

Good Grief!

“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.” (Rom 2.14-15)

Introduction/Review

- ❖ For the past few weeks we have been looking at arguments for the existence of God. These have been mostly dealing with the physical sciences and philosophy. Today we will be looking at a slightly different argument, morality and moral law.
- ❖ Moral law is the idea that there exist certain actions that are impermissible across every culture and all time. This was brought to center stage after WWII, when the high courts were attempting to try many German officers and soldiers who had committed atrocities in camps and on the field. When trying them the Germans claimed they broke no German law and were following orders so they must be acquitted. This was a good point so the courts had to think about it before finally charging them with the newly made Crimes against humanity charge. The courts told them in a sense that their crimes were so heinous that they transcended any man made governmental system. They were admitting that there was a higher court that all men must answer to regardless of manmade rules.

Source of Morality: the Holy God

- ❖ As Christians we know that God is the source of all things moral and good. By virtue of his divine Holiness, love and justice he wills our conformation to himself. His will is for us to be as he is holy, loving and just. As Lev 11.45 shows that God called his people (Israel) to be holy as he is. In Rom 12.1-2 God tells us to present ourselves holy unto him. God’s attitude is that his creation should model his holiness.
 - God is holy – Lev 11.44-47, ch 19-22 God is holy and demands his people do so as well
 - God just – Deut. 32.4, Zeph 3.5
 - God made man in his image and gave him his law on his heart. It therefore is safe to say we get this innate sense of morality directly from God.
 - Since God, the creator is the true source of morality, it is no surprise that all people have a sense of right and wrong, of things permissible and things taboo. As Rom 2.14-15 teaches all men have a law written on their hearts and a conscience bearing witness to that law. I Cor 5.1 Paul says there is fornication in the church that even the Gentiles will not commit. The Gentiles understood that this practice was unacceptable. Only the

Corinthians who knew better abused grace to do it, but the gentiles and the Corinthians still knew the action to be wrong.

- ❖ The idea that this law permeates all culture is encapsulated in the Declaration of Independence, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.” Clearly the founding Fathers believed that there are certain rights and just actions handed down and seated in the Creator. The truths are self –evident because they believe all men know them without needing proof.

- ❖ C.S. Lewis wrote that no culture is immune to the sense of right and wrong. He writes “Think of a country where people were admired for running away in battle, or where a man felt proud of double-crossing all the people who had been kindest to him. You might just as well try to imagine a country where two and two made five.” Lewis here asks us to imagine these things because no culture has been like this. J. Budziszewski professor at university of Texas says something similar “Everyone knows certain principles. There is no land where murder is virtue and gratitude is vice.” Budziszewski like Lewis recognizes that all peoples and countries have certain codes of ethics.

The Moral argument

- ❖ The moral argument simply stated is as follows
 - All laws require a law giver
 - There exists an all encompassing moral law that transcends all cultures and governments.
 - Therefore there must exist a transcendent, all encompassing moral law giver.

- ❖ Major contributors include, C.S.Lewis and William Sorley
 - William Sorley – Professor of moral philosophy at Cambridge University wrote *Moral Values and the Idea of God*(1918) in his book Sorley argued that God was our only hope to show a rational view of reality based on natural and moral orders.
 - William Lane Craig Reverses the argument to say
 - If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.
 - Objective moral values and duties do exist.
 - Therefore, God exists.

- ❖ This may be a more clearly stated way of saying it. If naturalism is correct then morality is an illusion and does not exist, yet, we know that morals do exist. So, naturalism must be false.
 - C.S. Lewis
 - Lewis taught that “feeling a desire to act in a certain way – say, the desire to help – is different from the feeling that we ought to help even if we really don’t want to do so. In the case of a cry for help, we will normally feel two desires – the herd instinct to help and the instinct of self-preservation, to keep out of danger. We also find inside a feeling that tells us we ought to follow the help instinct. Clearly, the thing which judges between the two instincts is neither of them.”(Shepherds notes Meer Christianity pg 16)
 - Here Lewis distinguishes between a fight or flight mentality but another desire helps us determine which one to follow. According to natural selection we should always choose our own survival. We would never choose to place ourselves in harm’s way for another human. Yet as the Bible tells us this is the true essence of love as defined by the scriptures that “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15.13)
 - Love is a moral law that requires action. It is a demonstrative love that the scriptures command of the Believer Rom 13.8-10 teaches us that to love is to fulfill all the law. We are to love, love others, love God. The world knows love is a good thing. Although an often misled and wrong idea of what it is, they still know love is something to be sought and given.
- ❖ So how can we know morals do exist?
 - Several ways exist but probably the most obvious and easy to remember is by our sense of justice and injustice. The difference between the two is only possible with objective morality. Justice is good and moral while injustice is always wrong and immoral. I believe it is Craig who uses the illustration of the student receiving a poor grade based on the color of his folder and not the merits of his paper. Often people will deny moral truths until they are affected negatively. It is often in the reactions of people that we see they do possess values. (even if misguided or misplaced) Such as the rioting after Trump’s election for racism, sexism, tyranny, ect. All these things are bad things and the fact that these people are so passionately opposing them shows they do in fact believe these things are wrong.
 - The moral argument is undeniable to almost everyone who is being honest. You will be hard pressed to find anyone who denies that they do not have a feeling that some things are just wrong. Even a hardened Atheist like Richard Dawkins believes in moral

obligations. A whole section of his book *The GOD Delusion* is devoted to defending children against the Child abuse of religious indoctrination. He says “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me. The adage is true as long as you don’t really believe the words. But if your whole upbringing, and everything you have ever been told by parents, teachers and priests, has led you to believe, really believe, utterly and completely, that sinners burn in hell (or some other obnoxious article of doctrine such as that a woman is the property of her husband), it is entirely plausible that words could have a more long-lasting and damaging effect than deeds. I am persuaded that the phrase ‘child abuse’ is no exaggeration when used to describe what teachers and priests are doing to children whom they encourage to believe in something like the punishment of unshriven moral sins in an eternal hell.”(pg 357-358)

- Clearly Dawkins believes that teaching children of hell and sin is abuse in a mental way which he believes is worse than physical molestation. But why does this matter to him? Without God morality is nothing. If naturalism is true the animal kingdom is full of ‘child abuse’ and no one cares. Many animals may eat or molest their own young or that of the same species; some kill them to weed out competition. Why are humans expected to act different than their animal cousins? This is committing species-ism.
- C.S. Lewis had somewhat to say to this point in *Christians Reflections* “One thing is immediately clear. We can have no ethical motives for adopting any of these systems. It cannot, while we are in the vacuum, be our duty to emerge from it. An act of duty is an act of obedience to the moral law. But by definition we are standing outside all codes of moral law. A man with no ethical allegiance can have no ethical motive for adopt in one. If he had, it would prove that he was not really in the vacuum at all. How then does it come about that men who talk as if we could stand outside all moralities and choose among them as a woman chooses a hat, nevertheless exhort us (and often in passionate tones) to make some one particular choice? They have a ready answer. Almost invariably they recommend some code of ethics on the ground that it, and it alone, will preserve civilization, or the human race. What they seldom tell us is whether the preservation of the human race is itself a duty or whether they expect us to aim at it on some other ground.”
 - Here Lewis takes aim at arguments like Dawkins’. Why can someone who says there is no objective, all encompassing moral law (From God), yet passionately fight the injustice of child abuse? Lewis is right that most of the time the answer they give is that it will aid society and the longevity of the human race. This assumes that there is a goal. Morality exists to aid in survival.
- Another way can be found, I believe in the psychology of the brain. In *Romans* chapter 1 we find a description of man’s repeated rejection of God and his law and God giving them over to a reprobate mind. It is interesting to me that when people engage in sinful

acts over time their mind becomes messed up. We often see a mass murder or serial rapist and ask 'what's wrong with their head?'. These individuals (if captured alive) are subjected to a Psych analysis and are found to have deep seated psychological issues. Well duh! This is due to repeated action that is wrong. Studies in the area of pornography show similar results, as do studies of homosexual tendencies. There is a definite and undeniable link between repeat offenders and psychological deficiencies and I believe the answer lies in Rom 1. Tom Woodward puts it this way..

- “Design also implies constraints. An object that is designed functions within certain constraints. Transgress those constraints and the object functions poorly or breaks. Moreover, we can discover those constraints empirically by seeing what does and doesn't work. This simple insight has tremendous implications not just for science but also for ethics. If humans are in fact designed, then we can expect psychosocial constraints to be hardwired into us. Transgress those constraints, and we, as well as our society, will suffer.”
- The idea is that we have certain pre-set functions that God has given us and when we act outside of our 'Programming' bad things happen naturally to us. I believe this is what Rom 1.27 may mean. That when we sin using our bodies in ways it was not designed, we reap natural consequences.

Objections to Moral argument

- ❖ So what would the Atheist say to the moral argument. Many argue that morality has a Darwinian origin such as Robert Hinde, Michael Shermer, Robert Buckman, and Marc Hauser. This is also picked up by Richard Dawkins in his book *The God Delusion* Chapter 6. He agrees Saying “On the face of it, the Darwinian idea that evolution is driven by natural selection seems ill-suited to explain such goodness as we possess, or our feelings of morality, decency, empathy and pity....But what about the wrenching compassion we feel when we see an orphaned child weeping, an old widow in despair from loneliness, or an animal whimpering in pain? What gives us the powerful urge to send an anonymous gift of money or clothes to tsunami victims on the other side of the world whom we shall never meet, and who are highly unlikely to return the favor?”
 - Dawkins admits that morality is a real thing and not illusions. He argues that they were just evolved in a process called reciprocal altruism (you scratch my back ill scratch yours) and arose to further the survivability species. Just big words that ultimately mean nothing in my opinion. This is because it does nothing to actual answer the problem. This is the issue again of deifying the process and ascribing foresight and volition to it.
- ❖ As stated above one objection is that morality is just a 'herd mentality' which aids in the survivability of the human race, by providing order and justice. This morality has apparently only arisen in humans so far, as only we have the capacity to choose a more or less desirable action after weighing the consequences. However this alternate explanation doesn't do justice to our experience.

- It assumes purpose
 - It is not emotion/chemical so cannot be described or explained by naturalism
 - Many actions make no sense to the survival of individual organisms – such as self sacrifice to save others. This assumes that herd survival over personal is preferred to the process which means the process chooses and compares.
 - If survivability and advancement drive all organisms then why do humans participate in activities that work contrary – Suicide, murder, smoking, drug abuse, homosexual actions, incest, infanticide. These things either are directly harmful or work contrary to advancement. How could the same process that gave us moral guidelines for the purpose of advancement also give us addictions and selfish practices that work completely contrary?
- ❖ Another objection then would be that morals are not universal because different cultures have different laws. What is gross or immoral in one country is acceptable in another. Men everywhere do 'evil' things.
- Our response then should be that it may be written on all men's hearts but that doesn't mean they are forced to follow it. Rom 1:21-23 Notice that they chose to glorify the creature (man) and his wisdom over God's. God did not force them to make a choice he allowed them to make up their own minds. This is consistent with our free will.
 - This is like a couple who are lost and the wife is constantly telling the husband to ask directions. To which he undoubtedly replies with? Im not lost. The problem with people is that in the face of a just and holy God we would have to admit first we are lost and broken before him. Ultimately we have a pride issue that keeps us from God. A pride that I'm good enough, smart enough, strong enough, ect. This pride stands in the way of making a decision to trust in Christ.
 - Again it is usually in the negative that we discover we know the Moral law exists as Geisler and Turek state "the Moral Law is not always the standard by which we treat others, but it is nearly always the standard by which we expect others to treat us." (pg 175 *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*)
 - As soon as someone cries 'foul' we can see they really do believe in morality, ethics, justice and fairness. This is shown in all the recent riots against social injustice in all forms. Key word **injustice**. They all believe in fairness, equality, justice ect. and are passionate about it. Passionate enough to go on 'peaceful'

demonstrations. Whether misled or not they defiantly are convinced that some things are wrong and some are right.

Conclusion

- ❖ The moral argument is a powerful attestation to God and his law. By pointing people to the obvious fact that some things are wrong and others right and asking them to dwell on this fact which we often take for granted, we can show them why we feel this way and where this feeling comes from. We can also show them how morals cannot arise from any natural process due to them often working contrary to self-preservation, and survival of the individual organism. Herd morality is a farce that would require intelligence and foresight to change from individual interests to collective. Geisler and Turek speaking of this view as held by Darwinist Edward O. Wilson say “Wilson says that social morals have evolved because those “cooperative” morals helped humans survive together. But this assumes an end – survival – for evolution, when Darwinism, by definition, has no end because it is a non-intelligent process.” Although it is impossible to prove beyond all doubt that morals do in fact exist, most people know they do. This is because they do exist and God is their source. The Bible claims we have this Moral Law conscience, and awareness to what is right and wrong. Our job is to show people how to properly respond to this conscience and stop resisting the Holy Spirit.