

In the World or Of the World?

1. Introduction

- a. I asked myself several hard questions this week. The answers I gave were not very reassuring. Let me share with you those questions and the answers I arrived at.
 - i. How am I different from the unbelieving world in which I live, how am I different from its values, its priorities, its system, its methods and its mindset.
 - ii. And...how does the difference I claim to have express itself in the way I live?
- b. I answered the first question by stating my values are different...I'm pro life, pro love, pro family, for justice, for truth, for honesty, I seek to understand God's point of view as expressed in the Bible before making decisions on how I live and conduct my affairs. I am a forgiven sinner by the grace of God and my priorities are ordered in light of that fact. My methods of relating to the world are governed by the truth of God's word as best as I can understand it.
- c. It was the 2nd question that I struggled with. I hope you struggle with it to.
 - i. I spend my **money** somewhat differently, giving priority to God and His church and the needs of others. But I don't really live sacrificially. If I did, I probably would bring my lunch to work instead of eating out 2x a week or spend less on indulgences like candy and entertainment.
 1. If I really took seriously the call to care, I would sacrifice those luxuries for those who don't have the necessities of life.
 - ii. I spend my **time** somewhat differently from the rest of the world. I spend a lot of time at church. I imagine that you do too. Granted, it's my job to be here, but even if it weren't, I would still be here every time the doors opened. However, if I am really honest, I would recognize how I spend other large chunks of my time. I spend them on me or my family. Not that it is bad, but it is the way that most other people in the world spend their time. They value their family and their own time. How is the way I spend my time really different from theirs?
 1. If I really took seriously the call to care, I would be more open to spending more of my time in prayer for others, and in spending time with those who are shut-ins, and with those who don't know Christ.
 2. That would be living differently from the way the world does.
 - iii. I spend my **talents** differently from the world. I don't spend them enriching or advancing myself. I believe that I try to use my abilities for God's glory. Or so it would seem to someone looking at me from the outside looking in. Truth is, I waste a lot of my ability and talent and neglect opportunities to use them for advancing the kingdom of God.
 1. If I really took seriously the call to use my talents for God, I would look for opportunities to use them in new ways rather than in ways that I feel safe and comfortable using them.

2. Scripture this morning relates to this subject and to making an evaluation of how you are different:

- a. John 17:11-, 14-19 *"I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are. ...verse14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.*
- b. John 17:11, 14-19 Message: *For I'm no longer going to be visible in the world; they'll continue in the world. While I return to you. Holy Father, guard them as they pursue this life that you conferred as a gift through me, so they can be one heart and mind as we are one heart and*

mind... Verse 14: I gave them your word; the godless world hated them because of it, because they didn't join the world's ways, just as I didn't join the world's ways. I'm not asking that you take them out of the world but that you guard them from the Evil One. They are no more defined by the world than I am defined by the world. Make them holy--consecrated-with the truth; Your word is consecrating truth. In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world. I'm consecrating myself for their sakes so they'll be truth-consecrated in their mission.

- c. Backdrop of this passage:
 - i. Last major prayer of Jesus before His crucifixion.
 - ii. He prays for the church who remains in the world.
 - iii. And then he states that He gave us God's word, and because of it, we didn't join the world's ways (just like Jesus didn't) and as a result, we are hated by the world.
 - iv. Finally he prays for us to be singularly mission minded and be about the work He left us behind to do.
- d. One common term and theme that Jesus uses is "the world."

3. What is the world?

- a. **The world is a system of beliefs, values and knowledge that is organized in active hostility and rebellion against God.**
- b. The Bible talks about the wisdom of this world and the spirit of this world.
- c. We're also told that this world is corrupt.
 - i. I'm not going to name all of the things that are worldly because we'd be here all day.
 - ii. I don't have enough time to name everything that's worldly.
 - iii. A list won't suffice b/c I'll miss something. The Holy Spirit must be your arbiter of what is worldly and what is not.

4. Worldliness and the Christian:

- a. The Bible says that we are not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world.
 - i. What does the Bible mean when it talks about worldliness?
 - ii. What do we mean when we talk in terms of being a worldly individual?
 - iii. I believe worldliness is perhaps the greatest problem that plagues the church today. Why?
 - 1. It ruins our effectiveness for the Lord.
 - 2. And it robs us of spiritual power.
 - 3. Perhaps you recall the parable of the sower? The seeds that were sown among the thorns that grew up were choked off by what Jesus called the "cares of life" and He noted that they kept the believer from bearing fruit.
 - 4. This is the problem!
- b. Sometimes we use the terminology, "a worldly Christian."
 - i. But that's really a misnomer when you think about it.
 - ii. Billy Sunday, used to make fun of the term "worldly Christian." He said, "Why to talk about a worldly Christian makes about as much sense as talking about a heavenly Devil."
 - iii. When you see a person who claims to know Jesus as their Savior, and yet their lifestyle resembles the world more than it resembles the lifestyle of a believer, then you have a reason to question whether or not that person has really had an experience with the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. What is the difference between *in the world* and being *of the world*?

- a. Jesus prays that we will be kept **in** the midst of the world.
 - i. This is very important.
 - ii. For centuries Christians have read the Scriptures to mean that, because the world is a dangerous place, we ought to keep as far from it as we can, we ought to put up walls around our family, our home, to keep the world out.
 - iii. As a young Christian, I was taught that the only safe thing to do was to steer clear of the world, and have nothing to do with it:

1. Do not go to places where worldly people go.
 2. Do not have contact with non-Christians, do not make friends among them.
 3. Some families would remove their children from any contact with the world by sending them only to Christian schools.
 4. Now there is a good reason for that at times, but one can go too far in that direction, and create another danger entirely –that is the danger of uninvolvedness with life and an inability to act as salt and light b/c we are disengaged from the world and the people in it.
- iv. We are not to isolate ourselves from the world.**
1. When Jesus sent his disciples out to preach, He told them, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," {Matt 10:16}.
 2. No sensible shepherd would ever do that, b/c wolves are dangerous animals. With one slash of their teeth they can rip a sheep's throat wide open. The world can do that to believers too. We must never forget that it is a dangerous place. Our safeguard is that our Shepherd with us and in us.
 3. Maintaining that loving relationship with him is what enables Christians to be in the world, but not of the world -- to make contact with the world, to establish friendships in the world, and yet to be kept from the terrible dangers of the world.
- b. **Being "of the world" means to adopt the world's values and to love the things, rewards and pursuits that this life offers more than God.:** WE cannot love God and this world or this life!
- i. Jesus said, *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money"* (Matthew 6:24).
 - ii. **There is one kind of love that God hates. Do you know what it is? The love of the world.**
 - iii. 1 John 2:15-17 *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever"*
 - iv. You cannot be a spiritual schizophrenic. You cannot say, "I love God and the brethren, but I also love the world's satanic system."
 1. In verse 17a he says, *"the world passes away"*
 2. Nobody buys stock in a company that is sure to go bankrupt.
 3. Nobody sets up house in a sinking ship.
 4. No reasonable person would lay up treasure where moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal, would they?
 5. The world is passing away! To set your heart on it is only asking for heartache and misery in the end.
 - v. He also says that if you share the desires of the world you will pass away.
 1. You will not only lose your treasure. You will lose your life.
 2. If you love the world it will pass away and take you with it.
- c. **REVIVAL AND WORLINESS:**
- i. I prayed with a group of pastors this week for revival. As we prayed, we read 2 Ch. 7:13-14. Most people don't read v 13 with the passage. Do you know why?
 1. Let me read it for you.
 2. Most of us don't want to have our stuff stripped from our hands, we don't want to suffer loss, we don't want to stop being a part of the world system that we have carved a niche out for ourselves in.
 3. **TRUTH IS...REVIVAL WILL NOT COME UNTIL YOU ARE WILLING TO LET IT ALL GO!**
 4. We are going to pray for revival. But it will cost you and I!
- d. What happens to us when we love the world?**

- i. James 4: 4 *You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.* 5 *Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?*
 - ii. The word for “adulterated” means to mix with something else, a foreign substance, not 100 pure. You can adulterate your coffee when you add cream! Or your steak by adding steak sauce. You can adulterate your relationship with God by mixing it with friendship with the world
 - iii. That is what adultery is, **bringing in something foreign to something pure**. The world favors a generic brand of religion, but despises those who are true and faithful followers of Christ. Isn't that what Jesus said" " *If the world hates you; you know it has hated me before it hated you*
 - e. Dr. David Wells (GCTS) observes, "*Worldliness is what makes sin look normal in any age and righteousness seem odd.*"
 - i. Which are we?
6. We are called to live in the world but not to adopt the worlds ways, values or methods.
- a. *15 "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*
 - b. We are left behind in the world – why? Why not just take us to heaven?
 - i. When we come to Christ, we actually are pretty excited about going to heaven. The problem is that we aren't “done” with earth yet. Many of us would like to wear the crown of life without having to bear the cross, to win without running or conquer without fighting a battle. (Spurgeon)
 - ii. You might have noticed that Christ did not pray that we should be taken out of the world.
 - iii. **There are three reasons why Christ left us here:**
 - 1. **Because living here is for our eternal good.** We are being made ready for heaven. Our lives are being shaped for eternity. This life is an adventure of change for us.
 - 2. **Because the world needs us.** Every person in this world needs Jesus Christ. We are left behind to finish the work of Jesus.
 - a. There is a story of Jesus having a conversation with Gabriel, the angel. Gabriel asked Jesus, so what's the plan? Jesus replied, “I've entrusted it to those 12 men who will give it to others.” Gabriel asks, “what if they fail, what is your plan B?” Jesus answered, “there is no plan B.”
 - b. The Coast Guard sees themselves as the last line of defense in the rescue of people at sea. If they fail, people die.
 - c. **You and I have a mission. If we fail, people die.**
 - 3. **Because it will glorify God.** – I read somewhere that “A tried saint brings more glory to God than an untried one.” Silver once purified and the dross removed more accurately mirrors whatever looks upon it.
 - iv. **Danger of Worldliness:** Quote: "*It does not matter how loudly you denounce or protest: if you join the world, they will not mind your words, and you are faithless to Christ.*" (Bible Treasury).
 - 1. I watched on U-Tube.com a video called Jesus Camp. It was meant to ridicule people who believe in Jesus. Kids of all ages were praying, crying, praising God at this camp in S. Dakota. They were expressing their values of heaven and not earth. The newscaster that was filming thought they were stupid. What a waste of a childhood!
 - 2. Christians are not meant to fit in on earth. We are supposed to feel out of place. We are meant to feel like we don't quite belong.
 - 3. We are aliens here. Quit trying to make this your home!

- v. A preacher asked a group of people, "how many legs does a dog have"? The group said, "four" ...the preacher then asked, "how many different paths can those 4 legs travel"? And the group said, "they can only follow 1 path". The preacher then made his point, The Christian, with only 2 legs...will try to walk down 2 different paths...the path following Christ...and the path following the world.

7. One way to avoid falling in love with this world is to understand our mission: Let me explain.

- a. **Our understanding of the difference between our duty and our mission will determine how we live.**
 - i. Our "duty" is to live a life worthy of our calling, and to await the return of our Lord.
 - 1. To live morally
 - 2. To pray
 - 3. To fellowship with other Christians
 - 4. To love others
 - ii. **Our "mission" is to make Christ known to the world and to bring His kingdom into men's hearts and lives.**
 - iii. **If we confuse duty with mission**, and believe that all we must do is live a good life, refrain from evil, support our local church and look forward to Jesus' return, **then we will not only fail in our mission but we will be indistinguishable from the world.**
 - 1. I believe that the church today has failed to communicate its mission and instead simply taught its members to do "their duty."
 - a. A soldier's duty is to obey his orders, to risk his life for his comrades. But a soldier's mission is to capture the ground from the enemy.
 - b. Should he confuse duty with mission, then playing a football game (instead of going to war) and risking injury to protect his quarterback will make him feel like he has done his job. But he will have failed miserably.
 - c. That is the church today.
 - iv. **Bar Illustration.**
 - 1. Three people enter a bar in Cleveland.
 - a. John is a salesman for an insurance company and is going to the bar to blow off some steam. He knows he will probably have one drink too many, but he feels like he earned it.
 - b. Pam is a single mom who lives alone. She is going into the bar to try to find companionship. She is lonely and would like to find someone who will help her fill that emotional void in her life. So she goes to the singles bar every Friday night to try to meet Mr. Right.
 - c. Adam is a young man who loves to impress the ladies with his dancing skills. He goes into the bar every weekend to see how many people he can impress.
 - d. What do all three of these people have in common? They are going into the bar to **meet their needs**. It is part of their life as much as breathing and walking.
 - 2. Two different people enter that same establishment.
 - a. Bill is an undercover policeman who is trying to catch the drug dealers who are selling drugs to people.
 - b. Mary is a drug and alcohol counselor who is looking for people who might need help.
 - c. What do these two people have in common? They are going into the bar on a mission.
 - i. It isn't to immerse themselves in the culture of the bar, because that would dilute their own mission.
 - ii. They go to fulfill their mission.

3. Like each of us...we are in this world on a mission.
 - a. We aren't to involve ourselves or immerse ourselves in the system of this world, because to do so will dilute the effect of our own mission.
 - b. Do you remember what that mission is? To make Christ known to the world and to bring His kingdom into men's hearts and lives.
 4. Too many churches have forgotten their mission. Too many Christians have set aside their mission.
 - a. **They have gone to the world to meet their needs instead of going to the world to meet its greatest need.**
- b. There was this lifesaving outpost on the east coast of Maine that was manned to rescue fishing vessels that ran aground in heavy seas. They had a number of lifeboats and no shortage of volunteers to help save lives. As they rescued folks, they would bring them to their outpost and provide the survivors with coffee, a hot meal and a cot to sleep in until they could go on their way. Over time, the outpost flourished, contributions made it possible to build a nicer building, to provide beds instead of cots, and included a kitchen with all of the best equipment. The rescue mission began to have social events and meals for the volunteers. One day, a ship ran aground and when they rescued the survivors, they found that many were immigrants who were badly hurt. Their presence in the rescue outpost left it dirty and disorderly. The members of the outpost voted to stop providing rescue services because it was interrupting the flow of the smooth operation of their facilities and fellowships and was taking funds away they needed for upkeep. Meanwhile, another ship ran aground and because no lifeboats were dispatched, the entire crew drowned.
- i. That outpost had confused its mission with its duties. Churches and Christians are confusing them too.
 - ii. Verse 18 reads: . *In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world. I'm consecrating myself for their sakes so they'll be truth-consecrated in their mission.*
 1. We have a priority of our mission. Why are we here? Why do so few of us attend prayer? Why do so few of us witness to our lost neighbors? Why do so few of us come to learn how to share our faith? **Because we have confused duty with mission!**
 2. We don't attend prayer meetings, we don't do street witnessing, we don't like to go out where people are perishing because we get dirty, its inconvenient, its not fun, its not enjoyable. BUT ITS OUR MISSION!
 3. THE word translated mission is often translated "sanctify" which means to separate, or set apart, to a specific purpose; to put to an **intended use**.
 4. WHAT IS YOUR INTENDED USE?
- c. We are sanctified (set apart) consecrated by the word of God because it is consecrating truth.
- i. V17: *Make them holy--consecrated-with the truth; Your word is consecrating truth.*
 - ii. *14 - I gave them your word; the godless world hated them because of it, because they didn't join the world's ways, just as I didn't join the world's ways*
 - iii. Jesus clearly saw the terrible danger these men faced. He understood that the world would hate them, fight them, and undermine them every way it could. Why? Because he had given them the Father's word. It is the Scripture, the Word of God, that is the primary object of the enemy's hatred. If he cannot destroy it, he seeks to dilute its impact
 - iv. The world will despise us because we will not adopt its values.
 1. John 15:18-19 *"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.*
- a. You are sanctifying those pews at this moment as you sit on them.

- b. You sanctified your car as you drove here this morning. (It did not make it run better but it was put to the proper use!)
 - c. I sanctify my comb when I comb my hair -- I use it for its intended purpose.
 - d. And what are we intended for? What purpose did God have in mind in redeeming you?
 - e. That he might use you as the instrument of his working, to bring others to receive His love so He can set up His kingdom in their heart.
 - f. When you become that, you are sanctified.
 - g. In this context it includes a sense of personal agreement with that, a determination, a willingness, to do it.
 - h. Thus we could use the word "commitment." Our Lord is praying that these men be personally, willingly committed to the work of being used of God.
8. Good concluding illustration: Boating: The shoving off, the rope that was holding the boat in the slip is thrown off onto the boat and then the last person on the dock puts one foot in the boat and then shoves as hard as they can with the foot that remained on the dock.
- a. And this is the picture that many of us as Christians are faced with right now. The boat that Christ is in is pulling away. And this boat wants to take you and me on all kinds of adventures. But we've still got one foot on the dock and we don't know what to do.
 - i. And the further out the boat goes the more painful it becomes. And so a decision has to be made.
 - ii. Either we take our foot off the boat and remain friends with the world, or we push off and leave the world behind. Can't do both.
 - b. Your mission, should you decide to accept, is not to simply do your duty. Duty is not sufficient to accomplishing your mission on earth. It will not differentiate you from the world. Your mission alone determines that.
 - c. Will you shove off today? Will you begin the journey of ever deepening commitment to prayer, to service, to giving, to loving others? Will you say goodbye to your old friend the world and its values, its priorities and its system?