

In Gods World

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Date: 15 March 2026

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[0:00] Well, I'd like us to turn back to Romans 13. Let me read verses 8 to 10 again. Oh, no one anything except to love each other.

For the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and any other commandment are summed up in this word.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. For our two services today, and then for Sunday morning next week, we're doing a little three-part series called Integrated Decisions.

And that might sound like a bit of a strange title. It's trying to capture two things. First, it's capturing that life is full of decisions. This week, you're gonna make hundreds, if not thousands of decisions. What you eat, what you wear, what you watch, what you buy, what you throw away, what you say yes to, what you say no to, when to speak, when to stay silent, how to react if something goes well, how to react if something goes wrong.

[1:06] And all of those decisions are gonna affect your life. And some of them will have a very big effect on your life, and many of them will also have an effect on other people's lives.

The greatest kindnesses that you have experienced in your life have been received because of choices made by others. And the most painful bruises that you've experienced in your life have come to you because of choices made by others.

And of course, the same is true the other way around. The best that we've been to others has been because of choices we've made. And the worst that we've been to others has been from choices that we've taken.

And so our title is emphasizing that we all have to make loads of decisions, but it's also trying to emphasize that these decisions should be integrated.

Now, what do I mean by that? Well, first of all, we're recognizing, as we said this morning, that we're created to be thinking, choosing, deciding creatures. We're not made to be robots. We're not controlled by fate.

[2:11] We're not pre-programmed. And we make real choices. And that's a wonderful privilege and a huge responsibility. And that's a key part of the dignity of humanity that is revealed in biblical anthropology.

And as we highlighted this morning, we want to make sure that that decision-making power that we have aligns with the rest of reality.

We want it to be the case that our decision-making connects with what is real, what's true, and what's right.

We want our decisions to be integrated with reality. And in thinking about that, we're using a short summary and a diagram to capture what we're trying to say.

Our short summary is this, that making integrated decisions involves living under God's rule in God's world as God's child. Living under God's rule in God's world as God's child.

[3:18] And we put that into a wee diagram that you can see there. And under God's rule is this upward aspect to it. In God's world is an outward aspect to it. And as God's child is an inward aspect that applies to ourselves.

And that upward, outward, inward element all connects with the categories of authority and application and attitude. Over us in our decision-making is an authority, whatever it might be.

And as our decisions connect with the world and the people around us, there has to be application. And our decisions shape us, especially in terms of our attitude.

And we need to think about all of these things in regard to authority, who or what decides right and wrong? What are the overarching norms that should govern our decisions?

In regard to outward application, how do our decisions impact our families, our colleagues, our friends, our environment? And what's the right thing to do in any particular given situation?

[4:19] And then inward is asking the question, why are we doing what we're doing? And what kind of person are we becoming when we do that? And so in all these ways, in all these directions, upward, outward, and inward, we want it to be the case that our decision-making is integrated.

This morning, we looked at this, the upward aspect, the question of authority, and the fact that from a biblical point of view, we are seeking to make our decisions under God's rule, that we are wanting to follow what God himself is commanding.

And what God commands arises out of his very nature, who God is, then sets the parameters for right and wrong, and that shapes the specifics of what God says in the commands and laws that he gives us.

And so as we make decisions, we want it to align with God's rule. And that's crucial because it means that in all our choices, we're doing two things. We're either obeying him or we're sinning. We're either obeying him or we're sinning. And ultimately, we believe it's God who determines right and wrong, and we want our decisions to align with who he is and what he wants.

[5:38] And when we don't do that, the big thing that we thought about this morning and that we have to recognize is that if we're not making God the authority in our lives, then we are making something else the authority in our lives.

Maybe ourselves or another person or an object, or maybe we're saying there's no ultimate authority at all. And if we are replacing God with something else, well, that's idolatry, and it has huge consequences for us.

That was all what we thought about this morning. This evening, I want us to think about the outward, sideways aspect of our decision-making, the fact that our situation and circumstances are hugely important for how we make our decisions.

And at one level, that's very obvious. We're always going to be influenced by factors around us. So even as we make our decisions just now, it's influenced by the environment that we live in, by the resources that we have, by the legal structures that we live under, and even things like advertising or peer pressure or trends.

All of that can influence and shape our decisions. And so factors around us are always going to affect our decisions. More importantly, perhaps, is to recognize that our circumstances can also determine whether or not an action is right or wrong.

[7:02] And that's one of the things that's so important for us to recognize, that right or wrong, it's never just this simple, always black and white thing. Circumstances can make a massive difference.

So choosing to cut someone's skin with a knife, that has very different ethical implications if it's being done in an operating theater or if it's being done in a dark alley.

The ethics of smashing a window are very different if you're a firefighter or just a vandal. And sending your children outside in shorts and bare feet has very difficult ethical implications, depending on whether it's January or July.

But mind you, even in July in Lewis, sending your children out in shorts and bare feet might be the wrong thing to do. But you know exactly what I mean. And you see this even in Jesus. Sometimes Jesus told people to speak and sometimes Jesus told people to stay silent.

And that was all because of the circumstances that they were in. So when a leper was healed in Mark 1, he said, don't say anything to anyone. But when the demon-possessed man in Mark 5 was healed, Jesus said to him, go home, tell your friends how much the Lord has done for you.

[8:17] Completely opposite instructions. And so in two different situations, the right thing in one was the wrong thing in the other and vice versa. And of course, it's circumstances and situation that is the key factor.

What is right and wrong in a hospital is very different to what's right and wrong in a shop. What is right and wrong on a rugby field is very different to what is right and wrong in Parliament. So we've got to think about our circumstances. We've got to think about how our decisions apply to the world around us. And I want us to use Romans 13 as our guide.

And that chapter that we read gives us a key biblical statement about ethics and about decision-making. It says here that love does no wrong to a neighbor.

But of course, that's a wonderful statement that every one of us, I'm sure, would agree with. But of course, it raises the crucial interpretive question.

[9:21] What is wrong? What is right? What does that actually look like? And of course, these are the questions that we need to wrestle with. And our circumstances can determine what it is that constitutes wronging our neighbor.

Now, at one level, right and wrong, as we saw this morning, is defined by the normative standards set out in the Ten Commandments. That's the kind of basic moral code that the Bible gives to us. But the outworking of those commandments can be quite complicated depending on our circumstances. So we looked at these this morning. This is Commandments 5 through to 10. The Ten Commandments are often split into two groups.

The first four are described as our duties towards God and the other six are described as our duties towards one another. And in these duties towards one another, the command is clear, but the application can sometimes be complicated.

So how do you honor your parents if your parents are separated and they actually have very different desires for you, very different expectations of you? That can be very difficult. How does the command, do not kill, apply in the context of war?

[10:34] And right now, of course, in our parliament, there's a huge debate about assisted dying, how this should apply to the terminally ill. Should a wife or husband seek divorce if their spouse is abusive or if they've abandoned them?

Should a parent withhold property, take property off their child, if that piece of property is harming them? So say their phone is doing them far more harm than good or if your parents find a vape in their jacket pocket or maybe even if they've got their hands on alcohol, should parents take that property off them?

Well, I think they probably should. But of course, that's part of the complexity of these situations. Should you tell the truth if you are in the Second World War and you're hiding Jews in your basement and Nazis come to the door?

Should you tell the truth? I think most people would say no. And is it wrong for someone who's homeless to long for a house and to dream of somewhere that could call their home?

All of these things just highlight the complexity of applying ethical standards to specific situations. The rightness and wrongness of decisions are affected by our circumstances.

[11:46] And that means that when we're making a decision, we have to look upward. Where's my diagram? We have to look upward and think about God's law, but we also have to look outward and think carefully about how that applies in different circumstances.

And so we're going to think about that a little bit more tonight. We're thinking about integrated decisions in God's world, in the world around us. And with Romans 13 as our guide, we're going to look at three things and we'll whiz through them quickly.

We're going to think about spiritual reality, communal responsibility, redemptive history. Now you might be thinking, what do all these things mean? Well, Romans 13 touches on them all and I hope that they'll all make sense as we go through them together just now.

So starting off here with spiritual reality. In many ways, Romans 13 is a very kind of day-to-day down-to-earth chapter. It talks about society, it talks about government, it talks about criminal justice, it even talks about taxes.

And it's a great example of the Bible speaking into the realities of normal life. But the thing I want you to notice first and foremost is in the midst of all of that, all the kind of government, criminal justice, taxes, God is constantly mentioned.

[13:06] All over the place, Paul mentions God. And that's the thing that I want to see, that as Paul talks about these structures and activities

in society, in all of it, he sees the fact that God reigns over it all. And so he doesn't have this sort of separation of his religious life and his secular life. Instead, he sees that the two are woven together. He never views day-to-day life separately from the truths of the gospel.

Instead, he recognizes that everything in the world, everything in the physical reality of the world around us, is part of a bigger spiritual reality.

And of course, Paul is just doing what Jesus did. Jesus, in Matthew 6, speaks about clothes and by worrying about your food and your clothes. And he says, look at the birds. Your heavenly Father feeds them.

Look at the flowers in the field. God clothes them with glory. And so even when Jesus is looking at the birds flying or the flowers growing, he sees that as through the lens of God's sovereignty, recognizing that the physical world around us is part of a much bigger spiritual reality.

[14:24] And that's the key thing that Romans 13, the first part of it, is getting us to do. It's getting us to realize that all of our decisions, even the most day-to-day and down-to-earth ones, are taken in the context of a bigger spiritual reality.

Now, first and foremost, that's reminding us that every decision that we take is taken what we call *coram deo*. Now, that's a Latin phrase. I don't know Latin. I love using Latin because it makes me sound clever.

I don't know Latin at all. But that's Latin for before the face of God. And what we're saying is that actually it's a beautiful and immensely helpful phrase because it's telling us that every decision we take this week and every week of our lives, it's *coram deo*, before the face of God, in God's presence.

And so you're going to make thousands of decisions this week. How many of them is God interested in? All of them. And so when we make a decision, we never, ever make that decision outside God's view.

He is our creator. We are his creation. That is the context for our entire existence. And so although Romans 13 talks about day-to-day stuff like government and tax, later on it talks about drinking, all of that is in constant reference to God.

[15:48] Every decision we take is taken, as theologians would say, *coram deo*. But the second thing we have to remember when we talk about spiritual reality is the wider biblical teaching of the fact that the spiritual reality around us is actually a realm of conflict.

And throughout the whole Bible, everything is set in the context of this bigger spiritual conflict between the kingdom of God and the domain of darkness. The fact that God is bigger than us, but also evil is bigger than us.

Not the same level as God. God alone is God. But there is a bigger reality around us and that's a realm of conflict. You see it running right through the Bible.

Right through the Bible, this conflict between God's good purposes and all the destructive, disrupting influence of sin and evil.

It runs right through the Bible and you see it all around us in the world. And if you look at history, you will see again and again and again that there are so many people who have thought that they've cracked, they've cracked the idea of fixing the world.

[16:57] And they think this is what we need. This is what's going to fix it. This is what's going to sort it. We finally cracked it. It's never worked. It's never worked.

Because the same conflict is there. It's actually bigger than us and we can't fix it on our own. And you see it around us just now that often that influence of spiritual evil, often it seems that it has a powerful influence of those who are in positions of authority and you see the kind of implications and damage of that on ordinary people in the world around us.

And so we see it, but we've got to remember that it affects us as well. That reality of spiritual conflict affects our own decision making.

And so as we're faced with choices, so often we are being tempted towards making bad choices. tempted towards the wrong thing.

That's exactly what happened at the very beginning of the Bible with Adam and Eve. They were tempted by an evil spiritual influence. We face the same challenge. And the reality of spiritual conflict means that our decision making is never pristine or pure.

[18:18] it's actually always messy. It's always messy. And so we might be lured into choosing the wrong thing for the wrong motives.

But sometimes we might choose to do what looks like a good thing, but we're doing it for all the wrong reasons. And sometimes we might have good motives, but we actually choose the wrong outcome.

That's all because our hearts are a battleground and we're making a big error if we forget that. Sometimes we think that our decisions are based on this idea that we are intrinsically good, that the world around us is intrinsically good, that everything is basically good.

Now, there is lots and lots and lots that is so good about us, about people, about the world that we live in. But the bigger reality is that we live in a realm of conflict.

And one of the big implications of that is that when it comes to decisions, we can get it wrong. And very often we do get it wrong. And sometimes we can make the wrong decision while all the time thinking that what we're doing is right.

[19:27] And that's true of us as individuals. It's true of governments. It happens all the time. Now, for every decision we make, we've got to remember two things.

We've got to remember that God is guiding and Satan is prowling. God is guiding and Satan is prowling. God's guidance comes through revelation.

That's the Bible. As God reveals himself to us, we see the ethics of the gospel, we seek to apply that to our lives. God's guidance comes through revelation. Satan's prowling comes through temptation.

He makes things look attractive that are actually so destructive. And, you know, if you meet people or see people or know people or maybe you've been this, maybe you've been this yourself that you can think of the worst decisions that you made in your life.

I'm sure there was a moment when it looked like a good idea. That's exactly how temptation works. And in terms of that kind of decision-making, look at the things that Romans 13 mentions.

[20:34] It mentions politics. It mentions money. At the end of the chapter, it mentions sex. It mentions alcohol. These are all areas where we can make good decisions or we can make terrible decisions.

And so one of the key steps for wise, integrated decision-making in God's world is to bear in mind the fact that we live our lives in the midst of a bigger spiritual reality and in that reality, there is conflict.

We are being pulled away from, we are being pulled towards sin or if we, as we seek to listen to God, we are being drawn back to our creator and to his perfect ways.

Secondly, we've got communal responsibility. The key thing I'm trying to highlight here is that our decisions affect the people around us. So there's that responsibility, not just for ourselves, but towards our community.

We can't make a decision that doesn't affect other people. And that happens in so many ways. It happens in work, in family, in communities, in society, in the church. And today, global connections are so strong that decisions that are being made on the other side of the world are affecting whether or not you will put your heating on tonight because of the impact of global economics.

[21:49] And of course, for people in the Middle East, the consequences is a thousand times worse than just a higher heating bill. And you see people affected by other people's decisions. That's because decisions carry communal responsibility.

This is a key emphasis of Romans 13. It's a key emphasis of the whole gospel. And the gospel is asking us to do one massive thing. It's asking us to love one another and for that to be the principle that shapes all our behavior and therefore all of our decisions.

And Paul uses the language of obligation. In fact, he uses the language of debt. He says, owe no one anything except to love each other. That's the debt that you always owe towards one another. Now, this is so important because so often our decisions are based on what we think we are owed. I deserve a treat.

I deserve more money. I deserve an easier time of it. I've earned this drink. I'm owed a break. I deserve respect. And so often we make decisions based on what we feel that we're entitled to. [23:01] What we feel we are due. But the pattern of the gospel is the opposite. We are to base our decisions not on what we feel we are due but on what we owe.

And Paul is teaching us that the debt we owe is a debt of love. Now, primarily that debt of love is towards the God who has shown so much incredible love towards us. But the pattern of the gospel is always one where goodness overflows. So the love that we have for God also spills out and overflows into love towards the people around us. And of course, that's just simply to be like Jesus. He has this incredible overflowing love towards God, his Father. and that love also overflows into each one of us as well into all those whom he has made.

And then verses 9 and 10 as you can see there emphasize that that love for one another actually that fulfills all the specifics of the law. Don't commit adultery, don't murder, don't steal.

[24:06] All of the specific inquirments of the law are leading towards this one great principle that we are to love one another and loving one another means doing no wrong to our neighbor.

And that is so incredibly important for our decision making because it's so easy to do the opposite. It's so easy to make decisions that benefit ourselves and that hurt our neighbor.

Now you might be thinking I'd never do that. I'm not going to make decisions that benefit myself and hurt my neighbor but well, I don't know. You think about school where you kind of gossip about somebody that makes you cool and popular.

It leaves your classmate humiliated. You think of work just, you know, not really pulling my weight, being a bit lazy, that makes me feel much more uncomfortable, leaves my colleague exhausted. And in church we criticize other people and it makes us feel righteous and yet it leaves a brother or sister feeling rejected.

[25:10] so easy to fall into this trap, so easy for our decision making to harm people around us. And the key point is that it doesn't have to be like that. And Romans 13 is giving us a command for it not to be like that.

Paul, remember, is not giving these Roman Christians a command on the assumption that they can't do it. He's giving them this command on the assumption that with the help of the Holy Spirit they can. And all of this means that if we follow Jesus our choices should leave behind us a trail of people who have been treated well.

Our choices should leave behind us a trail of people who have been treated well. Now, I don't really want to go into any detail because you know that far too often the opposite has happened.

And that's true in families, it's true in communities, it's true in churches. Our behavior can leave a trail of people who have been treated badly. That is not the way of the gospel. And a great mindset for us to have is that we want to leave a trail of people who have been treated well.

Think about, God willing, we're going to be back here in seven days' time. Between now and then you can leave behind you a trail of people who have been treated well. Now, of course, sometimes that can involve harder conversations.

[26:33] In the gospel, doing what's right doesn't always mean doing what's comfortable. And teaching someone well doesn't necessarily always mean giving them what they want. But the key thing that we want is for our decisions, for us to think through our decisions, recognizing the communal responsibility that inevitably comes with those decisions.

Because the decisions that you and I make this week are inescapably relational. My choices are going to affect my family, my colleagues, my community, and the gospel calls us to a life where each of these is grounded on love.

And so, our decisions can have a huge influence on other people, but equally, it's important to remember that the influence of other people can have a huge effect on us as well.

Here, Paul is instructing people, instructing us to make decisions that are going to show others that we love them. So often, however, we make decisions desperately hoping that other people will love us.

Isn't that true? It's so easy to make an idol out of other people's opinions, and especially out of other people's approval. We want to just make decisions that are going to make people like us and love us and think well of us.

[27:53] And it's so easy for that to influence us, and it's so easy for that to affect us on our walk as a Christian. Maybe, maybe, that's the single biggest thing stopping you from becoming a Christian.

The feeling, what are other people going to say? Maybe it's the single biggest thing stopping you from telling anybody that you actually are a Christian, but you don't want anybody else to know. It's so easy for our decisions to be so influenced by the fear of what other people think. I've fallen to that trap so many times in my life, so I feel like a hypocrite saying all of this.

But it's so easy to think, you know, you make a decision thinking, I hope that they'll think well of me, when we really want it to be the case that we make a decision and it leaves behind a knowledge with them that we love them and that we care for them.

That is the pattern. That is the basic pattern of Christian living that Romans 13 sets before us. So in making decisions, integrated decisions in God's world involves recognizing spiritual reality, it involves thinking carefully about communal responsibility, and finally, it involves thinking about redemptive history, and this is where Paul takes us in the last section of the chapter.

[29:17] Now, first thing I want to highlight here, I'll explain redemptive history in a moment. The first thing I want to highlight is that history itself is incredibly important for thinking about how we apply our decision making.

History has a big impact on whether or not a decision is right or wrong. So I want you to imagine after the service tonight, you go home, you sit down, and you pour a glass of wine. Is that the right thing to do or the wrong thing to do?

Well, it all depends on history. So if you are somebody who enjoys a glass of wine responsibly, then it's a great thing to do, and it's absolutely fine.

But if you're in recovery from years of struggling with alcohol abuse, it's absolutely not the right thing to do. And if you've already had ten glasses of wine this afternoon, it's definitely not the right thing to do either.

I doubt anybody would be here if that was the case. But you know what I mean? The key factor is history. It's history that makes that right or wrong. And history can have a huge impact on our decisions.

[30:23] So you might choose whether or not you're going to get on the plane because of a bad experience you had in the past. You might choose not to speak in school or at work because you've had a bad reaction when you did it in the past.

Or you might choose to do something wrong at school or at work because previously you got away with it. History shapes our decisions. Sometimes it can help us make a good choice.

Often it can move us to make a bad choice. In the gospel our history should have a massive impact on our choices.

And fundamentally that's because as Christians God has saved us. And we want our choices to express our love and our thanksgiving and our devotion to him.

The history in our lives the fact that we have come to know the amazing saving grace of God in Jesus. That is the best aspect of our history.

[31:25] And we want it to shape every single choice that we make. And the Bible recognizes all of this and in particular it wants us it urges us to make our decisions in light of redemptive history.

Now what do I mean when I talk about redemptive history? Well redemptive history is basically the history of God's salvation. His purposes and plan of salvation being worked out over history.

So God doesn't work out his plans in an instant. He works out his plans over history. That history culminates in the coming of Jesus Christ and in his death and resurrection.

And God's purposes are worked out his saving purposes are worked out over history. We call that redemptive history. And that works out across the whole Bible and indeed across the whole of history.

And I'm right ahead of time as I always do but I'm going to try and see if I can get through this very very quickly. Redemptive history is very important. We've got to understand it because it's crucial to bear it in mind when we make decisions.

[32:26] One area where this is crucial is in the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. So you might look at aspects of the Old Testament and there are lots and lots of commands in the Old Testament and people sometimes look at them and they think oh are we not meant to eat certain foods?

Oh are we not meant to wear certain fabrics? Oh are we not meant to do certain... And you see these commands in the Old Testament and you think well do they apply today? And the reason that they don't apply today is because of redemptive history.

Redemptive history helps us to understand the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is a shadow pointing towards the true fulfillment of God's saving purposes in Jesus Christ and the New Testament era which is inaugurated in Christ continues on today and will be consummated at Jesus' return and what was in the Old Testament shadow much of that has passed and been fulfilled in Jesus and so that helps us to understand how to apply the ethical instructions that we read in the Bible.

It also means now that as we live out our lives we are living in a moment of in a time of tension because we are living our lives as citizens of a new kingdom.

We are living out our lives as part of God's family and we are living out our lives recognizing that our ultimate loyalty is with Him but we are also living in our lives in a world that is still not fully restored and not fully renewed and still full of the influence of sin in our lives and in the world around us and that means we have got lots of choices to make that aren't perfect and that aren't simple and so a great one is when the Christians are trying to figure out who to vote for.

[34:09] You are voting in society and you think well I can see three different candidates and they have all got stuff I disagree with and they have all got stuff I do agree with and it can be very difficult to make that decision. It can be very hard in our work context sometimes what our employers will expect of us won't align with what we feel comfortable doing and we have to try and make that decision and we have to battle with that when we think about engaging with society what to read what to listen to what to watch all of that can be very challenging because we are living in that time of tension where we have been saved by grace but we are not yet home in heaven we are living in what is known as the era of the already and not yet and that is a time of tension and that can make lots and lots of decisions difficult and I think Romans 13 gives us very good advice back in the middle section where it says well look if you are in doubt our default is towards grace our primary aim is that we want to make decisions that show that we love one another and so we need to think about where we are right now in redemptive history we need to think about where we are right now in redemptive history when we make our decisions but even more importantly we need to think about where we are going and so in our recognition of redemptive history we are recognizing that history is moving towards an end point and the way we describe that the category for describing that in scripture is eschatology if we want we can just use the language of destiny the fact that that time and history is moving towards an end point and biblically integrated decision making remembers that we remember that what we decide now is in the context of what will happen then and the great emphasis of one of the great emphases of biblical eschatology is that there will be a day of judgment a day when every wrong is put right every sin is called to account justice will be done and eternities eternal destinies will be set that's what the gospel is actually addressing this is what it's all about and that's the amazing hope of the gospel that it gives us forgiveness and salvation and security for now and for eternity and that's that's what the whole gospel is grounded on and focusing on that's what Jesus and the Bible

care about and one of the things that the bible says again and again and again and that the new testament makes abundantly clear is that jesus is coming back that's a core belief of christianity we believe that jesus is returning and the massive emphasis of romans 13 and of the whole bible is that we need to make our decisions remembering that and paul uses the language of waking up and that's what he's talking about when he talks about the night being gone the day at hand all of it all of that's the language of saying look remember remember eschatology and remember that jesus is returning and that should affect every part of our lives and in these verses paul talks about our social lives in terms of drinking talks about our sex lives and talks about our relational lives quarreling jealousy all that kind of stuff every decision that we make should be shaped by the fact that jesus is coming back when was the last time you thought like that when was the last time i thought like that the whole perspective

of the bible is never actually to do with the specifics of this moment or this little period that we're living in the whole perspective of the bible is from this perspective of eternity and all of that means that our decision making must be shaped by our eschatological situation by that i mean that our decisions have implications for eternity one of the key things that the bible teaches is that there is a day of judgment and that's all the implications of that need to be thought through but the other thing that the bible teaches is that there's a day of opportunity that's today that's why jesus has commanded us to proclaim the gospel because this is the day of opportunity for all of us to come to him in faith and to find the salvation that he gives and to make our eternities secure and safe in him and so we need for our decisions to be integrated that involves thinking about spiritual reality it involves remembering communal responsibility and it involves understanding redemptive history another way of saying it all oh man ten past seven sorry too long i could have said my whole sermon in ten seconds i could have said my whole sermon in ten seconds i could have said it like this in your decisions this week don't be secular so don't think that this world is just all that there is we're part of something much bigger don't be secular don't be selfish remember your communal responsibility and most importantly of all don't be short-sighted what matters this week is nowhere near as important as what happens in eternity don't be secular don't be selfish don't be short-sighted with the lord's help we will make integrated decisions amen