

26-0719p Transcript

26-0719p - *What to Do?*, John Nousek

Bible Reader: Mike Mathis

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What to Do?

Scripture Reading

Scripture Reading (0:04 - 0:28): Mike Mathis Genesis 4:6-7: (0:04) The scripture reading for this evening is taken from Genesis, the fourth chapter, verses six and seven. (0:16) So the Lord said to Cain, why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen? (0:26) If you do well, will you	continued not be accepted? (0:31) And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door and its desire is for you, (0:39) but you should go over it. That completes the reading. (0:45)
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Transcript (0:04 -30:31), Preacher: John Nousek

(0:50) Well, good evening and thank you, Mike, for reading that. (0:56) So this morning we heard about the evil neighbor and that was all about the temptation of Satan. (1:10) This evening, what to do? (1:14) Well, so we just heard Genesis four, six through seven.

(1:21) I want to reread verse seven. (1:23) This is from the New King James, a little differently, but it reads, (1:28) if you do well, will you not be accepted? (1:34) Cain was being asked to conduct himself in accordance with God’s will, both outwardly and inwardly. (1:46) And you may say, hey, that’s Old Testament preaching.

(1:55) Okay, but don’t we have the same situation today? (2:04) See, Romans 3, 23 says, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (2:19) So before I start answering that question, what to do? (2:23) I want to first point out a couple of quick things. (2:28) And I’m going to make the assumption that the hearers today, (2:39) I’m going to make a couple of quick assumptions.

(2:42) We’ll zoom right past these. (2:44) And I’m going to say, first of all, that the Bible is God’s word, perfect word in all respects. (2:51) And we, yeah, we live in the age of the New Testament, (2:55) where Jesus has fulfilled the law of sin and death.

(3:02) And I’m going to go a little further, having to speak on our own position, (3:10) meaning we all want to live in accordance with God’s word, his instruction. (3:19) I’m going to make that assumption as well. (3:24) And individually, finally, each of us wants to follow God’s intent for our own lives.

(3:31) See, when we come to God’s word with that in mind, (3:38) I can answer this question fairly clearly, and I hope to do so right now. (3:45) And I’ve kind of separated this into three distinct parts. (3:51) And part one of three says, well, what does it mean to do what is right and what is well?

(3:59) You know, defining our terms is a very critical aspect of any sort of discussion.

(4:09) And I'd like to say, when speaking about what is right, (4:14) that which is good and acceptable and the perfect will of God, (4:18) it's important to point out the distinctions between two things. (4:25) And for that, I have the pleasure of referencing Noah Webster, 1928, his dictionary, (4:36) where he gives the definition to two different words that you might think, (4:42) well, aren't those the same? And those are ethics and morality. (4:52) See, Noah defines ethics this way, the doctrines of morality or social manners, (5:03) the science of moral philosophy, which teaches men their duty and the reasons for it.

(5:13) See, he says what is right is what should be. (5:21) It's the foundation for choosing the difference between right and wrong, (5:27) which is outside of ourselves. (5:30) Doesn't matter what I think, just is.

(5:36) And it is right in accordance with the Lord. (5:42) Now, morality, he defines a little differently. (5:48) He says the quality of an action which renders it good, (5:53) the conformity of an act to divine law, or to the principles of rectitude.

(6:03) I had to look that up. What does that mean, rectitude? (6:06) It says morally correct behavior or thinking, righteousness. (6:12) Okay, so it's this conformity implies that the act must be performed by a free agent.

(6:23) In other words, we get to choose. (6:26) And from a motive of obedience to the divine will. (6:32) And so far, I was thinking, you know, that's pretty much that line up with ethics (6:36) for the most part so far.

Okay, we're in the dictionary. (6:40) So we're going to get something a little narrow in on this thing. (6:46) This is the strict theological and scriptural sense of morality.

(6:55) But see, Webster goes on and adds a little comment towards the end of this. (7:03) He says, but we often apply the word to actions which accord with justice (7:10) and human laws without reference to the motives from which they proceed. (7:18) So words have a way of morphing their definition over a long period of time.

(7:26) And that is why it's important to define your terms early on. (7:31) So we know what we're talking about, right? (7:34) Okay, but even back then, the word morality was already being used or taking on, (7:41) morphing into a definition of right and wrong according to man. (7:47) And so the simplest way I know how to summarize this is to say ethics is what should be.

(7:56) And morality is now what is. (8:02) What is considered right or wrong. (8:09) Morality is what and how we think it should be.

(8:13) And we act based on what we believe things should be. (8:18) That's true. (8:21) You know, I've taken a number of different professional courses for different things.

(8:29) I have continuing ed requirements for a license I hold. (8:34) And part of that involves ethics. (8:37) I have a few hours of ethics every so many years.

(8:42) And inevitably, every time I sit down, usually it's in a larger group, (8:50) the instructor steps forward and says, I'm here to teach you about ethics. (8:56) Listen up. (8:58) But then they say, but

I'm not really an expert in this area.

(9:04) And I just want to say, then why are you even trying to teach this? (9:12) So we have the standard. (9:13) We have God's word. (9:16) We have what should be according to our creator.

(9:20) And that is the ethic. (9:25) As it says in Romans 12 too, and do not be conformed to this world, (9:32) but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that is your thoughts, (9:38) that you may prove what is good and acceptable and the perfect will of God. (9:47) So if we really want to do what is right and well and good, in God's eyes, his ethics, (9:57) we have to do at least two things.

(10:01) First, we have to think correctly. (10:06) And also, we need to carry it out correctly. (10:11) See, God said that to Cain.

(10:14) He says, if you do well, will you not be accepted? (10:22) He was asking Cain to conduct himself inwardly and outwardly, correctly, (10:31) in line with what God wants. (10:35) So here's part two of three. (10:38) How do we do that? (10:40) How do we think correctly? (10:42) Well, to think correctly, we conform our morality to God's ethics.

(10:50) We conform what we believe to God's word. (10:55) That's the answer. (10:58) So consider what God's word says about how and what we think.

(11:04) In Proverbs 23, seven, single verse, it says, for as he thinks in his heart, so he is. (11:15) Eat and drink, he says to you, but his heart is not with you. (11:24) What we think and believe is like, I've heard it said this way, (11:29) is like a huge steering wheel for our lives that guides and influences everything we do, (11:37) from the smallest decisions to the biggest decisions.

(11:41) Oh, I'm going to do this or that because I believe if I turn left, I'll get there, (11:52) because the map says so. (11:53) And I believe the map. (11:55) And therefore, this is the way to go.

(11:57) Well, except the map's upside down. (12:00) Oops. (12:02) Our worldview and all of our beliefs that flow from that worldview (12:09) will direct and even support our actions.

(12:14) Well, if I believe this set of facts, then it makes sense to do this, to turn left. (12:21) Yeah, well, you need to correct the map a little bit. (12:26) Like 180 degrees a bit.

(12:32) In Ephesians 5, verses 12, and I'll read verse 15. (12:39) Ephesians 5, it says, for it is even shameful to speak of those things which are done by them (12:46) in secret. (12:49) The God's word says to us, think before speaking.

(12:56) I've heard that before. (12:58) I've heard that before when I was probably five years old. (13:04) And in verse 15, it says, see then that you walk circumspectfully.

(13:12) Another one of those big words. (13:15) Not as fools, but as wise. (13:20) So, we need to be careful to consider all circumstances and possible consequences.

(13:29) God's word says, think before doing. (13:35) You sure about that? (13:36) Have you considered the options? (13:40) You know what's going to happen to you if you, yeah. (13:46) In 1 Corinthians 1, verse 18, God's word says, for the message of the cross is foolishness (13:56) to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

(14:03) See, if your thoughts are contrary to God and God's ethic, that is to say, if you didn't (14:12) believe that Jesus Christ gave us his perfect word and created all that there is from the (14:19) beginning to end, you probably wouldn't be sitting here right now listening to some guy (14:24) like me. (14:26) You just wouldn't. (14:28) What do I want to hear that junk for? (14:35) You wouldn't want to listen to preaching about sin, redemption, eternal destination, (14:44) paradise versus torment, our obligation to do good even when it comes at personal expense.

(14:52) All that would be out the window if you didn't believe. (14:58) And how you believe has a huge impact on what you do. (15:05) See, instead of listening to that, you'd hit the door.

(15:11) Say, that's all trash. (15:14) You'd leave the building and possibly never come back. (15:18) Instead of listening to someone preach the gospel, you'd run out the door, do as you (15:23) see fit, maybe never be heard from again.

(15:28) So I warn all of us not to be fooled. (15:31) Our thinking is vitally important and linked directly to our eternal destination. (15:39) And to think correctly, I'll say it again, we must conform our morality to God's ethic.

(15:48) We must conform what we believe to God's word. (15:55) Now, what to do? (15:58) Part three. (15:59) How do we carry it out? (16:02) How do we actually do this? (16:04) I read the pages, the scripture.

(16:08) I found myself reading, listening to it. (16:13) I have it on audio. (16:17) And I've gotten to places in the pages of scripture where it's, wait a minute, rewind.

(16:24) Are you kidding me? (16:30) That's hard to understand. (16:31) Is it? (16:33) Maybe it is. (16:34) Maybe I don't want to hear it, but it's still there.

(16:39) That's a tough one. (16:41) Because I'm here to tell you, I have read some things in the pages of scripture that (16:47) I didn't like at first. (16:55) So now, if we think correctly, how do we carry out God's ethic? (16:59) Well, let me read 1 Peter 2, this is chapter 2, verses 15 through 17.

(17:07) For this is the will of God, that by doing good, you may put to silence the ignorance (17:16) of foolish men. (17:19) I'll pause right there because as a man unfamiliar with God's word many, how many years ago, (17:29) and I'm still learning and I'm still reading and I'm still trying to understand as much (17:33) as I can, but I'm going to tell you that the ignorance of foolish men, yeah, that's where (17:41) I was because I know that I didn't know and I was ignorant of a lot of things. (17:51) Well, now I've learned some things and as a result, I'm better off, far better off.

(17:59) Let me continue. (18:04) That you may silence, that you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men as free, (18:10) yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. (18:17) Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the King.

(18:30) Wow, yeah, but exactly how? (18:36) How do I do all that? (18:39) How do I determine what is right and good and in God's will? (18:45) How do I honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the King? (18:53) One way we do that is we're to use a pattern. (18:58) We use the pattern of conduct found in Scriptures to govern our daily interactions. (19:08) See, do I turn left? (19:10) I turn left on a red light? (19:15) Maybe that's a bad idea.

(19:21) God says in Philippians 3.17, (19:24) Brethren, join in following my example. (19:29) That's

the pattern. (19:31) And note those who so walk as you have us as a pattern.

(19:40) Okay, so we have a pattern in which we can follow. (19:51) Verse 18, for many walk of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping, (19:57) that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, (20:01) whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame. (20:09) Who, what? (20:10) Who set their mind on earthly things.

(20:18) They're thinking about earthly things. (20:24) For our citizenship is in heaven, (20:28) from which we also eagerly wait for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. (20:34) Okay, so we have the pattern of the Scriptures, and we follow that as best we can.

(20:45) And secondly, we're to surround ourselves with like-minded Bible-believing Christians (20:52) today who can be an example to us, and also we can offer an example. (21:01) Those that follow the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hearts, (21:08) all their mind, all their soul, all their strength, as best as we can, (21:16) often are an example to others, not just, not the things that we say with words. (21:24) I'm glad I have the opportunity.

(21:26) I'm still working at a job, and I show up, show up in the morning, leave in the evening, (21:35) do my thing, and subtract all day. (21:38) I talk to people. (21:39) They want to know this.

(21:40) They want to know that. (21:41) I help them get through whatever it is, and I don't say anything to them. (21:48) I do have a cross that's in my office on the side, just sitting there, (21:56) but yet I've had people come up to me.

(21:59) Well, I know you're this, and I know you don't like all that swearing, and I know you don't. (22:06) Well, I just don't swear at people, but your actions speak to what you're doing and how you (22:15) interact with people is very important, and we want to be good examples to one another, (22:22) and we want to be good examples to people outside the church, (22:27) and I'm here to tell you I don't always do that perfectly. (22:32) Perfectly is a very high standard.

(22:36) I don't often do that, but I do the best I can, and I try to be that example. (22:47) Let me read you 1 Timothy chapter 4. (22:49) This is verse 9 through 12. (22:54) God's Word says, (22:55) This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

(22:59) For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, (23:06) who is the Savior of all men, especially to those who believe. (23:12) These things command and teach. (23:16) Let no one despise you of your youth.

(23:19) See, Timothy was a young man at that time. (23:22) Let no one despise you, despise your youth, but be an example to the believers. (23:31) You can encourage to be an example in the things he does, (23:38) probably in the things he doesn't get involved in.

(23:42) He's probably not down at the bar, (23:45) and if he was, he better leave because that's not the place to be. (23:51) But be an example to the believers in word and conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, (23:58) in purity. (24:00) So we are to be an example for one another.

(24:04) That's my part three. (24:08) So finally, please realize this. (24:11) I have to say, it's easy for me to stand here and read God's Word.

(24:18) At times it's difficult to do, and I know this, and I've lived that, and I recognize that. (24:31)

It's easy to say, here's the instruction, have at it, go. (24:39) Yeah, but what do I do? (24:43) It's an entirely different matter to walk out these doors with you and actually do it.

(24:52) But I'm encouraged by this simple fact. (24:56) We're not alone. (24:58) We are definitely not alone.

(25:02) Romans 7 makes this clear. (25:05) Romans 7, I'll read verses 14 and 15 first. (25:10) We know that the law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual.

(25:16) Sold as a slave to sin, I do not understand what I do. (25:21) But what I want to do, I do not do. (25:24) But what I hate, I do.

(25:29) This guy recognized. (25:31) Paul recognized. (25:34) We have God's Word.

(25:36) We have what is right and good, but it is difficult to carry it out. (25:44) I recognize this myself. (25:47) He goes on in verse 21 through 25.

(25:52) So I find this law at work. (25:54) Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. (25:59) For in my inner being, I delight in God's law, but I see another law at work in me, (26:06) waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at (26:16) work within me.

(26:17) What a wretched man I am. (26:22) Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? (26:30) So pause right there. (26:33) Paul wants to do what is good, but his thoughts, the way he thinks, his thoughts are at war (26:42) with the illusion and allure of sin.

(26:49) We heard this morning, the neighbor, the neighbor is constantly throwing you the little piece (26:57) of delicious meat. (27:00) Oh, this is great. (27:02) I'll get some more.

(27:04) Tomorrow he's going to have cheese and bacon. (27:09) Oh, before you know it, you're over there all the time and it's just a disaster. (27:17) It's an illusion.

(27:19) The allure is an illusion. (27:21) It's not real. (27:23) It's junk.

(27:23) It's trash. (27:25) Don't go there. (27:27) See, in verse 25, the very next verse, Paul answers his own question, which is, (27:34) who will rescue me? (27:37) He says, thanks be to God who delivers me through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

(27:45) Paul's guilty of sin, just as we are. (27:50) He was a persecutor of the church. (27:53) He was out doing what he could do because his morality told him, this is what needs (28:00) to be done.

(28:03) And yet the Lord Jesus Christ confronted him and said, no, your zeal, your efforts, (28:13) what you think is right is not. (28:20) Paul was guilty of it, just like we are. (28:23) It's clear he made some really bad decisions like we do, but he relied on Jesus Christ, (28:30) his Redeemer, to clear his record, blotting out his sins.

(28:38) And when we are in Christ, after being baptized into his death and resurrection, (28:46) we have that saint's fleet wiped clean. (28:50) It's fantastic. (28:53) It's fantastic that we can just, that it can happen.

(28:56) He made it available to us. (29:00) So then what, what do we do? (29:04) Once we come to

believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God and we are baptized into (29:08) his death and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins, what do we do? (29:18) Think clearly. (29:21) Align our thoughts with God's word, his instructions, and then carry them out.

(29:30) Exactly how do we do that? (29:32) Well, two things I mentioned to you tonight, (29:37) and I found these in the pages of God's word, so I stand firm on these things. (29:43) One, follow the pattern of thought and deeds that are described in God's word. (29:51) And two, surround yourself with like-minded Bible-believing Christians (29:57) who are an example of godly character.

(30:03) As we leave here tonight, let us always remember to pray to do what is good in God's eyes, (30:11) not in our own, not according to our own morality, but conforming our thoughts to God's ethic, (30:21) his perfect word, and then live accordingly. (30:27) And let us pray that we have the strength to do that. (30:31)