***How Then Should I Live?

Colossians 1:24-29

COL-191***

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2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

1 Corinthians 1:21: "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom, did not come to know Him, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe."

Romans 1:18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."

We direct your attention this morning to the book of Colossians, continuing with Colossians 1:25: "Of this church. I was made a minister, according to the stewardship from God bestowed upon me."

Our subject is "The Mystery of the Church," segment number 11, in Colossians 1:25-29.

From the time of the first human beings, Adam and Eve, the first question that a person must deal with, following the point of salvation, is: how should I now live? Many people take a long time before they come to the realization that salvation has taken place, and now: how should I live?

I heard an evangelist one time speak about one of his converts, who came to him and said, "What are the rules of the Christian life?" That young woman was saying, "How now should I live?" And, of course, there is a reason for asking that question, as indicated in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, where the apostle says, "Or do you Christians not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you, Whom you have from God, and that you are not your own. For you have been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body."

The apostle Paul was very fond of referring to himself as a bond slave of Jesus Christ. He used to be a bond slave of the devil, but now he was a slave of Christ. He used to be a slave enslaved to evil. Now he's a slave enslaved to righteousness. And he is this because, in either case (saved or unsaved), you are not your own.

We have a lot of AWOL Christians out there, don't we? They are Absent WithOut Leave from their master, and the duties that they owe that master. Salvation is received by faith in Jesus Christ as a grace gift from God, and therefore, it is forever a settled matter. One is justified, and permanently reconciled, to the Holy God. So, sin is no longer an issue.

Romans 8:38-39: "For I am convinced that neither death; nor life, nor angels; nor principalities; nor things present; nor things to come; nor powers; nor height; nor death; nor, any other creative thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ our Lord.

Then 1 Peter 1 stresses this issue of salvation as a matter which has been settled forever in heaven. 1 Peter 1:4-5: "To obtain an inheritance which is imperishable, and undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you (the sure thing), who are protected by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed at the last time." Yes, we're saved. But what all that implies, and what all that includes, we don't have the foggiest notion. We have some inkling of it. But only heaven will reveal the magnificent things that God has done for us in giving us the salvation that we can never lose again.

However, while that is a settled issue, the quality of a believer's life on earth after salvation, and its eternal value, relative to rewards in heaven, depends upon the Christian fulfilling the plan that God has for his life. That is a simple little statement that is violated all the time. It's very hard to find Christians who are carrying out the plan of God for their lives, from the time they wake up in the morning. It is very hard to find Christians will be able to say, with Paul, "I've kept the faith. I fought the good fight. I've completed my course." Most of them never even get on course.

In Philippians 2:12-13, Paul says, "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;" that is, work out the daily expression of the certainty of your salvation that you possess on a moment-by-moment basis: "For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." He is the master, and He has a lot for you to do. And it's a daily call. It's to daily mission. And Paul says, "Be careful how you answer the question, now that you are saved for a certainty: How should I now then live?"

The degree to which a believer enters into the plan of God will have an impact on the nature of his eternity relative to the rewards of the Judgment Seat of Christ. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, all fakery; all deceit; and, all pretense will be exposed, and shunted aside as worthless hay, wood, and stubble. Those things will be burned up and forgotten.

1 Corinthians 3:14-15: "If any man's (Christian man's) work (his life service) which he has built upon it (the foundation of salvation in Jesus Christ):" "If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward." That "if" means maybe so, and maybe not. It depends upon whose plan of life you lived out: yours; or, God's. Verse 15: "If any man's work is burned up (maybe so, and maybe not), he shall suffer loss. But he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire. The Holy Spirit adds that last line to make sure that nobody is mistaken here, into thinking that this has to do with your salvation. You don't get salvation by your works. You get rewards recognition; and, crowns of honor for your service. What Paul is talking about, then, is how we should now live, after the point of salvation.

So, how should we live? I come into the Christian life. I'm a babe. I don't know anything. I'm just barely able to have faith in Christ as Savior. That has brought me into salvation. I'm secure in that. What's the basic requirement? Well, the basic divine requirement for living the Christian lifestyle, which is what we're talking about, following salvation, is to secure the mind of God in the mentality of one soul. The arrogance of Christians' minds often make them think that they have arrived at the mind of Christ, the mentality of God in their souls.

Ephesians 4:22-24 say that: "In reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self (the sin nature which ran the show), which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit." You Christians came into the Christian life with the sin nature: screaming; kicking; and, fighting, because the devil tried to keep you out. Now that he couldn't keep you out, he's going to try to keep you living by the authority of that nature which, no longer enslaves you. Its power has been broken.

So, Paul says, "Get rid of that old self. Stop living the way you did before." How should you not live? Very differently. This age of grace, the church, is very different than any time before, in history.

Verse 23: "And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind." You have a transformation of mind. Bible doctrine replaces your human viewpoint: "And put on the new self which, in the likeness of God, has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." Now put on a new lifestyle – the lifestyle which reflects the person of Jesus Christ: the lifestyle which reflects the life of righteousness. This is indeed the supernatural life, because God says, "You be as holy as I am." Nobody can do that unless you follow the divine power structure that God has provided for the age of the church.

Step number one: getting the mind of God into your mind. The mind of God is secured through the learning of doctrine from the local pastor-teacher, if he's teaching by the HICEE technique. This is what coming to church is all about. The result is that in Christendom, this is so rare that what you have are Christians who are blind to spiritual realities, and they're trying to lead other people, the blind leading the blind, and they both fall into the ditch, as Scripture says – the gist of their human viewpoint humanism.

1 Corinthians 2:16 says, "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Who can grasp God's thinking that he should instruct Him? Who can teach God? The implication is no one. But we (Christians) have the mind of Christ. We Christians have the mind of God. How did we get it? You got it through doctrinal instruction in the local church by the pastor-teacher who does his job.

Ephesians 4:11-13 spells it out a little more clearly in the local church: "He (Christ) gave some as apostles to the local church's communicators – some as prophets as communicators (we have no apostles and no prophets left); and, some as evangelists, preaching to the pioneer fields as missionaries; and some as pastor-teachers" (taking those who are saved – it's a combined job – instructing them in the Word of God). For what purpose? For the equipping of the saints, to enable them to do the work of service, to serve God with Holy Spirit-guided, divine good service, for the purpose of building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."

**How then Should I Live?**

How then should I live? Day-by-day, I live in such a way that I'm becoming more like Jesus Christ in every possible way. My soul like His soul. Therefore, my thinking is His thinking; my volition is His will; and, my emotions are His feelings. That is the stupendous calling of the church-age believer. And this is not something that you are called upon to achieve by your self-will or your determination. You're going to do it good, and everything else has the world-doing. This is understanding the power system: doctrine stored in the human spirit; indwelt by God the Holy Spirit; and, no other Christians or other saints of God in ages past have ever been in dwell permanently by the Holy Spirit. And that Holy Spirit brings up the doctrine from your human spirit to guide your life. It happens automatically.

The natural, satanic, human viewpoint of the mind of man must be replaced by the supernatural divine viewpoint of the mind of God. In this way, the believer comes to appreciate; to love; and, to worship God as his Father. And in this way, he builds a capacity in his soul for God to pour out blessings. It was not the purpose of God to over-flood (to just overwhelm) the Jews under the Mosaic Law blessing. They had to keep this law and that rule, and act this way and that way. It was not: here's a wide-open field for you to gather the fruits of blessing in. But in the church, that's what it's all about. It's all about God pouring blessings until you're so overwhelmed, you can hardly stand the joy, and the thrill, and the happiness, and the prosperity of the Christ-like life.

Now, that should not be a foreign experience to any believer on the face of the earth, if the system is working in the local church ministry, and you have believers who are positive and receptive to being taught. Those represented by these empty chairs here this morning are not the positive ones. What this does in turn is enable the child of God to discover and to fulfill the Father's plan for his life. This is not a great big secret. It's what He wants you to know. And it becomes very clear. He will open doors; He will slam doors; and, He will certainly place burdens upon your heart. That's often when you start gagging.

Romans 12:1 tells us to: "Present our physical bodies as an act of worshiping God, by sacrificing as an act of worship. Verse 2 says, "And do not be conformed to this world." Don't pattern your life after this world. There is the problem. Do not live like this world. That is the first point. Don't be up to your elbows in the institutions and the activities of the world system, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind – your mind transformed from human viewpoint to divine viewpoint, through the intake of the Word of God. You need to have doctrine in your human spirit, so that you may prove what the will of God is. It'll be very clear to you then. You will say, "I have this gift. I have this particular gift. I this spiritual gift. I know exactly what I should do in life. I know what I should do when I wake up in the morning and say, "This is my spiritual gift. Now how will I use it this day?" It's no big secret. It's only the secret of the stubbornness of a blinded, deliberate mind: "You will find what is the will of God, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect purpose of God in your life.

In Ephesians 2:10, the apostle Paul says, "For we (we Christians) are His workmanship. Grace created us for what we are. We were created in Christ Jesus. For what purpose? Good works: "Oh, no, no. He created me to make money. He created me to have a great career. He created me to have a big political future. No, no, He created me to be to be a very famous entertainer." No, He didn't. He created us for good works. Which good works? Which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. He is not even telling you to go out there and find something good to do. He is telling us: "What do I do now, now that I'm saved. What do you want me to do, Father? This is my ability. This is my capacity."

Nobody should ever forget the Ephesians 2:10. Remind yourself of it frequently. What do you want me to do? "You are the master. I am the slave." I am not a free agent, roaming through life on my own, never giving a single thought to what should I do now that I am saved.

So, the first duty of every Christian after salvation is to grow spiritually, and to keep moving on spiritually, until he reaches the epitome of spiritual growth – what James called the super-abounding grace level: super-grace spiritual maturity.

In 2 Peter 3:18, Peter says, "But grow in the grace and the knowledge (doctrinal understanding) of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity." And this is knowledge that your pastor-teacher has taught to you, and you have said, "Amen, I accept it. I believe it – that knowledge, which is full functioning knowledge that will do something in your life.

Then there is the verse I just refer to, in James 4:6: "But He (God) gives greater, super-abounding grace (overflowing grace). Therefore, it says, 'God as opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" We are to come and says, "Father, I'm your slave. You are my master. What do I do? You have given me this. You've given me this. You've given me this. I have ability. I have things. I have time. What do I do? I serve You, because that's going to give me the best of life here, and it's going to give me the most enriched eternity forever."

Now, none of this is to be found in the dispensation of the Law: the dispensation of Israel. None of this is to be found there. There is no such lifestyle; there is no such offering; and, there is no such potential whatsoever. It's distinct to this age in which we live. The goal is to be transformed, then, by doctrine, really into the very image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:13-16: "Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness and deceitful scheming." How many Christians have we seen become spiritual casualties? Why? Because they didn't understand that their every breathing moment was to grow in the knowledge and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, to build up a spiritual maturity structure in the soul that the devil couldn't touch. Instead, they were up to their eyebrows in the world system; in the world's way of life; in the world's way of doing things. They were easily brought down by the devil – by every stupid wind of doctrine that comes along. And, unfortunately, what you get in most churches is emotionalism. They don't teach you the Word, and they certainly aren't going to teach you the deep things of the Word, because they think you don't have enough IQ, as Christians, to be able to understand those things. So, they treat you like idiots, and they play on your emotions, and you go charging out, and the devil sticks his foot out, and you fall flat on your face – the craftiness; the deceitfulness; and, the scheming.

I'm getting more and more respect for Satan all the time. I'm awed by what Christians do. Talk about the blind leading the blind! And what tragedy it when those blind do it to their own families, within their own household, because emotionalism is what they're riding on. I remind you that if you are on track, that you do view yourself as a very serious servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you do go about your business serving Him, and you are the kind of a Christian to be counted on, I warn you again: you are a high priority for the devil. And you must be so on guard, because you are the one that he is after. The Christian who is just floating: he comes in; he comes out; he moves along; he goes about his life; he's on the treadmill; and, he's running out the clock on his life – the devil is never going to bother him. He's going to steer clear of you. He's going to tell his demons, "Make things nice for him. Just don't bother him. Leave him alone.

Those of you who are serious about serving God, keep looking over your shoulder, and be aware that the Holy Spirit, Who is in us, is greater than the devil, when you are capable of being in touch with Him, through your maintenance of your temporal fellowship, with your confession of known sins (1 John 1:9). If you are in that fellowship, you are under the protective custody of God: "Greater is He, who is in us, than Satan, who is in the world." He can't beat us. We whip him every time. It's only when we lose track of who we are, and what dispensation we live in.

Verse 15: "But speaking the truth in love, we are going to grow up, in all respects, into Him, who is the Head, even Christ, from Whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." That first 16 has been magnificently demonstrated, and has been for years, here in Berean Church. In all these parts of the body (this local body) – these believers fitted and held together. Join everybody with one skill; one ability; one capacity; one focus of devotion; and, one readiness to be called on, so that there is growth in the body of Christ in its impact in the word that goes out.

Who can believe that the Word is so powerful from this place, such that we get results of letters and contacts, even on the worldwide Internet web, people can bring up a true gospel? They can bring up the Word of God. They can reach out more and more to us, and that's going to be better all the time. Who could believe such a thing? God says, "You have joined yourselves together – a body with all the parts." We have no primadonnas here. We have nothing but servants who respect one another, and who lean on one another desperately. Don't let us down. We are very much dependent upon one another. And the way you let us down is when you let the work of God down by not being there with what it means.

Now, this kind of a mature Christian is able to live victoriously over sin in the devil's world. And so he will fulfill His own mission of personal service. Paul describes this for you. Ephesians 1:9-12: "He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention, which He purposed in Him." God makes known to you what He wants to do. This is no mystery. We're not bumbling and stumbling around. Most of the time, we don't want to do it: "With a view to an administration (a dispensation) suitable to the fullness of times; that is, the summing up of all things in Christ: things in heaven; and, things upon the earth in Him. Also, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predesignated according to His purpose, Who works all things after the council of His will; to the end, that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, should be to the praise of His glory." He is going to elevate us to magnificent glory. How much? What we do with the life we have after salvation. That kind of a mature Christian, at super-grace level, at the prime of your spiritual life, is never Satan's fool.

The spiritually mature believer glorifies God by living the life, with the Spirit of God guiding him, through the doctrines that he has stored, and by fulfilling his particular mission of service. The result is that he receives the best of life. He will have the best life possible. You talk about quality of life? The world is a joke. It keeps talking about the quality of life. No one who does not have spiritual maturity can possibly enjoy a quality of life. All he can do is live on an animal level.

Romans 9:22-24: "What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with such patience the objects of His wrath prepared for destruction?" The context says, "Some people don't get chosen for going to heaven. Is that right. Well so what? God is the Creator. God is the potter. You are the clay. So, what if God decides, "I'm not going to choose this one for salvation?"

Verse 23: "And He did so in order that he might make known the riches of His glory upon the vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory." He does not choose everyone, so that he can point to us, and, boy, do we ever see the glory and the contrast. Here are these magnificent people in the world. Call them beautiful people. They're intellectual. They're the power makers. They're the ones with the money. They're the ones with the power. They're the ones with the influence, up at the highest echelons of power. And God says, "I pass them by." And with all they have, they will be in the lake of fire forever. Am I that much better? No. "Is there something of value in me, Father, such that you said, "I'm going to be a trophy of your grace?" No: "Even us, whom He also called – not from among the Jews only, but also from among the gentiles." We have been called to the special magnificent life.

So, the means for spiritual growth of the believer is doctrine, which becomes the frame of reference for his thinking; for his actions; for his will; and, for his soul. 2 Timothy declares to us that this Word is the inspired Word of God, and therefore it bears a power that Scripture promises: "All Scripture is inspired by God, profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." Do you understand the connection there? If you don't have verse 16, you don't have verse 17. You cannot be equipped to every good work to serve God, until you have become a person steeped in the Word of God, so that has been reproof. You have been corrected, and you have been trained in righteousness. Then you have done what is the business of the Christian in the church age. Then God is ready to use you.

You should not tell people who are born-again that they should hustle out there, and start carrying on in some kind of ministry. First, they need to become something in God. They need to become something spiritually. And that takes a while before they're ready to open their mouths, or to get themselves out there into the world. It's like somebody who says, "We should not send our little children to a Christian school. They should be out there where they can confront the world, and learn how to live in the world." That's not what you do with tomato plants. You put them in a hothouse, and you grow them carefully first – little plants, until they're strong enough, and they have capacity, and then you put them out there in the world system. And that's what we do with children. But the Word of God says, "When you are prepared, I will use you in a magnificent way."

How important is doctrine in the Christian's life? Well, how important it is, is shown by the fact that God magnifies His Word about His Own Person. Psalm 138:2: "I will bow down for Your holy temple, and give thanks to Your Name; Your lovingkindness; and, Your truth. For You have magnified Your Word according to Your Name." You have raised your Word above Your Very Person. Doctrine is the most important thing in anybody's life. If you don't have it, you don't even have a live. Only positive volition to the Word of God can transform a Christian's life internally, so that he will live like Jesus Christ. Therefore, he will be graced-out in a life that goes beyond his fondest dreams. What a life it is – when God is constantly there; you're on track with Him; thoughts come to your mind; and, you say, "Yes, I should do that." We forget to say, "Thank you, Lord. I didn't think of that." You have a problem, and you say, "That's the answer. Yes, Lord. Thank you. I'm glad You called that to my attention." Suddenly you realize there's something really eerie, and really creepy happening. My mind has got another mind imposed upon it. That's right. It's the mind of God. That's what the Christian life is all about.

Ephesians 3:13-19 (life beyond your fondest dreams): "Therefore, I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf. For they are for your glory. For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father from Whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God." You're going to be filled up to all the fullness of what God is? That's right. Was there ever a Jew told that in the Old Testament? No. Were Adam and Eve ever told that? No. Was Abraham ever told that? No. Will anybody in the tribulation, who becomes a believer, be told that? No. The fullness of what God is, that's what I become? That's it, folks. That's the game of the church age.

Now, we have pointed out the dispensational nature of the church. That is a unique period of time in history. The Bible is a dispensational book. You cannot understand, or apply, the Bible unless these dispensational distinctions are understood. And Paul, in our verse we read this morning, Colossians 1:25, the word is translated as "stewardship," but it's the word "dispensations." Christians who do not distinguish God's way of life between the dispensation of Israel and that of the church cannot live under the blessings that are pertinent to the church age. The doctrines of the present, unique church age are the source of enormous blessings in time and eternity. I know people, who are very sincere Christians, that are just so proud that they're playing around with the Mosaic Law. They talk about the Sabbath day, and they talk about tithing, and they're talk about all the Jewish stuff, and they're nothing spiritually. They're shallow little people who have no capacity for walking in the world, and being separate from it. When you look at their lives, you can't tell the difference. They're just part of the system of the world.

The Christian is not bringing in the Old Testament kingdom of the Jews. He's building up the body of Christ, the church. The Christian has enormous spiritual resources through doctrine, to live above Satan's world system, as befits a member of the royal family of God. 1 Peter 2:9 says, "We are a royal priesthood." And as a royal family, there are certain things that are required of us in our conduct: points of etiquette. In royalty, that's called the protocols. The word "protocols" means "the etiquette, the ceremony, the proper way that you conduct yourself." We Christians have certain protocols that are pertinent to us in the age of grace. And if you don't know this, then you won't live according to your standard of royalty. When you meet Prince Charles of England, protocol requires that you address him as "Sir." When you meet Queen Elizabeth protocol require that you never reach out your hand to shake her hand unless she reaches out her hand first. You never touch a royal personage, and you dress in a certain way. You don't wear miniskirts and shorts when you come into the presence of royalty. This is all protocol. And if you're a person of culture and of significance, you understand how you should conduct yourself in the presence of royalty, and how you, as a representative of royalty, are to conduct yourself. Now, there's the rub.

It's a sorry sight when we have Christians living as part of the world's system of Satan, reflecting the styles of Satan's people, instead of the royal family of God, the church. I would suggest the Christians, before they walk out the door after they have dressed, and they're ready to go out to the world, that they stand and look in a full length mirror, and be sure to turn around, just to see what you look like, and to see how much of the waves and the degrading styles of the world that we Christians can be reflecting in that mirror. Just stand up and take a look at yourself. See the failures to portray the manhood and the womanhood of a member of the church-age royalty. You'll see it once you get it in your mind. You'll say, "Now, am I a member of the royal court? Is that what I look like?" Ask yourself how much of the image of Jesus Christ is being reflected in you in that mirror? Yeah, that's what the church-age way of life is all about. Protocol requires that we reflect the image of Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved (that is, Christians), now we are children of God. And it has not appeared as ye what we shall be. We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." Right now, we're moving more and more into the image and the fullness of God in Jesus Christ. And what we are going to be, we don't really grasp. But someday, when the rapture takes place, and we are in His presence, we're going to be just like Him. Aha! Now I look in the mirror and I say, "Do I reflect Jesus Christ? What is this I'm wearing? What is this I have brought in from the world system around on me?" Do you see Christ in you, the hope of glory – a real man, or a real woman in the mirror? Or do you see a twit whom like a dumb sheep, follows the world's image; the world's appearance; or, the world's manners? Do you see the protocol of Satan instead of the protocols of God?

Look at yourself, and introduce yourself as heaven's ambassador, representing the royal court of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Look at yourself in the mirror, and say, "Ladies and gentlemen, may I present Samuel, royal ambassador from the court of heaven, the court of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. This is God's representative." Take a look at yourself in the mirror, and see if what is reflected is Christ Jesus in us, the hope of glory. Do you see the dignity of a prince or princess? That Latin word "gravitas" – is it there? How about in the highest echelons of American life today, and the people and the leadership? Do you see gravitas? Do you see dignity, and even some of these people who claim they're Christians? We can tell, because they carry a Bible. And how are they living, so that they reflect Christ Jesus, the hope of glory, living in the church-age protocols? Talk about the blind leading the blind? Do you see the dignity of a prince or princess when you look at yourself in the mirror, or do you see a dog or a pig of Satan's sophisticated, arrogant, glamorous, corrupt, evil world system?

The Lord Jesus Christ said that He was not part of Satan's world – its lifestyle. And He said that believers are not to be part of it either. Now that's pretty clear as to how we should live following the point of salvation – what kind of matters and what kind of customs we should follow.

In John 17:14-17, this is the high priestly of prayer. If you want to know the transition of Jesus Christ from Israel to the church, it's most effectively portrayed in John chapter 13-17. The gospel of John was written to church-age believers. The other gospels were to other believers. But in John chapters 13-17, specifically, Jesus really shifts gears, and they didn't fully comprehend what He was doing. But He's saying, "I'm now going to teach you church-age truth. You're not going to know all of it. You can't even take all of it. When Paul comes, I'll give it all to him, and he will teach it to the other apostles and to you." So, Jesus here gets to John 17, and this is His high priestly prayer. He's speaking to His Father. He is going to go out of here, out to Gethsemane, and pay the price for the sins of the world on the cross.

Jesus says, "I've given them (these believers – these apostles) Your Word (doctrine was where it's at – it always is). And the world has hated them, because they're not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." Yes, we do have to be in the world, so that we can pass out the evangelism brochures, so that we can be the witnesses. But that's it. We're not involved in its system, and its activities, and its movements, and its rallyings to various causes: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them (set them aside) in the truth." What is the truth? "Your Word is truth."

The Lord Jesus Christ obeyed the laws of the land. He paid his taxes, and He did not carry on joining groups who wanted to outlaw slavery in the Roman Empire. The apostle Paul was a Roman citizen. He capitalized on his civil rights when he was mistreated as a Roman citizen. But he did not become part of the political system. He was not part of a system where he's going to try whitewashing the devil's world. He went about the business of being in the world, not part of it. But he was sounding forth as the Word of God.

This is what the apostles did when they were told that they could not preach the gospel anymore. They said, "You decide. Shall we listen to God, or shall we listen to you?" When the powers of the state ask us to do that which is against the Word of God, then we say "No," and we take the consequences. And the reason for that is that we obey God before we obey man.

There was a time when nations understood that their laws must be compatible to the laws of God. We now refer to "European nations." A few centuries ago, you didn't talk about European nations. You talked about the Christian nations. These nations were referred to as "Christendom," because they all were based upon a culture that came from Scripture as a foundation.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ was never a part of Satan's world system. And we feel comfortable in being part of it? It is Bible doctrine, of the church dispensation, that provides the believer the magnificent spiritual resources that enable him to live Christ-like – to be separated from the devil's world, and in the process of humiliating Satan at every turn, with great dignity; with good judgment; with genuine love; with moral integrity; a servant's heart; and, having some spiritual discernment.

Some Christians are so stupid. They cannot see through anything – the grace way of life for blessing now, and rewards in heaven, instead of whitewashing what the world is doing.

We don't have any sissy men in the age of grace, who want to look like girls. We don't have any masculine women who are trying to be one of the boys. We have no whining. We know no self-centered attitudes. We're not greedy. We are not selfish. We are not hateful, like the worldings are, toward us. We are Christians claim the truth in genuineness, and in love. We don't feel sorry for ourselves. And we stay on the line, and we do the calling until the Lord takes us home. For many Christians, their hearts will never be drawn to walking with Jesus Christ in separation from the world. They just cannot be in world society, and not be part of it. They just can't help but to take on the appearance of the world. They just cannot keep from being part of the system. They just cannot keep from hiding themselves so they don't look differently. They don't want to walk down the street, and have people look at them, and say, "Hey, there goes that Christian. There goes the royal ambassador of the court of heaven.

Christians like that, who will never make it out of the world system, will always follow around in the muck of Satan's world. They'll be drawn like Paul’s associate Demas was, to its glamor; sophistication; wealth; prestige; power over people; illusions of greatness; or hypocritical, shallow religion.

Living by the dynamic power system of the church dispensation discredits a believer in the eyes of the world. So, he is viewed as an oddball. He's dislike. And he's rejected. I live by doctrine, and I live by the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. That system of dynamic power was created by God the Father for His Son, Jesus Christ, for His humanity, when He was here on this earth. And that's why Jesus was able to live a sinless life. It wasn't because He was God. In His humanity, He did not have a sin nature. But he'd beat the devil at every turn, because of the simple fact that He metabolized doctrine in His soul, and He listened to the Holy Spirit, so that He could say, "I always do the will of My Father."

The glory and the joy of the church dispensation is the unique power system provided to every believer. It carried Jesus Christ, in His humanity, through it. It will carry us through in the devil's world. Bible doctrine in the human spirit, and the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, to the believer who is in temporal fellowship, enables him to rise to the lifestyle of Christ; to walk with God like Enoch of old; and, to live moment-by-moment in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. Now, that's life. Only then can you say you've got a life.

Most Christians are so low on the scale of spirituality, and so spiritually immature, that they cannot help but be entangled in the devil's world as pathetic slaves of Satan. And that is sad.

How should I then live, now that I am a Christian? By the dynamic power system, unique to the age of grace, that is available in any local church that is doing its job of introducing people to the deep things of the Spirit of God,

We close with Romans 6:17-19, where Paul says, "But thanks be to God that, though you were slaves of sin nature, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching (doctrine) to which you were committed. And, having been freed from sin (the sin nature), you became slaves of righteousness. I'm speaking in human terms, because of their weakness of your flesh (that is, your sin nature). For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members are slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification" (being set apart for the purpose and the plan of God for you."

Now, you may, of course, ignore all this. You may say, "I'm very happy with the life I live, and I'm not going to let you goad me and get me to do something big for God." That is the privilege that resides in your own priesthood. But at least you'll know better now.

What should I do after I'm saved" Get into the power dynamic of doctrine, and the Spirit of God, and find the will of God, and the plan of God for your life, so that you look back from eternity, and you find that it has been a meaningful life.

Father, we want to thank You for the Word, and for all that You have shown us this morning, and for how this indeed does ring a bell of truth. Please help us to rise to it, to be everything that we can in Christ Jesus. We pray in His name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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