

In the World But Not of the World

Text: John 17:14-16

Introduction

1. Did you feel out of place most of the time, at work or at school?
 - a. Is it something like a square peg trying to fit into a round hole?
 - b. Could it be you feel like a "sore thumb" sticking out from everyone else?
2. If so, you are not unique.
 - a. All who would be godly feel the same pressures while living in society.
 - b. Cross-bearing (Matt. 6:24) and persecution (2 Tim. 3:12) take different forms.
3. How can we practically live from day to day in the midst of other people from whom we differ greatly in values, standards, morals, etc., without being considered peculiar?

I. The Christian's Attitude Toward the World

A. Come out of it.

1. 2 Corinthians 6:17. "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."
2. 2 Timothy 2:19. "Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'"
3. Colossians 1:13. "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."
4. John 15:19. "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."
5. 2 Thessalonians 2:14. "To which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

B. Not love it. (1 John 2:15-17)

C. Not conformed to it. (Rom. 12:1-2)

D. Keep unspotted from it. (Jas. 1:27)

E. Be militant against it. (Eph. 6:12)

II. No Matter What You Do, Some Will Not Like You

- A. Jesus told His disciples that they would be hated without a cause. (John 17:14; 15:18-19,25)

- B. There is always the unfairness of unreasonable people. (2 Thes. 3:1-2)
- C. Those who are worldly will think you are strange. (1 Pet. 4:1-5)

III. What Can We Do to Make Sure We Have Done Our Part?

- A. Be friendly.
 - 1. Friendliness, not sourness, is to be a quality of every Christian.
 - 2. John Wesley: "Sour godliness is the devil's religion."
 - 3. Warmness draws people, coldness repels them.
- B. Possess a humility that will cause you to mix and mingle with all classes of people.
 - 1. Social, intellectual, financial or spiritual snobbery will never influence people for good.
 - 2. Consider Philippians 2:3.
 - 3. We can get down among people without getting down on their level of sin.
 - a. The example of Jesus. (Matt. 9:11)
 - b. The common people loved Jesus. No one loves or looks up to a snob.
- C. Be unselfish.
 - 1. Do not be self-centered. (Phil. 2:4)
 - 2. Be a "people person."
- D. Be tolerant of others.
 - 1. Do not encourage sin but understand that others do not have the same understanding you have.
 - 2. Have the facts before you make judgments on people.
- E. Be sincere, truthful, honest and consistent.
 - 1. Consider Philippians 1:10.
 - 2. Do not feign warmth and friendliness.
 - a. Such must be natural and spontaneous.
 - b. Be genuine in what you do.
- F. Follow the golden rule. (Matt. 7:12)
- G. Be stable.
 - 1. Be a source of strength and security to others.
 - 2. Do not use others or lie or gossip about others.
- H. Have reasonable expectations about life.
 - 1. Unreasonable ones make for unhappiness constantly.
 - 2. The world is not all beautiful, people are not all fair, etc.

Conclusion

- 1. While being a light in the world, realize that people see the Lord and His church through you.

2. What do they see?
 - a. An unhappy, judgmental “kook” who is nothing more than a fanatic.
 - b. A reasonable, fair, honest, caring, compassionate person who tries to do what's right in every situation.
3. It is not easy to be in the world but not of the world.
 - a. Jesus never promised it would be.
 - b. He just promised glory eternally for trying. (1 Pet. 4:14-16)