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# MDP of God

Have you ever had the experience of asking- “*how did this happen*?”

I remember one time when I was a kid we were having dinner- and Mom, *who was usually a pretty good cook*, had made something – I don’t remember what it was – but it wasn’t Mom’s usual results

*That is- it was awful*

Dad was late for dinner- so it was me and mom and my two brothers – I dug right in – and it was like – “oooh- are we supposed it eat this?” – *But I didn’t say that out loud[Said, I really don’t like this]*

Mom’s telling us- Go ahead and eat- as she was running around getting more things on the table- putting things away

So I’m trying to force this stuff down – but it wasn’t pleasant

Well Mom sat down *– took a bite and almost spit it out* – so it wasn’t just us—**obviously something was wrong**

And her reaction was- “*How did this happen*? It’s not supposed to taste like this?”- I think we ended up having hot dogs or something

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Have any of you ever had a “How did this happen experience?”

Used to happen to me a lot when I played golf – “*How did that happen*?- It shouldn’t have gone there”

Well that’s kind of what is going on in our first reading today

God is asking rhetorically through the Prophet Isaiah- “how did this happen?” *– It’s rhetorical because of course God knew how it happened*

God is saying through the prophet, “*I gave my people everything they would need to be a faithful and holy people* – **and they’re not**—what happened?”

The vineyard of course, is God’s chosen people- and the prophet says how God planted the vineyard – He used the finest vines – He tilled the soil – He prepared the ground for planting, and He looked for the crop of grapes, but it’s produced wild grapes

*How did this happen?*

And of course God knows how it happened- the fact is *there are the ways of God ------and there’s ways of the world*

*And the ways of God a lot of times looks a lot harder than the ways of the world* – the ways of the world seem more natural to us – the ways of the world look like they’ll be a lot more fun than the ways of God

And so even people who have been taught the faith – raised in the faith – can reject the ways of God *because the ways of the world* ***look*** *so inviting*

For instance, the ways of God call us to forgive those who have hurt us and to pray for our persecutors –

Well the ways of the world tell us, “**Make em pay** – get even – hurt them back”

## And that seems far more natural for us

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And that even happens in Christian marriages- one spouse might do something stupid – and the other one retaliates

The first one thinking they’re an innocent party [feel they’re justified] – does something else to **purposely irritate** the other one- ---but then the other one purposely does something to annoy the first one- *and it goes on and on*

*It’s certainly not good for their relationship* – it’s certainly not building each other up as they vowed to do on their wedding day – *but they’re getting even*- **they’re making them pay**

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Another example is that the ways of God tell us to look after the needs of others **ahead** *of our own needs* – St Paul told us in our 2nd reading last Sunday, “Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather humbly regard others as **more important** than yourselves, *each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others.”*

Well the ways of the world tell us, “That’s nonsense! -Take care of #1!-Nice guys finish last”

So the ways of the world would have us tear others down so that we can feel better about ourselves

The ways of the world says that if someone makes a mistake- you just *point that out to everyone*

**Point out their faults** – point out how they did something wrong – *that way you’ll look better in comparison- it will make you feel superior to them*

 So just go ahead and gossip about all they’re mistakes

**That of course is far from love** – it’s far from building others up – *it’s far from the ways of God*

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And you know, when we look around a lot of times it seems like the ways of the world are right – Good people are taken advantage of- faithful people are hurt- what appears to be evil people do get ahead in a materialistic sense- selfish people appear to get what they want

So it’s easy to see why people would abandon the ways of God and embrace the ways of the world

*And I want to address that in just a minute* – but I want to share a couple of more examples before I do

The ways of the world tell us it’s okay **to use other people**- it’s okay to lie to get what you want or to stay out of trouble- *it’s okay to destroy the unborn if they don’t fit in with your plans*

This is Right to Life Sunday, so I did want to mention that one philosophy of our world – *that the littlest and weakest among us are expendable*

*The ways of God of course are much different*- the ways of God tell us that we never use people – **instead we’re to build them up**

We’re not to lie or cheat to get ahead or stay out of trouble- *the ways of God tell us* we’re to be people of integrity – true to our word and honest in our dealings with others [sometimes is hard]

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And of course in the ways of God we’re called to make sacrifices for the needs of others – **to love others**-we’re called to stand up for the rights of others--- *that certainly would eliminate the destruction of the unborn as any kind of viable alternative in a difficult situation*

And it certainly would require the followers of Christ to stand up against this modern day holocaust – to identify yourself as “pro-choice” – when the choice means the destruction of an innocent human being is certainly **a rejection** of the ways of God

You know my friends—in the last few years we’ve had examples in the news of barbarity---genocide---beheadings—terrorist acts

And many people are shocked saying, “*How could anyone be like that*?—How could anyone do the things these barbarians are doing?

But you know for 47 years we’ve had that same barbarous behavior in our country—with the legal dismembering of unborn children

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And what’s really tragic is we’ve had presidents—congressman and women—U.S. Senators---and of course Supreme Court members *in full support of that barbarity*—we have almost half the U.S. Senate (including one of our senators) who support that barbarity—we’ve had more than half our Supreme Court who favors that kind of barbarity to be legal--- we have millions of people in our country who vote for those who support this barbarity *and act like it’s no big deal*

**Well it is a big deal folks**—I’ve spoken to you many times that I very much fear for the salvation of those who identify themselves as “pro-choice”—when the choice they are speaking of is the death of innocent children

And I need to tell you this---I say it in love—but if you are pro-choice in the area of abortion---you are no different than those in the Middle East who support Isis and **al**-Qaeda---who are beheading journalists in the Middle East

Your no different than the countries who give them safe refuge—the ones who financially support them—they may not be wielding the knife---*but they’re responsible for the beheadings*

In the same way—people who are pro-choice are responsible for the deaths of innocent children in our country—*because they make the slaughter possible*

SO I need to say in love—if you have been pro-choice in the area of abortion—**you need to repent**—you need to turn to God for forgiveness

**Now the Good News is** – there are people who earlier in their lives had followed the ways of the world –found themselves with an unwanted pregnancy and was involved in an abortion-or have been pro-choice-- *but have now repented of that*

And I think it’s so important to point out how God practices what He preaches – **God forgives** *– and when God forgives us He wants us to forgive ourselves*

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So I do want to say that if anyone here has been involved in that decision in the past – that *God reaches out to you with love*

If you’ve repented and received His forgiveness He doesn’t want you to keep beating yourselves up

He wants you to find the peace and joy of His love and forgiveness

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I want to briefly address how it often looks that those who follow the ways of the world rather than the ways of God **look** *like they’re better off*

**Look** like life is so much better for them then for those who follow the ways of God

The fact is, *we are made for God*- as St Augustine once said in prayer, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee”

*Looks are deceiving*- and this is where we need that leap of faith

A wonderful example of that is St Paul- in our 2nd reading today Paul is writing from prison – *he’s a prisoner for preaching the gospel*

From a worldy stand point –he had given up everything for Jesus- *he was a fool who had nothing earthly*

He was in jail facing death – he had been shipwrecked three times – he was stoned and left for dead once- he was beaten with rods – on several occasions he had been scourged

And yet St Paul in his writings radiated joy- he speaks of praying in **thanksgiving-** he says whatever is true- whatever is honorable- whatever is pure- whatever is lovely- whatever is gracious- if there is anything of excellence and worthy of praise- **think of these things**- /// Keep doing what you’ve learned and the God of peace will be with you”

Was Paul looking through rose colored glasses? **No**—*He had encountered the living Lord*

He knew that no matter what was thrown at him – he had triumphed in Christ- He was loved by Christ

He was focused on life with God- *so nothing in this world could overcome him*- and he radiated joy as a result

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That’s how we avoid becoming those wild grapes – by focusing on the life Jesus wants us to share with Him

The ways of the world look inviting- But God gives us a much greater invitation

An invitation to life with Him – but not only in the next life – **life with Him now** where we can experience His joy in the midst of adversity – His peace in the midst of turmoil – His love in the midst of division---**Right now**

My friends, let’s focus on the ways of God so that with Paul we can experience right here and now- the joy and peace that can only come from Christ