

Fact Sheet for **“Living as Christians in a Non-Christian World”**
Matthew 22:15-40

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The vast majority of the people whom we interact are not Christians. And God did not call us to hide behind high walls so we wouldn't be stained by the world. Instead Christ gave us the Great Commission in the last three verses of Matthew's gospel (Matthew 28:18-20). This means we must interact with our culture. But our current society is affirming LGBTQ, so how should we interact with our culture? This is the sixth and last sermon in this series. In the first five we looked at some of the bedrock of what the Bible teaches. And as we interact with our culture we need to be careful not to erode that bedrock.

- 1 – God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5)
- 2 – Everyone has a sin nature (Genesis 3:1-13)
- 3 – The Holy Spirit indwells Christians (1 Corinthians 2:6-16)
- 4 – The Bible is both inerrant and infallible (five prophetic passages and their fulfillment)
- 5 – Sexual immorality (LGBTQ) is darkness, not light (1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

So, how do we effectively live as Christians in a non-Christian world without eroding our adherence to this bedrock of what the Bible teaches?

Firstly, God called us to share the Gospel with those we interact with, not to stamp out all sin in the world. Now when we vote we do vote our values, and we support those things that support our values. But we shouldn't be surprised when the world takes off in a different direction. Reading people the riot act about their behavior can make sharing the Gospel with them rather difficult. Instead consider Paul's approach when he spoke to the Greek Philosophers in Athens (Acts 17:16-34).

Secondly, most of the time what the world does doesn't directly impact us, but there are other times when it does. For instance if you are a public school teacher here you are instructed to refer to a transgender student by the pronoun of their preferred gender. Would you be willing to do this if you were a teacher? The more you think about this the murkier the answer gets. For each of these situations I would refer you back to the Holy Spirit who indwells you. What is God leading you to do?

Thirdly, there may be those who interact with you by way of an overt attack on your beliefs. This calls for a different response on our part. I want to refer you to Jesus here.

Right at the beginning of His public ministry he was at Cana in Galilee for a wedding (John 2:1-5). Very shortly after this, upon casting the moneychangers out of the temple, the Jews asked Him for a sign. He responded, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:18-19) Compare these verses with the day of the Last Supper two years later.

ESV John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

Here's my point. Jesus knew from the beginning that He would be crucified on Passover and raised on the third day. After the Last Supper Jesus went to the cross willingly. But before His

hour had arrived He dealt very differently with those who opposed Him. I don't have time to cover all those interactions, but here are three challenges that occurred in rapid succession between Palm Sunday and Good Friday. As we go through them think of how you might respond to those who would deliberately attack you for holding to what the Bible teaches.

Challenge 1

Read Matthew 22:15-17. Luke phrases it this way...

^{NLT} **Luke 20:20** Watching for their opportunity, the leaders sent spies pretending to be honest men. They tried to get Jesus to say something that could be reported to the Roman governor so he would arrest Jesus.

Read Matthew 22:18-22.

You see, when someone asks about your beliefs so that they can accuse you, there are ways of answering that are forceful and will keep you from falling into their trap. You don't need to hedge your answer in a way that would erode your adherence to what the Bible teaches.

Challenge 2

Read Matthew 22:23-33

Jesus didn't answer them the way they wanted. Then, as Jesus often did, He asked them a question they couldn't answer and quoted Exodus 3:6 when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush. Again, there are ways of answering trap questions that are forceful, accurate, and helpful. In fact, Luke adds this note.

^{NKJ} **Luke 20:39** Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well."

Challenge 3

Read Matthew 22:34-40.

This was a hostile test, and was meant to be a point over which Jesus could be faulted. Matthew's record stops here but Mark's keeps on going showing that one scribe was being drawn to Jesus (Mark 12:32-34).

Here's my point. Jesus' hour was close but it had not yet come. So Jesus answered these three trap questions forcefully, truthfully, and in a way that silenced his opponents. He also answered in such a way that people who were listening might be drawn to Him.

Much of our culture may not impact us directly. Some of it may, in the sense that we need to make a decision. Rely on the leading of the Holy Spirit. Some people may deliberately ask us trap questions so they can accuse us. As you answer never erode your reliance on what the Bible teaches. But ask God for the wisdom on how to respond forcefully, accurately, and in a way that puts forward the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a good way.

It is possible to live effectively as a Christian in a non-Christian world. Look for those opportunities our culture affords to share the Good News of Jesus Christ!