

**Be The Church - Part Six**  
**Our Values**  
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This morning is the last of a six-part series called “**Be The Church**”.

This has been a great series where we looked at God’s purpose for creating the church. **The church is a community of believers gathered and working together with a kingdom purpose.**

**That kingdom purpose** is to reach those far from God and to grow together as the family of God.

In this series we have been using a catch phrase to describe who we are and what we do as the church. “**We are followers of Jesus who help others follow Jesus.**”

The past six weeks we have explored....

- **the mission** of the church
- **the people** of the church
- **the habits** of the church
- **the love** of the church
- **the gospel** of the church
- and this morning I want to talk about **values of the church.**

Being the church means we follow certain values that represent and show we are part of another kingdom. Our values distinguish us as the people of God.

The Bible teaches the concept of **being in the world but not of the world.** In **John 17** Jesus prayed that the Father would not take us out of the world but keep us from the evil influences of the world.

When we talk about “The World” today we are talking about - a people and culture that have adopted a secular value system and world view.

Some parts of the church respond in a reactionary way to the world and go into another form of bondage with lots of rules in their effort to be separate from the world. This is not what these scriptures mean.

Jesus did not instruct us to build monasteries, develop closed communities or go hide away from the world until he returns. Instead he told us to go and engage the world around us.

## **READ John 17: 13-19**

### **1. Being the church means we engage our world without adopting the world's values.**

This poses some tough questions:

- How do we stay relevant without losing our prophetic voice?
- How do we develop relationships and friendships with non-Christians without compromising who we are called to be?

**STORY:** I remember some of the challenges at the one place I worked. One person was an atheist, one person was a transsexual, some were weekend party people and a few nominal Christian. I remember attending some after work events and a Christmas party where alcohol was flowing freely. **This is what I discovered. I didn't have to be like them to have a good time with them and they didn't expect me to change my values.** I didn't judge them or act super spiritual. I chose to be friendly and be a friend. **Because I was willing to be who I was in a non-judgmental and non-compromising way it open the door for some really good conversations and I know at least one who became a Christian.** Now I know that sometimes there is much more opposition to Christians in the workplace and school than what I experienced. But we have a choice to make in how we engage the world as believers.

**So, how do we stay involved in our world without becoming like the world? How do I stay relevant, connected, and involved without losing my witness or values?**

I think the key is in verses 16-17.

- <sup>16</sup> **They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.**
- We need to have our identity rooted in another world. If your identity is wrapped up in the things of our culture you are going to have a hard time not getting sucked into the value system of the culture.

- You will care more about what your friends and people think of you than what Jesus thinks of you. Where our identity is rooted is important.
- I belong to another kingdom and culture. My life is to reflect that culture and value system in how I live amidst this secular culture. I am not to be like everyone else.
- <sup>17</sup> **Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.**
- Sanctified means that we are called by God out of the world and set apart for a holy purpose in the earth.

Jesus says, the thing that sets us apart, or sanctifies us, is *truth* or *kingdom values*. **“Sanctify them by the truth”**. This truth becomes our worldview and Christian identity. This truth is what sets us apart.

We are called to live sanctified lives which means our lives are driven by values that reflect Jesus values.

**Oswald Chambers: Sanctification means being made one with Jesus so that the nature that controlled Him will control us.**

As the culture becomes more decadent we begin to seem strange and out of touch in the eyes of the world. **What was seen as normal Christianity 50 years ago is seen as radical Christianity today.**

In our culture today, Christian youth who save themselves for marriage are seen as strange. Those who don't tell lies or cheat the system are seen as very unusual because it is so common place in our culture.

Living out the values of Jesus sometimes puts us in conflict with the values of our culture. The temptation then is to compromise to accommodate the culture and fit in, instead of shining as lights to redeem the culture. **When that happens, the church loses its prophetic voice and ability to change culture.**

We should live our lives with the sense that we are different. We carry the mark of God on us. We are not of this world. We have the seal of the Holy Spirit in us.

Are we willing to live by a different set of standards? Are we willing to stand up for God? Are we willing to challenge the gods of our culture and be ostracized at times because we dare to be different?

**John 15:19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. NIV**

### **TPT The Passion Translation**

**If you were to give your allegiance to the world, they would love and welcome you as one of their own. But because you won't align yourself with the values of this world, they will hate you. I have chosen you and taken you out of the world to be mine.**

### **MSG**

**If you find the godless world is hating you, remember it got its start hating me. If you lived on the world's terms, the world would love you as one of its own. But since I picked you to live on God's terms and no longer on the world's terms, the world is going to hate you.**

So, we are to love the people of the world but not engage in the sinful aspects of the culture. **Jesus hung out with sinners at times**, he was friendly, kind, loving but he did not compromise his values in order to be accepted by them.

This is also a challenge when the church tries to be **seeker sensitive** to draw people in. Yes, we should remove unnecessary obstacles, but we need to be careful not to compromise our core values. The church of Jesus is sanctified for a holy purpose.

**The challenge is for us to stay relevant and friends with the people around us without beginning to think like them.**

## **2. God has given us a new way of thinking and a new way of living.**

When you become a Christian your **worldview and lifestyle** begin to change.

The first thing God does when we accept Jesus and become a Christian is he goes to work on our minds. **He begins to change how we think. He begins to change our value system.**

God doesn't just do **behavior modification** on us. Because if we fail to renew our minds, then behavior must constantly be **reinforced by outward pressure** of some type.

**Parents you know until a teenager understand the value of your rules he or she will keep pushing against them.** For instance, you might say, "*On Sundays we all go to church*". They may obey out of threat of losing privileges. But once they understand the value for themselves it changes everything. It's no longer because mom and dad said you need to go to church but because they now see the value and want to go for their own spiritual growth. Their minds have been renewed which now affects their behavior.

God is at work with each of us to do a complete transformation of our minds, so we begin to think like he does about everything. Then we no longer need outward rules to guide us, but we are now led by the Spirit out of a renewed mind and heart.

**That's why we emphasize the importance of reading the Bible regularly.** The scriptures and the Spirit re-program our way of thinking from the corruption of the world to the values of the kingdom that give life.

Our minds are constantly under attack by our culture. So, we need regular washing with the word to keep our minds renewed and cleansed from toxic thinking.

I remember **Todd White** sharing his story of coming out of a very messed up life. After becoming a Christian and leaving Teen Challenge he took a long period of time to just read and read and read the scriptures. God was reprogramming his mind.

When our mind is renewed by the truth of God's word - that's when real change and victory takes place in our lives.

### **Romans 12:2**

**Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. NIV**

## MSG

**Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out.**

## TPT

**Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you, but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think.**

Remember we are the called-out ones. We are not of this world and its value system.

Let me share several core values of the Kingdom that we represent. And then some distinctive values of Petra. These are just some of the values of being the church.

### **3. Kingdom Values of Authentic Churches or Gospel Jesus centered churches:**

- **Preach the Gospel with a passion to reach the lost**
- **Practice discipleship and Christian community**
- **Embrace the ministry of the Holy Spirit**
- **Balance grace and truth**
- **Place a high value on the inspiration and authority of scriptures -**  
the basis for authority and truth – when this value is dropped everything falls – the culture then dictates what is right and wrong
- **Follow a Biblical moral standard**
- **Treat all life as sacred** - from the womb on – this includes the poor, disabled and the alien among us.
- **Anticipate the soon return of Christ**

### **4. Distinctive Values of Petra** – values that we emphasize maybe more than some other churches. Every church has it's distinctives or unique calling and gift to the broader body of Christ. Here is what we bring to the table.

- **Our emphasis on the Holy Spirit Baptism and Spiritual gifts**
- **Our emphasis on healing ministries**
- **Our emphasis on being an externally focused church**
- **Our emphasis on worship and prayer ministry**
- **Our emphasis on Life Groups**
- **Our emphasis on the generations serving together**
- **Our emphasis on team ministry**

- **Our emphasis on a New Testament model of leadership**

These are some of the things that make us unique in our community.

**Conclusion:**

So, in conclusion, what does it mean to be the church? **It means we keep learning and growing as followers of Jesus, so we can come alongside others and help them to know Jesus and follow him as well.**

**It means that God has empowered each one of us to bring Jesus' love, healing and hope to the world.** – This is our mission statement.

**It means we will be a generation of counter culture Jesus followers that bring forth the Kingdom of God in greater measure as we make him Lord of our lives.**

Then someday we will hear the Father say – Well done! Thank you for your faithfulness in the midst of your generation. Thank you for upholding my values. Thank you for letting your light shine. Come into my heaven that I have prepared for you.

**Closing:** (Read this prayer together)

**Lord we purpose to be your church and represent you to our world**

**Help us love like you do**

**Help us to hate what you do**

**Help us to think your thoughts**

**Help us to value what you do**

**Help us stand strong against the pressure of our culture**

**Help our lives to be a light to others**

**Help our lives to be pleasing worship to you**

Now let's go be the church!