

SWITCHING SIDES

Ephesians 5:7-10 (HCSB)

Therefore, do not become their partners. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light—for the fruit of the light results in all goodness, righteousness, and truth—discerning what is pleasing to the Lord.

Theme: switching kingdoms

FCF: a truncated version of Jesus leads to a truncated life in the world

Point: a change in identity leads to a change in desires where we care more about what pleases God than ourselves

Intro: Chapter 5 is a picture of God's kingdom breaking forth in the ordinary rhythms of life. Our motivation for doing what's right is that God is our loving Father. His love is others-centered and self-giving. Sin works against this in our lives, so we must learn our identity as a child of God, trust in Christ, and fight our old sin nature by the power of the Holy Spirit.

KINGDOM: "God's people in God's place under God's rule" - Graeme Goldsworthy¹

To *partner* (συμμέτοχοι symmetochoi) is to identify with someone *by doing what they do*²
Living according to God's kingdom entails a break from the old kingdom (i.e. the world) and the people in it who live outside of God's rule.

Because you have a different identity now

You were once _____, but now you are _____. (8a)

In other words, you have switched kingdoms.

The question naturally follows: **What is the Christian's relation to people in a worldview/kingdom/culture that is hostile to God's saving rule?**

- **Pharisee** ~ combatting³ the world **AP!**
 - John denies this...
John 3:17 (HCSB)
For God did not send His Son into the world that He might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.
 - **Sadducee** ~ conforming to the world
 - Paul denies this
Romans 12:2 (NASB)
And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
- **Essenes** ~ cocooned from the world
 - Paul denies this...
1 Corinthians 5:10-13 (HCSB)
I wrote to you in a letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. I did not mean the immoral people of this world or the greedy and swindlers or idolaters; otherwise you would have to leave the world. But now I am writing you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer who is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or verbally abusive, a drunkard or a swindler. Do not even eat with such a person. For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? Don't you judge those who are inside? But God judges outsiders. Put away the evil person from among yourselves.

D.A. Carson's wrote a book, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, showing that the common problem we have in relating to culture as Christians is that we are too reductionistic. One says we must be removed from worldly things (Essenes), one says we must be in opposition to the world (Pharisees), and another says we must transform culture by contextualizing (Saducees). But "the rich complexity of biblical norms, worked out in the Bible's story line, tells us that these...often operate simultaneously."⁴

• **Jesus ~ John 17:15-23 AP!**

• Jesus tells his followers to be...

1. **truthful, but inclusive** (sanctify them by the truth...I have also sent them into the world)
2. **confrontational, yet embracing** (23)
3. **unstained, but messy** (the world hated them because they are not of the world...I am not praying that you take them out but that you protect them from the evil one)
 1. our problem isn't that we don't want to be like Jesus, it's that we can only handle part of him!

Some things to think about...

- If everyone loves us, we might not be very confrontational
 - If everyone hates us, we might not be very embracing
 - If no one needs us, it could mean we're invisible
- all of these broken ideologies comes from a truncated version of Jesus.
A truncated Jesus gives us a truncated plan for the world.
But we've been called to a robust view of Jesus!

We are...

Ambassadors: living in one country, representing another.

illust: American ambassador to China.

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 (HCSB)

Therefore, **we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us.** We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." He made the One who **did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

You have a lot of power behind you---but you no longer care about yourself.

This starts when God changes you by His Holy Spirit.

Paul: act like what you are---

---discerning what is pleasing to the Lord. (v.10)

Philippians 3:18-21 (HCSB)

For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame. They are focused on earthly things, **but our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.** He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subject everything to Himself.

A change in identity leads to a change in desires.⁵

There's a fundamental shift in what you care about now:

You used to care about lustful self-indulgence.

Now you care about *what's pleasing to the Lord*

This will help us in the turbulent waters of culture.

How do we know if we need to speak out in truth?

How will we know when we just need to quiet and listen?

How do you navigate issues of sexuality?

If a non is living in sin---speak or live out your worldview?

We don't know how to do this perfectly. But we must try.

We certainly must be enjoying Jesus (all of him, not a reductionist form of him)

Enjoying His Word (or you will become a *Sadducee*)

Enjoying His Spirit (for the times you don't know His will)

Enjoying His gospel (or you will become a *Pharisee*)

Enjoying His Church (you can't avoid the center of fellowship)

Enjoying those He died for (or you will become an *Essene*)

Matthew 5:14-16 (HCSB)

You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

When Christ is the only light that flows from our life in a supernatural combination of truthful embrace, loving confrontation, and a holiness that is not afraid of getting its hands dirty, we will become a city on a hill amidst our city, pointing the way out of the darkness.

There is a silly saying: "you're so heavenly-minded, you're of no earthly good."

Colossians 3:1-2 (NASB)

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

It's not one or the other. Rather...

We will identify rightly to things on earth when our minds are identified to things in heaven.

¹ Graeme Goldsworthy. *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*.

² “It is participation in another’s rights by becoming somehow identified with that other.” McGrath, “‘Syn’ Words in Saint Paul,” 221. Quoted from Hoehner. *Ephesians*. 668.

³ This alliteration was adapted from Britt Merrick’s book, *Godspeed: Making Christ’s Mission Your Own*.

⁴ D.A. Carson writes this, not about the first Jewish sects I am referring to, but as a critique against Richard Niebuhr’s famous grid regarding the same. Niebuhr’s five-pronged approach pitted different ways to relate to culture against themselves, and Carson, while appreciative of Niebuhr’s work, argues against such reductionism. I had this in mind while using these first century sects as an illustration. *Christ and Culture Revisited*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008). 227.

⁵ Philippians 2:13 “For it is God who is working in you, enabling you both to desire and to work out His good purpose” (HCSB).