

Being a Christian in a Fallen World

When I lived in Spain I noticed that many English people had retired in the various lush Mediterranean villages that were predominantly owned by foreign retirees. Although they lived in Spain they did not speak Spanish but English, they did not eat Spanish food but English food, they did not dress in Spanish dress but continued to dress in their own English dress. Although they lived in Spain they stood out as being different from the Spanish citizens. They lived in Spain but continued to live as citizens of England. We are Christians – citizens of heaven – living in a fallen world.

John 17: 1 – 19

1) The world that we were saved from

- 1 John 2: 16 For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world.
- When we talk of the world we aren't talking about world geography, countries and people.
- The world the we are referring to is the value system, the crime and corruption, the wickedness and warped sense of goodness. The systems that satisfy the lusts of man, and elevate him to be ruler of his own world.
 - The world is the domain where values are turned upside down so that good is seen to be evil and evil is seen to be good
 - Isaiah 5: 20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.
 - It is a world where human life is regarded as cheap with the legalisation of abortion and euthanasia and where someone gets a heavier sentence for fraud than for murder.
- This world is ego-centric where personal convenience, ambition and ideals are set above community, relationship and the feelings of others.
- Morality is subjective and is set by a person or specific group's ideas of right and wrong
 - Man has replaced God with himself and have created moral and religious systems that would attempt to give the world some sort of moral order and peace.

2) Two kingdoms in conflict

- We are in the world but not of the world
- When we were saved God did not remove us from the world that we were saved from.
 - Salvation means that we died to the world – the world's corruption, values and ego-centricism
 - Galatians 6: 14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
- We died to the world and were born again into the kingdom of God
 - John 3: 3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again"
- Jesus came into the world, lived in this world but was not of this world
 - John 18: 36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

- When we are born of God we are born into the kingdom of God and the Kingdom of God is within us
 - Luke 17: 20 – 21 Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."
- Unlike natural kingdoms and nations that have clear geographical borders the kingdom of God does not and the two kingdoms – God and darkness exist alongside each other as yeast within dough, or weeds amongst wheat.
 - However these two kingdoms do not coexist as peaceful neighbours but rather are at war with each other – they are two kingdoms in conflict
- As Christians in this fallen world we have to look at the world and the choices that we make through the eyes of Jesus our king and no longer through the eyes of the world.
- As a salmon swims upstream against the current so it is for a Christian making the right choices – kingdom choices- in a fallen world.
 - We need to do what glorifies Jesus and not ourselves
 - We treat all people – Christians and non-Christians – with love and respect and put others before ourselves
 - We need live right and resist temptation even when everyone around us is doing the opposite. We will be mocked for making the right choices
 - Our values change and we find ourselves having a completely different value system to that of the world.
 - In the world that is rejecting God we are being called religious fanatics when we put God first in our lives
- As Christians we need to seek God for his thinking on issues such as:
 - Dealing with other religions, materialism, politics, dealing with a non-Christian government, racism, the Israeli – Palestinian issue and many more.
 - We so often form our opinions according to the media or popular opinions rather than seeking God in prayer and in His word concerning the issues in the world and end up having worldly rather than kingdom opinions.

3) Why God has left us in this fallen world

- John 17: 18 – 19 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.
 - Jesus has sent us into the world for sanctification purposes i.e. we were set apart for sacred use.
 - We have been kept in the world and sent into the world for the purposes of the Kingdom of God
- We have been sent into the world to do what Jesus did – usher in the kingdom of God and bring those who are not in the kingdom into the kingdom
 - Jesus taught His disciples to pray “your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 5: 10)
 - The Holy Spirit didn’t come into a vacuum – He came into us and we are the agents of the kingdom of God on earth. We are now the salt of the earth and the light of the world
 - As we go about our work in all aspects of society we demonstrate and bring the kingdom of God through the way we live, the way we speak, the message we share in the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.
- It is thus imperative that we seek God for the work that we do, our careers and what we study so that we live as effect Christians in this fallen world.