

## **A Biblical Worldview**

Matthew 22:36-38

Pastor Jarrett Stephens

Well...let's begin!

Actually, before we dive into our text and get going this morning, I thought I would take just a few minutes and describe to you why I believe a series like this is important and what led me to go ahead and dive into some of these topics we'll be covering over the next several weeks.

I also want to set up some "ground rules" if you will for us. Due to the nature of these topics and the highly polarized atmosphere we are living in today, I know most all of us here have opinions on these matters and some are VERY passionate about the opinion or position you hold and I get that.

I just think it would be wise here at the outset of this series to acknowledge a few key factors that we simply must keep in mind as we talk through and navigate many of these topics we are covering, and in this I have just a couple of requests for you as you come and engage with us and the teaching of scripture each weekend.

First, my plan was to actually preach this series in the Fall of next year. That would be during the election season, and I thought that would probably be the most effective and appropriate time to preach a series like this...that was the plan.

And then here in the last year...to use our *Chasing Sanity* series title, it's been getting INSANE for a while - it just seems to me like the moral and social issues of the day have become even more pressing and are getting more and more crazy by the day.

- Whether it's a culture refusing to define what a female is...
- Or our politics becoming god...
- Or the conversations that were happening after the turning of Roe v. Wade...

What really got me thinking about this series was some of what I saw and what was taking place during Pride Month in June – and it wasn't just the celebration of sin.

And let me just say right here if you are here today or listening online and in a homosexual lifestyle or know of a loved one who is, I hope you will stay for these messages and this series because I promise you, you are loved here at Champion Forest– and while we believe the teaching of scripture - and this is what we are going to talk about today – the title of the message is: **A Biblical Worldview**

While we see life through the lens of scripture and because of this believe that a homosexual lifestyle (as well as any promiscuous lifestyle – gay or straight), is contrary to the teachings of

scripture the very same scripture teaches we are to love, care and treat ALL people as image bearers of God with respect and dignity and kindness and love.

I say all this to say, it wasn't the celebration of sin that moved me to preach this series as much as it was the aggression in the message being broadcast and how our children and grandchildren are being bombaraded by images and media and friends...and so, if the world is talking about it, the church should as well.

And so, this is my reasoning for preaching this series. As a church...and as your pastor, I have the responsibility to speak where the Bible speaks, and I give you this commitment in this series – that is what I am going to do!

I told our preaching team that preaches at our other campuses...I told the deacons this Wednesday night – What you can expect from me in this series is that I'm going to stand on the Bible.

And fair warning: for some that's not going to appear as far right as you want me...and for others it's not going to be as left as maybe you desire me to be...and if I do this right, and keep my prophetic voice, I'm going to make everyone uneasy and angry at some point in this series. Lucky me!

And so here are the ground rules...expectations if you will and they include a couple of requests right up front.

First: **Pray for us.**

Let's make these next several weeks a matter of prayer because much of what we are dealing with while on the surface may appear natural and of the world, we know that under the surface there is a spiritual battle taking place.

There are "forces" in the unseen world that are doing everything in their power to move us away from God and you can trace their work back to the one called the "Adversary" who is out to steal, kill and destroy".

So, I need your prayer as I attempt to communicate God's truth and you need prayer to receive what is being communicated as God's Word. Let's not allow the Devil to take the Word that is being sown in our heart away (Matt. 13). We need to be praying.

We need to pray for the unity of our church in this series. Look, we are a big, diverse spiritual family. And that is a GREAT thing! It's one of our strengths and part of what makes Champion Forest, Champion Forest.

And just like in big physical families, not everyone holds to the same opinions...not everyone sees things the same way...people have different experiences in life and therefore see life differently...and this can sometimes present some challenges and if not careful could create opposition toward one another and disunity in some way.

Let's pray against this. Let's commit right now to pray and I believe engaging in prayer will help keep our mind and heart in the right place as we talk about these topics we're addressing in this series.

Second request...and this is a BIG one: **Give us grace.**

We have 35-40 minutes each week to cover a particular subject. We're talking about issues that entire books are written on...we're talking about issues that colleges and seminaries spend an entire semester diving into.

We've got 35-40 minutes! So, please give us some grace. Some of you have a great handle on some of these things we are discussing and you are ready for the deep end of the swimming pool. You care deeply about a particular subject...and are passionate about it.

Others may be thinking about what we are introducing for the very first time. And so, I just need to ask for some grace on behalf of the preaching team because there is simply no way we can cover EVERY angle regarding EVERY subject we are going to address.

**Illus. Best preaching advice ever given** – “Put it on a shelf where everyone can get it!” And that's what I'm going to attempt to do. We have students in the room that are in middle school and high school. We have adults in the room that have their Bible degree and been teaching in a Life Group for 40 years!

So, just asking for a little grace and if you do have a question, we have set up an email for you to send your questions to – and I have a team that will be running this for me and helping me out. If any questions come up about a specific subject feel free to email your questions to **questions@cfbc.org** and we'll try to answer them and give you some resources to go to that may help you think through the subject at a deeper level.

Three: **Have hope.**

Listen, this is NOT going to be a doom and gloom series. Are you kidding me? Yes, this world may be going insane, but for Christians, just a reminder here: God is sovereign and in control.

He's not pacing around wringing his hands, wondering what is going on. He is sitting down – the earth is his “footstool” the Bible says. It may appear to be spinning out of control (we're going to talk about evil and suffering next week), but make no mistake, he's in control!

Have hope. God is in control and as Christians, isn't it true? We are simply passing through! This world is not our home, and no matter how dark it gets, we've got Jesus! And he has promised that one day he is either going to usher us into his presence or deliver us out of this world and ONE day, he is going to make all things right...make all things new (Rev. 21).

So, as dark as it gets and as insane as it all may seem, we don't lose hope. God's got this!

And then fourthly and we'll get going: **Remember the end goal**

Let me remind you of the end goal right up front. It's that in ALL things, we bring glory to God – in how we THINK about these issues (and that's where we are headed today) but also in how we engage with others in these issues.

What brings more glory to God than someone trusting in Jesus? We are to be witnesses to those who are far from God. And so how we engage in these issues is critically important. The application for these messages is CRUCIAL.

So, if you are taking notes, please put in big, bold letters here: those that are far from Jesus and maybe don't see things the exact way we see them – they are NOT the enemy! They are the mission field!

And so, the end goal is to bring glory to God by how we think about these issues AND how we engage with others IN these issues.

And this sets the text we are launching from today up in a perfect way because a lawyer comes to Jesus and asks him, "What's the greatest Law in all of the Torah?" And listen to how Jesus responds:

**Matt. 22:36-40 – "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"<sup>37</sup> And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."<sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment.<sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."**

We're going to focus today on what Jesus called the "great and first commandment" – to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and we're going key in on this today: Loving the Lord with ALL your MIND."

**J.P. Moreland** is a Christian Philosopher. He wrote a book that was required reading in seminary called *Love Your God With All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul*.

In it he warns of the dangers of neglecting this part of our discipleship...not growing in a love for the Lord with our mind specifically in a culture that is now post-Christian. He has a good word for us for this series. He writes:

**"If we are going to be wise, spiritual people prepared to meet the crises of our age, we must be a studying, learning community that values the life of the mind."**

**Mark Noll**, a historian and research professor wrote a book called *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* and he warns of the same. Listen to what he wrote:

**“If evangelicals do not take seriously the larger world of intellect, we say in effect, that we want our minds to be shaped by the conventions of our modern universities and the assumptions of Madison Avenue, instead of by God and the servants of God.”**

In other words, how we THINK matters. What we put in our mind matters. Because how we think will ultimately determine how we live...our minds will no doubt influence the choices and decisions we make in life.

Now, we know the mind plays an important part in our lives. Allow me for a moment just to give you some verses that emphasize this and we will return to some of them in the application part of this message.

These are in no particular order, just highlighting the role and importance of the mind and how we should be thinking...let God's Word speak into and over your life:

**Col. 3:2-3 – “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup> For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”**

**Rom. 12:2 – “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”**

**Phil. 4:8 – “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”**

**2 Cor. 10:4-5 – “For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.”**

**Eph. 6:17a – “take the helmet of salvation.”**

**1 Pet. 1:13 – “Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”**

**Rom. 8:5-6 – “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.”**

Now, I read these verses and I set this message up in this way because part of having a biblical worldview is fighting for...engaging our mind...thinking about (in our context) all these subjects we're addressing in this series – the goal is to see them and think about them the way God does.

So, at the outset let's set this up this way and put an astericks by it. As Christians, we don't form our views about:

- Race...
- Sexuality...
- The Sanctity of Life...
- What we do with our money and possessions...
- How we engage in politics...

We don't form our views on these things first and foremost by our experiences...our feelings...or what culture dictates or embraces.

We form our thoughts on these issues and we allow our minds to be shaped first and foremost by God and his Word. In a VERY real way this is what it means to LOVE the Lord with ALL our mind. And when we do this we are living with what I refer to as a God-centered, biblical worldview.

**Chuck Colson** in his book, *How Now Shall We Live* which was very helpful in the preparation of this message defines a worldview in this way: **“It is simply the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the “big picture” that directs our daily decisions and actions.”**

Merriam Webster defines worldview as: **“a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint.**

Now, we all have a worldview...and in our day there are certainly competing worldviews. We KNOW this! So, how can we have confidence in what I'm calling for today? A God-centered, biblical worldview?

Well, for a worldview to be sustainable and worthy to be adhered to, it needs to have some weight to it. For a worldview to have any value at all it has to be able to answer life's biggest questions with a degree of authority and certainty. Questions like:

1. Where did we come from?
2. Who am I?
3. What's wrong with the world?
4. What can we do to fix it?
5. Where am I going?

For ANY worldview to be worth anything...for it to hold up, it needs to be...HAS to be able answer these questions in a satisfactory way. And as Christians, a God-centered, biblical worldview does just this for us! It answers the BIG questions.

1. Where did we come from? Who am I? As Christians, we look to the creation account in scripture.
2. What's wrong with the world? As Christians, we look at what happened in the fall of man and entry of sin into the world – that comes from our Bible.

3. What can we do to fix it? Where am I going? That's redemption and from the Bible we learn how God through Jesus restores what is broken and will ultimately make all things new.

Listen: It just makes sense to me that if the Bible is solid on the BIG questions OF life, then it will help us be solid on all the BIG issues we face IN life.

Now, if you've been engaging in this message at any point today, you can see that I am putting a HUGE emphasis as it relates to the worldview Christians should have on the Bible – and so what we believe about the Bible is crucial.

If we don't believe the Bible is God's Word, why would we allow it to shape our life? Why would we conform our thinking to what it says? engage with it at all?

The point is if we are going to center our lives on it and base how we view life and the world through it, we better have confidence in it.

So, as it relates to God's Word, let's look at it. Is it just an old book with outdated ideas and some interesting stories? OR is it inspired by God and trustworthy enough for us to build our lives upon and funnel every idea, movement, thought and feeling we have through it?

**Illus. Summit/Next Step** – Proud of our discipleship team for putting this together. Why we did this (# of conversions/baptisms) and imperative to start on right foundation. It's a six-session workbook and we'll have these available for you to walk with new believers through.

You know what session #2 is on? Can you trust the Bible? And this article mentions the uniqueness of the Word of God. That it's different than any other book. And it talks about:

### **1. The Bible's Continuity:**

It was:

- written over a period of 1500 years
- more than 40 different authors (various background, education, etc)
- written in different settings and contexts (wilderness, dungeon, traveling)
- different times/moods (joy, war, tragedy, struggle)
- three continents (Asia, Africa, Europe)
- Three different languages (Heb, Greek, Aramaic)
- Different styles (poetry, narrative, law, prophecy, letters, parables)
- COMMOM THEME: Jesus Christ (creation, fall, redemption and restoration.)

Paul uses the word "inspired"...what sets it apart is that it's "god-breathed!"

**2 Timothy 3:16** – "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

Peter writes in **2 Peter 1:20-21** – “**knowing first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along (nautical term) by the Holy Spirit.**”

It's not just unique or inspired. It's also powerful. The writer of **Hebrews 4:12** – “**For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and the intentions of the heart.**”

Listen to what the prophet, Jeremiah recorded that he said God told him in **Jeremiah 23:29** – “**Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?**”

There is something to God’s word. There’s no question about it. People read it and are changed from within...it’s not just like any other book!

It tells one major story...a theme throughout the entire book is the thin red thread...the blood of Jesus. Its continuity sets the Bible apart...so too does:

## **2. The Bible’s Circulation.**

No other book has been translated in more languages...no other book has been as widely read. This may not prove it’s inspired, but it is circumstantial evidence and certainly proves the uniqueness of it. There is not another book that is even close the Bible’s circulation.

## **3. The Bible’s Survival** (makes it unique and points toward its inspiration)

It’s survived time: we have the earliest and the most manuscripts of any other ancient literature. It’s survived persecution. How many times though history have people tried to destroy the Bible?

A quote from the *Next Step* book on this...it’s by **H.L. Hastings** who was a minister in the mid 1800’s. He wrote:

**“Infidels for 1800 years have been refuting and overthrowing this book (The Bible), and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before....So the hammers of the infidels have been pecking away at this book for ages, but the hammers are worn out, and the anvil still endures. If this book had not been the book of God, men would have destroyed it long ago. Emperors and popes, kings and priests and rulers have all tried their hand at it; they die and the book still lives.”**

I could go on and on about the case for the Bible. It’s manuscript evidence. How archeology confirms its accounts. We could go on and list the prophecies that have come true within it.



This book can be relied upon...it can be trusted...and therefore we can with confidence look at all of life through its lens. When we address the subjects of this series, we are addressing them from a biblical worldview and we can say with the reformer, **Martin Luther: "When the Scripture speaks, God speaks."**

So, let me start landing the plane here. Let me give a quick illustration and then we'll leave with an application of challenge to pray three prayers as we get this series going.

First, the illustration. I've used this before, but I think it will make the point. I have here: a blindfold, some sunglasses and glasses.

Now, as it relates to worldview, there are some here and watching online that are wearing a blindfold. And what I mean by this is as we talk about looking at life and more specifically the subjects we are dealing with via a biblical worldview, nothing we say is going to make sense...you don't see it or your friends and co-workers won't see it the same way we do.

And do you know why? It's nearly impossible for them to!

**1 Corinthians 2:14 – "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned."**

In other words, there's a blindfold on!

**2 Corinthians 4:4 – "In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."**

Listen, people who don't have Jesus living in them, they don't have the capacity to see and understand why we live our lives the way in which we do! A God-centered, biblical worldview makes absolutely no sense to them.

THIS is one of the many reasons, we rarely argue an unbeliever over to our side.

Now, we need to be ready to give an answer for why we believe, what we believe...this is the role of apologetics and being able to give a defense for the gospel.

But you just need to know, trying to convince someone that does not believe in God to believe and embrace life through a God-centered means, is not very likely...they are blindfolded.

Only AFTER the blindfold is removed can we hope for them to see life through a God-centered, biblical worldview and that's what makes the miracle of conversion so amazing. Because God does in a moment, what our well-informed arguments could never do. He by the Holy Spirit removes blindfolds all the time!

This is why we preach the gospel. This is why we share our faith. Because it's the power of the gospel that enables the Holy Spirit to convert and bring people to Jesus.

Once THIS happens, THEN and only then can this God-centered, biblical worldview start to be developed.

And developed is the operative word. Some of you have probably been sitting there and thinking, "Jarrett, I know Christians that don't share the same worldview as I do...they don't see these issues that we are going to talk about in the same way."

You know why? Well, they can see, but their worldview is shaded. It's colored. I liken it to these sunglasses. The blindfold has been removed, but they still may not see things the way God sees them.

They are new to salvation. And while salvation...i.e. conversion is immediate, having a God-centered, biblical worldview isn't!

- Some have years of being raised a certain way...
- Some have years of being educated a certain way or in a certain system...
- Some have life experiences or have made choices that effect the way they see things...

And this doesn't just disappear...it doesn't just go away at conversion!

**Illus. Muslim faith convert** – looking at life through a biblical lens is going to take time.

And this is WHY discipleship is so important! It's why Life Groups are so important. It's in settings like this a God-centered, biblical worldview grows and is developed over time.

And as we grow in our relationship with God, what happens is that over time is that the sunglasses become less shaded! We begin to see things more clearly...our thinking is LESS conformed by our past, our background and our experiences and more conformed by God and his word.

But ultimately, we have to go from here (sunglasses) to here (glasses). This is the goal – it's to have the glasses on and to see clearly all of life through the lens of scripture!

In order for this to happen though, we have to submit our lives to God's word – believe what's in here and walk in the way that the Lord commands. Only then will our life look like the picture Psalm 1 presents:

**Psalm 1:1-3 – “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;<sup>2</sup> but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup>He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.”**

This is what life looks like with the glasses of a biblical worldview. But how do we get here? Where does it start?

Exactly where we started today. With loving the Lord with all our mind. So, three prayers as we consider having and holding to a biblical worldview and as we address these subjects from a biblical worldview. Make them your prayer every day.

### **Prayer #1 – “Lord, help me to fill my mind.”**

Transformation begins first by emptying our mind of what is not true and replacing it...or filling it with what is true. This is Romans 12. Don't be conformed (fitted into mold, be transformed.)

This is where God's Word comes in...thinking on it. Meditating on it. I'm not talking about some sort of spiritual yoga or some transcendental practice of sitting with our legs crossed...I couldn't do that any way! I'm talking about feeding your relationship with God by spending time with him in his word.

**Robert J. Morgan** - *Reclaiming the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation*. Listen to how he defines meditation – **“Biblical meditation is the powerful practice of pondering, personalizing, and practicing Scripture.”** (notice the work you do!)

### **Prayer #2 – “Lord, help me to guard my mind.”**

The mind is the battlefield for life. This means we must protect it at all costs. With enemies like our flesh, this world system, and Satan himself – if we allow them any room in our mind, it will be to our own demise. Again, this why we prepare our mind for action and take every thought captive.

It's been said, “what happens in the mind, plays out in time.” So, we have to guard our minds in Christ as the scripture says.

Jesus in Matt 6, peels this back one layer deeper and gives us some insight into how something gets in our mind. If the mind is the gatekeeper to our life, what's the gatekeeper to our mind?

**Matthew 6:22-23 – “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light,<sup>23</sup> but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”**

How does something get in our mind...typically it's through what we see!

### **Illus. Blue Bell Oatmeal Pie**

Lord, help me to guard my mind! And this leads right into the third prayer:

### **Prayer # 3 – “Lord, help me to train my mind.”**

Your mind is a muscle and what you give it to will either strengthen your life or weaken your life. You will train your mind by giving it to God's Word OR you will be taken captive by worldly ideologies and philosophies that sound good...that whole groups of people readily embrace. They have a hint of truth, but don't come from God or fully align with his word.

If we are going to love the Lord with all our mind and have a biblical worldview...if we are going to chase sanity, then we need to be praying:

“Lord, help me to fill my mind. guard my mind. And train my mind. For your glory.”

Amen. Let's pray.

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*Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.*