

THE TRUTH AND EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S SALVATION

Lesson Fourteen

The Consequences of Man's Fall- The Mind of Fallen Man Became Filled with Vanity

Subject: The Consequences of Man's Fall- The Mind of Fallen Man Became Filled with Vanity

Scriptures: Eph. 4:17b; Rom. 1:21; 1 Cor. 3:19-20; Col. 2:18b; Ecc. 1:14, 2:1, 11; Psa. 39:5

Aim: To see that all mankind has become vain in their reasonings; that they are directed and controlled by their own vain thoughts.

Memory Verse: Ecc. 1:2

Approach: Survey- Give the class one minute to think or dream (these must be their own thoughts, so the teacher should not make any suggestions or ask any leading questions). At the end of the minute, ask them to write down everything that came to their mind within that time. Have them sign their names, and then read the results without revealing names.

Content: What does "vanity" mean?

- A. Webster's dictionary defines it as "...something that is empty or valueless; inflated pride in one's self or one's appearance; conceit" The root word s from the Latin word "vanus", meaning empty; "having no real value; IDLE, WORTHLESS. Marked by futility or ineffectualness; UNSUCCESSFUL, USELESS; foolish, silly; EMPTY, HOLLOW; devoid of worth or significance."

*Before giving the above definitions, ask the class to describe what vanity means to them. Prompt them for their own answers, then ask the following questions: (1) Have you ever wanted something very much and then you finally got it? How did you feel when you received it? How did you feel about it later, maybe after a few weeks or months? (2) How do you feel after you've received an "A" on a test, or gotten the best grade in the class, or received a lot of praise and attention after a good performance at your music recital? Didn't that make you feel great? How long did that "great feeling" last?

Here you may give definitions of "vanity". Then go on with...

- B. In the book of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon speaks often of the vanity of life: "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity." (1:14) "I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this is also vanity." (2:1) "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity."

Have them recall their feelings of disappointment or dissatisfaction. Ask for examples. You can show how these feelings are related to the vanity of life by asking the following:

-How about your entertainment? Have you ever gone to a special event (maybe a ball-game, a picnic, a school party, or play), where everyone was having fun, and there was lots of

laughter, and excitement. How did you feel after it was all over and you were back home again, all alone with your thoughts?

- C. We find in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul saying that there are some people who are “always learning and never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim 3:7). Without taking this verse out of its context, we can certainly feel the impact of his words on our present day situation.
- D. The reason for man’s condition of vanity can be found in the New Testament also: Romans 1:21, “because knowing God, they glorified Him not as God nor thanked Him, but became vain in their reasonings...”, and 1 Corinthians 3:20, “And again, the Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are vain.”

Application:

Take a flashlight and shine it on various spots around the room and ask the children to try and catch the light at the spots where it falls. This is an illustration of vanity.

Conclusion:

1. Write down two things you owned in the past that you liked very, very much (not a person). What kind of feelings do you have for those things now? Where are they today? Then ask this question: Why, at one time, were you so happy with maybe just one of those things (maybe it was a new bike or a video game, or a new pair of sneakers, or designer jeans, or a jacket) but whatever it was, you’ve now grown tired of it or indifferent towards it. Why?
2. Emphasize the fact that every aspect of our behavior originates with our thoughts; and every point of our speech begins in our mind. If our thoughts are vain and our mind is impure, then what we exhibit and speak will reflect this condition. Point out that all things apart from God are vanity- empty, useless, foolish, and worthless.

Paul exhorts us to “no longer walk as the nations...walk in the vanity of their mind.” The nations (i.e. the Gentiles) are the fallen people who have become vain in their reasonings (Romans 1:21). They walk without God, in the vanity of their mind and are controlled and directed by their vain thoughts. Whatever they do according to their fallen mind is vanity; it is all without reality. The life of fallen mankind is a walk in the vanity of the mind. All the worldly people today walk in such vanity. In the eyes of God and in the eyes of the Apostle Paul, whatever the people in the world think, say, or do is nothing but vanity. None of those things is real or solid- everything is empty. As believers, we should no longer walk in the vanity of the mind. Instead, we must walk in the reality of our spirit. (L.S. Ephesians #46 p. 390)