

Earthly-mindedness – Phil 3.19

Lesson 2: What's so bad about earthly-mindedness!? Part 1

Introduction

It's hard to see what's so wrong with earthly-mindedness because it's hard to distinguish between a minding of the things of the earth out of obedience to the Lord (1Tim 5.8; Col 3.22-24) and a minding of the things of the earth that hinders our service to and love for the Lord (Mt 6.24, 31).

We looked last week at what earthly-mindedness looks like when it's sinful. But let's take a closer look and consider *what's so wrong* with earthly-mindedness. And what we'll find is, according to God, it's a dreadful disposition that He opposes in His people.

I. What's so bad about earthly-mindedness?

A. Js 4.4 calls it *adultery*.

1. Being married to the Lord Jesus and called to set our mind and affections on things above, when we let them go after the things of the earth in His place, we are committing spiritual adultery against the Lord.

B. Eph 5.5 calls it *idolatry*.

1. What is earthly mindedness but a covetousness of the things of the world and Pauls says this is idolatry against our Lord, a breaking of the First Commandment. When we mind earthly things more than God we bow our hearts to them and worship and serve them.
2. What's the great evil in idolatry? Jer 2.12-13
 - a) When we let our hearts go after other things, we depart from our God, renouncing His protection and goodness to us, Hos 4.12
 - b) When we choose a thing of earth as our god, we profane the name of our God, forsaking the great God of heaven for a dunghill.

C. Js 4.4 calls it *enmity against God*.

1. Earthly mindedness makes a man an enemy to spiritual things (Phil 3.19) and puts him at opposition with God Himself (Js 4.4), who calls him away to spiritual things for his best things and to Himself for his Chief Good.
2. Earthly minded men go up and down on the earth loading themselves with earthly pleasures and treasures, without a care for their souls, making provision for the flesh to satisfy its desires. This cannot but put him at enmity with God and in opposition to spiritual things.

D. There's hardly any disposition more opposite and contrary to the work of grace and godliness in a man's heart than earthly mindedness, Mk 8.34-36. So that where earthly mindedness *prevails*, it's doubtful there's any work of grace at all in a man's heart.

1. It's contrary to the very beginning of the work of grace since the very first thing God works to do is disengage the soul from its love of the things of earth.
2. Christ says we must be willing to lay down all earthly things at His feet and give up our interest in it all and take up our cross, if we would be His disciples. The redeemed soul is brought to say, "Farewell earth! My heart is set on God and His Christ, whom my soul loves and to whom my all is surrendered."
3. Before Christ redeemed it, the soul was ever busy digging in the earth in search of its happiness; but once grace begins it work, the soul immediately comes away from the earth to seek the better things of heaven and its happiness in God.
4. If a man is still earthly and still busy about many things, then it's clear that the work of grace has not begun in that man. His heart is still earthly and clings to the earth.

5. If a man is a Christian, whatever earthly mindedness there is in him will hinder his enjoyment of spiritual things and his communion with God by the Spirit.
 6. Grace enlarges the heart and soul so that nothing of earth can satisfy anymore, the redeemed soul must have God, he must have Christ, he must have the Spirit at work in him. To a redeemed soul, all the things of earth are as a drop in a bucket compared to all that God is to him. But if a man is still happy with the world and still content not to look up to God for his good, comfort, pleasure, and happiness, then it's clear that no work of grace has begun.
- E. Earthly mindedness opens men to a great many temptations, 1Tim 6.9
1. When a man sets his heart on the things of earth and determines that they are necessary and that he must have them or else, he sets himself up for snares and temptations to shift up and down and strain his conscience to justify the acquisition of those things.
 2. Think of a man in a struggling business that is about to lose all he has. Only one thing stands in the way of losing everything, but his conscience tells him not to do it. If he's an earthly man, he'll muzzle his conscience and save his business; but if he's a godly man he'll let the business go and save his conscience before God.
- F. Earthly mindedness is one of the greatest hindrances in the world to profiting from the ministry of the Word, Ezk 33.31
1. When we sit under the ministry of the Word with a heart full of the dross of the earth, we can neither see nor value the things of the Spirit. We might commend the sermon and like the preacher, showing love with the mouth, but our heart is in love with the earth. Remember from Mt 13.22 that it was neither drunkenness nor adultery nor idolatry that choked the Word, but the deceitfulness of riches, the deceitfulness of earthly mindedness.
 2. When we bring an earthly mind and earthly heart with us into the house of God, it chokes the Word we hear so that it does not become fruitful. What was the reason the rich young ruler went away from Christ with no benefit? It was because he was in love with the things of the earth.
 3. On the contrary, a spiritual heart enters the house of God, receives the truth of God's Word, and finds it so precious that it wouldn't trade a thousand worlds for it. He goes home blessing God for such a morning, for such a Lord's Day, for such a pearl of great price that's worth more to his soul than all the world can offer.
 4. How many sermons have been lost on a man because his heart was clogged with the earth!? How many souls have been eternally lost when that truth that might have saved their souls passed by them, but they were too earthly to profit from it!?
- G. Earthly mindedness causes many senseless and harmful lusts in the heart, 1Tim 6.9
1. It causes men to follow after those things that are vile and base, things that have no worth or value in them, mere trifles and toys that moths eat, rust destroys, and thieves steal.
 2. It causes men to become servants of their servants. God made the things of earth to be a servant to us. But when a man chases after them and put his neck under their dominion, he becomes a servant to his servant. The honor he enjoys among men is not for his own sake, but for the sake of his earthly possessions and riches. Take these away and what is he? But a godly man's worth is in God's love for him and in his likeness to Christ. Take away all his possessions and the angels will still count it an honor to attend to him.
 3. A man might have more of the earth if he didn't mind it so much. It's because of men's earthly mindedness that God cuts them short of the things of the earth, or if He does give it to them, He makes it such a burden and thorn to them that they find no real joy in them. Whereas for a spiritual man who seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, to him God will give him all he needs of the earth for now and then all the earth once it's cleansed and made new at the resurrection, Ps 37.10-11; Rev 21.1-4. A spiritual man who

goes about his business on earth out of obedience to God and who commits all his work to God for success, will find himself blessed far beyond what he could imagine, and more happy in what he has than he'd ever dreamed, Ps 90.17; Pr 16.3

4. It's foolish for you to buy anything at a price greater than it's worth. But an earthly minded man not only pays more for the earth (in his endeavors and time) than it's worth, but worse still, he pays out for the earth what he might've paid out for heaven, and gotten a far greater return and benefit. Now his soul is lost and a whole world cannot redeem it.

Questions

1. Can you see some of this earthly mindedness in you?
2. What are the some of the ways we justify earthy mindedness?
3. When God gives us the things of earth we're so bent on having, how do those things settle with us afterwards? Do they come with peace and comfort? Why not?
4. What's the best way to get the things of the earth? From whose hand is it best to receive them?
5. What's it say about your heart if you can't live without this or that?
6. How do we seek things of the earth and enjoy the earthly things we have, without sin against God?