

Sunday A.M.
Feb. 3, 2019

Christians in Culture - A City on a Hill

Matt. 5:14

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Foreword

We spoke recently about Christians having the "compass" of God's Word in their hands; His principles by which they guide both themselves and those they are connected to. However, in His sermon on the mount, Jesus defines the scope of our responsibility as the cultures of the entire world.

Who Are the Light

Devoted followers and imitators of Christ are the light of the world.

What is a Christian's Light

In Matt. 5:16, Jesus said good works are our light in the world. Matt. 5-7, Christ's Sermon on the Mount, clarifies some of those good works. Jesus describes how His followers are to influence culture in 9 areas...

anger 5:21-26 lust 5:27-30 divorce 5:31-32
oaths 5:33-37 revenge 5:38-42 love/hate 5:43-48
giving 6:1-4 judging 7:1-6 treatment of others 7:12-14

If we accept the role and responsibility of being God's light in the world, we must know God's principles, embrace and practice them in our own lives, and present them to our culture for guidance.

The World's Culture of Darkness

a. Lucifer's Light and Satan's Personal Darkness

Jesus' statement of us being light in the world infers the world is in darkness. Darkness entered heaven when Lucifer turned dark and became Satan, God's enemy. Darkness entered Earth when Satan deceived Adam and Eve to cast off God for independence. Darkness enters our homes, families, communities, and countries when we listen to Satan and follow in our first parents' footsteps.

There once was a time of nothing but glorious light. Even Satan was then an angel of light. His former name Lucifer (Isa. 14:12) meant *bright morning star*. In Ezekiel 28:12-19 God says about him,

"You were the sum of all things, you were full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, you were covered with every precious stone...the workmanship of stringed instruments and pipes was placed in you the day you were created...I set you as the anointed cherub that covers on the holy mountain, where you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created.

But Lucifer's pride swelled until he believed he could overthrow God (Isa. 14:12-14). That's when he became Satan, which means *adversary*. We should not call him Lucifer unless we are referring to his existence before his sin.

b. The Darkness of Fallen Angels and War in Heaven

In the passages of Isaiah and Ezekiel, Satan's iniquity turned into pride and rebellion against God. He corrupted and persuaded a third of the angels to join him (Jude 1:6; Rev. 12:4, 7-9). When these failed, dark rage, vengeance, and destruction consumed him. Satan vented it on a new target...us.

c. The Darkness of Death, and Distance from God

By deceiving Eve and Adam, Satan brought death and distance from God upon mankind.

d. The Darkness of Lawless Wickedness

By Noah's day, Satan tempted man so that every imagination of his heart was only evil, continuously.

e. The Darkness of Deviant Sexuality

Satan has perpetrated the darkness of contradicting God's ordained purposes of sexuality...pleasure and procreation within

1.) Adultery, Promiscuous Fornication, Homosexuality

In Abraham's day, Satan tempted Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities around them into rampant, city-wide fornication and homosexuality (Jude 1:7; Rom. 1:24-27). If God could find any righteous in the cities, He would withhold judgment. But He could not, and their sexual deviancy brought down God's wrath and destruction.

The explosion of adultery and fornication in the 1960's, was a shrugging off of mores held by former generations that were rooted in Scripture. Promiscuity produced soaring numbers of unexpected and unwanted pregnancies, which imposed alarming dilemmas on families and marriages, and community stigma. Contraceptives once intended solely for family planning were proliferated to single young people as early as junior high school as a solution, but actually facilitated more promiscuity. It also produced the unintended consequence of an epidemic of venereal diseases.

Sex abuse, Pedophilia, Sex Slavery and Trafficking, and Sexual Entertainment are marking the landscape of our country as it surfaces from its dark basement into the light of day, and receives no adverse response.

Worst of all, the darkness of morning after pills and abortion have become a scourge to the human race. The secular Guttmacher Institute admits it is difficult to measure the number of abortions from the countries of the world. But just from what is relayed to them, they reported that between 2010-2014, 56 million babies a year were aborted.

2.) Polygamy

In Genesis 2:24 we see God's ordained plan for marriage. A man leaves his parents, cleaves to his wife (singular), and they shall be one flesh. Polygamy permits a plurality of wives in direct contradiction to God, which also prevents a man from becoming one flesh with his wife.

3.) Transgenderism

The present trend and fad of deviating from God's biological determination of gender, to define it with our own definition, is nothing short of Satan's statement to Eve, "*When you disregard God, you shall be as gods, determining right and wrong yourself.*"

Romans 1:25 speaks of a people who change the truth of God into a lie. Verse 32 says they know the judgment of God against deviations from God's ordained way, but deviate anyway, and have pleasure in those who indulge them too.

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f. The Darkness of Mind-Weakening Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Every weekend people abdicate the strength of their mind to maintain proprieties, inhibitions, and prohibitions by altering their mental state with drugs and alcohol. More and more, our culture promotes this darkness as it demands liberality and legalization. Because of the effect of these chemicals on judgment and self-control, the toll of destruction wreaked on marriages, families, and communities cannot be measured.

g. The Darkness of Past and Modern Idolatry

In the days of Israel's independence, Satan tempted God's people to turn to fake gods and sacrifice their children to them. When Christ was born, he tempted Herod to kill the toddler children of Bethlehem just to kill Jesus (Rev. 12:4-5). In the Tribulation period he will try to destroy Israel (Rev. 12:6)

Modern idolatry has revealed the worship of a new universal god...self. Somehow, Satan has created a generation of narcissism. The swing toward more self-esteem in the '80's has morphed into the monster of self-love today. Only our God knows the full consequences to our culture of this darkness.

Christians a City on a Hill

The darkness of our world today is a direct result of man's conscious or unwitting partnership with Satan. The darkness of a culture is simply the indulgence of everything opposite of God's ordained principles. God wants Christians to adopt His principles on a personal level, and influence those connected to them. But Jesus also says "we are the light of the world" that should not be hidden from the world. We are to relay the principles of God into every facet of our culture. The way things have been looking, we may be more to blame for our culture than we think.