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B0926 – June 28, 2009 – Loyalty To God In Every Area Of Life

We're working with the Golden Era of Solomon and what we can learn under the doctrine of sanctification. Most of the doctrinal truths that come out of the end of the OT expand some aspect of sanctification. With David it was one of the dimensions of sanctification. We said there were two dimensions to sanctification, long-term growth on one hand and the existential present on the other hand. David amplifies the existential present, the moment by moment; am I in fellowship or out of fellowship, am I walking with the Lord or not walking with the Lord, am I abiding or not abiding, all that terminology is related to this existential dimension. Turn to Ps 51. This dimension of spiritual growth is a tough dimension to take care of because we all sin daily and we don't like it that we sin and we can easily get frustrated and once we've become frustrated we usually retreat, go into a spiritual cave and die. The Christian life is a struggle and it's not easy to confess this sin this hour and that sin the next, day in and day out, year after year. It's easier just to go into a spiritual coma. When you start to think about giving up David's your man. Go back to David, imagine in your mind's eye this man who was the king of the nation, he's in the national spotlight and he fails miserably. It was a royal failure that had national consequences, social consequences, family consequences and, of course, individual consequences. David caused a wreck in the nation. We said that it didn't happen over night. There was a progression in David's life that issued forth this big sin. David's life, so far as we can tell from the Psalms before the problem with Bathsheba, was a well-disciplined, spiritual one. He got up early every morning and spent time in the word of God. It was what the king was supposed to do - write his own personal copy of the Bible and study it daily. That was David in the early years. But something happened and I think we can all identify to some degree. We go through phases where we're in the word every day and then we go into a spiritual slump and we know we should be back in the word

but for some reason we don't and things start to fall apart, the littlest things start to work their way into our lives and then we commit some idiotic thing. The idiotic things don't just spring up out of nowhere. Usually there's been a downward pattern in our life and the idiot thing grows up out of that. When that happens you're in the place David was in and there's quite a bit of ground to reclaim at that point. We're way down the creek with a long way to paddle.

Another thing we can identify with in David is that many times after the idiot thing we're just like him; we don't even realize we've sinned. That happens when we are so deep into the situation we can't see out. We're deceived and someone has to say, "Knock, knock, hello, is anybody home? Don't you see what you did?" And most of us, "Yeah, I see the mess I caused, I can see my reputation going down the tubes, I can see people got hurt and I'm sorry about that." But that's not biblical confession. If that's where you are then you haven't come to the point of true conviction of sin. You're still not convinced. You're sorry because of the social ramifications but you're still thinking on the horizontal plane, I messed up my life, I messed up so and so's life. Yeah, everybody knows that. But that's not the big issue. The big issue is when we've reached Ps 51:4, "Against You and You only have I sinned." At that point, now I've admitted the standard isn't me, the standard isn't society, the standard is the Lord. He's the one who made the standard and I broke the standard. And until we've admitted that we haven't confessed our sin and we haven't been restored to fellowship. We're still walking around in the tooley's. So, David's the model of the existential dimension of sanctification and when we get to Ps 51:4 and we confess, the final thing is the Lord's work and that is He restores us. We're restored to intimacy with Him, we're walking with Him again. But don't get the false impression that the consequences of the sin go away. Maybe they do, maybe they don't but just be careful because sometimes Satan will use the consequences of our sin to trip us up, get us thinking: now wait a minute, did the Lord really restore me to fellowship, because here's all this mess I'm facing due to that sin. And I don't really feel like I'm in fellowship. In that case you have to train yourself to relax and trust the Lord. The Lord said he would restore me and I confessed to Him and therefore He has restored me and now I have all these consequences to manage, but I know the Lord's going to give me the grace to make it through. So, keep David in mind as a model in the day to day dimension of sanctification.

With Solomon we're amplifying a different aspect of sanctification. Solomon teaches us something else. What is that something else? The aim of sanctification. What did we say was the basic aim of sanctification. Not rushing ahead. Just basically what is the goal or aim of sanctification? To learn loyalty to God. Not to defeat our enemies, not to stop sinning, but to learn obedience to Him through his word. And that's what Solomon expands for us. He's expanding it and bringing it out of a little religious box and saying, look, every area of life is an opportunity to learn loyalty. I don't have to be a vocational minister to serve God. I can serve God in a multiplicity of ways and we said that's deep sanctification, that's very advanced thinking and that is the kind of thinking that is required to build a biblical culture. So we've been working with culture and the question of how our faith is related to culture and we concluded with the concept of counter-culture. It's not that we are against every little thing the pagan culture around us discovers or develops. It's just that we send it all through a biblical filter so we can pick and choose. If you don't do that then you syncretize with pagan culture and that distorts and ruins and you lose your witness. If you swing the other way and say everything the pagan culture does is wrong then you separate from pagan culture to the point there's no contact whatsoever and you lose your witness that way. The counter-culture idea is that we can take certain elements from pagan society because we recognize that even though they're fallen they're still made in the image of God and they still have talents and skills that we might want to tap into. There are some things we can learn from pagans and we're not going to eschew that, we're going to use that but at the same time we're going to give it a biblical twist and we're going to bring it under God's pre-interpretive dominion and build a biblical culture.

That brings us up to where we are. We said there were five points to biblical culture. We've studied the first two. First **Biblical Culture is a By-Product of Advanced Sanctification**. By 'advanced sanctification' we mean deep maturity. We're talking in the realm of the long-term growth dimension, when you've taken in the word of God for years and years and years and you've learned the basics of Christianity and you've learned how to manage your spiritual life and you've learned how to articulate the Christian faith and then you start to reach out into other areas. At that point you're starting to broaden your sanctification. So you can ask questions like, "How would a chemist love the Lord with all his heart, mind, soul and strength?" "How

would that look different than a worldly chemist?” “How would an engineer love the Lord?” “How should I view art such that I am pleasing the Lord?” These are all questions for advanced sanctification. And then I answer those questions working out from a biblical frame of reference. I think it out. Paul said to the Colossians, taking every thought captive to Christ and this is what he meant - bringing every area of human investigation under Christ’s authority. And as you’re doing this you go out and in the areas your talented you start producing a biblical culture. Bringing Christ into every arena is what we mean when we say Biblical Culture is a Product of Strong Sanctification.

The second point we said is that **Biblical Culture has a Unified View of Life**. It’s just not true that the secular religious compartments exist. When you’re advancing spiritually you’re starting to see, Hey, I don’t have to take off my biology hat when I go to church and put on my religious hat, and when I go to vote I take off my religious hat and put on my political hat. I think this is one of the greatest strains Christians have because in our day we’ve been told over and over that biology and politics and math are unspiritual, they’re just neutral gray areas. So when you start drawing that out for people I think it produces tension in us. We’re not comfortable right away and that’s just a part of the growth process. Think how many times growth was a painless process. That’s why they call them growing pains. Growth hurts and growth is uncomfortable. And it’s okay to be uncomfortable with it. But you need to work through it, keep going, and keep thinking. Once you’ve accepted it and you admit, alright Lord, I know you want me to come out of this religious box then there’s another hurdle to face and that’s the fact that it’s a daunting task. Now you’re really having to think the Lord’s thoughts in every area of life. And that means constant questioning; what about food, what about music, what about art, what about politics, what about form of government, what about parenting, what about education and it’s radical to think that God has something very definite to say about all these things. And the more and more you do this and the more and more you think and the more and more you grow in loyalty to Him then the more and more you realize boy, there’s a serious conflict going on here. Everywhere I turn I look at things this way and the world looks at them another. I say this, the world says that and good grief, can I ever get a rest here? What is going on? Where was I for the last 30 years? And that takes us to the third point.

The third point, **Biblical Culture Points to Total Victory**. If I view all of life as under God and I begin to grow in loyalty to Him and produce something of Biblical culture then what is complete loyalty to God going to produce? If partial obedience to God produces a partial Biblical culture, what is full obedience to God going to produce? A total culture, a worldwide global culture under Christ's reign. This is why I had you go through those millennial passages in Isaiah 11 and 41. Those passages depict what a totally biblical culture brought in by the one greater than Solomon, Jesus the Christ. We don't live in the millennium, we live in the church so we're not going to have total victory now. But the development in our own personal lives and families that produces generational obedience, those are foreshadowings of the total victory in that millennial reign of Christ. Christians in various periods of church history have understood this and went out and produced partial biblical cultures. I think of Bach. Bach's classical music is actually quite distinct from other composers at the time. Bach emphasizes resolution, the music has this embedded in it, he's telling a story and the story has tension, it has climax but in the end there's resolution. Bach was a very godly man despite some of his David like failures. Those aren't the issue, people always point out the failures. Yeah he failed, we all failed. But what was the focus of Bach's life? Bach decided he wasn't going to do anything else but create music to go with the word of God each Sunday. Think of the creativity that takes. Think of Bach every week writing a new piece of music for the worship service, not just playing and rehearsing a new piece. He wrote a new one, he composed a new piece of music every week. These are the creative geniuses, and they lived in a sinful world with sinful bodies, they had their own sanctification problems, but they produced partially biblical cultures. What do you suppose it's going to look like when at last all evil is removed and our full potential for creativity is unleashed? What man produces in the eternal state will astound us. Biblical culture accomplished in a small way today points to the time when man will produce a total biblical culture under Christ.

If you read Proverbs you were probably aware that in the first nine chapters of Proverbs this "lady wisdom" shows up. It's a female metaphor for wisdom, and you might have been puzzled over why wisdom is pictured as lady here. There are two ladies, "lady folly" and "lady wisdom." Why are these two characters contrasted? They're metaphorical characters. Wisdom is looked upon as a female. Why is that? It's a major thing in Proverbs, you can't

escape it. It's deliberately stuck in there, so we have to look and say wait a minute, what's the female-ness of wisdom all about?

Think back early in our series when we dealt with the divine institution of marriage; one man and one woman. That's a structure God embedded in the cosmos, there's no undoing it, you can violate it, but if you do that there's always a price to pay. And in the details of that structure you have the man, you have the woman, they have distinct roles. Think back and imagine yourself as Adam, you're in the Garden, God comes to you and gives you a calling. Then God puts you to sleep, takes one of your ribs via surgery and creates Eve as an *'ezer*, that is translated in our Bible as a helper or a helpmate, this is the English idea of it. People don't think too much about that. A helpmate to do what? What was Adam called to do? Adam was told by God to go out and subdue the earth, he had a calling, and he was alone. What's the role of the *'ezer*? Now it starts to gel, because the calling of that man cannot be done without this helper, the female. She's got to be there; it can't be accomplished without her. She is the one who finishes it off. That's why through the whole of Scripture you see the same theme; the woman is the one who completes a culture. She is the one who finishes it off, she adorns it. The guy builds the house and who decorates it? A good illustration. The woman is essential or you can't get the culture finished without her. That's why every culture that has had male and female vastly out of balance has almost wiped itself out of existence; the West is a good example. They didn't call it the Wild West for no reason. People saw that a culture dominated by men wasn't complete. And that's why wisdom is pictured as a lady; she is man's helper-completer. The Bible says you need wisdom like a man needs a woman. It's absolutely essential to complete man's calling.

Now we come down to a more profound thought. What does the NT do? It extends the concept of wisdom and calls Jesus our wisdom. That's another one of these little NT words that we read fast and never understand what Paul said, because Paul knows, if we asked him, Paul what do you mean by that? Well, did you read Proverbs recently? What's the matter with you, open your Bible. He would have expected us to know that when he called Christ our wisdom he was calling Jesus Christ something very profound. He was identifying Jesus Christ with Proverbs 8, the wisdom that pre-existed the world and laid down the structure, the blueprint in Jesus Christ's mind. If you doubt that, the passages where he emphasizes Jesus as wisdom are

exactly the passages where Jesus is the Creator and does everything by the word of God, Col 1:30, Heb 1:1-3; 11:3. Watch the context when Jesus is referred to as wisdom. Do you need to get wisdom now? You bet, if you want to be like Christ. People talk, WWJD, What Would Jesus Do? It's the wrong question; it's putting the cart before the horse. What does Jesus think? Jesus is the wisdom of God and His mind, the mind that contains the blueprints of the entire cosmos is what we're interested in conceptualizing as far as is possible as finite man. Then we can talk about what to do, what to produce.

What is Jesus going to do? Is He going to come back? Yes, He is. Is He the wisdom of God? Yes, He is. What is He going to produce? Culture the likes of which history has never seen. The grandeur of Solomon is nothing in comparison to the grandeur of the Lord Jesus Christ. So let it never be said that the evangelical fundamental Bible-believing church squashes creativity and culture. If we do, we're out of it, there's something wrong with us if we don't encourage our young people to produce in every area of life, tremendous things, tremendous biology, business, chemistry, math, art, music, you name it. It's maturity, it's a slow maturing that people are feeling like hey, now I can express myself the way I always wanted to. Now I can release some of that creative energy and produce something of tremendous value. So culture is important.

A problem arises when Christians do this. Every time they start building a Biblical culture something else starts building, a culture war. This is what happens when the pagans really start running society. For example, they come down hard on the home school movement. The reason is those kids are being raised in a different framework, with agendas that are diametrically opposed to theirs. It terrifies them to think that parents are instilling Biblical values in their kids. That is a terrifying thought. I'm not saying they're bad people; hear me out. Let's understand the psychology of what's happening here. To do this let's put ourselves in their position, or the position of any Christian. I'm not saying home schooling is the only thing, this is just one issue. There are a lot of godly Christians trying to teach in the public schools, we ought to pray for them, what a mess they have to face every day. The reason is because the system is overwhelmingly against them. They can do lesson plans and pray for their kids but they still have to teach that other framework. It's trying to fight an uphill battle. And prayerfully you win a few battles here and there with some kids.

But biblical culture to the unbelieving pagan is a frightening thing. When some Christian goes out and on a small scale does what God created him to do it's a stark reminder of the foolishness of his rebellion. On his autonomous basis he is not fulfilling his proper role in God's plan for history. He's in rebellion against God's wisdom principles and therefore he can never be totally fulfilled as a human being made in God's image. Man was made to have dominion under God's authority and yet he is in rebellion against Him. Therefore he has no part in the final consummation of human civilization under Christ. Every little piece of godly creativity reveals something of the underlying wisdom of God in creation. Biblical culture will always bring opposition. Don't be shocked when it happens, expect it. We're not yet living in the kingdom of God.

Such hatred is why pagan school teachers and college professors target (for special ridicule) and attack the Puritans. To keep students from discovering the Puritan basis of Biblical culture in the West, they portray Puritanism with Arthur Miller's distorted presentation in his play, 'The Crucible.' Students are thus kept from reading quality Puritan authors like John Milton and John Bunyan and are force fed stuff by Emerson or Thoreau, both radical transcendentalists in the Hegelian dialectic materialism. It's communism. I often wonder, because I don't think the high school teachers know what they're doing, they haven't had enough education to get into the underlying philosophy to this stuff. There's no question the college professors have. They know exactly what they're doing to you having you read this stuff themselves. And clearly the educators behind the high school teachers know. They've got an agenda for this country and they're implementing it with great success and it all starts with hatred for the Puritan Calvinists who founded this country on biblical principles from 1606-1776. People forget that's even American history - that's how much it's hated. But that's 170 years of key history they don't want you to know about. It was a tremendously biblical culture; the law was biblical, the economy was biblical, the society was biblical, the politics was biblical - an amazing part of our history.

A true biblical culture is a counter-culture that disrupts paganized civilization because it points to a different standard. That's what the puritans pointed to, the word of God. This is why we need to pray for those Christians

out in the front lines today who are producing according to that standard. They know they're going to get hit, they know they're going to be ridiculed, they know they're going to be opposed but they go on anyway. So what? We're on the winning side. The rest of these people that are attacking us are all losers, in a real serious way. They are cosmic and historic losers, so why should I stop my testimony because I'm intimidated by losers.

Next point, **Biblical Culture Expresses Mature Adoration of God.** When we started the class we said that depth produces breadth, a deep relationship with the Lord will always spill over and form some sort of culture. When you have a lot of Biblical culture, like you had in Solomon's day, what did that produce in 1 Kings 8? Worship! The grandeur of a Biblical culture will focus on God. It will promote the worship of God. Worship will be easy in a Bible-friendly culture. There will be stimuli sown all over the place for worship of God. You don't have to be embarrassed; you don't have to apologize for praying somewhere. You don't have to be embarrassed for being a Christian and a scientist. All the early scientists were Christians. Newton, Faraday, these guys saw the creation and they knew it was the handiwork of God so they said, logically, if creation is the artwork of God then if I study it I'm going to learn more about Him. And science was a worshipful experience. When that's happening large-scale you're seeing biblical culture.

What do you think the culture will look like in the coming kingdom when Christ reigns? Isaiah 11:9 says in the kingdom the whole earth is going to be filled with 'the knowledge of Yahweh.'" There's the culture.

The fifth point is a point of warning that we have to note because of Solomon and his era. **Biblical Culture Has Limits in the Present.** We can't get arrogant. There are those in our circles who we will call the triumphalists; these are post-millennial people who argue that the church is going to Christianize the planet and build the kingdom and when the gospel has triumphed then Jesus will return and we'll hand over the kingdom to Him. The liberals and the pagans fear these guys, to them these people sound like Ahmadinejad because they talk this way and several of them have said they're going to implement the Mosaic Law Code and they will have capital punishment by stoning. You can imagine how that creates a little controversy.... We're not that kind of people so just relax. There are limits to Biblical culture right now. Think about it. Why did Solomon's Golden Era not

last? What happened? What went wrong in Solomon's time? From Solomon on down? He defected from his personal walk with the Lord, and just as biblical culture doesn't start until I walk with the Lord long enough to get the tools to build a culture, and if, while I'm building the culture, I depart from the Lord the culture begins to decline again, it deteriorates, it decays, it rots.

We have seen what used to be a semi-Christian culture in this country rot right in front of our eyes. I'm afraid to say that a lot of it was because back in the 1920's the church lost key battles. We lost everything in the 20's and 30's, and we came out of that very weak; we retreated and the culture collapsed. What does this mean? It means the death of our culture. When our loyalty wanes our culture begins to die. We're going to watch that happen and there's a parallel with what we've already studied in the conquest of the land.

Judges 2:1-5 and verses 20-23, the Doom pronounced at Bochim was when the Lord said you guys, I gave you the land, you could have conquered it all, but what did you do? You went your own way; now I'm telling you something, I'm not going to let you conquer the land. And those outer limits of the land offered to Joshua have never been reached... never been reached, never were reached in the OT. They still await the Messiah to reach that boundary because it won't be reached until the leadership is godly.

It's the same thing in our culture. There's got to be a large population base of strong sanctified believers or there can't be a Biblical culture. So we can make progress here and there but we always have to realize that today, or in any time between the First and Second Advent the culture fluctuates in godliness between two limits. The upper boundary is the god of this world. It's Satan, even in Jesus' day. So the culture can get so far, there's a lid, so to speak, on it. On the other hand, there's a bottom. Society can't get totally bad either. Why is that? God's restraining grace, which is not going to be removed until the Tribulation.

So as long as the restraining grace of God is not removed, society will never become 100% pagan. No matter how crummy it is, there will always be some culture some where with the truth in it. Eventually in the Tribulation when that restraint is pulled off, then you have demonic influence galore. But today God has worked it out so that one area of the world may be demonic, may be oppressive, may be anti-Christian, then there'll be another place in the world that will be open to the gospel, then there'll be another place that's closed,

another place that's open, another place that's closed, etc. Right now where is the gospel most open? It's not in America. This is where it's closed. It's open in the Middle East. Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Iran. Of all places, in Iran, there are so many coming to Christ that the Muslim clerics are having to strategize how to stop it. It's a historical shift taking place again.

We've concluded with the Golden Era of Solomon, we're going to start moving into the rest of Kings, and we're going to watch how God disciplines His people. So this is not a pleasant period of history but it's a period of history from which we can learn. God really wallops His own; there's some very serious discipline that goes on. There's great grace but there's also great discipline and after five or six more weeks you'll wonder where the light at the end of the tunnel is. Exactly at that point is when we emerge into prophecy, because the OT, at that point who arises but prophets like Jeremiah, Isaiah, Amos and what are they saying? There is light at the end of the tunnel but it's not going to be this generation, this generation is failing miserably. It's going to have to come at another time in history, another generation whom God works on, and that's the light at the end of the tunnel we'll start to see.

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