

Rev. Seth D. Bode †† Sermon 426, 05-16-2021 †† Easter 7

“Lord God, you have appointed me as Pastor in your Church, but you see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon you: I wish to devote my mouth and my heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon your Word. Use me as your instrument – but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all.”

“Sir, we would see Jesus.”

JOHN 17

¹After Jesus had spoken these things, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you ...

¹²“While I was with them, I kept those you gave me safe in your name. I protected them and not one of them was destroyed, except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

¹³“But now I am coming to you, and I am saying these things in the world, so that they may be filled with my joy. ¹⁴I have given them your word. The world hated them, because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I am not asking that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the Evil One. ¹⁶They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

¹⁷“Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, I also sent them into the world. ¹⁹I sanctify myself for them, so they also may be sanctified by the truth.”



You wouldn't set up your permanent residence in a hotel room, would you?

You wouldn't bring your life's savings for safe-keeping on a vacation cruise ship, would you?

So why do we reside in this world like it's our home? The answer is, of course, the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh. In fact, the word “world” shows up in this text nine times, and each time it is referring to this world of unbelief and rejection.

We do not need to be afraid of this world. Nor are we called to avoid this world. Yet today we learn from Jesus how to live in this world. We learn how to live in

this world while truly belonging to another world. We learn what God is doing as our lives in this world continue. So we learn again how much God loves us.

To What World Do You Belong?

1. The drawbacks of not being “of” this world

The Son was praying to the Father. This is an exciting chapter of the Bible because we get to overhear it. John listened and recorded, and so we get insider info, insider intel, top secret truths for those who do not really belong to this world.

But what insider info is missing? The Son was not requesting to take us out of this world.

You and I may rather appreciate that. There are so many things in this world we haven't done! There is so much to explore! There are so many people we haven't met! There are so many fun times to be had!

We may also take sinful pleasure in a world where truth does not matter. What matters to this world is personal experience. There is no foundation to stand on; it is broken up into many little foundations.

While that may seem fun, it proves that the houses of human experience are built on something shakier than rock. They are built on sand. We can focus so much attention on what we see and hear, touch and taste, that it swallows us up and may very well choke out our faith in the Son of God.

Yet the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, is not saying there are no dangers to this world. In fact, much of His prayer is that the Father would keep us safe.

2. The benefits of not being “of” this world

Ours is a resurrection faith.

Here you see the Son emphasizing what makes us not of this world. It is true because Jesus prays for you! Not only that, but in His prayer we discover the tools that the Father will give to us:

- This world says, “You need no foundation.” The Son prays, “They have my Word.”
- This world says, “You belong here!” The Son prays, “They belong in my kingdom, where power and authority in this world are merely given.”
- The world says, “Don’t you just want to be a regular, normal person? Don’t be some extremist Christian.” The Son prays, “Father, sanctify them, set them apart, make them Holy as part of my Holy Church.”

In that struggle, the heart discovers that this world is a dead end. The heart discovers this world’s true loneliness. Our hearts may grow faint and say, “Get me out of here!” But that is not the prayer of the Son. He asks for our souls’ protection.

The Father has indeed said “yes” to Jesus’ prayers. He has indeed given us these things Jesus prayed for. The Son prays, “Give them a piece of my joy.” Ours is a resurrection faith.

So the risen Lord is ascended and has visibly left us. He is out of our sight. Yet He is the Director of Missions, the Great Commissioner who oversees our mission. If you belong to this world, you might just forget that mission to go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation; to go and gather disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching. If you live by faith alone, then you belong to another world. Your world is not this place. Your citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, stop setting up a permanent residence in this world. Treat this world as the Son treated it; He became flesh and made His dwelling among us. But He did not come to stay. He did not come to erect an earthly kingdom. He did not come to eat, drink, and be merry. He did not come to satisfy His appetite for pleasure or leisure. He did not come to serve the idol of staying alive at all costs. He did not come to banish poverty in this life. He did not come to stay. Neither do we. The Son came to die and to live again; so may the Father guard our souls until He brings them home; in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.