“DARE TO BE DIFFERENT!”

Introduction:

A. (Slide #2) One Of The Great Struggles For Christians Is The Struggle To Please God Combined With The Pressure To Conform To The World.
   1. We long for approval.
   2. We crave to be in people’s favor.
   3. We do not want people to view us as ignorant.
   4. We do not like to be accused of being ignorant, bigoted, fanatical, puritanical, hate-mongers, or diabolical!

B. The Temptation To Seek Acceptance Has Always Been A Real Temptation!
   1. Baalam cared more about being accepted than about prophesying Truth! Nu. 22-24; II Pet. 2:15
   2. Israel, frustrated by the sinful ways of the sons of Eli and Samuel, demanded a king to be their judge!
      a. Last Sunday evening, we saw this demand that brought a cataclysmic change to Israel.
      b. I Sa. 8:19,20 “Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, ‘No, but we will have a king over us, \(^{20}\)that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.’”
   3. David felt such a tug from the pressure of sinners seeming to have a life of ease!
      a. Ps. 73:2-6 “But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. \(^{3}\)For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. \(^{4}\)For there are no pangs in their death, But their strength is firm. \(^{5}\)They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men. \(^{6}\)Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment. \(^{7}\)Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish.”
      b. Ps. 73:12 “Behold, these are the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase in riches.”
c. What kept him grounded in his faith in God?
   1. Ps. 73:17,18 “Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. 18Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.”
   2. Ps. 73:28 “But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, That I may declare all Your works.”

4. Solomon gave into the temptation completely!
   a. He sought worldly wisdom, women, wine, wealth (possessions) -- anything that the world wanted, he wanted and got!
   b. And what did it give him? Ecc. 12:8 “‘Vanity of vanities,’ says the Preacher, ‘All is vanity.’”

C. “Dare”
   1. Romans 1:26-32 describes America in 2017!

   2. Daring to be different demands that we dare to:
      a. Be spiritually brave.
      b. Be right!
      c. Defend what God says is right!

3. We MUST understand God’s expectations! God not only condemns sin, He also condemns those who approve their actions!
   a. Rom. 1:32 “who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.”
   b. Those who condone sin, those who dare to be different are as guilty in God’s sight as those who practice sin!

D. “To Christ Be Loyal And Be True!”

I. (Slide #3) Charges Jesus Gives In His Covenant!
A. (►) I Jn. 2:15-17 “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 17And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

B. (►) Jn. 17:14-16 “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”
C. (►) We Belong To God! Therefore Live LIKE Him And FOR Him! Tit. 2:14; I Pet. 2:9

II. (Slide #4) Christians Are To Be Different:
   A. (►) In What They Love!
      1. The world focus upon wants, needs, pleasure, power, comfort, position, and pride.
         a. The focus is upon “me!” -- what I want, what I want to do, how I feel!
         b. The desire is for the biggest, the most beautiful, or the most impressive!

   2. The followers of Christ love:
      a. Jesus! Jn. 14:15
      b. His Word! II Tim. 2:15
      c. Heavenly treasures! Mt. 6:19,20
      d. Fellow Christians. I Jn. 4:21; I Pet. 2:17
      e. The lost and try to guide them to Christ, salvation, and hope! Lk. 15
      f. Their neighbor! Lk. 10:36,37

B. (►) In What They Praise!
   1. The world praises talents, looks, and power.

   2. Christians praise the Godhead; they praise holiness; they praise those who live by faith in Jesus Christ!

C. (►) In Their Actions!
   1. The world decides that they do whatever they want whenever they want.

   2. The Christian seeks to obey God and do right!
      a. He avoids sin; he seeks to follow the fruit of the spirit! Gal. 5:19-23
      b. He loves godly living.
      c. He loves Truth.
      d. He is honest.
      e. He tries to have a Christian attitude -- kind, gentle, humble, and loving!
      g. He cares about the spiritual condition of and eternal destiny of himself and others!
         1. Mt. 28:19,20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”

3
2. He cannot be quiet; he cannot stand to think of people being in Hell forever!

D. (Slide #5) In Their World View -- Wickedness Or Holiness?

1. The world -- I Jn. 5:19 “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”
   a. It denies that a God exists.
   b. It belittles Jesus.
   c. It ridicules the Bible.
   d. It denies any objective basis for right and wrong.
   e. It views the supernatural as just a figment of someone’s imagination.

2. Is. 55:8,9 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. 9“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

3. We will only ACT differently if we THINK differently!

4. Our minds must be attuned to the mind of Christ!

5. (►) We refuse to let wickedness enter our minds or reign in our hearts!
   a. (►) Racism:
      1. What a raging topic today!
      2. There are racists in all races; their venom is vile and ungodly!
      3. Christians are not immune to being influenced by the world!
      4. Peter:
         a. The Law of Moses separated Jews from Gentiles to keep their lineage pure so the Messiah could be born in the family of Judah and to protect them from evil and idolatrous practices that would corrupt them in the sight of God.
         b. Jews took this Ac. 10:14 “But Peter said, ‘Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.’”
         c. Ac. 10:28 “Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”
         d. However, later it reared its ugly head again in Antioch, Gal. 2:11-21. Paul chastised him.
      5. We are in a world where people are trying to stir up racial tensions.
      6. Christians must love each other; we must show the world that Jesus Christ can bring us to love, respect, and peace!
b. (►) Immorality:
1. You feel like Romans 1 is describing America today!
2. Some sins are totally accepted!
3. Some crimes are glossed over; some are reported as tragedies.
4. People destroy cities, stores, houses, cars, etc. in the name of opposing what they have seen as past injustices.
5. Christians must be like Daniel -- Dan. 1:8 “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”
6. Like Lot, we may live IN Sodom; we do not have to ACT LIKE Sodom! However, immoral culture can rub off on us, entice our hearts, and weaken our resolve -- Look at Lot’s family!

c. (►) Homosexuality:
1. It has come “out of the closet” with raging speed.
2. Our government has approved of “same sex marriages.”
3. Cake makers are being sued for refusing to make a cake for a “same sex marriage.”
4. The LGBT movement has persuaded our culture that anyone who opposes homosexual lifestyles is promoting “hate speech.”
5. Some religious groups have caved in to the pressure; some have misrepresented God’s love and grace to advocate that God loves homosexuals; therefore they are accepted by Him and by these religious groups.
6. Christians must firmly but respectfully oppose sin, whatever it is! We must not condone or approve ANY sinful activity.

d. (►) Abortion:
1. In 1973 the Supreme Court ordered that states had to allow abortion.
2. For 40 years in this country, babies have been killed because it is the “law of the land.”
3. “Pro-choice” means that is it acceptable to kill babies.
4. Many who are “pro-life” become such extremists that while opposing murdering babies, they advocate murdering adults!
5. Christians must LOVE life and oppose advocacy or destroying it!

e. (►) Ecumenical Fellowship:
1. The advocacy of today:
   a. “One church is as good as another!”
   b. “We are all going to the same place!”
   c. “We are non-denominational!” Today that means “We have no loyalty to any denomination; we just believe what we believe!”
2. The conviction of many religious groups today: “We have NO doctrinal code! And for some “We have no MORAL code!”
3. The religious world is tolerant of ANYTHING except the fact of exclusivity -- Jesus is THE Savior; The Bible is the ONLY Truth; His Church is the ONLY ONE He blesses and accepts; His plan of salvation is the only way to be forgiven!

f. (►) Leaders altering God’s pattern!
1. Some want open fellowship
2. Some want to forego the plan of salvation and extend fellowship to any religious people.
3. Some want to change worship to accept the world’s ways instead of God’s ways.
4. When leaderships tolerate these changes, godly Christians face real dilemmas.
5. “How long can they stay?”
6. Those who refuse to speak up for God and just tolerate changes are cowards.
7. They need to seek a place where they can worship God acceptably.
8. They will be castigated, alienated, and accused of being “troublemakers” and divisive! However, the divisive troublemakers are those who pervert God’s ways!

E. (►) In What They Put Their Hope!
1. So much of the world puts their hope in perishable, temporary things.
   a. And HOW QUICKLY things can be gone!
   b. Hurricane Harvey in TX a couple of weeks ago; Hurricane Irma through the Caribbean and in FL this AM!

2. Christians put their hope in Christ and in Heaven!
   a. “This World Is Not My Home!”
   b. I Pet. 1:3,4 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,”
   c. They understand that our things, our bodies, etc. in this life are decaying; our spirit lives forever eternally! Thus, Christians prepare for eternity!

III. (Slide #6) God Calls Christians To Dare To Be Different!
A. (►) Come Out From Among Them! II Cor. 6:17,18 “Therefore ‘Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.’
1. This is just after we are told to not be unequally yoked with unbelievers and to not have fellowship with lawlessness!
2. Light does not have communion with darkness!

B. (►) Be A LIGHT To The World!
   1. Mt. 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”
   2. You SHINE amidst the darkness! II Cor. 6:16
   3. Eph. 5:8,11 “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light….. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”

C. (►) Rom. 12:1,2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
   1. This is how justified people live!
   2. They are non-conformists with the world; they are transformists -- they seeks to imitate God!

D. (Slide #7) Eph. 4:22-24 “that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,….. and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

E. (►) Sadly, Many Surveys Suggest That There Is Little Difference In The Actions Of Sinners And Saints In Our Present World!!! Brethren, THAT MUST NOT BE!
(Slide #8) Conclusion:
A. (►) Again, “To Christ Be Loyal And Be True!”

B. (►) But When You DO DARE To Be And ARE Different:
1. Daring to be different means we may face criticism, ostracism, or terrorism.

2. Mt. 5:11 “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.”

3. Mt. 10:34-36 “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; 36 and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’”

C. (►) The World May Despise You But Christ Will Adore You And Bless You!