

23-1224a Transcript

23-1224a - 6-America - Addicted and Soft, Dependent and Lost, Scott Reynolds

Bible Readers: Scott Reynolds and Roger Raines

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6-America - Addicted and Soft, Dependent and Lost

Transcript (0:03 - 28:18)

Scripture Readings

1st Reader: Scott Reynolds

1 Chronicles 12:32,

(0:03) The first scripture reading is from 1 Chronicles chapter 12 verse 32. (0:13) Just reading the first part of that verse, it says of Issachar,

(0:17) men who had understanding of the times had to know what Israel ought to do. (0:24)

2nd Reader: Roger Raines

Proverbs 29:18,

(0:29) Good morning. Second scripture reading, we're going to stay in the book of Proverbs.

(0:33) This time we're going to chapter 29 verse 18. (0:39) Proverbs 29 verse 18.

(0:45) Where there is no vision, the people are on a strain, but happy as he will keep the law.

(0:54) This concludes this reading. (0:55)

Transcript

Preacher: Scott Reynolds

(1:00) Good morning. (1:03) We've been bringing to you sessions of a webinar series entitled (1:07) Seven Threats of Our Time by Dr. Del Tackett, author of the Truth Project and the Engagement (1:14) Project. And today we'll cover the sixth session of the Seven Threats called America (1:21) Addicted and Soft, Dependent and Lost. And I just wanted to make a comment here about (1:28) this is a transcription.

I transcribed his webinar and then read the transcription (1:35) because I didn't really want to paraphrase or summarize what he's saying because what he's (1:43) saying is just so important and it needs to be given to the church. So Del begins by saying, (1:53) let me again welcome you all to this next session where we're talking about the seven threats, (2:00) the perfect storm that in my

mind, I think in a lot of people's mind are converging upon us, (2:06) converging upon all of Western culture. But the seven threats, there are probably a whole lot more (2:14) and it's possible you're thinking of some that we haven't covered that we won't cover.

And you may (2:20) even think that they are greater than some of the ones we've listed here. And I might not argue (2:26) with you if I looked at it, but these are the seven that come to my mind that are all pulling (2:33) together. And I think that they are serious threats, critical threats.

But let me say here (2:41) in the beginning that I will say it in the end, that we as the remnant in this land are first (2:48) of all never to lose hope because our hope is not based upon the circumstances that surround us. (2:56) We can be in the middle of the worst storm in history and still not lose our ultimate hope. (3:04) We may lose hope that we are going to survive the storm.

That may be true. But in the end, (3:11) we do not forget who we are and whose we are. We do not forget who holds us.

The Lord is our rock. (3:19) He is our Redeemer. And even when things are not going well, it might also be good here to remind (3:27) ourselves again that to some extent we are not promised the kind of culture in which everybody (3:33) loves to hear the Christian message that all of the institutions attempt to follow a biblical (3:39) worldview where there's no hostility to those who hold to the absolute truth of God.

We're not (3:47) promised that for a long time in our culture to one degree or another. We have been blessed with (3:53) that. But these are difficult times and we do not know the future.

But God has certainly called us (4:00) to be at light in the midst of the darkness that we see around us. So nothing we're going to say, (4:09) nothing that we have said in the first five threats should cause us to wring our hands, (4:14) to cause us to have knees that shake and hearts that melt. But all of these are consistent (4:21) with what we understand that God has called us to.

Just as the sons of Issachar were called (4:29) to understand the times in which they lived, to have more than just a knowledge of what's going (4:36) on, but to have a wisdom and a discernment. We need to be able to look into the mirror (4:42) in order for us to understand what's going on. Sometimes it's not a pretty thing.

Sometimes we (4:49) don't really want to look into that mirror, but it does no good to deny what is happening (4:54) around us. In fact, the best thing that looking around us will give us is the ability to apply (5:03) biblical wisdom, discernment, and prudence, and to understand what we should be doing. (5:11) I think, as we have mentioned before, I think it is an important thing for us to understand (5:18) that wisdom can cause us to act in certain ways according to that wisdom, based upon the (5:25) circumstances around us.

And oftentimes, believers in the past have acted in wisdom in the world in (5:33) which they live. And sometimes we can make those actions permanent. But rather than reacting (5:40) visiting the world around us to ask God for wisdom as to how we should act, the easiest thing (5:46) to do is to simply act the way everybody acted in the past.

And of course, we do not want to do that (5:53) because that would be unwise. It would not be diligent. It would not be prudent of us to do (6:00) anything but to continually look at the times in which we live so that we might, as God gives us (6:08) wisdom through his word, as the spirit of God

provokes us and guides us into all the truth, (6:16) as Jesus said, that we will then be able to apply good, true, practical wisdom to the world in which (6:25) we live.

So, for that reason, that is why we are looking at these seven threats. Now, I'm not going (6:35) to go into any detail of these, but just simply of a way to put in context where we are today, (6:43) because to some extent, each of these threats almost rest upon the one prior to it. We began (6:51) by talking about the possibility that we lived in a world where the scoffer has risen.

That was (6:57) the first threat. And possibly, where God has given us over to a depraved mind, (7:05) where we increasingly see in our culture the reality that people no longer respond to things (7:13) with logic and common sense. Reasonableness is tossed away.

And that is why sometimes we look (7:20) at what is going on and say, this is absolutely crazy. And in some cases, it is crazy. But we have (7:27) to recognize and understand that it may be possible because God has given us over to a (7:36) depraved mind.

And so we need to understand how to deal with a culture in which many have been (7:44) given over to a depraved mind. So the next one was the rise of homo deus and neochristianity. (7:53) And this is the continual pressure of our culture in particular that is calling us over and over (7:59) again to consider that we are some kind of a divine being, in particular, our heart.

(8:06) That when our heart speaks, we think that's a divine proclamation. And so for this reason, (8:13) we have granted to even young people, way younger than they should be, (8:20) granted even anything in this way to declare themselves to be a woman or a man. And we have (8:27) to bow down to that as if that is a divine proclamation.

Neochristianity is taking that (8:36) saying all about me from the world and applying it to Christianity and beginning to think (8:43) that Christianity primarily is all about me. The third threat was the loss of the noble male (8:52) and the virtuous female, and then the rise of malevolent compassion. (8:57) That would be evil compassion.

There we were talking about how God had made the male and (9:06) female, and he made them differently. We believe in the scripture. We believe in how God made (9:13) mankind, and he made male and female, and he made them differently.

He made them with different (9:20) drives. And so we looked at what happened when a culture turns away from that which is good (9:27) and true and noble and righteous, and then what is left for both male and female (9:36) is an unbridled sense of compassion, and that turns into what we call malevolent or evil (9:45) compassion. And that is the prime ethic which is driving our culture today.

It is important for you (9:52) to understand that because it seems like every piece of legislation we have today is being driven (9:59) by malevolent compassion, and if you do not agree with that, then you are not compassionate. You are (10:06) a hater and all of those things, but it's not a compassion that moves us toward good things. (10:13) It's a compassion that actually allows us to embrace evil.

And then the fourth one was this (10:21) whole notion associated with the consolidation of massive earthly power. And by the way, all of (10:29) these we have presented here, and they are available on our website, on our education page. (10:37) Look through the list of sermons and you'll see where these were presented, each of these threats.

(10:44) So this massive earthly power is an unprecedented thing that we find today in our culture (10:58) where it is no longer just simply that the massive power is the state. We've seen that (11:05) through all of history of nation states where a state has assumed increasing power, it consolidates (11:12) more and more power in its hands, and tyrants arise, and that usually ends up with the state (11:18) collapsing eventually. But what we see today is a very, very unique consolidation of power that is (11:25) beyond just the state.

We see the rise of mega industries that are multinational. We see the (11:33) rise of all kinds of entertainment forms and internet forms and many, many things that we (11:40) now have power, that now have power way beyond anything in the history of mankind. They have (11:48) the power to shut you down financially.

They have the power to shut you down socially. (11:56) There's a lot of power. And of course, at that point, with great trepidation, I used the image (12:01) from Revelation regarding the harlot who rides the beast.

And again, now I'm not saying that (12:08) what is happening today is in alignment with whatever we might understand those words in (12:14) Revelation to be thinking in terms of an actual time in history. But I borrow the imagery because (12:21) it is an excellent way for us to see and understand how a harlot could be riding this beast with all (12:28) those horns. If you look at it from the perspective of what's happening today, that is the distorted (12:36) feminine compassion of malevolent compassion, which is now driving all of these powers.

(12:43) In fact, we have a large, we have large technical companies with all kinds of major, (12:49) major tech companies, very, very powerful companies that are all signaling how compassionate they are. (12:56) That is the key ethic that is driving our culture and one of the great storm fronts. (13:02) And then the last time we looked at the rise of a demonic worldview.

This is a worldview (13:09) that is pitting people against each other. It has its roots, of course, all the way back (13:15) into the Garden of Eden, where Satan tried to pit Adam and Eve against God. Did God really say, (13:29) did God really say you will be like God? God is your oppressor.

You are the oppressed. (13:37) We have the same exact thing going on in our culture today and attempt to stir up animosity (13:43) against people that are first declared to be oppressed against another group of people (13:48) that are declared to be the oppressor. And so that is what's driving the rise of all kinds (13:54) of segmentation in our country.

And it has brought us now to a rift within our culture. (14:02) Okay, so this brings us now to the next threat, number six, America addicted and soft and lost. (14:13) I spent a lot of time wrestling over this title.

I didn't want to tie it directly to America, (14:20) but I think it is important to do so. All the statistics I have here tonight are based, (14:26) that we will be talking about actually tonight, are based upon statistics here in the United (14:33) States. And so we're looking more specifically, not just at Western culture now, but we're looking (14:41) specifically at our culture in America.

And when you try to assess if someone is hit with any kind (14:49) of a disease or a virus or even an injury of some sort, a significant injury, the significant factor (14:56) in whether someone will survive or do well in that situation is what is their current mental (15:04) and physical and spiritual health. Are they strong and hardy or are they weak (15:12) and lacking the will to fight? There's no

difference when you're assessing (15:17) out the threats to a culture. Are the people strong in character? Are they resilient? Are (15:24) they alert? Are they capable of withstanding these storms or are they weak and ready to give in? (15:32) Are they unified by a noble and high cultural vision? Do they have a spiritual wellness (15:39) associated with them? The scripture rightly says in Proverbs 29, 18, where there is no vision, (15:48) the people perish.

The word, Hebrew word there, could be understood that they are unrestrained. (15:56) The people are unrestrained, which is an interesting way to think about what happened (16:01) in our culture when there is no vision. The people become unrestrained.

There is little (16:07) self-control, little self-reliance in individuals. And that, of course, is what we see happening (16:15) today. And I think a great deal of it is because of what scripture tells us here, (16:21) that we now live in a culture that no longer has a biblical worldview consensus.

We talk about that. (16:29) It doesn't mean that everybody was holy, but there was a consensus of a biblical worldview for many, (16:36) many years in this country, regardless of how well we followed it. There was a consensus (16:43) of what was right and what was wrong.

But now that has radically changed. And not only is there a (16:50) great divide there, but even on both sides of that divide, there has been a great falling away (16:58) from a sense of who we are in the sight of God. Our one nation under God is still written on our (17:06) currency, but it is not an accurate perspective of what our culture thinks and how we act and (17:13) how we walk.

And so losing that larger story, losing the meta-narrative of God is a great (17:21) loss in our culture. And I personally had to look up the word meta-narrative. And then meta-narrative (17:28) is an overarching account or an interpretation of events and circumstances that provide a pattern (17:37) or structure for people's beliefs and gives meaning to their experiences.

And the use that (17:44) dictionary used was traditional religions provide stories that deliver a meta-narrative about how (17:54) we should live our lives. So the stories of the Bible are giving us this overarching account (18:01) and an interpretation of the circumstances that we read there to help us give meaning to our (18:08) experiences and structure our beliefs. So losing that larger story, losing the meta-narrative of (18:15) God is a great loss in our culture.

And as the scripture says, there are consequences for losing (18:23) that vision, for losing that perspective, that right perspective. And people will become unrestrained (18:31) and eventually they will perish. So we've looked at several ways to assess our culture and that's (18:38) what we've been doing through the first five threats, assessing our culture.

A lot of those (18:44) have been boiled down to the very first one where we were talking about the deep self-centeredness (18:50) that has descended upon people. And part of that self-centeredness is a rejection of God (18:57) and a rejection of his absolute truth. Rejecting who he is, a rejection of who we are in the larger (19:06) story and how we are to act.

So we'll continue on and we'll talk now about these areas of addiction (19:18) and softness, dependencies, and lostness. But first of all, I think it is important, as I've (19:25) said many, many times, that we go back again, ground ourselves in who God is, the very character (19:32) of God. I believe last time we went through this, and so I won't spend a lot of time, and I think (19:39) it's always valuable to our eyes and to gaze upon the face of God.

And it's going to be a critical (19:46) area again for what we're going to be saying today to understand who God is. And we could (19:55) list attributes almost forever. I only have a few of them for us to think about that will be (20:01) pertinent to what we're going to be talking about.

But in conjunction with the last time, (20:07) that God is one, is one of his attributes. God is one. There's a unity associated (20:14) with the triune, three-in-one nature of God.

He is socially complex, Father, Son, (20:22) Holy Spirit, and yet he is one. He's not only one in terms of being the only God, (20:29) but he is also one, as Jesus said in John 17, where he was praying that we might be one. (20:36) And then the use of that word, talking about how we might be united, that we might be bound (20:42) together.

One of the things that has happened in our culture, and this is the result of a demonic (20:49) worldview, that Satan has always attempted to pit people against each other. If you're talking (20:59) about division, if you're talking about ID politics, that is splitting people apart. That was (21:07) my comment, by the way.

And Satan has always attempted to pit people against each other, (21:13) to tear them apart. His number one scheme is to destroy relationships. So we have to go back (21:20) and ground ourselves again.

In fact, God is not like that. God is one in essence. He is socially (21:28) complex.

He is also rational. He speaks to us. He calls us.

He says, come, let us reason together. (21:37) He is truth. He has laid before us in logical order as the children of Israel, (21:42) assembled before Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, and God's laid out the logic for them.

If you do (21:50) this, then this will happen. And if you do that, that will happen. A very logical structure.

(21:57) And so God is a rational being. He created a rational universe. And we will look at some (22:03) things today in this threat in which people are pursuing things that are not rational at all.

(22:11) And God's truth has been laid before us. So there is both unity and diversity within God's character. (22:20) There are a lot of things that can be said about this.

What I mentioned for us today, (22:27) that we will be speaking of things that may make you angry, may cause you to be angry towards other (22:33) people. There is a diversity that God has created. We have great diversity in humanity.

(22:42) Even physical characteristics are diverse. But in God's design, he has designed, for example, (22:49) the husband and the wife to come together in unity. That diversity of male and female could (22:57) be the greatest diversity in humanity.

And yet God brings them together in a unity. (23:04) As he says in Malachi, he made them one. And what was he seeking? He was seeking godly offspring.

(23:12) He was seeking the fruitfulness associated with the male and female coming together, (23:19) uniting as one in the design of God, and therefore being fruitful. (23:26) And that brings us

then to this last one I refer to as the modus operandi of God. (23:35) And that is that God creates the universe.

He creates it with great diversity. But he brings (23:42) it together in unity. That is why our universe is filled with the most exquisite systems (23:50) that are comprised of the most diverse pieces and parts.

Electrons, neutrons, protons, (23:57) extremely different from each other. Even the quarks. And if you don't know what a quark is, (24:02) I had to look it up.

Take a look. They're very interesting. Even the quarks are extremely (24:09) different from each other.

And by the way, they are named the quarks. And they are what electrons, (24:17) what neutrons and protons are made up out of. They are named down, up, strange, charm, bottom, (24:25) and up.

So God, great diversity brought together in a unity for a higher purpose and to produce (24:36) fruit. That modus operandi of God is seen in the inanimate world around us. It is also seen (24:44) in the living world around us from plants to animals to human beings.

And his modus operandi (24:51) is that he calls his creatures in that unity, in that diversity and unity of that diversity (24:59) to bring forth fruit. And this is a very important concept. It's the first time I've (25:06) heard something like this, but it's plainly stated in the scriptures.

So he's not stretching out (25:11) here. He's actually got an insight that's worth looking at. And it is the fruit of God's creatures (25:20) that bring forth glory to God.

And that is what we read in John when Jesus said, (25:26) by this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit. It is the fruitfulness of God's (25:33) creatures. The heavens declare the glory of God.

The sun glorifies God by shining. (25:40) The fruit of the sun is light. And that light means the heat, the energy and everything (25:51) that is the fruit of the sun.

We would be in extreme straits if the sun woke up tomorrow and (25:59) said, you know, I'm just not going to shine today. I'm tired of being fruitful. I'm going to sleep (26:06) today.

And so to the rest of creation obeys God and it brings forth its fruit. But it is only (26:14) in humanity where there are creatures who do not obey God and we rebel against him. And we think (26:23) we have a better idea concerning God's design, especially for social order and for those social (26:30) institutions that God has made for us, that we might bring forth fruit and that brings glory to (26:36) God.

So that is the modus operandi of God that he creates, he equips, he empowers, and he sends (26:44) his creatures so that even the smallest creature might bring forth fruit. Now, Satan's modus (26:51) operandi is to consolidate power and make dependent and destroy people's fruitfulness, (26:59) to destroy their incentives for fruitfulness. And there are other ways that destroy their (27:06) fruitfulness that we're going to see tonight because we won't have time today, this morning.

(27:13) So that is why we spent some time laying the groundwork. And again, the whole point (27:18) of becoming aware of and understanding the threats that we're facing today in our culture

(27:26) is so that we can then know what to do and how to engage our neighbors that are providentially (27:34) near us. So tonight we're going to look at assessing America from these four characteristics.

(27:42) You could add more, I'm sure, but we're going to look at addiction in America, the softness, (27:49) the dependencies, and the lostness of our culture, beginning with the notion of addiction tonight, (27:56) the compulsion to repetitively involve oneself with a substance or an activity (28:05) that is overall unhealthy. And so we're going to close this morning. (28:12) And we are extending the invitation now to anyone who is subject to it.