

MUG

COMMISSION INTERNS: JOEL CATHEY & DANIEL GROFF

Josh Post accepted a ministry position at another church this summer.

INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

INTRODUCTION

If you are new with us, we primarily preach through books of the Bible

- verse-by-verse,
- chapter-by-chapter.

And we will do that starting in just a couple weeks.

- Our Fall sermon series will be an in-depth study of
- **SLIDE EPHESIANS**

This will be at 13-week series starting after Labor Day.

But for the next couple weeks we're going to be doing a quick mini-series called **SLIDE WHAT I LEARNED...**

You see, this summer I was on a sabbatical.

- So, for 12 weeks I didn't do the work as the pastor of Fathom.
- And the Lord taught us some really interesting,
 - and important things while we were away.
- So, this series is a look at those things.

Now, last week I talked about the theological topic of THE CHURCH.

- And I made the case that Christians
- need a meaningful connection and membership
- with a LOCAL church
- if they are to be properly disciplined.

And I came to that conviction after spending three months without functionally being a member of our local church.

- Now, some of you told me I made sabbatical sound lousy!
- I mean, did last week seem kinda like a downer?

Well, I kinda meant it to...but the sabbatical wasn't all a big bummer.

ILLUSTRATION: DISNEY

Actually, one of the best parts of our time away was taking Harper to Disneyland for the first time.

- So, Harper is our only daughter,
- and she's 7,
- so, she is perfect Disneyland age. Ok?

She's young enough for everything to be completely magical and real...

- but she's old enough NOT to melt down
- in a fit of screaming
- in an hour-long line
- to ride in circles
- on the back of a flying elephant.
 - Which I may or may not have witnessed!
 - And that was just the parents!

Now, I expected the best part of Disneyland to be the rides, ok?

- Indiana Jones
- Space Mountain
- Pirates of the Caribbean
- Star Wars

Like, that's what I was pumped for...and that's cause I'm a guy.

But that wasn't the best part of Disneyland for a seven-year-old girl.

The most important part of Disneyland for Harper...

- wasn't the rides...
 - or the food...
 - or the entertainment!
- It was getting pictures with the characters.
- It was the princesses.

Not really my thing...AND what you need to know about Disneyland is there's no fast pass to the princesses.

So, we got in a two-hour line...to meet the princesses.

But she was a champ!

And here's what happened when she finally got to the princesses.

- **SLIDE** She met Snow White.
- And **SLIDE** Cinderella.
- **SLIDE** And her finally, Arielle.
 - Notice how she's holding her foot...
 - she does that when she's nervous...
 - it was so cute I thought I might throw up.

So, we met the princesses...and it only took up half of our day!

Now, the only other picture she just had to have was with Minnie.

- So, we hunted down the mouse,
- waited in line again...
- and as we approached the target,
- Harper leans to Maryse and says,
 - “Mom, this is the most important picture of my entire life.”

So, here it is: **SLIDE**

- They say a picture’s worth a thousand words...
- in our case it was literally worth a thousand bucks!

BLANK SLIDE

EXPLAIN: CRAZY WORLD

Now, I told you about some of the hard parts of Sabbatical last week.

And I’m sharing about some of the good parts of Sabbatical this week.

- Because I want to make a point
- that you can read almost every experience
 - as both good AND bad.

Very seldom are times

- black OR white...
- high OR low...
- good OR bad.

It’s almost always a mix of both.

And as I was on Sabbatical, I missed some big cultural things:

- The war in Ukraine is still waging.
- The horrible mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas.
- The inflation of the world economy.
- The overturning of Roe v. Wade, and subsequent battles.

I mean, it's been a pretty substantial summer of news.

And while last week I reflected on what I learned about THE CHURCH...

today I want to tackle the topic of **SLIDE THE WORLD**

So, I don't know if you've noticed...

- but on almost every single one of these world events...
- there are polarizing,
- seemingly opposite opinions of what is
 - good OR bad...
 - right OR wrong...
 - true OR false.
- even amongst professing Christians!

And it got me thinking... **how is it that we can see things so differently?**

- How is it that, even among believers,
- we have such different views of the world?

EXPLAIN: RESOURCES

Well, I did some reading this summer that helped me on this.

- I read a couple books,
- and listened to some podcasts...

and found some very helpful cultural analysis that I think can aid us in trying to understand why things are so polarized.

- So, almost none of this stuff is my own,
- I just cobbled it together from a bunch of other guys
- who are way smarter than me.

So, I want to present 4 different worldviews

- that are prevalent in our world,
 - but also in the church,
 - and even in each one of us.

Think of these as lenses,

- by which we see the world,
- and they color how we view each and every event.

TRANSITION

So, let's get to work. Let's talk about these lenses.

I'm borrowing a chart from an Australian pastor I follow, and we'll fill it in as we go. But it looks like this **SLIDE**

So, each one of the four lenses will have four observations:

- what is the PURPOSE of life?
- what is the WORLD?
- what is SIN?
- and what is the proposed SOLUTION?

And it'll be easy to see these lenses at work in our world...

- but I want us to do the harder work of looking inward
- to see where we are tempted
- to look through these lenses,
- rather than the lens of the Gospel.

LENS 1: HEDONISTIC

Ok, the first worldview or lens is the **SLIDE HEDONISTIC** lens.
And the purpose of life in the hedonistic lens is **SLIDE PLEASURE**

The purpose of life is to feel all the good.

You ought to pursue...

- pleasure,
- and comfort,
- and delight.
- Anything that makes you happy.
- All the good experiences.
- Go on all the trips.
- Buy all the toys.

It's all about pleasure.

THE WORLD

What is the world in the hedonistic view?

The world is **SLIDE A PLAYGROUND**

- The world is where you should go and enjoy all it has to offer.
- It's the context for your pleasure-seeking mission.
 - The mountains are calling...
 - so, eat, drink, and be merry!
- **The world exists as a conduit for your pleasure.**

But then, in this view, what is sin?

SIN

Well, sin is anyone or anything that might **SLIDE PREVENT PLEASURE**

- Things that are considered repressive to pleasure
- are bad or wrong or sinful.

So, we can think of the caricature of...

- the 1950s, Leave it to Beaver,
- bland,
- suburban,
- prudish life...

up against the

- free love,
- Woodstock,
- hippy movement of the late 1960s.

That square, regressive, black-and-white version of life is actually sin.

“Why wouldn’t you want me to be happy?”

SOLUTION

What is the solution for the ills of the world from the hedonistic perspective?

SLIDE JUST DO IT

- Just chill out, and live your life,
 - and as long as it doesn’t hurt anyone else, just do it, man.
- Express yourself.
- Say yes to your desires.
- Follow your heart.
- Look inside.

APPLICATION

But there are bits of truth in all these lenses.

- There is a truth that God created pleasure.
 - God created nature,
 - and human relationships,
 - and good food,
 - and good drink...
- these are good and right.
- But in the right place!

Ecclesiastes 3:11 says this

SLIDE ECCLESIASTES 3:11a

[11] He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart

If you grew up in church, that's the "God-shaped hole" that's in the middle of your heart that only God can fill.

Only the eternal can fill the longing of your heart!

This is why everything else in your life will eventually run out of steam!

- Cause they're temporal things...
- Trying to fill an eternal hole.

But if we look at this world through a Gospel lens:

- You were created for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- You were created for the presence of Jesus.

There is a better lens.

TRANSITION

So, do you find yourself with the lenses of hedonism?

This one is true of almost ALL of us in some way or another...

Are you concerned with seeking personal comfort and pleasure?

This is the hedonistic lens.

LENS 2: MORALISTIC

The second lens or worldview is **SLIDE MORALISTIC**

What happened is the hedonistic lens won in the late 20th century, and by the early 2000s we got to this point where all the lines of morality had been pushed from a pop culture view:

- from shows like the Simpsons,
 - to Friends
 - to South Park
- to MTV,
 - where the objectification of women...
 - and violence was glorified...
- to Madonna...
 - And Britney...
 - And Paris Hilton...

Hedonism won.

But then questions began to surface like,

- how far is too far?
- what things are off-limits?
- where is the line?

And a new moralistic lens began to form,

- not from the church or other faiths,
- but from the progressive secular world.
- In things like
 - Political correctness...
 - Virtue signaling...
 - And cancel culture...

PURPOSE

So, let's answer our questions. In the moralistic worldview, what is the purpose of life?

And the answer is to **SLIDE DO GOOD**

In this lens, to pursue pleasure is not enough.

- Now we broadcast NOT how hedonistic our lives are,
- BUT how moral our lives are.
 - This is seen in the filters we put
 - over our profile pics on social media
 - with moral messages.
 - The, "I stand with..." blank, messages we post.

And it's still hedonistic in some ways because we derive pleasure from feeling moral.

But it's almost like,

- the hedonist thinks it's cool to be bad...
- whereas the moralist thinks it's cool to do good.

WORLD

What, then, is the world?

Well, the world is **SLIDE A GOOD PLACE THAT'S BEEN RUINED**

- This world was good,
- it was beautiful,
- it was pure.

But people created problematic structures, and now it's all a mess.

SIN

So, what is sin to the moralist?

Well, the sin from a moralistic view is **SLIDE IGNORANCE**

It's almost an elitism that says,

- *"if you just knew...*
- *If you just read these books...*
- *or listened to this Ted Talk...*
- *or knew the realities of that person's plight.*
- *Then you'd be enlightened."*

There's some elitism in this view that sees others' views as ignorant.

- But they think if you'd just educate these people
- they'd see the light.

SOLUTION

And that's the solution posed by the moralists. **SLIDE EDUCATION**

- *“We need to inform everyone...*
- *through visible education...*
- *about what the new moral code is.”*
 - And through these campaigns,
 - ignorance will be pushed back,
 - and the world will enter a new moral utopia
 - of peace and love.

APPLICATION

Now, again, there is some truth in this moralistic lens.

- We are also called to be people of character and morals.
- There is a moral vision in the scriptures.
- We’re called to do good.

But the Biblical vision is that we cannot do it in our own strength.

- Our morality,
- our virtue,
- comes from God.

Not just from knowing better and trying harder!

ILLUSTRATION: KICK BOARD

You see, EDUCATION as the solution to make people moral

- is just like when a Christian tries
- the outside-in approach to following Christ,
- rather than an inside-out transformation.

The outside-in approach is sin management. Just try harder! Do better!

But managing your sin is like this:

This summer Harper took swimming lessons.

And one of her favorite parts of the swim lessons were the kick boards.

- You know what those things are?
- Kick boards are these foam boards that float,
- and you can hold onto them and kick around the pool.
- It's like lazy man's swimming...

So, I bought her a kickboard,

- and we took it to the pool...
- and we'd play a game at the pool...
 - we'd push the kickboard under the water,
 - and see how long we could hold
 - the very buoyant kick board under water.

And how long you could hold the kick board under water depended on how strong you were, ok?

- I was very good at this game.
- Harper was not.

But it really didn't matter how good you were at it,

- because eventually,
 - even for one of such physical prowess as I...
- that kick board is eventually coming back up out of the water.

And listen, a kick board doesn't just gently float back up out of the water.

- It explodes violently out of the water,
- sometimes just jacking you right in the grill.

TRANSITION

That's moralism. It's based on the "know better, do better" philosophy.

It can only work until you get tired of holding it back.

But if we look at this world through a Gospel lens:

- You were created to do good.
- But there is no one who is good, no not one.
- You need the goodness of another,
 - gifted,
 - imputed to you.

There is a better lens.

So, do you find yourself with the lenses of moralism...

- just holding that kickboard under that water with all your might?
- Eventually, it's gonna come back up and mess you up.

This is the Moralistic lens.

THERAPEUTIC: PURPOSE

The third lens is the **SLIDE THERAPEUTIC** lens.

- This is a very popular lens in our times,
 - and this lens isn't focused on the pursuit of pleasure...
 - it's not primarily focused even on doing good.

The therapeutic lens is all about **SLIDE FEELING PEACE**.

- To survive the craziness of this world
 - I need to center,
 - and I need to go inward,
 - and I need a sense of inner peace.

So, there is a lot of language in this worldview

- about mental health,
- and therapy,
- and counseling.

And all of those things are good. Ok? We're breaking the stigma!

I've been very open about my struggles with depression and anxiety and seeking counseling and therapy for those things.

- But when it's elevated to a worldview...
- that's the problem...

I think you'll see this.

THE WORLD

What, then, is the world in the therapeutic?

The world is **SLIDE DANGEROUS**

- It's not a playground.
- It's not a good place ruined.
- It's actually a dangerous place
 - filled with pain,
 - trauma,
 - and discomfort.

SIN

Then, what's sin?

Sin is **SLIDE CAUSING MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL PAIN**

- Sin is causing distress.
- Sin is perceived unsafety.
- Sin is triggering someone.

SOLUTION

So, the solution proposed by the therapeutic worldview is **SLIDE SAFETY**

The solution is to make you feel good by protecting you from bad feelings.

- There's this call to create safe spaces.
- To protect against triggering moments.

Everyone is fragile...and we need to protect, protect, protect.

We need to create a world of safety.

APPLICATION

Now, once again, there is truth in this worldview.

God's word speaks about this. Peace is offered to us...but it's different.

SLIDE PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

[6] do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Sounds good...but do you remember where Paul is writing this letter from?

- Yeah, he writes to the Philippians from prison.
- And he will later in this chapter go on to say this:

SLIDE PHILIPPIANS 4:12

[12] I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

You see, the Christian doesn't find peace in safety.

We find the secret to peace in Jesus!

- We believe a lie
 - that if we could get everything
 - to just line up in our circumstances...
 - If we could just find complete safety...
- then we'd have peace.

But Jesus doesn't promise to make everything better in your life, he says, I am better than life.

- That's the peace of Christ.
- The peace that Jesus gives is not therapeutic...
 - it doesn't happen because you find a safe space,
 - with a cozy chair,
 - and a warm beverage,
 - and some essential oils,
 - blissing out to some
 - experimental Icelandic electronica...
- It's a supernatural peace...
- it is transcendent...

And it's wholly different from the peace you can muster on your own.

- There's a peace that can be found
- even when you aren't ok...
- even when you aren't safe...
- even when you are triggered.

So, that's the therapeutic lens.

NIHILISTIC

And the last lens for this morning is the **SLIDE NIHILISTIC** worldview.

Life is meaningless.

- Now, nihilism is not a new philosophy,
- but this lens is becoming more and more mainstream.
- And it seems to be growing significantly.

PURPOSE

The purpose of life in the nihilistic worldview is to

SLIDE FEEL NOTHING

- Pleasure is too difficult to attain.
- Doing good...what's the point?
- Feel peace...good luck!
- So, it's better just to feel nothing.

THE WORLD

To the nihilist, the world is **SLIDE A DISASTER**.

You see little to no hope for the future when you look through this lens.

In fact, as you read about a great many of the mass shootings

- that have occurred in the last couple decades,
 - very often the shooters aren't on an ideological quest
 - or radical political agenda...
 - sometimes they are...

But very often they are people...

- who see through the lens of
 - nothing matters...
 - there's no hope...
 - this world is a pure disaster.
- It's nihilistic.
- It's almost a hate of the world.

SIN

What is sin to the nihilist? Sin is **SLIDE EVERYWHERE**

- It is in everyone.
- It is in every structure and system.
- It permeates everything.
- It's all corrupt.
- It's all unjust.
- It's all doom and gloom.
- Welcome to reality!

SOLUTION

So, what's their solution? Well, the answer is **SLIDE ESCAPE.**

- Escape into the world of distraction,
 - from tv,
 - to video games,
 - to augmented reality.
- Escape into the world of self-medication.
 - Drugs
 - Alcohol
 - Food
 - Whatever numbs it out.
- Escape from reality...
 - the real world is too dark and depressing...
 - so, it's time to escape.

And just so you know, this worldview is growing at an alarming rate, especially amongst the emerging generations.

APPLICATION

But there is an element of EVEN NIHILISM that's true.

- This world IS broken.
- This world IS corrupt.
- We WILL be let down by this world.
 - But this world is not our home.
 - This world is not what it one day will be.

Our hope is found in nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

APPLICATION: US

So, that's the chart. There are undoubtedly more lenses.

Now, I want us to be honest and admit

- that there are times,
 - maybe even seasons,
- when we look through these lenses ourselves.

Let's not pretend that as Christians we aren't prone towards

- hedonism,
- or moralism,
- or the therapeutic,
- or even towards throwing up our hands
 - and thinking this whole thing is a lost cause!

But we do have a different lens to look through...

that the rest of the world doesn't have.

A Gospel lens has an entirely different take on this stuff:

What is the purpose of life?

- The purpose of life is to **SLIDE WORSHIP GOD**
 - You were created with a purpose.
 - It's to glorify God with your whole life.
- What's the world? It's **SLIDE BEING REDEEMED**
 - God created the world for us...
 - to live in relationship with him...
 - to cultivate the ground...
 - and now he's made us agents of reconciliation...
 - as he is making all things new again.

- What's sin? Well, it's our **SLIDE REBELLION** against God.
 - It's us breaking from God,
 - and wanting, instead,
 - to be independent creatures...
 - wanting to be like God ourselves.
- And what's the solution? It's **SLIDE A RELATIONSHIP**
 - We are sinners.
 - Saved by grace.
 - And on the cross,
 - Jesus pays the price for our sin.
 - And when he raises from the grave,
 - there's an invitation for us to bend the knee to him,
 - call him king,
 - and have our lives completely transformed by him.

The solution to the mess of this world is Jesus.

- It's a relationship with God
- where he declares you
- his adopted son or a daughter.

And the life of a disciple is bringing your vision more and more in-line with a gospel lens rather than any competing visions of life.

But the question remains how?

How do we align our sight with the gospel lens more and more?

Well, it's not by simply trying harder...cause that's the moralistic lens!

- It's actually by believing the solution more and more.
 - It's by believing that we are sons...
 - that we are daughters...
 - that we are adopted into God's family.

BLANK SLIDE WITH PADS

ILLUSTRATION: ADOPTION

A friend of mine told me the story of when he and his wife adopted one of their sons from another country.

- He had grown up in an orphanage
- for the first four or five years of his life,
- where he was taken care of,
- but there was no real relational care.

The caretakers were greatly outnumbered by the number of orphans, so, we would use the language that he was emotionally neglected.

- Well, they brought him home...
- and he started showing some emotional and behavioral issues.
 - He would have outbursts of anger and rage.
 - He would take things from their other children,
 - now his siblings,
 - and hide them under his bed.
 - He would take and hide food...
 - almost like he was storing up
 - for when it wouldn't be available.

They tried to lovingly care for him, but they didn't know what to do.

So, they started going to counseling with an expert in this area.
And the counselor told them to try something different.

For one hour each day they were to sit down on the floor with him.

- The mother would have the boy sit in her lap,
- and the father would sit facing him
- and look him in the eyes,
- and say these things to him.
 - *"You are my son.*
 - *I love you.*
 - *You are my child.*
 - *I love you."*

Just over and over again.

And the next day they would swap.

- The mother would say the same things.
 - *"You are my son.*
 - *I love you.*
 - *You are my child.*
 - *I love you."*

And they did this for one hour a day for weeks and weeks.

- And slowly...
 - not overnight...
 - but overtime...
- his behavior started to change.

Why?

- He needed to know who he was.
 - *You are my son.*
- And he needed to know how they saw him.
 - *You are loved.*

CONCLUSION

Church, you don't align your vision to the gospel lens

- by simply trying harder,
- or learning more.

You do it by knowing...

- believing more deeply
- that you are a child of God,
- and that you are loved.

And that's the Father's message to you today.

- *"You are my son.*
- *You are my daughter.*
- *And I love you.*
- *Don't believe what these other lenses tell you.*
- *Believe the Gospel.*
- *You are my child.*
- *And I love you."*

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Lukianoff, Gregg, & Jonathan Haidt. The Coddling of the American Mind.
- Sayers, Mark. *Why Good Friday is Good News*.
- Sayers, Mark. *Rebuilders Podcast: Morality in the Grey Zone*.
- Truman, Carl. The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self.