

Norman C. Schwab
Yacolt EV Free
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What Kind of Fool are You? Psalm 53

People in their great boredom can think up some ridiculous and very foolish situations which we think are quite humorous. E-mail does a great disservice by propagating such foolish commentaries on the imponderables of life. They are so foolish....Here are a few:

Does distressed leather come from very tense cows?

If the #2 pencil is the most popular, why's it still #2?

Do chickens think rubber humans are funny?

Is it legal to run into a crowded fire and yell "Theater!?"

Is it possible to be totally partial?

Would a fly without wings be more properly called a walk?

If the funeral procession is at night, do folks drive with their lights off?

Why is the word abbreviation so long?

If you're cross-eyed and have dyslexia, can you read all right?

How did a fool and his money GET together in the first place?

Why would you call someone a fool who declares there is no God?

A great imponderable of the intellectual, the proud, the independent, the humanist elite and the spiritual rebel that cry out. There is no god. If they do not go so far as to state there is no god at the very least they live as if that statement is true. They live as practical atheists, living like there is no god.

A friend of mine Phil Long, is an Airline pilot. He lives up in the on the other side of Silver Star above Washougal and commutes to New York for work. One day while flying struck he up a conversation with the captain who casually and caustically slurred He wasn't into church and didn't believe in God. Phil replied, "Well, I sure hope you are not an atheist. That is about the most irrational position you could take. You state emphatically that there is no God. Phil drew a circle shaped Venn-diagram and began, "Tell me, out of all the knowledge in the world how much of that do you know?" Go ahead draw a slice out of the pie of the

universes total knowledge. The man reached over and made a dot in the middle of the circle. Wow you are admitting there is plenty that you do not know about, therefore it is totally irrational to be so certain and state there is no God. It is impossible to prove with total certainty that there is not a god. You can't do it. Atheism is irrational.

The man then returned, "Well maybe I'm one of those that just doesn't know if there is a god." Phil replied, "An agnostic?" That is even worse! At least an atheist is irrational. An Agnostic is downright dishonest. What do you mean the captain replied, wanting to get back to the business of flying. How am I dishonest? Well, said Phil. Your life demonstrates, shows what you believe. right? You tell me that you are not sure if there is a god, but you have chosen to live your life as if there is no god. That is dishonest. Saying one thing and doing another. How would you live if you really believed that there might be a God, since not to declare there is no God reveals irrational thinking and choosing to live as if there is no God is dishonest. That conversation ended there, their schedules changed and they never flew together again, but it certainly gave the man something to chew over in his mind. The world calls the things of God foolish. But the Bible has the final word. What kind of a fool are you?

Turn with me in your Bibles to Psalm 53. (READ) Not an exceptionally pretty picture that the Psalmist paints. But I think he writes for a reason it is a realistic portrait of the godless. Atheist. Ah Theo. Ah meaning no. Theos Greek for God. Ah Theos. Atheist. He writes to shock the complacent, the spiritually dulled man or woman, teen, boy or girl. Wake up you fool! Wake up and smell the coffee. Gain understanding. Get wisdom! If you believe that there is no God. You are foolish. Nabal. This does not mean you are not mentally unable. This does not mean your IQ is hovering down in the single digits. A Biblical fool is not mentally incapable, but spiritually anesthetized, dulled, morally dead and aloof to spiritual matters, insensitive to God. We are fools even if we mouth the words, yes...I believe in god..if we fail to live what we believe is true. Would you have acted differently this last week if you truly believed there was a God? What kind of fool do you want to be? Let me (read) I Corinthians 1:18-27. God has made the wisdom of this world as foolish. What they have ridiculed foolish is in fact great

wisdom. Their own wisdom has left them severely empty and short in all the things that truly matter in this world.

Back to Psalm 53. Point number 1 from verse 1. It is foolish to live as if there is no God. This includes those who also say that there is no god, and those who say there might be a god, yet live as if there is no god. It also includes those who say there is a god and yet live as if there is no god. The last group wants to appear spiritual but is merely a dishonest practical atheist, viewed by the world around them as a hypocrite and never tasting of the power of God to change their life so becoming distasteful to the people around them who hear one thing and see another. The fool has said in his heart there is no god.

The Atheist says there is no god. The agnostic says, "I don't know if there is a god, but even if there was a god it is impossible to know God in any personal relational way and it is impossible to know what He would want me to live like. God does not effect my life. Therefore I will choose to live as if there is no god. I will be the master of my universe. I will seek theories and philosophies out that attempt to disprove God not those that lend evidence to his existence. I like being in control of my own life. I like being the master of my universe and the captain of my own life's ship. Even though I do not know, I will live as if He does not exist. Sound familiar? The fool has said, in his heart, a willful choice because it goes against his natural life urges, self focused desires, therefore says or speaks loudly by his actions. There is no god.

They are corrupt. Morally. This word is the same to describe milk that has gone sour. It may take a little while but milk left unrefrigerated will go bad and sour. After a while sour milk begins to smell real bad. Those who do not believe in god will eventually sour and degenerate into evil.

One does not need to look very far for evidence of a creator god. We see his fingerprints so often we take them for granted. Look at your hands, a human face. even plants. There is no rational explanation for such design and creative beauty other than a creator behind them. A God who cares that if the moon or the sun were just a degree out of course no life could sustain here on earth because we would either freeze or fry. It is no mistake we are where we are.

Yet the fool who says there is no god runs to evolution to try and rationally explain away a supernatural intervention by Almighty God. By chance and millions of years...we humans are nearing the apex of a random set of incredibly great luck. However when asked how this grand scheme was all started, they say it came from a single cell which evolved into all present life forms and continue to struggle to find a transitional bridge between species in the geologic record. Where did that single cell come from? Where spontaneously from heat and gasses of an inorganic primordial soup. OK where did the soup come from. From a Big Bang? Who then built the bomb that banged. They have no answer for ultimate beginning. But they must continue working to prove existence apart from God, apart from the spiritual...because to do so requires them to change and they refuse to do so. Romans 1:20-23. (READ) Professing to be wise they become fools. They worship the creation rather than the creator. Do we see any of that? What kind of a fool are You? Point number 1. It is foolish to live as if there is no god.

Point #2 Being good isn't good enough. Look at the end of verse 1. There is no one who does good, who seeks after God. v. 3. repeated no one does good, not even one. The fool has said in his heart there is no god. But someone will object. I know someone who says they don't believe in God, but they seem so kind and nice and giving and friendly. Other may say. I know I don't really live the way God would want me to. I know that I am in the drivers seat of my car. I make the decisions and call the shots in my life. I know god isn't often considered in my decisions, I know I end up living like a practical atheist most of the time...but hey. I'm as good as the next guy. I help folks out when I can. I come to church when it's convenient. I throw a few bucks in the plate that should be good enough to get me in shouldn't it? Sorry, being good just isn't enough. There is no one who does good. No exception. Just so we don't miss it. Not even one. We could never do enough good stuff to gain God's favor.

Trying to hoard up piles of human righteousness is like playing the game of monopoly. When we were camping in the Redwoods a few weeks ago I played a game I hadn't played in 20 years. The object of the game is to collect as much money and property as one can. I happen to get the only monopoly and was able to control things quickly, I had lots of

money, but it was only monopoly money. Only a fool would take his monopoly earnings and go into town to buy groceries. Monopoly is a game; a different currency is used in the real world. It is the same spiritually. Yet there are people who think they are collecting assets before God, when they are only collecting human righteousness....Man's goodness has no real value in heaven apart from being linked with His Son. When His son placed his stamp on our deeds they become spiritual. Without faith it is very difficult to please him? No its impossible to please God. Righteousness efforts on our own are like filthy rags.

Being good is not enough because we all have the universal problem of sin. Man is not naturally good. This does not mean that everyone is as evil as they possibly could be, but that sin is present in every person. Roman 3:23 "All have sinned and fallen short..come up empty." With a built-in propensity to sin when it benefits us...we have a problem. This is not a politically correct message. But it's true. To say that we are all basically pretty good means that we have no problem, we have no need of God. No need of a Savior. Folks we cannot be good enough on our own to stand before almighty God. Billy Graham is not good enough. Mother Theresa is not good enough. I'm not good enough. It is possible to have gone through catechism. Grow up going to church. Know all the right answers. Have learned all the AWANA verses and never really know God. Never felt the depth of your sin. Always convinced yourself that you were just about as good as the next person, probably a little better. So you would probably be OK. That is the deadly deception of being good. It's deceiving because it looks and sounds so good.

We all are under sins powerful control. A death grip. Yet, some of us are so spiritually dull we don't even realize the seriousness of our situation. have you been absolutely floored by the depth of your sin? Being good is just a fable. I just can't cause I'm not able. I must leave it in the Lords hands when I feel crushed by the Old man's rubble. Being good isn't good enough.

Point number 3. Fear me now or fear me later. Verse 4. Here the Psalmist begins to envision the fate of those who live as if there is no god. This looks to the end time judgment in the future, yet the author is so certain that he writes as if it is already happening. Those who devour "My people" or God's faithful ones will suffer great judgment. They

thought nothing of devouring, ridiculing, destroying his children as though munching on their piece of breakfast toast. In this life they feared little. They had no fear of God, they had seared their conscience. They did not bother to call on God. They enjoyed being the driver in their lives. They controlled and no one else. They had put up their "Look out for number one" poster.

Now in verse 5 they fear greatly. In Hebrew this is a major superlative. Literally they feared a great fear, where no fear had been. Realization that the stock they had been investing was themselves and when the market crashed so did they. In the end day there will be only one blue chip stock left. That will be those who have received the gift of one share of Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 1:7 says that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...fools despise wisdom and instruction." The fool leaves God out of their life, ignoring wisdom. The fool may say He believes in God and yet goes on living his life as if there is no God. The fool is unable to see the long term investment of knowing and fearing the Lord. He is unable to see life from an eternal perspective and only lives for the here and now. Basically, living as if there truly is an Almighty God that we can know and has revealed himself to us through the Word and has told us the best way to live, coming from the perspective of the One who has created.

The one who says there is no God, does not solve His problem of pain. He spends his whole life running to continue to dull the pain, to put an aspirin on it. But pain is still there whether or not he feels it. In fact he does away with the only thing that might help him. That is the possibility that there is a God and one who can intervene.

The atheist states if God is God, He cannot be good. Look at all the hurt and pain in the world. He continues to assert that if God is good, then look around, he cannot possibly be good. Yet. we must know that God is God and we are not. Our standards of goodness must differ radically from his. As they do from parent to child. It is good for my sons to eat certain foods and balance their diet. When I encourage them to do so, what I call good, they view as terrible. One day they will see the value, the goodness of that particular food, but not now. Are we so pompous as to think we humans have a better perspective on life in relation to God's

wisdom, then a child to his parents? Sometimes God will view our struggles, our loss, our pain as good. They may keep us from harsher evil. They may forge in us strength and character. They may move us closer to Him. They may discipline us when we need it. We are much more interested in our immediate well being and comfort...I'm thankful that there is One far more interested in my long-term good. For one day verse 6 the evil will be judged and Christ will reign in righteousness restoring His captive people. Setting the prisoners free.

You may appear to be a fool to some folks around you by following Jesus, by actually living as if there were a God. He will call you to give up control. He will want to be behind the steering wheel of your life. But, He can drive a whole lot better than you and I can. In fact until you move over to the passenger seat, you don't even have the ability to go forward. You are imprisoned to yourself, to only place your life's can in reverse. Destined to smash and crash your way through life. It's time to give it up. He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. What kind of a fool are you?

He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool; shun him.

He who knows not, and knows that he knows not, is a child; teach him.

He who knows, and knows not that he knows is asleep; wake him.

He who knows, and knows that he knows, is wise; follow him.

Too many people are like the photographer who was also a skydiver. He know, but knows not that he knows. The evening news in April 1988 showed his footage of a jump with several other parachuters, twisting, waving and diving. There were smiles all around until the final skydiver opened his chute...then the camera went berserk when he reached for the ripcord that was not there and realizing that he was freefalling without a parachute. Up until that point the jump probably seemed pretty exciting and fun...but clinging to a camera and no parachute was deadly foolish. If he had just stopped to consider before he jumped and buckled on a chute. We do not dare to step out into the dangerous excitement of life with confidence in anything but faith in Jesus Christ. Are you buckled in?

Some of you this morning realize you are not buckled in and are in a freefall, scrambling desperately for a rip-cord some chute that will save.

Some here know but know not that you know. You are asleep. You believe God, you know. But you have chosen to live as if there is no God. Some here have never known God but want to begin a relationship with Him. It is simple. Yet sometimes a terrifically difficult thing to give control over to God. The Spirit of God may be talking to some of you this morning so I want to explain what it involves. First, admit you are a sinner. Rom. 3:23. All have sinned. God I am a sinner. My goodness is not enough to be able to know you in a personal way. to be able to spend eternity with you. God I feel the depth of my sin, and I repent. I want you to help me do a 180 degree turn in my behavior. I realize you will not overwhelm me. You will work on just one thing at a time. But God I want to start that process. I repent. I also believe God. I believe that you love me. Love me so much that you sent your son, your perfect son Jesus Christ to come live on this earth and to die to pay for my sin. He died on the cross for me so that I could live. He is my Saving One. Left to myself I am destined to imprisonment and spiritual death. I believe in Him. I accept the grace and forgiveness for my sin, that absolutely free gift from you. The gift of acceptance, forgiveness, freedom and power to live life the way you the Creator intended. I have sinned. I repent. I believe. Are you ready to come in humility before Almighty God. There is a God, we must begin living like it. (Pray)

You know I would love to get together with everyone here and go over to Grammy's kitchen for lunch and talk about where you are in your spiritual journey with God. That isn't possible. The cook would not be pleased if I took all of you to lunch. So I would like you all to do me a favor and participate in a personal survey. Take out your welcome card put your name at the top. There are enough cards in the seats one for everyone. and you will notice at the bottom there are letters A-D. Circle one of those based on what I'm going to explain. If you have already committed your life to Christ prior to this service..circle the letter A. If today you are believing in Christ for the first time...circle the letter B. If you feel you've made commitments to Christ in the past, but need to start living as if there is a god....circle C. If you say, Norm, I haven't made the decision yet, but I'm considering it. circle the letter D. If you feel like you don't ever intend to commit your life to Christ, I would really appreciate your honesty by circling the letter D. I want to be praying for

all of you. As we worship God. Pray to Him. Allow Him to work and move your thoughts, even your desires. Feel free to come and pray at the front, however you wish. We worship to an audience of one. Don't worry about what the person will think who is sitting next to. We worship God and God alone.