

THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: [John 17:14-17](#). From Roy H. Enoch.
- B. Definitions may be needed.
 - 1. "The church" is the body of Christ, those who have been "delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. 1:13).
 - 2. "The churches of Asia" or "The churches of Galatia" refer to local congregations or assemblies.
 - 3. "The world" refers to human society without God.
 - 4. "Worldliness" refers to gratifying the lusts of the flesh (1 Jn. 2:15-17).
- C. The NT uses many references to "the world:"
 - 1. "the whole world" (Mt. 16:26).
 - 2. "since the beginning of the world" (Mt. 24:21).
 - 3. "from the foundation of the world" (Mt. 25:24).
 - 4. "all of the kingdoms of the world" (Lk. 4:5).
 - 5. "the world cannot hate you, but it hates Me" (Jn. 7:7).
 - 6. "look, the world has gone after Him" (Jn. 12:19).
 - 7. "I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world" (Jn. 12:47).
 - 8. "His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father" (Jn. 13:1).
 - 9. "He will convict the world of sin" (Jn. 16:8).
 - 10. "the ruler of this world is judged" (Jn. 16:11).
 - 11. "do not be conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2).
 - 12. "God made foolish the wisdom of this world" (1Cor. 1:20).
 - 13. "the spirit of the world" (1Cor. 2:12).
 - 14. "cares about the things of the world" (1Cor. 7:33).
 - 15. "were in bondage under the elements of the world" (Gal. 4:3).
 - 16. "has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith" (Jas. 2:5).
 - 17. "friendship with the world is enmity with God" (Jas. 4:4).
 - 18. "they speak as of the world, and the world hears them" (1Jn. 4:5).
- D. We want to focus on the world from two standpoints:
 - 1. The effect of the church in the world.
 - 2. The effect of the world in the church.

I. THE CHURCH SHOULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WORLD THROUGH CHRISTIAN LIVES.

- A. Jesus used several terms to describe the influence of the church on the world:
 - 1. Matthew 13:33:
 - a. Its influence permeates the whole.
 - b. It works quietly from within rather than by force.
 - 2. Matthew 5:13:
 - a. Salt preserves by keeping things from spoiling.
 - b. Salt seasons and gives flavor.
 - 3. Matthew 5:14-16.
 - 4. Matthew 13:24:
 - a. Luke 8:11.
 - b. The word of God only produces Christians.
 - c. The doctrines of men produces division.
 - 5. Matthew 13:44-46:
 - a. The kingdom or church is of great value.
 - b. It requires all that we have.

- B. We must make sure that our lives reflect this influence.
 - 1. At WORK we must show these Christian traits of honesty, dedication to doing things right and well.
 - 2. We must show the maturity of self discipline.
 - 3. We must show the love of doing good for evil.
 - 4. We must show the humility of exalting others rather than ourselves.
 - 5. We must show understanding of forgiveness by remembering our own weaknesses.
 - 6. We must balance avoiding evil companionship, with living in society of ungodly people.
 - a. Our close friends should strengthen us spiritually, especially our mate.
 - b. We must chose teachers who love the truth and who will not compromise God's will with the world.

II. WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE DANGERS OF THE WORLD IN THE CHURCH.

- A. We cannot please the world and the Lord.
See Mt. 6; 2Tim. 3:12; Jn. 15:18-20; Gal. 1:10.
- B. A faithful church may be respected but it will not be popular.
 - 1. Acts 2:47.
 - 2. After God's discipline of Ananias and Sapphira (Ac. 5:11-14).
 - a. Correction is not pleasant, but it is needed, it shows love, and it is beneficial (Heb. 12:11).
 - b. It is an essential part of all instruction.
 - 3. Condoning sin is to accept guilt of the sin (1Cor. 5:5-7).
 - 4. Those who believe that they can run around with a wild crowd and not be affected only fool themselves (1Cor. 15:33).
- C. We have to associate with worldly people, but we should be careful about becoming close friends with them.
 - 1. There is considerable difference in making acquaintances in order to teach, and to becoming close friends.
 - 2. Paul could accept social customs, that were not ungodly, in order to teach the gospel (1Cor. 9:20-22; Jas. 4:4; 2Cor. 6:14-18).

CONCLUSION.

- A. We must associate with worldly people, but not become worldly.
- B. The church is in the world, not in heaven.
- C. We must not let the church become worldly.
- D. We can accept custom as long as it doesn't change the teachings of Christ.