Technolatry III - Redemption

Deuteronomy 8:10-14 Sun PM, September 14, 2014

*De 8:10 When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. 11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: 12 Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; 13 And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; 14 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;*

# Introduction

1. Today we are inundated with utopian views of technology – as if the next device is sure to usher us into the millennial kingdom.

* It is not surprising that the world would find comfort and assurance and hope in such a flimsy god as technology.
* The world is looking for a god, and will usually settle for any *easy* god.
* That is to say, the world will settle for any god that will not make demands on them.
* Or at least, that won’t make *uncomfortable* demands on them. Especially demands about repentance and surrender.
* One thing is for certain --- the world is not looking for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
* Do unsaved men long for a god to fill the hole in their soul? Certainly. But the world in general is content to heal the wound slightly.
* It is the Lordship of Christ that natural men resist:
* Think of the number of times the Bible describes unconverted men as being *alienated* and *enemies* in their minds by wicked works.
* Eph 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being **alienated from the life of God** through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:
* Ro 8:7 Because the carnal mind is **enmity against God**: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
* It is the tyranny of light that causes darkness to resist. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that men will not come to Christ because they refuse to give up their sin.
* Joh 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.
* And that is the point made in Romans 1  
    
  Ro 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
* The world has consistently latched onto whatever god is offered up by pop culture rather than receiving the God of the Bible.

1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

* So now, when pop culture offers up this new god – *technos*, we should not be surprised to see the world latching on like never before.
* This is by far the most powerful idol man has ever made.
* Sadly, many Christians have fallen into the trap of thinking that the improvements brought by technology are *only* good.
* Far too many believers rest on their technology, look to it for comfort and hope, believe that it will make the world a better place, and allow themselves to be re-made into the image of their technology.

1. All gods dole out blessings in exchange for our allegiance.

* It seems that whatever technology allows can very quickly become a demand.
* I will give just a few examples here --- the cell phone enables you to be always connected. People can reach you at any time, wherever you are.
* And that is why we have to remind people to turn their cell phones off when they come into church.
* And it is why people will *answer* their phones in places where they absolutely should not be --- like in a church service, or when they are at the dinner table or out to eat with their family.
* The cell phone allows you to exchange a text message – a simple way to communicate that allows you to send a message without disturbing anyone, and without interrupting the person you are sending it to.
* But then, your cell phone demands that you give immediate attention to that text message – that you look at it right away, and that you answer it.
* So in other words, it allows you to be uninterrupted, and then it demands that you be interrupted.
* Technology is supposed to save us time, and the way it is designed it certainly does *allow* us to save time.
* But then, it demands so much time from us and consumes so much time from us…
* Technology ought to help us to focus more deeply, to concentrate more fully over longer periods of time.
* But then technology, and particularly the Internet places a great deal of stock in the ability to be interrupted.
* Whether you look on blogs or at online resources, there is a constant presence of “links” that beg to be clicked on and rabbit-trailed after.
* And so in fact, what technology allows it in turn demands the opposite.
* And more and more Christians are finding that they have less and less ability to focus deeply and concentrate fully.

1. We become what we worship --- the Technolater is no exception.

* Judging by the young men I regularly encounter who can’t stop texting long enough to discuss eternal things or talk about their soul…
* And judging by the long lines we can expect every year at Best Buy the night after Thanksgiving, it is apparent we have become preoccupied with our technology.
* Preoccupied might be too mild – we are obsessed. Infatuated. Bemused.
* Idolatry moves in two directions – we worship what we are, so we make our idols like ourselves.
* But then we become what we worship.
* Those who worship the God of the Bible become like Him.  
    
  2Co 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.
* And those who worship God’s they make with their own hands become like them.

Ps 115:4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

5 They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:

6 They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:

7 They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.

8 They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.

Ps 135:15 The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

16 They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not;

17 They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths.

18 They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.

* They that make them are like unto them. When we forget God, we begin to resemble our idols.
* And we see this with our sophisticated idol of technology as well --- think of how we become like the technologies we worship.
* The more deeply we become preoccupied by technology, the more we become like it.
* The technologies that infatuate us are just machines – unfeeling, apathetic machines.
* We become that – unfeeling, incapable of deep thought, unable to discern, unable to reason.
* Our devices respond to stimulus – the click of a mouse, the stroke of a key – and we merely respond to stimulus.
* Our devices are not alive, and they suck the life out of us.
* Our devices do what we tell them, and we do what our devices tell us.
* Our devices have no real personality, and they strip us of our personalities.
* An idol is anything that displaces God --- whether it be God’s priority, God’s preeminence, God’s authority, or God’s place in the life, in the heart, or in the mind --- an idol displaces God.
* If we want to know what our idols are, we can ask ourselves: who or what has control? Who or what has priority? Who or what has our attention? Our focus?
* If it is anything other than God, whatever it is, it is an idol.
* Let me urge you to think of the ways that we seek to escape our duties and responsibilities towards God through technology.
* Think of the ways that we seek relief from the effects of the curse apart from God or independently of God.
* We are told – in fact, commanded – to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.
* But we have gotten it backwards – we seek for all these things to be added to us, and then we forget God.
* This is just what God warned against in Deuteronomy – that when we were blessed, we would tend to forget God.
* We all need to pause and consider the ways that we replace God’s priorities with the priorities that are demanded by technology.
* And then we must repent.

# Division

What is necessary for our idolatrous hearts to turn from their idols to serve the living God?

* Three things, as I see it: First, true conversion; secondly, sanctification; and thirdly, a godly Christian perspective.

## The Necessity of True Conversion

Which gives us the *power* to turn

1. It is regeneration, the new birth, the saving grace of God poured into the sinful heart of man that breaks the hold that idols have on our hearts.

* If I ever stop preaching salvation by Jesus Christ alone, I hope that you will move quickly to remove me from this pulpit.
* There is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ.
* But when we look to Christ, we have the power to break free from our idols.
* That power comes through the grace of God that is given to us at salvation.
* And it comes by the Holy Spirit, Who immediately begins to indwell us when we are saved.
* The results of conversion are well documented for us in the Bible.
* In the Old Testament, we can’t help but notice how prone the people were to turn back to their idols.
* Over and over and over again, God’s people went back to their idols.
* Last night in our devotions, we read the story of Micah in the book of Judges, who stole 1,100 shekels from his mother, returned them to her, and then used them to make idols and a temple in his own house.
* I couldn’t help but notice the way people love to have their own personalized idols – idols of their own making.
* In the New Testament, God turns that story around. We begin to see the way men turn from their idols.
* 1Th 1:9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;
* I am grateful for the example of these idolatrous cultures, because it reminds us of the power of God’s grace, power that is *transformative.*

1. The transformative power of redemption

* Redeemed man makes for a different reason than fallen man.
* Fallen man makes in order to find redemption on His own terms and to escape the demands of a sovereign God.
* Redeemed man makes in order to serve that same sovereign God.
* It is sin that drives man to invent in order to escape God.
* And so long as man’s sinful nature remains intact and unmolested, man’s tendency to make idols of the things he invents will remain unchanged.
* Only through redemption, as God replaces the heart of stone with a heart of flesh and makes a new creature, will man’s tendency towards idolatry be altered.
* “For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” 1Pe 2:25
* But this truth is what gives us hope --- because we know that God is in the business of drawing straight lines with crooked.
* Though we repeatedly make a mess of things, God promises to remake us.
* I am not here calling for you to sit back passively and “let the Lord do what He is going to do.”
* God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. And that brings up…

## The Necessity of Sanctification

1. Which is at once a work of grace and a work of volition – God enabling, man responding in faith and submission.

* We must be set apart to God. We must be holy.
* And that means we must repent where our attitudes towards technology have taken a wrong turn.
* Sanctification includes casting down imaginations and bringing thoughts into captivity *to the obedience of Christ.*
* I don’t want you to think that I am anti-technology. I typed this message on a computer.
* And I looked stuff up on my phone while I was working on it.
* But I want us to be reminded that technology is a good, and that it is at the same time dangerous.
* And it is dangerous, not because of anything inherently wrong in the things we make, but that there *is* something inherently wrong with us.
* We are sinners, and the Fall corrupts *everything* --- *starting* with our own thinking, our own imaginations, our own priorities.
* And that is why a thoughtful view of technology and of our attitudes towards it really is necessary if we are to live in sanctification.

1. But I must caution you again --- we are not justified one way and sanctified another.

* We do not find salvation in Christ and sanctification in our own works.  
    
  Ga 3:3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?
* There is no salvation in turning to technology --- we must turn *to* God *from* idols, which means turning **from** idols to God.
* But this is where we get messed up --- because we have grown accustomed to technology until our dependence on it has become invisible.
* We have come to expect that our problems will be solved by some technology.
* You might be thinking about an app that will record how much time you spend on your various devices.
* And if we get real sophisticated, we will invent an app that will block us off after a certain amount of time.
* We find ourselves punching our problems into search engines, we Google the answer instead of seeking the Lord.

Ps 20:7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

Pr 21:31 The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD.

Ps 33:16 There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. 17 An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.

Isa 31:1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!

* It is important for us to ask, “what are you seeking, and where are you seeking it?”
* Because it has become so easy to search and seek *everywhere except where we ought to be seeking and searching.*

Ps 71:1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. 2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me. 3 Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress.

1. Think of the ways we turn to technology for deliverance.

* We trust in filters, we have “technology fasts”, we get rid of the technology --- certainly there is a place for all of that, and I am not preaching against it.
* When we need answers, we go to Google.
* The thought struck me this morning, that your search history might tell a lot about your priorities, about what you are seeking.
* Of course, I’m hopeful that we aren’t going to Google for spiritual answers.
* But I’m afraid that we get so used to going to Google that we have forgotten how to go to God.

1. Technology is not the place where we find deliverance.

* Safety is of the Lord. God did not teach and instruct Israel to overcome their dependence on horses and chariots by getting rid of them.
* They kept their chariots and were instructed to trust the Lord.
* That is the key --- turn to the Lord.

Jer 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. 6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. 7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. 8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? 10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Ho 14:1 O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. 2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. 3 Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

Mic 5:10 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: 11 And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds: 12 And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: 13 Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands. {standing...: or, statues} 14 And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities. {cities: or, enemies}

## The Necessity of a Christian Perspective

1. When man has been redeemed, he is delivered from his idols. He then has the power and ability to see technology in a true light: first as *wisdom*, and then as *wealth*.
2. Technology as wisdom – technology (etymology – *techne = art or skill*) the way we apply our knowledge to problems in order to find solutions, using tools to improve our tools; wisdom is the practical application of knowledge.

* If we think of technology as a form of wisdom, that will guide us in how we approach it.
* Job 28:28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.
* Ps 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever. {a good...: or, good success} {his commandments: Heb. them}
* Pr 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.
* Pr 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

1. Technology as wealth – every good gift and every perfect gift is from above

*1Co 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*

* We must have a right view of technology, as wealth ---
* Someone said that the appropriate demeanor is one of “wary gratitude.”
* Wealth is good. It is a gift from God. It is a blessing.  
    
  Pr 22:2 The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.
* But riches are dangerous.

Ps 62:10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

1Ti 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

* This should teach us to practice good stewardship. Remember that stewardship is a kind of service – a steward is a servant – and thus involves submission to God.

# Conclusion

This is what Moses was warning the children of Israel about.