

Series Title: At the Crossroad: From false beliefs to Freedom

Sermon Title: Week 5: The trap of lesser gods

Date: 11-03-19

† **False belief #1:** Pain is BAD, I need to protect myself from it

False belief #2: My well-being depends on meeting others

EXPECTATIONS

Truth! My well-being is in CHRIST and comes from living by GRACE, not by keeping the LAW

† **False belief #3:** Fulfillment of my CORE needs can be found in a source other than GOD

- *Tell story of Samaritan woman at the well*
- *READ FROM MY BIBLE JOHN 4:7-19*
- *Amazing story from many perspectives, focus on one*
- *In story, Jesus reveals the many sources the woman was looking to for life- picture of us as well*
- *Physical water. Basic sustenance. So often we think “if my physical needs are met, that will be all I need. But not true*
- *Identity as Samaritan. Negative factor, she automatically devalues herself because what she has been taught or experienced. When we think of our core need of identity, so much is derived from cultural forces we are part of that cause us to think “I am less than”, or “I am better than”*
- *Similar, her family heritage. Jacob, who had built the well in generations past.*
- *Then Jesus gets personal, reveals her many relationships... she was trying to derive life, her core needs, from men. Social, and intimate relationships. She was on expectation treadmill, and failing, moving from one to another.*
- *Finally... from religion. She knew of need of God, of worship, but limited it to location, religious activity, rather than God himself. Jesus revealed this when he said “What you think you are worshipping, you don’t understand, you don’t yet know” So many people seek to meet needs through religious activity, but it is all too easy to be spiritual and never know God.*
- *The Samaritan woman was dependent on many things, and the water from Jacobs well was powerful metaphor for her entire life. She would return to it day after day, and yet she always remained thirsty.*
- *THEN JESUS SAYS: “THERE IS ONLY ONE SOURCE for your needs that won’t fail you, only one well that won’t run dry, AND IT IS ME.*
- *In end of story, vs 25/26, woman finally confesses her hope.. when the messiah comes, he will explain things to us. SQUINT JUST A BIT... “When messiah comes, HE will show us what we can depend upon. He will make this life make sense. HE will meet our needs”*
- *GREAT DECLARATION OF HIS IDENTITY... Jesus said ‘I am he’*
- *This story brings us to one a central matter of the life of every human being, including Jesus, and that is...*

† **The important concept of dependency.**

- *We all have core needs that we need to be met,*
As human beings, we all share the core needs of SECURITY and SIGNIFICANCE

Security: *Love, belonging, understanding*

Significance: *Competence, respect, purpose, identity*

What are other core needs? *Hope, Contentment, peace, joy,*

- **REALITY! HOW AND WHERE we seek to meet those needs, what we *DEPEND ON FOR LIFE*, is one of life's greatest issues.**

† As people, where (or to whom) do we look to meet these core needs?

- *Pete's dependency wheel*
- **MOTHER. Parents. Siblings. Extended family.**
- *Pets, food, toys, books, peers*
- *School, sports, social media, appearance, dating*
- **Church? Marriage, partner, sex, job, alcohol, escapism**

Of all these 'need suppliers' how many are external, how many could possibly stop meeting my needs, and how many do you ultimately control?

- **External: ALL.... Could fail me: ALL... Control: NONE**

What happens when a source of dependency stops meeting my needs?

- **Stress! We feel threatened. This leads us into distorted thoughts, unhealthy emotions, and destructive behaviors**
- **Seek ways to get people- our sources- to start meeting our needs again. Guilt, charm, coercion, manipulation**
- **Look to other sources to get our needs met. Try different social setting, different church, different job. There are times that these dynamics need to change for us to be healthy, but often we just bounce from one source to another, trying to find something, or someone, who will take on the impossible task of meeting our deepest needs. Too often... different spouse.**
- **END RESULT is that life becomes all about us, what others are doing for me, and this makes it impossible for me to LOVE.**

- **WHEN WE LOOK TO circumstances, PEOPLE, to meet these core needs of dependence, there's three big ways Pete points out we do this, and none of them will sustain over time.**

Reality! Dependence, INdependence, and INTERdependence all set us up to fail.

- **DEPENDENCE- If I'm dependent on someone to make my life work, what is nature of that relationship? TAKE. Over time, I'm going to suck the life out of them. I'm also likely to feel controlled, trapped, maybe resentful.**
- **LIKEWISE, if someone is totally dependent on you, you can only sustain that for so long before you get tired, burned out, trapped, burdened. This is why children are not intended to stay dependent!**
- **REALITY OF RESPITE CARE... often caregiver will die before the one they are caring for.**
- **INDEPENDENCE. I don't need anybody. Can only trust myself. But this leads to isolation and loneliness, and you're still not looking to God, and will miss God's greatest plan for our lives, which is to LOVE PEOPLE! For most people, the well of self reliance runs dry pretty quick.**
- **INTERDEPENDENCE. We will depend upon each other. Jerry Macquire illustration- "You complete me" As I said in my article this week...**
- **That's an awesome line for a romantic movie, and a disastrous strategy for any relationship! If I'm dependent on another person to make me complete, or I enter into a relationship because I think this person will make me complete, what happens when (not if) they can't keep up their end of the expectation bargain? EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN DISCUSSING.**
- **Whatever the outcome, the relational stress can be traced to the false belief that "my need for being whole, complete, is dependent upon the provision or performance of another"**

person.” The converse is also true, when the validation we seek is contingent on our provision and performance. The result is a relationship based upon mutual taking, and the outcome is sadly seen all around us.

– **BOTTOM LINE!!!**

† Reality! *The greatest deception in relationships is that someone, something, or some activity other than God can be the source to meet our core and truest needs.*

True Belief #3: JESUS is the key to my needs being met; He is the source!

Philippians 4:12-19 *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

– **Paul goes on to share how the Philippian church had supported his ministry, his gratitude... ends with...**

¹⁹ *And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.*

– **That statement often claimed that if I give financially, God will give back to me financially. That’s not Paul’s point. The philippians were able to give generously because their HOPE, the CONTENTMENT, DEEPEST NEEDS, were not met by their money. They were able to be generous with their resources because GOD WAS THE MEETER OF THEIR NEEDS.**

– **Jesus makes this point in...**

John 15:4-5 *Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

† Okay, but how does Jesus meet my needs?

– **He uses people. Relationships. Friends. BUT they are the conduit, not the source, and has designed healthy relationships to be about mutual GIVE, not mutual take, because HE IS THE SOURCE.**

– **He uses the many gifts of life. Community. Fellowship. Recreation. Service to others. The the simple and profound joys of life. KEY!!! These gifts are expressions of God’s love, but our life, our well-being, and our dependence aren’t found in God’s gifts. They are found in him.**

– **Most importantly, as the true foundation of our life, God meets our needs through our faith relationship with HIM.**

○ **FAITH to believe HIS TRUTH- scripture.**

▪ **Who HE IS**

▪ **That I AM who HE SAYS I am**

▪ **Forgiven, made new, holy and dearly loved**

○ **FAITH to believe there is a bigger picture, we live in context of HOPE, of eternity.**

○ **FAITH to follow His teachings, leadership**

○ **FAITH to pray, develop conscious awareness of his presence, heart of gratitude**

○ **FAITH that I AM ACCEPTED. I AM LOVED. (prodigal son)**

○ **FAITH THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US A NEW LIFE, BROUGHT US INTO UNION WITH HIM, GIVEN US HIS SPIRIT...**

John 7:37-39 *On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.*

Galatians 5:22-26 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **(desire to find life in lesser Gods)**²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. **(Trying to draw life out of each other)***