



Blackfoot Church of Christ

Published by Blackfoot Church of Christ
Blackfoot, ID

Volume 6 Number 30

July 29, 2018

In the World not Of the World, Pt 2

By William Stewart

Our previous article concluded: “To be in the world but not of the world means we abstain from the wickedness of the world, not from living in the world.”

Jesus wouldn't do that! I've heard some folks justify the insistence of their will upon others on the basis that Jesus wouldn't do this or that. Jesus wouldn't go to a rock concert, or to a football game, or to the movies! Jesus wouldn't celebrate Christmas, or go to a vacation resort, or read a fantasy novel. Jesus wouldn't have a TV in His house, own an expensive car, or go to a restaurant that serves alcohol. There is an endless list of things that Jesus wouldn't do. I'm curious; how do these folks know what Jesus would or wouldn't do?

We have four gospel accounts detailing the life of Christ, but very little is revealed about Him apart from the 3+ years of His ministry. The gospels were not intended to be a chronicle of Jesus' day to day life. The writers focused on major spiritual events: his baptism, a lengthy fast accompanied by temptation, a selection of sermons, discourses and parables, occasional conflicts with the religious leaders, numerous miracles, the events leading up to His death, His resurrection, and His ascension. I would be surprised if we have details from more than 100 days out of the Lord's life! How presumptuous for someone to think they know what Jesus did or didn't do with His spare time. Or maybe the thought is that He never had any spare time – that He did nothing but preach, heal, and occasionally sleep.

First, let's acknowledge – none of the things listed two paragraphs back actually existed in Jesus' day. He didn't do those things, not because they would be wrong to do, but because no one was doing them. The Bible says very little about Jesus' leisure time (again, that's not the purpose of the gospels), but consider a few things:

Jesus dealt with judgmental Pharisees who tried to legislate every aspect of life, too. While on a leisurely walk with His disciples, the Pharisees accused them of doing "what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath," because they plucked heads of grain and ate them (Matthew 12:1-2). They hadn't broken the Sabbath; the problem was the Pharisees made their own rules and imposed them on people.

Jesus "...came eating and drinking..." He went to social gatherings (dinners, weddings, parties, etc.). For this reason, the Pharisees derided Him as "a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" (Matthew 11:19) [NOTE – this does not mean Jesus was out bar hopping or any such thing. Both the Old and New Testaments warn against the consumption of alcohol. The wine Jesus consumed would be more akin to what we today call grape juice].

The disciples of John and the Pharisees apparently spent a lot of time fasting. They were offended at Jesus and His disciples because of their eating and drinking (Mark 2:15-19). In response to the implication that He and His disciples should be more subdued and less festive, Jesus gave an analogy of the bridegroom with his friends. Prior to the wedding, they don't mourn and fast, but rather enjoy one another's company. Jesus enjoyed the company of His friends.

After the apostles returned to Jesus, having been sent out by Him to preach and heal, He told them to "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). Is He telling them to take a vacation? Well, not in so many words. He encouraged them to take a break, to have some leisure time, to refresh themselves. Perhaps it is noteworthy that our English word recreation is from the Latin recreare, meaning to create a new, to restore, to refresh.

Jesus occasionally tried to get away from things for a bit. I'm not talking about His frequent alone time spent in prayer (Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28), but the times when He left Jewish territory altogether, going to Gentile regions like Tyre, Sidon, and the Decapolis (Mark 5:1; 7:24, 31). He taught and did miracles in these places, but His statement to the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:24) would indicate that was not His reason for being there. Just as He called upon His disciples to "rest a while," it would seem Jesus sought to rest a while.

Am I saying Jesus would go to a rock concert, read a fantasy novel and own an expensive car? I don't know whether He would or not. The Bible doesn't give us much about the Lord's leisure time activities. But it speaks volumes that the disciples of John and of the Pharisees sought to stifle the mood, whereas Jesus encouraged fun, fellowship and a bit of leisure time. Jesus expected people to obey God and live for Him. To do so does not require us to be stern-faced hermits who never go anywhere or do anything that is not spiritual in nature. We are to be in the world, not of the world. This does not require that we go out of the world or have nothing to do with the world (John 17:15; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10), but that we do not engage in wickedness. It demands devotion to God and His will. It does not mean we cannot enjoy life; it means we live a life dedicated to serving the Lord. Being in the world and not of the world is a matter of character, seeking to emulate the goodness of God and not yielding to temptations of the evil one. That doesn't mean we don't participate in anything that is of this world; it means we don't engage in sinful activities.

A word of caution as we conclude. We have been called by God to be His people, to live His way. That doesn't mean we cannot participate in varsity sports, vacation tours, or service clubs. Being a child of God doesn't require that we not watch movies, listen to the radio or join a book club. However, on a daily basis we need to acknowledge that our primary responsibility is to the Lord and His will. Do not let things belonging to a passing world keep us from serving the Creator, Sustainer, and Eternal Judge of the world. It is possible to get so involved in the things of the world that we make ourselves useless to the Lord and His cause. If our priorities are set right, activities we participate in will turn into opportunities to shine as lights in the world (Matthew 5:14-16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Peter 2:11-12).

Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Paxton & Tessa are in Oregon at FC Camp this week.
- Ross's parents will be traveling back to AR this week.
- Kyle will be moving back East this week.
- Shirley Torres, Seattle WA (Torres' have visited our congregation) is fighting cancer. Chemo treatments have not been successful. They have decided to stop the Chemo and pursue other treatments to help enhance her quality of life.
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- The Christians in the Philippines.
- Bible class tomorrow night 7:00pm at Chad and Kass' on evangelism

For prayer requests, call or text

Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

Assignments

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| <u>Today</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Ross Ward Lord's Table – David Porter Sermon – Chad Mitchell | <u>Wednesday</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Tom Mitchell Invitation – Ross Ward |
| <u>Next Sunday</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Tom Mitchell Lord's Table – Chad Mitchell Sermon – Ross Ward | <u>Next Wednesday</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Chad Mitchell Invitation – Ross Ward |

Blackfoot Church of Christ
370 North Shilling Ave.
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

Meeting Times:

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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