

2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1

Two Kingdoms

Illustration: Choosing Friends

My parents warned me about certain friends.
It made me mad because they were my friends.
But they left the choice to me.

This passage is not about friends – it is about partnerships.

Partnerships are closer than friendships.
You rise or fall because for your partnerships.
You are tied at the hip.
You can have partners when you play tennis.
You have partners in business.
And the ultimate partnership is that of marriage.

In the context of the passage, it seemed that the Corinthians, who struggled with faith and culture

Were entering into partnerships and serious relationships with those outside the faith.
What Paul reminds them of their identity.

- v. 16b – You belong to God – you are mine – identity.
- v. 17 – You are meant to be different – you are holy – a way of life.
- v. 18 – God’s Children – you reflect me. – Purpose & Mission.

Practical Matters

This is not about us withdrawing from the world
It is about being aware of our engagement and disengagements with culture.
We are to be watchful and aware of what we let into our hearts and minds.
We are to have a critical mind, not a critical spirit (more a compassionate one)
What you enjoy, movies, internet, friends and even ourselves.
You are called to be a part of the kingdom of God, his people
that confronts and calls others from a culture of selfishness, sin and death.
We do that by knowing who we are (or whose we are)
We do that by the way we think and therefore live differently
And by being missional, always aware of the big picture.
What Paul is saying is that the two worlds, the two kingdoms are not compatible.
And it’s not whether a person calls themselves a Christian – it’s about being one.

Asked to do a wedding

I learned that although the young man knew about God and went to church as a youth
His fiancée did not believe in God
I had a hard decision to make.
How do I love this couple and yet hold to the teaching of this passage?
Well I explained why I couldn’t do the wedding.
I told them that Christian wedding was a worship service in which the couple come to God.
To receive his blessing, one need to believe in him!
It would be disingenuous of me to ask the girl to pretend she believed.
It boiled down to preserving her integrity and mine.
We do not start marriage with pretence.
But I said, I wanted them to have a good marriage and I was willing to counsel them.
Truth and Love are the hardest things to hold together.

For each of you, you must learn that following Jesus is not a part-time thing for Sundays only.

You are to be in the world, but not of the world.

You are shaped not by what you gather for yourself, but what you give for the Kingdom.

What tensions are in your life regarding being in but not of the world?

What partnerships are God asking you to examine and give up?