The Church…In the World but Not of It

Slide 1

As I thought about what to preach this week, and as I thought about my upcoming vacation, I realized I how much I am looking forward to escaping from difficult duties for a while. But our job is not to escape the world, it isn’t to blend in with the world, and it isn’t even to overthrow the world’s systems. The scriptures make it clear that the ways of the world (the ways that oppose God’s ways) are going to be the predominate form of government in this place.

I do not believe we should expect that some nations are going to be righteous nations, while others will be godly. Instead we, as the church, are supposed to rise up, like cream and demonstrate God’s goodness in a fallen world system.

No matter how many nations of people’s there are in the world, the book of Revelation only emphasizes two different groups, those who have faith and those who do not.

As the theologian Jonathan Menn wrote:

“As has been seen…throughout Revelation, humanity consists of two, and only two types or groups: those who are committed to Christ and those who are not. Babylon epitomizes the system and worldview of everything and everyone that is not Christ’s. The world’s system appears all-powerful but contains the seeds of its own destruction. God’s judgment on the ungodly economic, cultural, and religious system of the world leads to the establishment of God’s consummated reign and the union with His people. As Revelation 18 says:

**18**After all this I saw another angel come down from heaven with great authority, and the earth grew bright with his splendor. **2**He gave a mighty shout:

“Babylon is fallen—that great city is fallen!  
    She has become a home for demons.  
She is a hideout for every foul[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+18&version=NLT#fen-NLT-30958a)] spirit,  
    a hideout for every foul vulture  
    and every foul and dreadful animal.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+18&version=NLT#fen-NLT-30958b)]  
**3**For all the nations have fallen[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+18&version=NLT#fen-NLT-30959c)]  
    because of the wine of her passionate immorality.  
The kings of the world  
    have committed adultery with her.  
Because of her desires for extravagant luxury,  
    the merchants of the world have grown rich.”

**4**Then I heard another voice calling from heaven,

“Come away from her, my people.  
    Do not take part in her sins,  
    or you will be punished with her.  
**5**For her sins are piled as high as heaven,  
    and God remembers her evil deeds.  
**6**Do to her as she has done to others.  
    Double her penalty[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+18&version=NLT#fen-NLT-30962d)] for all her evil deeds.  
She brewed a cup of terror for others,  
    so brew twice as much[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+18&version=NLT#fen-NLT-30962e)] for her.  
**7**She glorified herself and lived in luxury,  
    so match it now with torment and sorrow.  
She boasted in her heart,  
    ‘I am queen on my throne.  
I am no helpless widow,  
    and I have no reason to mourn.’  
**8**Therefore, these plagues will overtake her in a single day-- death and mourning and famine.  
She will be completely consumed by fire,  
    for the Lord God who judges her is mighty.”

This passage describes the literal judgment of Babylon but it uses the description to challenge us to be in the world but not of it. We have to be prepared to live with God’s people as God’s people among people who are opposed to us and what we value. We are to be God’s Kingdom (The Church) among the nations of the world. And being the church, standing out from the masses requires work, really hard work, which seems to be getting harder in this nation. But that is okay. If God can challenge His people to rise up from among Babylon, we the church can demonstrate God’s Kingdom values in America, but it takes work. Before I go any further about the work part, I want to generally clarify what I mean when I say, “Kingdom Values.”

**17**For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. **18**If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and others will approve of you, too.”

Romans 14:17-18 NLT

As subjects of God’s kingdom our marching orders are living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. We are to rise above the world’s system through the Fruit of the Spirit not by the might of our worldly success. As Galatians aptly describes the differences between what the two kingdoms value.

**9**When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, **20**idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, **21**envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

**22**But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23**gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Galatians 5:9-23 NLT

Understanding that God wants us to “Rise up out of Babylon” so to speak, I can tell you that as the church, we have our work cut out for us. Yes, it takes work. As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians.

Slide 2

“*For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.*” (2 Thessalonians 3:10–12, ESV)

This principle is just as true in the spiritual realm as it is in the physical realm. It takes work to show things like love, joy, peace, patience and kindness. So today we are going to talk about principles that God wants us to utilize in the church to be the church.

Slide 3a

***God wants us to be good stewards of what we have been given.***

Slide 3b

“*…Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.*” (Luke 12:48, ESV)

Slide 3c

“*This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.*” (1 Corinthians 4:1–2, ESV)

Slide 4a

***God wants us to take care of our families.***

Slide 4b

“*But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*” (1 Timothy 5:8, ESV)

Slide 5a

***God wants us to care for our physical and spiritual well-being.***

Slide 5b

“*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*” (Romans 12:1–2, ESV)

Slide 6a

***God wants us to love Him emotionally, intellectually, and willfully…***

Slide 6b

“*And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment…”*” (Matthew 22:37–40, ESV)

Slide 7a

***God wants us to love our neighbor as our self.***

Slide 7b

*And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*” (Matthew 22:37–40, ESV)

***God wants us to be involved in at least three formal church ministries…oh wait, maybe that isn’t true.***

But here is what is true…

Slide 8a

***God has equipped each of us to be part of the whole of His church.***

Slide 8b

“*For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*” (Romans 12:3–8, ESV)

Every member has some type of gift to offer in the building up of Christ’s church. We are all like broken shards of glass that, when we find our place, we together, reflect the Body of Christ.

The vision that was established a long time ago here at Bonney Lake Community Church is…that we would be a gathering of believers that know Jesus Christ intimately and are making Him known locally and globally. It is this vision that drives us to do the good works that He has planned for us in advance, and it is our personal relationship with Him that will lead us to our part of the local and global ministry that He desires for our Church.

This vision is not simply a hand-crafted statement to make us sound like we have it together. It is meant to be a measuring rod for us to evaluate what we are doing as individuals and as a corporate gathering of God’s people. God commands us to be “doers of the word and not hearers only.” Like He warned the Church at Laodicea we too should be warned that God hates complacency and loves smoking hot passion. Today as I share with you our mission statement, I want that you would examine your passion. The preaching of the Word is meant to be a time of encouragement, confession, conviction, correction, examination, meditation, and personal application. It is not meant to be about idle talk. I will end by taking a moment to share my personal approach to living life with Christian vision.

**Anthony’s Mission and Vision Statement**

Mission—My mission is to live life, with others, in the growing knowledge of the truth, love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Vision—My vision is to see faith in, and faithfulness to, Christ, strengthened in every person who knows me.

**Steps to Accomplishment**

Power of the Spirit (Love, Joy, Peace, etc…)

Ask for God’s power, seek to be a peacemaker, show love, show kindness and gentleness to others.

Purposeful Devotion (Prayer, Study, Meditation, Humiliation)

Pray for my family, for friends, for neighbors, for leaders, and for God’s wisdom in being part of His plan.

Read books, listen to sermons online, subscriptions to educational periodicals and devotionals, take webinar type classes.

Think about the information that I have processed through study.

Change my ways when needed and humbly act in ways that I am equipped to serve.

Proclamation (Preaching, Teaching, and applying my learning for the benefit of others)

Tell people what I have learned through the purposeful devotion part of my life in order to help them know Christ better and have faith in His plan for their life.

Personal involvement (Finding ways to engage myself in the lives of others instead of isolating)

Pre-marital counseling,

Helping others through grief,

Helping others with construction projects

Participation in memorial services

Officiating Weddings

Participation in Community prayer and ministerial orgaizations

Dirt bike riding

Coaching sports teams

Being available for people when they need to vent

Having friends or neighbors over for lunch, dinner, or grabbing coffee or going hiking.

Patience with myself, others, and God (People are messy and God is too Holy to make us like Him overnight)

Life ebbs and flows, sometimes our relationships with God and others seems to be fruitful and working well and other times it feels stale and lame. Stay engaged and be patient. God is faithful.

Make a plan for yourself, based off of the basics that God has commanded us, how He has gifted you, and the passions He has given you, if each of us purposes to live with Christ-centered vision in our daily lives, then we will be the Church God wants us to be.