove laws and law enforcers there is no restraint. We have seen this. Because of time sake, we will look at this passage and how a Christian responds in next weeks message.