

What's Wrong?

Ps. Craig Mobey

Scripture: John 16:7-13 (NIV)

⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

⁸ When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment:

⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me;

¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer;

¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

¹² "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.

¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."

Introduction

Jesus is explaining that He will ascend into heaven and send the Holy Spirit. He also explains that the Holy Spirit will come to believers as an advocate, comforter and guide and to the world, as One who will prove to the world that they are wrong about sin, righteousness and judgment. And if you or I are busy with the things of the world, the Holy Spirit will speak up.

We can be certain that as things stand in the world, not all is well. If you look at your world, what do you see wrong and what is the fix? Let's think about this.

Let's see what, according to others during an online discussion, (1) is wrong in the world and (2) what is the fix:

- A, "The freedom that you truly crave for is justified. It is just an expression to be who you really are instead of trying to impress people for appearing nice."

The fix: enlightenment.

- P, "...lack of empathy or understanding of those around the individual leading to behaviour that is outside the normal bounds of that society or crime,..."

The fix: Transcendental Meditation.

- D, "...human nature has been unleashed from civility by the internet."

The fix: find your place in this new world.

- R, "I think that the one big problem the world has is... its bigness. Population."

The fix: stop having so many children. A maximum of 2 children per person ... Birth control in the water supply, free DIY sterilisation pods on every street corner..."

- A, "The thing that is wrong with society is lack of morals and misunderstanding. You can only influence human behavior and thoughts to a certain extent through religion, laws, and punishment. Humans will be humans."

The fix: learn to co-exist. humanism

Body

The list of what is wrong is a long one and I ended up reading quite a bit of it. If anything, it demonstrates, what I call a "God-consciousness" in that there is a general consensus that all is not well in the world and people are searching for a meaningful solution. People are making comparisons between the present state of affairs and a desired state of affairs. The solution to problems, in every instance, requires a change from something to something else.

From my point of view, sin in one or another form is the proverbial elephant in the room, and no-one in the chat dares mention it. The realization and confession of sin go hand in hand with accountability to God. Such an admission would be a game changer. But ... accountability has to be toward the only True and Living God, not to any pagan gods because pagan gods are unable to do something about the problem of sin.

Here is a curious yet predictable thing: in such an open forum, in a post-modern post-foundational world, proclaiming the singular truth of Jesus will inevitably end in people being

offended, disagreement and conflict, despite their obvious need for Jesus. The world in which we live:

- Is comfortable with multiple coexistent truths.
- Places man at the centre of the universe.
- Decides for itself what is sin.

There is only one truth, God's truth, God is at the centre of the universe and God has already said, in His Word, what sin is. And despite how the world might receive the Good News of Jesus, we should still proclaim the Gospel.

So, to identify sin is to also admit that something must change. If something must change, it also means that something right now is not right. And if you or someone else has lived life believing everything is right, the singular truth of Jesus may leave you or someone feeling charged with something, a Godly awareness of sin. And here is the "thing," we – and others – don't like being charged.

You can imagine someone living his or her life, believing that all is good; they are doing the best; believing that what is wrong with the world is "out there," meaning that problems are external. They might even see themselves as a victim of circumstance, not the originator or a responsible party. And here comes someone saying, "all are sinners and are currently falling short of the glory of God."

It is not you or me claiming this out of our own, it is in fact, the Word of God in Romans 3:23 declaring this Neither you nor I have the right to charge anyone of sin. We are charged to spread the Good News about Jesus. Listen again to John 16:8-11, Jesus is speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit, "When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."

And suddenly, things become personal. It is not the minister or Christian doing the charging, but God the Holy Spirit. But what defence can be reasonably offered to God? Surprisingly, there are 3: Agreement, disagreement or denial. If in agreement, then I must change. If in

disagreement, then something else or someone else must change. Denial on the other hand is what I call “an ostrich defence” a head in the sand defence. Whatever the case may be:

- That person’s relationship with the minister or Christian will never be the same again.
- That person’s relationship with God will never be the same again.

But what if things are even more personal? What if it is YOU that the Holy Spirit is engaging through Scripture. As I just said:

- Your relationship with yourself will never be the same again.
- Your relationship with God will never be the same again.

But let’s keep on with this personal journey:

- Why is it that the Holy Spirit brought something to your attention?
- What is it that must change for Jesus’ peace to re-establish itself in your life?
- What language are you using to describe those things that the Holy Spirit has brought to your attention?

God knows your heart and motive. If I, for example, mentioned something to you, perhaps along the lines of, for example, “you need to stop drinking so much” you can disagree with me, agree with me or deny it. Not so, when it is God bringing something to your attention. The “ostrich defence” does not work with God. He created you and He created the sand. You can’t hide and deep down inside, you will know that God is right. In this sense, to disagree is to also be intellectually dishonest. You are therefore confronted with a choice. And we are accountable to God.

1 John 2:15-16 reads, “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.”

The world is what we leave when we come to Christ. Loving the world means being dedicated to its systems, treasures, philosophies, and priorities. The world often admires sin. We cannot. We cannot be devoted to both God and the world at the same time.

Conclusion

Perhaps this is a good time to again ask, “what do you see wrong in your world and what is the fix?” Having heard today’s message, your answer may have contracted to a personal level.

When a true child of God goes astray, God will discipline and call him/her back to obedience because of His love for us. And we cannot abuse His love. Romans 6:1-2 says, “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?”

Brothers and sisters let us remind ourselves that just as a fish is not made for land and cannot continue there, we who believe are not made for the things of the world and cannot continue there.

Amen.