

## Pastor's Corner 3-17-2018

### What do we Believe?

The other day I was listening to a country radio station and a song came on that caught my attention. This song has a very distinct message and on the surface the beliefs expressed by the artist sound quite positive and uplifting. But if we dig a little deeper, we will see that the message is humanistic and ultimately undermines the most basic tenants of Christianity. The song is called "Most People are Good" and it's performed by Luke Bryan. To get a sense of the song let's take a look at the lyrics from the chorus.

*I believe most people are good  
And most mama's oughta qualify for sainthood  
I believe most Friday nights look better under neon or stadium lights  
I believe you love who you love  
Ain't nothing you should ever be ashamed of  
I believe this world ain't half as bad as it looks  
I believe most people are good*

I think we should cut Luke a bit of a break for going out to a bar or a football game on Friday night. Afterall, he's not a Seventh-day Adventist and has probably never heard of the Sabbath. But setting that aside, notice the underlying message of this chorus.

His big idea, of course, is that most people are good. That's a nice sentiment but it flies directly in the face of what scripture teaches. Romans 3:10-12 says, <sup>10</sup>"As it is written: 'There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup>there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup>All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.'"

Throughout the Bible, humanity is portrayed as hopelessly sinful and wicked even from birth. This is a result of the fallen moral nature that we inherited when Adam and Eve fell from grace. It's not really our fault (at least until later in life when we reinforce that fallen nature by our own choices) but it's unavoidable, a genetic condition that nobody escapes. If we accept Luke Bryans' understanding of the basic nature of humanity then we might come to the conclusion that since we're all basically good, than there's probably no reason to repent of our wickedness.

The chorus goes on to uplift the virtues of motherhood (which is probably the one part I can't complain about aside from the fact that I think it's a bit silly sounding) and then launches into a reference to the hot button issue of today – loving who you love. This idea that you love who you love and there's nothing wrong with that is pretty popular today. Anyone who disagrees and thinks that God has set certain boundaries on acceptable love relationships is seen as a bigot. The truth is that God *has* set boundaries when it comes to love and marriage. We aren't permitted to marry our siblings, for instance. Or people of the same sex (if you want to see the whole sordid list of unacceptable sexual relationship check out Lev 18). But according to Luke Bryan, that's all fair game, because you love who you love.

Before repeating his original sentiment that most people are good he observes that the world "ain't half as bad as it looks." The Bible perspective is, again, completely opposite of what is expressed in the song. If scripture is to be believed, then the world is probably much worse than it seems. Regarding the time of the end Mt 24:10-12 says, <sup>10</sup>"At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, <sup>11</sup>and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. <sup>12</sup>Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold."

Rather than getting better, the world (and the people in it) is getting worse. This is only observable, however, if we look at things through God's eyes. Through God's eyes, humanity is sinful and lost, but because of his love and mercy, he has provided a way for us to escape our genetic fallenness. Bryans' solution (which is the same solution proposed by Lucifer) is to simply recategorize evil behavior as good behavior and thus do away with sin altogether.

All in all, I think the song is a mess and the message undermines the gospel story. The irony is that in the second verse Bryan sings, "I believe them streets of gold are worth the work, but I still wanna go even if they were paved in dirt." I'm sorry to say it buddy, but if you're hoping to walk the streets of gold, you need to start depending on the goodness of Christ and not on the supposed goodness of humankind.

In conclusion I would like to share the lyrics from another song that deals with belief. This is perhaps, one of my favorite contemporary Christian songs though the message in the chorus stems from the Apostle's Creed which is centuries old. The song is by the Newsboys and the title is "We Believe." I'll share just the first verse and chorus.

*In this time of desperation  
When all we know is doubt and fear  
There is only one foundation  
We believe, we believe  
In this broken generation  
When all is dark, You help us see  
There is only one salvation  
We believe, we believe*

*We believe in God the Father  
We believe in Jesus Christ  
We believe in the Holy Spirit  
And He's given us new life  
We believe in the crucifixion  
We believe that He conquered death  
We believe in the resurrection  
And He's comin' back again, we believe*

I'll take belief in God and his salvation over belief in man and his supposed goodness any day of the week. Keep searching Luke, and maybe someday your beliefs will be centered on God rather than on man as well.

Have a Happy Sabbath,  
Pastor Tyler