

1 Peter 1:17-19 – Part LL

1Pe 1:17 (NKJV) **And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; ¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.**

This morning we want to begin by looking at the phrase in v18 and what Paul says was our “**aimless conduct**”. What I want to do is paint a picture of how God sees a man or woman who is lost and has no interest in Christ. That is all. Why do that for those of us who are saved. It is so that we can fully and deeply appreciate v19 and the “**precious blood of Christ**”. The individual who has no appreciation for Christ has no understanding of their own personal depravity. The phrase “**aimless conduct**” is translated as follows in some of the other translations:

1Pe 1:18 (NASB) **knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,**

1Pe 1:18 (ESV) **knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,**

1Pe 1:18 (AMP) **You must know (recognize) that you were redeemed (ransomed) from the useless (fruitless) way of living inherited by tradition from [your] forefathers, not with corruptible things [such as] silver and gold,**

1Pe 1:18 (NIV) **For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers,**

1Pe 1:18 (ISV) **For you know that it was not with perishable things like silver or gold that you have been ransomed from the worthless way of life handed down to you by your ancestors,**

“Useless, futile, fruitless, empty, worthless, aimless” – that is quite an assortment of terms. In the Greek Interlinear it is translated as “**vain**”. It is the Greek word “*mataios*” and in all of the various dictionaries is defined as being vain, empty, fruitless, and aimless. It is like someone who was actually chasing the wind or shooting at stars – useless, vain, aimless.¹ The implication and tragedy of this word is what it is inferring about people who are lost. It is implying that outwardly they think that their life is headed in the right direction, but in the final analysis they are simply what the Bible would call a “**fool**”. They may be outwardly successful, educated, wealthy, and whatever other quality they deem as important. However, the ultimate and final result of living a life without Christ can only be spoken of as utterly worthless and completely useless. [Mark 8:36](#) and [Luke 9:25](#) describe it this way,

Mk 8:36 (NKJV) **For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?**

Lk 9:25 (NKJV) **For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?**

That is a very rhetorical question, and the obvious answer is that it will not benefit that individual one thing.

The dilemma that faces the lost person is that they have to decide what it is that they are going to believe about Christ – is He risen or is He not risen. If Christ is risen from the dead and His resurrection is an actual historical reality, then no matter what they deem to be a successful life is utterly worthless in eternity. It has no value. Think of it this way. Someone who is lost and who denies the reality of Christ's resurrection becomes very, very successful by the world's standards. They live the good life, have the best of everything, travel extensively, and live luxuriously every day. However, they finally reach that fateful day appointed to all men when they die and pass out into eternity, and at that very moment, everything that they thought to be valuable and worth having is found to simply go "poof" – gone, no more, non-existent, and of no value whatsoever. "Poof" is the spiritual reality of living a vain life. They are left completely with nothing whatsoever of any value. They are at that moment naked, destitute, and eternally sealed to a life of indescribable horror from which there is no escape.

Now, there are two distinctive elements about this word that really make it even more interesting. The first is that very often "*mataios*" refers to the deceptive quality of something or someone. I hate to be deceived, to be lied to, to have someone be dishonest with me. We had someone come into our Awana service last week and all they wanted was some money. I did not believe one word that the guy was telling me – not one word. His story was "fake news" – right? It was fabricated to get something, and the tool that he was using was deception.

The second quality of this word "*mataios*" is that it refers to something that is both ineffective and useless.² I.e., it may be something that outwardly appears to be okay, but ultimately it has no value whatsoever. It would be like someone giving you a counterfeit bill. Normally when something has a deceptive characteristic to it, it is because it really has no inherent quality or integrity. People that are honest have integrity and character. Just think for a moment of something as simple as yard maintenance tools – weed eaters, chain saws, blowers, etc. Many of the tools may run or last for a few months, but then the lack of quality in the product begins to surface. This is true in purchasing tools. Very often the tools can look the same on the store shelf, but the actual lack of quality of the materials from which they are made does not become evident until after the individual has bought the cheap tool. Have you ever bought something and simply said after a short time that "This thing is worthless!" The problem is that what is on the inside of the product is not what it may appear to be on the outside. The product is built to break down, and ultimately the tool quickly becomes utterly useless and ineffective to its user. That is what this word is referring to – ineffective and useless. Most of the parts on major home maintenance tools are built to self-destruct within so many hours of use. The gears inside the engine are made of very low quality resin material designed to only last so many hours. The companies make sure that the gears will only last so long. Once you hit that hourly limit, the machine stops working and you have to either purchase a new piece of equipment or pay for an expensive repair. The equipment is designed to literally self-destruct within a certain amount of time – and it will. However, when you purchase it, the equipment is new and shiny and initially runs great and looks like it should last a long time. It is deceptive and becomes worthless.

So, a lost person can be living however they may want to live, going along as if everything is okay, but their life has this insatiable ingratitude that is more than willing to completely forsake God, forsake His

truth, and sell out to their personal whims and wants. The average lost person who denies Christ actually thinks that they are smarter than God. They forsake the only One who can save them. They literally become “**futile**” in their thinking. Listen to how [Ephesians 4:17-19](#) describes their condition,

Eph 4:17 (NKJV) This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,¹⁸ having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;¹⁹ who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

This is an amazing passage. Just listen again to the descriptions that Paul uses. They have a “**futile**” mind – “*mataiotēs*”. The word comes from our first Greek word “*mataios*” and means vanity, futility, and worthlessness.³ They have a mind that produces nothing of any meaningful value – utterly worthless. The lost man’s thinking, ideas, philosophies, opinions, beliefs, assessments, theories, views, reasoning, and discerning is all utterly worthless and futile and of no eternal value whatsoever. If what we believe and think does not lead us to Christ, then it has no value whatsoever. Nothing is more important than being rightly related to God. The picture could not be any worse.

Then their ability to even understand is “**darkened**”. The word means to be full of darkness and implies that the individual is both mentally and spiritually confused.⁴ I have heard some of the most bizarre treatises on God, how we got here, and where we are going that can be imagined. Just total mental and spiritual darkness. It is as if the individual literally understands nothing, absolutely nothing. Their mind is so confused and darkened that the most reasonable truth in the universe – that there is a real God – seems absurd to them. If a man just simply looks at himself, looks at his own body – eyes that see, ears that hear, tongues that talk, minds that think, hearts that love – and then blames in on an explosion in the universe, on some primordial slime, or billions of years of evolution, that man is an utter fool living in mental and spiritual darkness. Even his own physical laws of the universe completely refute his thinking. That is what these words are both saying and implying.

It gets worse and this is the tragedy of the darkness and futility of their mind. Men are so ignorant and so blinded by the sin of their heart, that now they find themselves “**alienated from the life of God**”. It means that because of the darkness of the lost sinner’s mind and heart that they have literally excluded and separated themselves from the very life of God⁵ – the one thing that they desperately need the most in their life. If the individual is excluded from the life of God, then it means that they are excluded from God Himself. They have no desire to even entertain any accountability to the One who created them. They see Him as a threat to their pleasure and to their vain and futile ideas about life, and in the process they keep removing themselves from the truth and ultimately from Christ who can save them. They disregard Christ as nothing, as someone with whom they desire to have no contact. They see God as a menace to their personal selfishness and greed. They want life solely on their terms, and God is just a nuisance to their lives. This is a very ugly picture – this idea of having an ungodly, worthless, and empty manner of life. So, they just continue in their immorality, in their drunkenness and debauchery, and in the darkness and alienation of their mind to anything having to do with God.

You would just think that it could not get any worse, but it does. It says lastly that they just give themselves over to “**lewdness**”, “**uncleanness**”, and “**greediness**”. Before we can look at these words,

we have to see how the verse actually begins. It says that the lost man is “**past feeling**”. Just think about that for a moment – literally having become so dulled in their mind that they literally have no feelings, no emotions about God except bad ones. The Greek Interlinear says “**having put away remorse**”. Nothing bothers them anymore. They can sin anyway they please, and it just not bother them. They can live in immorality and have no sense of shame whatsoever. The NASB, ESV, and AMP say that they have “**become callous**” or dull to anything having to do with God. The NIV says they have “**lost all sensitivity**”. That is how this verse begins. It says that in the blindness and darkness of their futile way of thinking that the result is always a moral degradation and depravity. They have no remorse about practicing any kind of moral impurity at all – homosexuals, lesbians, pre-marital sex, bi-sexual – you name it. The NASB, ESV, and NIV say “**every kind of impurity**”. The ISV says “**every kind of sexual perversion without restraint**”.

Now, I am sure that someone is wondering why in the world that I am making so much of this verse in [Ephesians 4](#) when we are studying [1 Peter 1](#). Well, it is because this is exactly that from which we have been redeemed. Before we can even come close to appreciating [1 Peter 1:19](#) and the “**precious blood of Christ**”, I feel compelled to highlight our utter depravity and worthless accomplishments apart from Christ. Do you want to know what you would have been like without Christ? Just read [Ephesians 4:17-19](#) again. We can never understand the magnitude of what Christ has done for each of us personally until we fully understand exactly what we were really like and what we have been saved from and what we would have become if we were still lost. I read something recently by the Puritan Thomas Watson and this is what he said. He said,

“Great was the work of creation, but greater the work of redemption; it cost more to redeem us than to make us...”⁶

What an incredible insight. Our redemption is the greatest thing that God has ever accomplished. He can do anything, anytime, anyway, anywhere, but He did the greatest thing and made the greatest sacrifice possible for us. Man in his depravity thinks so highly of himself, his creativity, his intelligence, and his individuality, that he sees the idea of a real God as an intrusion and infringement on his life. The more independent one thinks of himself, the further he will drift from God. Here is man in utter bondage to sin – a slave to sin actually, yet he sees himself as having no need for truth, and hating the absolutes of God’s Word. He hates the idea that God condemns the lost man to eternal judgment. He hates that God makes demands on his life. He hates that God is always right and he is always wrong. He hates the fact that he cannot live life the way he wants to live. Just to reemphasize all of this, notice once again how Scripture describes the lost man in [Romans 1:21-22](#),

Ro 1:21 (NKJV) **because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,**

The lost man is not even “**thankful**” or grateful for all that God has done. To the contrary, he is ungracious, unthankful, unappreciative, and ultimately becomes unpleasant and vile with his dissatisfaction of God. Church bores him, the Word of God bores him, God bores him. The problem that the lost man never seems to see or understand is so very simple. No matter the grandeur and the magnitude of a lost man’s earthly accomplishments and achievements, from the perspective of eternity

everything that he has accomplished is worthless. Just imagine waking up in eternity apart from Christ and realizing that everything you hated and despised was true and that not one single thing that you ever did or ever accomplished has any value whatsoever. How about that for a wake-up call – and I might add, a wake-up call too late.

For the person who has heard the truth and known the truth, but who chooses to deny and reject it, these verses will become their eternal confession and haunt them forever and forever. You see, what all of this should do is prepare us for [1 Peter 1:19](#). We should never walk away from an understanding of all of this with a kind of smug indifference or a kind of irreverent disinterest. We should never lose sight of what redemption really did for us. Everything that we have read today about the lost man was us in our sin and in our rebellion and in our spiritual indifference and arrogance. It describes “why” Christ had to die. It was because of me, it was because of you. As we close, listen to how Peter will close out this portion of the passage in [1 Peter 1:20-21](#),

1Pe 1:20 (NKJV) He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you ²¹ who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

ENDNOTES

¹ Zodhiates, 948.

² Harris, *mataios*, ep.

³ Zodhiates, 949.

⁴ Zodhiates, 1298.

⁵ Verbrugge, 37.

⁶ MacArthur, 71.

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