

In and Out
#1: In It, Not of It
April 28-30, 2007

[Jesus said,] ¹⁸“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”

John 15:18-19 TNIV

[Jesus prayed,] ¹¹“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. ¹³I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.”

John 17:11-19 TNIV

Introduction: Perhaps the most pressing issue facing believers who live in our culture is how to live “in the world, but not of it.” This may be especially true for a church like Columbia in a place like Washington. Over the next eight weeks, we will look to God’s Word, the Bible, together in order to learn how to “walk circumspectly in the world.”

I. The “World”

- A. In John 15, 17, and elsewhere in the New Testament, the English word “world” generally translates the Greek *kosmos*.
- B. Theologically, “kosmos” does not usually refer to the whole created order, but the workings of the world that have been subjected to “the evil one” (Satan)

- C. This helps us understand what believers mean when we speak of being “in the world (*kosmos*), but not of it,” by which we mean that our flesh (Greek *sarx*) is subjected to futility, though not everything in the world is inherently evil.
- D. Whatever is submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, then, is “good,” while all that is submitted to the power of Satan—intentionally or by omission—is “evil” and unworthy of the believer’s attention.
- E. Excellent examples: Food, drugs, money, sex, etc.

II. The “Word”

- A. Jesus warned his “chosen” that the “world” will hate us because it hated him first, because it rejects that which it cannot control. (John 15:18-19)
- B. Jesus prayed that we would be protected from the “world” by the power of God’s name (i.e., the Creator’s name). (John 17:11-12)
- C. Jesus’ desire was not to make his followers killjoys, but to ensure our complete joy. (v.13)
- D. Jesus insisted that his followers not be “of the world” any more than he was, which helps us understand his true intent. (vv.14, 16)
- E. Jesus did not desire that we be taken out of the world, but that we be sent into it and protected. (vv.15, 18)
- F. To live “in the world, but not of it” requires that we be sanctified by the truth of God’s word. (vv.17, 19)

III. The “Way”

- A. Christians live out a myriad of responses to the world, some choosing complete separation and others choosing immersion.
- B. Most Columbians seem live between these two extremes, struggling to find the appropriate line between “the world” and “the way.”
- C. It is difficult to live as “praxis” believers in a “praxis” church, but this approach may be nearest to Jesus’ intent for his followers.
- D. Praxis requires faithful intentionality!

Conclusion: To live “in the world, not of it” requires disciplined faith and a deep relationship with Jesus Christ and his church. We must be in the Word to live in the world.