



Instructions: If your group meets bi-weekly, complete questions 3 & 4 this week.

1. Pastor Tom tells us, as a nation, America is shedding much of the general religious character that has dominated our culture for centuries. Have you seen this change? If so, how? He went on to explain that we often react to this change in one of two ways: fear or outrage. Have you experienced either of these reactions in your own life? Do you believe we are responding correctly to this loss of religious character? What is the danger in barricading ourselves away from the culture at large?
2. What similarities can be found between our culture today and the culture of the church in Corinth? What problems did that church face both internally and externally (see notes)? Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; in these verses Paul called the church worldly and accused the people of being controlled by their sinful nature. How did that effect the witness of this church? How can this impact our witness today?
3. Read Acts 18:9-11. What did the Lord instruct Paul to do? What reassurance does He give to Paul? Do you believe America is like Corinth as outlined in vs. 10? Why or why not? How can we apply what Pastor Tom was preaching this past Sunday to speak out and not be silent?
4. Pastor Tom warns us that "Seeing our culture (and the people in it) as the problem and as enemies cannot be our default setting". What is the inherent danger caused by this? How can we guard against it? What can you and your small group do to engage the culture without losing the Gospel? How can we be the light that shines in the darkness? Take a moment to write down some of the ideas you've come up with and take them home with you to act on. In the following weeks, continue to share with your group the steps you've taken to share Jesus with the world.

New Year, new series, new group! Plan now to attend Small Group Connection on Sunday, January 17th & 24th @ 6:00pm in the Video Café as we launch new groups. Childcare provided, but pre-registration is required. Sign up today at www.myriversidechurch.com/sgconnect.

“WHAT IN THE WORLD HAPPENED?”

JANUARY 3RD, 2016

Message Notes & Discussion Guide



“What in the World Happened?”

[Senior Pastor, Tom Lundeen]

MESSAGE NOTES

Our unprecedented growth in knowledge and technological advancement has not resulted in human beings being better, kinder, _____, more loving, compassionate, and gracious, etc.

As a nation, America is _____ much of the general religious character that has mostly dominated its culture for multiple centuries.

...we tend to react in one of two ways:

- _____
- _____ -...the ‘_____ vs. _____’ narrative becomes all-consuming...”this feels invigorating like a ‘panic attack’ with a _____ of adrenaline to fire up passions.” (Robinson)

It turns our public witness to the world often into an ugly temper tantrum or into a church b_____ away from the very people Jesus came to rescue.

- We’re going to learn from 1st century Jesus-followers in the city of Corinth how to engage the culture with convictional k_____ and without losing the gospel.
- We’re also going to learn that the culture we are so often scared of and outraged by has put its _____ on our lives more so than we may realize...

God is calling us to “re-solve” with _____ how to engage our culture without losing the gospel.

1. Why Corinth? (note Acts 18:1-18)

Corinth was a:

- N_____ city
- E_____ powerhouse
- Religious city (temples to many _____)
- Deeply immoral city (“corinthianize” = “go to _____...to fornicate”)

The church Paul started in Corinth:

- Had great strength and _____ potential (note Acts 18:9-11).
- Was p_____ by problems (note 1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

To be a follower of Jesus in Corinth was challenging:

- The d_____ culture was 180 degrees different from the Christian faith.

- Just about every temptation known to the human race was alive, well, living, and in _____ in Corinth.
- P_____ it was difficult to follow Jesus in Corinth....
- Persecution of various _____ and intensity were still commonplace for Christ-followers (note Acts 18:12-16).

2. So What in the World Has Happened?

3 huge religious _____ going on in America that we need to understand (from Ed Stetzer, Nov. 4, 2014, Executive Director of LifeWay Research):

- A. Christ followers no longer have the “h_____ f_____ advantage” - a _____ worldview is more dominant.
- B. Christ-followers have lost c_____ privilege—”Privilege refers to a built-in advantage one has due to some inherent quality. Christians had this privilege; others were expected to _____ to it. Christians still have a privileged position in our society, but it is lessening while Christians simply have less influence.” (Stetzer)
- C. Christ-followers will become more _____ - seeing our culture (and the people in it) as the problem and as enemies cannot be our _____ setting.

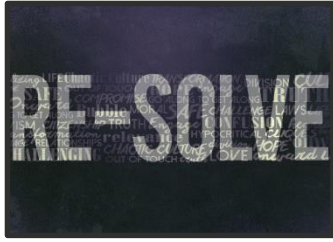
With resolve let’s “re-solve” to engage the culture without losing the gospel:

“...it’s important to remember that in the 1st century, Christians didn’t gain influence by protesting the Roman government’s “War on Christmas”. They faithfully followed Christ, at times in the face of persecution, while rescuing discarded infants, comforting the sick left to die alone and _____ to a not-always-receptive world.” (Stetzer)

Preparing for the Lord’s Table:

“A _____ view of culture leads to meanness. If we believe we are on the losing side of history, we slide into the rage of those who know their time is short. We have no reason to be fearful or sullen or mean. We’re not the _____ of history. We are not slouching towards Gomorrah; we are marching to Zion. The worst thing that can possibly happen to us has already happened; we’re dead. We were crucified at Skull Place, under the wrath of God. And the best thing that could happen to us has already happened; we’re alive, in Christ, and our future is seated at the right hand of God, and He’s feeling just fine...If the gates of hell can’t hold Jesus back, why would we be afraid of Hollywood or Capitol Hill? Times may grow dark indeed, but times have always been dark, since the insurrection of Eden. Nonetheless, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not, the darkness will not, the darkness cannot overcome it. The arc of history is long, but it _____ towards Jesus.” (Moore)

Tell someone about the next step you took today in your spiritual journey. You can use the connect card to let us know about your commitment, too!



"What in the World Happened?"

[Sr Pastor, Tom Lundeen]

(You can sign up for Pastor Tom's e-newsletter for his thoughts on various subjects at pastortom@myriversidechurch.com)

MESSAGE NOTES

Our unprecedented growth in knowledge and technological advancement has not resulted in human beings being better, kinder, nicer, more loving, compassionate, and gracious, etc.

As a nation, America is shedding much of the general religious character that has mostly dominated its culture for multiple centuries.

...we tend to react in one of two ways:

- Fear
- Outrage - ...the 'us vs. them' narrative becomes all-consuming..."this feels invigorating like a 'panic attack' with a jolt of adrenaline to fire up passions." (Robinson)

It turns our public witness to the world often into an ugly temper tantrum or into a church barricaded away from the very people Jesus came to rescue.

- We're going to learn from 1st century Jesus-followers in the city of Corinth how to engage the culture with convictional kindness and without losing the gospel.
- We're also going to learn that the culture we are so often scared of and outraged by has put its imprint on our lives more so than we may realize...

God is calling us to "re-solve" with resolve how to engage our culture without losing the gospel.

1. Why Corinth? (note Acts 18:1-18)

Corinth was a:

- Newer city
- Economic powerhouse
- Religious city (temples to many gods)
- Deeply immoral city ("corinthianize" = "go to devil...to fornicate")

The church Paul started in Corinth:

- Had great strength and big potential (note Acts 18:9-11).
- Was plagued by problems (note 1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

To be a follower of Jesus in Corinth was challenging:

- The dominant culture was 180 degrees different from the Christian faith.
- Just about every temptation known to the human race was alive, well, living, and in color in Corinth.
- Politically it was difficult to follow Jesus in Corinth....
- Persecution of various kinds and intensity were still commonplace for Christ-followers (note Acts 18:12-16).

2. So What in the World Has Happened?

3 huge religious shifts going on in America that we need to understand (from Ed Stetzer, Nov. 4, 2014, Executive Director of LifeWay Research):

- A. Christ followers no longer have the “home field advantage” – a secular worldview is more dominant.
- B. Christ-followers have lost cultural privilege – “Privilege refers to a built-in advantage one has due to some inherent quality. Christians had this privilege; others were expected to adjust to it. Christians still have a privileged position in our society, but it is lessening while Christians simply have less influence.” (Stetzer)
- C. Christ-followers will become more distinct – seeing our culture (and the people in it) as the problem and as enemies cannot be our default setting.

With resolve let's “re-solve” to engage the culture without losing the gospel:

“...it's important to remember that in the 1st century, Christians didn't gain influence by protesting the Roman government's “War on Christmas”. They faithfully followed Christ, at times in the face of persecution, while rescuing discarded infants, comforting the sick left to die alone and sharing the gospel to a not-always-receptive world.” (Stetzer)

Preparing for the Lord's Table:

“A gloomy view of culture leads to meanness. If we believe we are on the losing side of history, we slide into the rage of those who know their time is short. We have no reason to be fearful or sullen or mean. We're not the losers of history. We are not slouching towards Gomorrah; we are marching to Zion. The worst thing that can possibly happen to us has already happened; we're dead. We were crucified at Skull Place, under the wrath of God. And the best thing that could happen to us has already happened; we're alive, in Christ, and our future is seated at the right hand of God, and He's feeling just fine...If the gates of hell can't hold Jesus back, why would we be afraid of Hollywood or Capitol Hill? Times may grow dark indeed, but times have always been dark, since the insurrection of Eden. Nonetheless, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not, the darkness will not, the darkness cannot overcome it. The arc of history is long, but it bends towards Jesus.” (Moore)

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