**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

 *Ekklesia Series*

*Right Before God*

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

May 26th In the Year of Our Lord 2019

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS quoted)

Job 9:1 Then Job answered,

 2 "In truth I know that this is so; But how can a man be in the right before God?

 3 "If one wished to dispute with Him, He could not answer Him once in a thousand times.

 4 "Wise in heart and mighty in strength, Who has defied Him without harm?

 5 "It is God who removes the mountains, they know not how, When He overturns them in His anger;

 6 Who shakes the earth out of its place, And its pillars tremble;

 7 Who commands the sun not to shine, And sets a seal upon the stars;

 8 Who alone stretches out the heavens And tramples down the waves of the sea;

 9 Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, And the chambers of the south;

 10 Who does great things, unfathomable, And wondrous works without number.

 11 "Were He to pass by me, I would not see Him; Were He to move past me, I would not perceive Him.

Reviewing from last Sunday, we were discussing the theological points of the Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church is represented by RCC which is the state church.

The main issues people found the state church to be in error centered on:

1. Water-baptism required for salvation - not justified in Bible.
2. The Lord’s Supper is symbolic. Reject RCC claim to have authority to change the water and bread into blood and flesh of Jesus. Protestors also rejected this teaching in its entirety.
3. Priesthood of the Believer, meaning that every person who believes in God has direct access to God. No more going through a priest.
4. Separation of state and church.
5. Rejection of Infant Baptism and the RCC authority to remove original sin.
6. Saved by Faith alone (“Sola Fide”)
7. Rejection of RCC authority. Luther called for the supreme authority of the Bible to be over the Church and Pope. (“Sola Scriptura”)

There was one parameter that the culture of the Reformation anticipated, and it almost went without saying: There is God and no other deity. The atheistic school of thought for Western man had not yet sprung. It was not until the age of science had entered into a maturing age with the Age of Reason, The Enlightenment (1700’s), did the idea grow and penetrate Western Leadership and trickle to the individual.

There can be reasonable observation that the Age of Reason is still with us today in that the atheistic culture grew from this time. We are at a place now that many in academia, government and the arts possess the worldview that truth can only come from what science tells us. God and His Bible do not represent verification of truth. In fact, the teaching from atheism today is hostile toward people who believe in God.

 This time of year, we have high school graduations.

Teachers: Public school systems will employ about 3.2 million full-time-equivalent (FTE) teachers in fall 2018, such that the number of pupils per FTE teacher—that is, the pupil/teacher ratio—will be 16.0. This ratio has remained consistent at around 16.0 since 2010. A projected 0.5 million FTE teachers will be working in private schools this fall, resulting in an estimated pupil/teacher ratio of 12.3, which is similar to the 2017 ratio of 12.2, but lower than the 2010 ratio of 13.0 [(source)](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_208.20.asp).

Expenditures: Current expenditures for public elementary and secondary schools are projected to be $654 billion for the 2018–19 school year. The current expenditure per student is projected to be $12,910 for the 2018–19 school year [(source)](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_236.15.asp?current=yes).

Attainment: About 3.6 million students are expected to graduate from high school in 2018–19, including 3.3 million students from public high schools and 0.4 million students from private high schools [(source)](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_219.10.asp).

College and University Education: Enrollment

The number of students projected to attend American colleges and universities in fall 2018 is 19.9 million, which is higher than the enrollment of 15.3 million students in fall 2000, but lower than the enrollment peak of 21.0 million in fall 2010 (source). Total enrollment is expected to increase between fall 2018 and fall 2027 to 20.5 million.

Females are expected to account for the majority of college and university students in fall 2018: about 11.2 million females will attend in fall 2018, compared with 8.7 million males. Also, more students are expected to attend full time (an estimated 12.1 million students) than part time (7.8 million students) (source).

Some 6.7 million students will attend 2-year institutions and 13.3 million will attend 4-year institutions in fall 2018 (source). About 17.0 million students are expected to enroll in undergraduate programs, and 2.9 million are expected to enroll in postbaccalaureate programs (source).

In 2018, a projected 12.3 million college and university students will be under age 25 and 7.6 million students will be 25 years old and over. The number of college and university students under age 25 hit a peak of 12.2 million in 2011 and has remained steady since that time. The number of students 25 years old and over hit a similar peak in 2010 (of 8.9 million) but the overall enrollment for this age group declined from 2010 to 2018 (source).

Attainment

During the 2018–19 school year, colleges and universities are expected to award 1.0 million associate degrees; 1.9 million bachelor’s degrees; 780,000 master’s degrees; and 182,000 doctor’s degrees (source). In 2015–16, postsecondary institutions awarded 939,000 certificates below the associate degree level, 1.0 million associate degrees, 1.9 million bachelor’s degrees, 786,000 master’s degrees, and 178,000 doctor’s degrees (source).

<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372>

These are interesting facts to review. Over 3.5 million teens graduate from high school looking for a future. The American Dream of the post WWII generation is partially fulfilled when about 70% of these students go to college, be it that about 1/3 of the high school graduates go to a junior college pursuing a two-year degree. The reality is that America needs the two-year college program to train people to be in the work force. Many of these two-year college programs prepare people to be a technician of some kind. America needs more technical workers in all fields, more than we need lawyers.

**Immediate transition to college**

**Question:**
How has the college enrollment rate immediately following high school graduation varied over time?

**Response:** Of the **3.1 million** recent high school completers1 in 2016, some **2.2 million, or 70 percent**, enrolled in college by the following October. The annual percentage of high school completers who enroll in 2- or 4-year colleges in the fall immediately following high school completion is known as the *immediate college enrollment rate*. The overall immediate college enrollment rate increased from 63 percent in 2000 to 70 percent in 2016, though the 2016 rate was not measurably different from that in 2010.

Higher percentages of high school completers immediately enrolled in 4-year colleges than in 2-year colleges in every year from 2000 to 2016. In 2016, about 46 percent of high school completers enrolled in a 4-year college and 24 percent enrolled in a 2-year college. The immediate college enrollment rates for 4-year and for 2-year colleges in 2016 were not measurably different from 2000.

<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=51>

 So, rah-rah and off to school they go but not before there are thousands of graduation ceremonies and commencement speeches given. Typically, these speeches are motivational and inspiring. Example being:

 “You 2019 graduates represent the brightest hope for America and the world. You have your whole lives in front of you. You are somebody, and you will accomplish great things in life. One day many of you will own their own business, and some will join the armed forces. All of you will be great.”

 Basically, these speeches are motivational but not realistic. Yes, some of the high school graduates will accomplish great things. But there is one reality that is not mentioned and is in sharp contrast. The colleges and universities in which students have worked so hard to be accepted have a different message. Despite what the admissions directors or the welcoming committee omit to inform parents and students entering college, the professors are waiting for the sheep in their classrooms.

 I have said before that many college professors view it as their job to deprogram freshmen that have any other worldviews than evolution or atheism. So, what does that motivational speech look like and sound like?

 [You live on a planet that is a happenstance in the universe. You are an accident of cosmic dust that got haphazardly stuck together to form earth. You are nothing more than carbon combined with other biological elements to form flesh. You will pass through a brief period of time and die leaving no trace of your existence. You have no real purpose as a living organism. There isn’t any God nor any future hope of your existence beyond the brief non-impactful life you now have.]

 Wow! Just a few months before at the graduation commencement speech, the high school graduates were told they were the greatest and the future hope of mankind. We have an **oxymoron.** What many parents spent 18 to 20 years imparting to their children is targeted to be erased. Ah, yes, but America sends their children-sheep to the big universities to receive an education. How many parents know their child is the target of a liberal social engineered religion of secular-humanist-atheistic-evolution?

What do all those hyphenated words mean? It means that your child will most likely graduate from the university experience doubting everything from their born gender to accepting that there isn’t any right and wrong, only relative thought for their time. And, above all else, there isn’t any God, and therefore, there isn’t any moral code derived from God. After all, a God that does not exist cannot have a moral code or define what is good and evil. Academic America works to wipe clean the conscience hard drive of family, culture and tradition and rewrite their manifesto of man.

 I could list many names who led the way in this decades-long effort, but I will not gratify their person. Actually, this effort has been ongoing longer than decades. A few weeks ago, I presented that in the mid-19th century two plagues were unleashed upon the world, Karl Marx and the Communist Manifesto and Charles Darwin’s Origin of Species. Both led to the God is dead philosophies.

 For some time now, the climate is antagonistic toward a biblical worldview and students are viewed as being naive and stupid for assigning any truth to the Bible. Basically, many who do not fall in line are bullied into submission. Those of us who withstood the bombardment are usually better prepared for life. I personally refuted Darwin in a Biology lab class demanding that the missing link be produced. They could not produce one as they stated all the evidence strongly points in that direction. I told them I was interested in science and not speculation. I was certainly not a Christian saint at that point in my life being a freshman, but I was not going to sell-out God for a grade. I made an “A” in the lab class and a “B” in the lecture. I shocked the world my first semester in college with a 3.0 GPA. Understand, I graduated in the last 25% of my high school class. The reality is, I never took homework seriously or the tests. However, college presented a different outlook on life. From my vantage point, my father was now paying the bill. I had better go to class, do the homework and study for tests. Hey, a winning formula.

 We are fortunate that not all freshmen buy into the secular wolves masquerading as professors. The Church needs to do a better job in preparing teens for college. Most parents are focusing on the academics, and they should. . . but. . . also the spiritual preparation.

 I believe that college preparation starts years before high school graduation. To start, we teach that a person has a personal relationship with God. That God is in their heart. We Believers are attuned to the spiritual battle all around us all the time. Satan walks around on the earth seeking to destroy constantly (Job 1). Satan comes to Jesus described in Matthew 4 to test Him. Jesus is prepared with Scripture.

 A young person’s spiritual strength is in their pray life, their Bible study time and their relationships where they share life’s experiences. All of these prepare a young person to be ready to withstand the tests from God’s enemy. Never forget, Satan came to Jesus, God in the flesh, and attempted to lure Him away. Jesus withstood the test. This test of Jesus proves that we can achieve victory over Satan with God operating inside our hearts and minds.

With what should teens be equipped for life beyond high school? Actually, this question applies to all of us.

 **Believer’s life points. Fundamental truths for victory.**

1. Focusing back on the opportunity for an **individual to approach God on their own** gives a person an environment to be self-expressive and the freedom to choose their associations. Thus, we are free to associate with any group or form our own. We are individuals and at the same time are in relationship with the whole Church. We are united in Spirit, God’s Holy Spirit.

From reading the Bible, we receive the idea that everyone is responsible for their own relationship with God. Jesus speaks to people in groups (Sermon on the Mount) and to individuals. We are given example after example of the individual call from God to make peace with Him. Jesus speaks to Nicodemus, the tax collector, the woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery and many others calling them all to make a personal decision to surrender to Him. There is a consistency.

So, we, like those in Pennsylvania, have the same clean slate. The door is wide open. **We have the freedom to individually believe and witness the Lord from our own conscience**.

Wth this individual relationship with God, we do not represent any man-made institutional religion. We do not have to defend some denominational cultural or political position or teachings. We focus on God Message singularly.

1. We live in the age of science. We need to be aware of certain things. Know the difference between scientism and science. This is my view of Scientism: It is a religion that uses the appearance of science to further a belief system. Atheists and secularists are categorized with scientism. They already hold to an answer they want before they conduct and experiment or make observations.
2. We need to be aware of the fact that Evolution as Darwin presented, or anyone since, has never produced a real science model for the origins of life. In addition, we now know through DNA studies to make a change in a species there has to be a rewriting of the DNA code. This takes specific engineering; the kind man has not been able to duplicate. There has never been one observation or biological matter found to demonstrate that one species changed DNA code beyond mutations. But mutations are working with what is already there. And mutations change in a bad way, changing the species that will not survive. Hence a cow with two heads. What we do see is that species suddenly appear in the geological record. These new species have new DNA codes that work and produce a survival rate. This appearance of a new code is evidence that some intelligent being is at work in the writing of the new code. How does the new DNA code happen? This is the foundational question of the scientific movement called Intelligent Design.

Evolutionists claim this change takes millions of years to take place through mutations that eventually get the code right and produce a different species. But again, there is no field finding to this idea. There never has been. This is a call to increase the information in the genome. And or a mutation that increased the information in a genome. But again, a mutation scrambles the genome information or leaves something from the code. Thus, again, you have two-headed cows. Again, new DNA code derived from a known species has never been found. Hence, no missing link has ever been found to connect the DNA dots that humans like us evolved from monkeys. Thus, evolution is debunked. The numerical odds of the time it takes to make a successful mutation to form another species has never been established by evolutionists. Example: birds to reptiles.

1. Evolution does acknowledge that life forms can adapt to their environment, and the strongest of a species survives and the weakest die. This is true.
2. **Causation:** Even the Big Bang theory relies upon a beginning. However, in scientism, there is no explanation that the beginning had a **cause**. The atheist’s leading voices declare that life was spontaneous but by no means connected to God. This is impossible for the atheist because God does not exist. They contend that something was created by nothing spontaneously. However, this reasoning is not contained in the laws of physics. Matter is always present in some form. Matter may change forms like water to ice but is still there. So, contained within the first law of thermodynamics is the conservation of Energy which highlights the fact that energy can neither be created nor destroyed. It can only change forms. The atheist denies this law by claiming that matter created itself from no matter. Really great science?
3. **Know the precision of the placement of earth.** It is accepted by scientists, including Christian scientists that the universe is expanding. This is a measurable observation that Hubble and Einstein agreed. They observed what is called a “redshift” which relates to measuring the electromagnetic spectrum red light from distant stars and celestial systems. The measurement indicates objects are moving away from each other. Thus, the main source of the “Big Bang” theory now seems to be the accepted view as pertaining to the origins of the universe. The “big question” is who caused the Big Bang? In Genesis, God states there was a beginning for the heavens and the earth. So, at least we can agree, for a human reference point, there was a beginning for the creation. God has no beginning.

<http://coolcosmos.ipac.caltech.edu/cosmic_classroom/cosmic_reference/redshift.html>

With the premise of the Big Bang understood, then all things at the beginning where shot across space to form all that we see. Scientists tell us that for earth to be in its orbit the forces of the explosion of the Big Bang had to be extremely precise to place our sun, earth, moon and other planets around us is such a way that life developed on earth. This also includes the position of our solar system inside the galaxy we call the Milky Way. This ~~is~~ extreme celestial placement is evidence of the extreme precision that is observable. The miracle and the exclusivity of earth, is the fact that we cannot find life, or the elements to support life, anywhere in space that we can see. These elements referred to as the building blocks of life contain liquid water and the basic six chemical building blocks: oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, sulphur and phosphorus).

Keeping in mind with the expansion of **the Big Bang, gravity is** at work with the constantly expanding universe. The gravity of the sun and moon and other planets impact earth and its ability to have life. It is an extreme balance of the forces of an expanding universe and gravity all functioning at the same time. The odds of this set-up by chance is an astronomical calculation. In other words, someone designed and controlled the forces we see in physics.

 Also, keep in mind that the earth is just the right distance from the sun to sustain life. Closer to the sun and the earth is too hot to sustain life. Further away and the earth is too cold to support life. In addition, the moon is in just the right orbit and distance. If the moon was closer, the ocean tides would wash over much of the land every twenty-four hours. There is a constant balance of gravity and expansion that was set in motion from the beginning to create earth and a sustainable environment for life.

**Reflection**

**Understandably, we have just covered a lot of ideas that most people do not talk or think about.** The vast majority of people do not understand the forces at work around them. There are many forces and values, both in the physical world and in the political world, interacting constantly. All these energies functioning at a high pace 24/7/365. Then there is God’s Word that is constant from the beginning. John 1 witnesses to us that all things were made through Jesus Christ in the beginning, because He is God, He is the Word. Thus, the Word is a force just like the laws of physics. The Word contains explanations of life and the Gospel Message, the Good News.

Sounds great. But there is one problem. Most people in our time haven’t any idea what the Gospel Message is. If biblical-Christians talk about the Bible today, there is a gap between them and their audience. There are a few, but most adults who go to church are not prepared to witness the Gospel Message. Unfortunately, witnessing is viewed to be in the hands of full-time staff. Many Bible study books purchased in the bookstore or online are designed for a so-called Bible study teacher to facilitate the lesson, no real Bible knowledge required.

In America, we live in an age of ultimate freedoms and, at the same time, ultimate entertainment in a microwave society. Not enough time to slow down and absorb God’s Word. Only enough time to have a good feeling by listening to music and “religious in tone teachings” and sermons that bring comfort. The call for real change is seldom heard. The call for surrender and commitment has been laid by the wayside long ago. The “feel good” message combined with the lack of actually learning the Bible has intoxicated the Church to a point of not being able to hear. The church that called for a personal surrender to the conviction of God’s Holy Spirit has become the church of a conscience-free convenience.

However, the Lord always has His remnant.

**Romans 11:**1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

 3 "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE."

 4 But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."

 5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.

Isaiah 11:16

16 And there will be a highway from Assyria

For the remnant of His people who will be left,

Just as there was for Israel

In the day that they came up out of the land of Egypt.