

## Sent Into It

- Reading: John 17
- We read some of the final thoughts of Jesus before his crucifixion
- It's touching that his prayer was for his Brethren in the time of this, his own greatest personal need
- I would like to talk this morning about one thing that he said
- It's a common phrase
- If you've been around Christadelphians for more than a year, then I'm sure you've heard it
- I think that Jesus had an important message for them when he said it
- And, I'm afraid that we've tweaked the message a little bit, and that it would be better for us if we got it straight
- My thoughts come from Verses 14-16, so let's look at them again
- John 17:14-16
  - 14) I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.
  - 15) I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.
  - 16) They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.
- I'm sure that now you know the phrase that I'm referring to
- You've heard it enough times...
  - In the World, but not of it
- Now, let's be clear: This statement is very true

- We are in this World
- We are a part of this world's operating system
- Most Christadelphians work for Worldly Employers, we put our money in Worldly banks, we buy our groceries at worldly grocery stores and cook them up in homes built by worldly people and sold to us by worldly people...
- We are definitely IN this world
- AND! We definitely should not be a part of it
- We shouldn't get caught up in the things that those around us get involved in
- It's none of our business to debate politics, complain about municipal regulations, care about the success (or failure) of celebrities, concern ourselves over the stock market, or even worry about the weather
- All of these things are temporal
- They are here today, and gone tomorrow
- And, our goal is to be here tomorrow!
- So, the phrase does capture some truth
- I just don't think it does a good enough job of giving us the whole picture
- I think that this catchy little phrase gives the wrong impression about our mission in this world as followers of Christ
- When you say, "In this world, but not of it", it seems to give the drift of, "Alas, we are stuck in this world, but what we really need to do is make sure that we are not of it"
- If you look at it this way, then the focus is on our unfortunate condition of having to be "in" this world... Sigh...
- And our mission, it appears, is to not be "of" it
- So, the force of the statement is moving away from the world

- It's like, "Rats, we're stuck in this world, but let's concentrate our energy on not being of it"
- Now, there might be circumstances where that outlook would be helpful, but I think something essential is being downplayed
- Let's look a little closer of Jesus' context when he says this:
- John 17:14-16
  - 14) I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.
  - 15) I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.
  - 16) They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.
- Two times, both in verse 14, and again in verse 16, Jesus says that we are not of this world
- It's very clear that Jesus does not want his followers to be "of the world"
- But notice that for Jesus being "not of the world" isn't the destination in these verses, but the starting place
- It's not where things are moving toward, but where they are moving from!
- He is not of this world, and he states that his followers are not of this world either
- But, you get the sense that Jesus isn't resigning himself, and us, to this unfortunate position, instead it seems like he's rallying us to the challenge
- Enter Verse 18...
- John 17:17-18
  - 17) Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.
  - 18) As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.
- I have sent them into the world!
- Did you notice what verse 15 said?

- John 17:17-18

15) I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

- Jesus isn't asking his Father for his followers to be taken out of this world, but he is praying for them as they are "sent into" the world
- He begins with them being "not of the world" and prays for them as they are "sent into the world"
- When you think about it, I think that's an important difference!
- I think we should reconsider the old saying...
- Instead of saying, "In the World, but not of it"
- We should be looking at it more like, "Not of the world, but sent into it"
- It's a huge difference!
- Instead of the focus being on us huddling up over in some corner, doing our best to not be a part of the world...
- We have a Mission!
- A Job!
- A Responsibility, given by our Lord Jesus, to go out into the World
- We are not on a mission to completely disassociate ourselves from the World
- We are called by our Lord to go out there and actively associate ourselves with people
- How else would we ever be successful in preaching?
- Jesus's assumption in John 17 is that those who have embraced him, and identified with him, are indeed not of the world
- And now his summons is our sending — we are sent into the world on mission to advance the message gospel through the making of disciples

- I'm sure that you, like me, are about now turning your thoughts to Matthew 5
- Let's look at it together, because I think the verses there are helpful...
- Matthew 5:14-16
  - 14) "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.
  - 15) Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.
  - 16) In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

- You are the light of the world!
- Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven
- That important commandment of Jesus isn't really in keeping with the idea of us blocking ourselves away from everyone in an effort to try to be "not of the world" is it?
- I think that sometimes the first example that Jesus gives in verse 14 can lead us astray...

- Matthew 5:14-16

14) "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

- We get this mental picture of us being a city on a hill
- I think that we sometimes see ourselves as a Lighthouse set on a high hill
- All we have to do is show forth God's light, and anyone interested will draw himself to us
- Sadly, that's almost the least active version of preaching that we could ever imagine
- "All I'm going to do is quietly live my own life, over here in this corner, and if anyone takes the time to bother to come over and talk to me, then I'll tell them about the Truth"
- Jesus says, "You are the light of the world"
- He doesn't say to hide yourself away from it

- He actually says that you shouldn't be hidden

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20) "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,

21) that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

- Jesus's true followers have not only been crucified to the world, but also raised to new life and sent back in to free others. We've been rescued from the darkness and given the Light not merely to flee the darkness, but to guide our steps as we go back in to rescue others.