

Not of the World

John 17:14-17

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about man sending his broken plate to China for duplication, Stories for Preachers and Teachers, “Copying Imperfections,” s.v. Worldliness, s.v. General.
 - 1. Scripture gives us many admonitions to be separate from the world
 - a. “Do not be conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:2).
 - b. “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:17).
 - 2. The reason Scripture gives these admonitions is obvious—like the plate makers in China, we will copy the imperfections of those around us.
- B. In John 17, Jesus speaks concerning his disciples’ separation from the world.
 - 1. Jesus is about to be arrested and put to death, and he has several things on his mind—he prays for himself (vv. 1-5), he prays for his disciples (vv. 6-19), and he prays for the church (vv. 20-26).
 - 2. The section we’re concerned with this morning is dealing specifically with the disciples, and he’s praying for God to bless them because they are not of the world.
 - 3. Although our text constitutes a prayer, we can understand the will of God concerning our separation from the world by examining it.

DO NOT BE OF THE WORLD, vv. 14, 16

- A. These two verses state the fact that Jesus’ disciples are not of the world.
 - 1. Although this is addressed to the Father and not the disciples, it appears as though Jesus has no concerns that his disciples need to be separated from the world; they already have been.
 - 2. Jesus expects his children to be separate from the world.
 - a. “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them” (Eph. 5: 11).
 - b. “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (Js. 4:4)
- B. What makes Christians different than the rest of the world?
 - 1. We have the word of God—Jesus said, “I have given them Your word.”
 - a. This would apply to the disciples differently than it does to us.
 - 1) They would have the word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - 2) We have the word of God through what they have written.
 - b. The word of God separates us from the world.
 - 1) The word of God keeps us from the sins of the world (Ps. 119:11).
 - 2) The word of God guides us through the dangers in the world (Ps. 119:105).
 - 3) The word of God cleanses our way (Ps. 119:9).
 - 2. Jesus was not of the world.
 - a. Jesus was “not of the world” in a different way than his disciples—Jesus was not from the world in the first place, but he could have chosen to become a part of the world.
 - b. Jesus kept himself separate from the world.
 - 1) It’s obvious that Jesus did not refuse contact with the world—he was known for eating with tax collectors and sinners.
 - 2) But, Jesus did not allow those with whom he associated to dictate his behavior.
 - a) He would not have continued to associate with someone enticing him to sin.
 - b) Jesus’ association was in the open. No one could charge Jesus with

committing the same sins; the only thing they could say was that he befriended sinners.

- C. Because these disciples were not of the world, the world hated them.
 - 1. The world hates Christians, because the righteousness of Christians condemns their sinfulness.
 - 2. The world loves its own, but these disciples were not of the world. Are you of the world?

DO NOT LEAVE THE WORLD, v. 15

- A. Jesus prayed that his Father would not take his disciples out of the world.
 - 1. Jesus was about to leave the world, but his disciples would not leave the world.
 - 2. Why would Jesus pray that the Father not take his disciples out of the world?
 - a. They were to carry on his work on earth.
 - 1) The disciples would continue to do Jesus' work on earth—show his compassion, preach his message, etc.
 - 2) We need to carry on the work of Christ today—show his compassion, preach his message.
 - b. The power of the Holy Spirit would come upon them and enable them to preach the Gospel.
 - 1) After Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, they preached the Gospel of Jesus.
 - 2) Although the Holy Spirit will not come upon us and enable us to preach the Gospel, we have the Gospel recorded by men who were filled with the Holy Spirit, and we can thus preach the Gospel.
 - c. The experiences and trials they would soon encounter would add strength to character.
 - 1) This principle is taught in Jn. 1:2-4.
 - 2) The apostles endured countless trials, and they were better for it.
 - 3) When we face trials, we become stronger and better people for it.
 - d. Their influence for good could only be achieved through contact with the world.
 - 1) This principle was taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:13-16).
 - 2) Had the disciples not had contact with the world, they could never have preached the Gospel set an example for others to follow.
 - 3) We need contact with the world, so that we can allow our lights to shine before men.
- B. Jesus prayed that the Father would keep his disciples from the evil one.
 - 1. Although some translators understand this to read, "Keep them from evil," "keep them from the evil one" seems to be the best translation.
 - 2. Jesus prayed that his disciples would be kept from Satan.
 - a. It should not at all surprise us to find Jesus praying that his disciples would be kept from Satan.
 - 1) When Satan asked permission to sift Peter as wheat, Jesus prayed for him (Lk. 22:31-32).
 - 2) "It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34).
 - b. Jesus had to pray that the disciples would be kept from the evil one, for his death and exaltation would not rid the world of Satan—"the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 Jn. 5:19).
 - c. Jesus prayed that Satan would not be able to come and do just anything to the disciples—this should be a comfort to us; Satan cannot do whatever he wants, he has some limitations.
- C. It is good for us to be in this world.
 - 1. God never intended for us to separate ourselves physically from this world—there is much good we can do if we are in the world.
 - 2. Yet, we must be absolutely certain that we are not of the world.

- a. If we live the same way the world lives, our influence for good will be greatly diminished.
- b. Illustration about trainman's lantern not having a light, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, # 14728. Has your light gone out?

DO NOT BE THE SAME IN THE WORLD, v. 17

- A. Jesus prayed that the Father might sanctify the disciples.
 1. The word "Sanctify" literally means "to set apart," and often carries the connotation of holiness.
 2. Yet, "sanctification" has a connotation other than holiness as well, and it seems that that's its meaning here.
 - a. "Before I formed you In the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5).
 - b. "You shall anoint them [Aaron and his sons], consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister to Me as priests" (Ex. 28:41).
 - c. "Do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God?'" (Jn. 10:36).
 - d. The meaning in these texts and here in Jn. 17 is that sanctification occurs for a special task. Jesus was asking the Father to set apart the apostles for a special task.
 3. The apostles had a special task:
 - a. They would spread the Gospel to the world.
 - b. They would lead the early church with the authority of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. They would speak the word of God to the church.
 4. We have a special task, as well:
 - a. Collectively as a church, we have important tasks to honor God through our worship, to care for the less fortunate, to evangelize the world.
 - b. Individually as Christians, we have important tasks.
 - 1) Yet, we each have different tasks—"There are diversities of gifts" (1 Cor 12.4).
 - 2) What we need to do is to find our talent and use that talent to the glory of God.
 5. Let us be those who find the work God has planned for us.
- B. This sanctification would come through God's word.
 1. The apostles would be set apart for a special task through God's word—they would know about the task God had planned through the word of God.
 2. We are set apart by the word of God as well—we know the things we ought to be doing by a study of the Word of God.
 - a. By studying the word of God, we know what God expects of Christians and we can begin the process of doing it.
 - b. Are you studying the word of God? Do you know what God expects you to be doing? Have you found your special talent God has given?

CONCLUSION

- A. God expects us as his children to be different than the rest of the world.
- B. Are you living differently than the rest of the world? Do you need to begin this day?