

Series: The Believer's Place in a Wicked World
"Where is Your Heart?"
Colossians 3:1-4

Introduction:

1. Bible Christianity is different than all of the other religions of the world.
2. In religion, the followers are trying desperately to appease a wrathful God through religious acts, rituals, and observances. They are trying to earn God's forgiveness.
 - They never know when they've done enough, so they therefore keep working and working, hoping to gain forgiveness of their sins.
3. In the gospel of Christ, it is not **man** doing something for God, but **God** reaching out to man. The believing sinner is saved and forgiven instantaneously based on the finished and completed work of Jesus Christ.
4. God hasn't placed a performance system on our necks to try to gain His grace and favor. God says, "I'm going to give you total forgiveness, grace, mercy, favor, and all spiritual blessings **up front** the moment you, by faith, trust my Son."
5. Do you know what Paul says our response should be to that incredible grace?
Colossians 3:1-2 - Our affection, our total heart should be set upon Christ (Turn your Eyes Upon Jesus. The things of earth should grow strangely dim.) Why is this?

Christ has delivered us from our past identity.

1. According to verse 3 I have died and been resurrected. How did I die?
Galatians 2:20
 - God placed us in Christ the moment we trusted Him. His history is now our history. Romans 6 teaches that we are dead and buried with Him.
2. All of us were at one time part of Satan's kingdom of darkness. The Satanic system of wickedness and evil fills and controls this earth right now. The Bible refers to this as "the world."
 - Satan is called the god of this world. **2 Corinthians 4:4**
 - The Satanic policy of evil is rampant on this earth. It began in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve took that fatal step from innocence to sin.
 - Satan's world system of rebellion against God was put in place and continues to this day. **Ephesians 6:12; 1 John 5:19**
 - This Satanic world system is racing 100 mph towards judgment and condemnation. **1 John 2:15-17; 2 Peter 3:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**
3. You and I were a part of this world system. We were walking hand in hand with it. Our identity was found in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
 - The spirit of Satan's world system was working in us. Our identity was **of this world**. **Ephesians 2:2**
4. The moment we trusted Christ to save us, God changed all of that. God's Spirit placed us into Christ and delivered us from this world system (**Galatians 1:4**) and the wrath to come.

5. Because I am crucified with Christ, this means that I am dead to Satan's world system, and it is dead to me. The only way **out** of this Satanic, condemned world system was death, and God accomplished that by placing us in His Son.
6. While I **physically** have to live in this world, I am spiritually dead to it. I am no longer a part of it. A separation has occurred. **Galatians 6:14**

Christ has provided for us a new position.

1. We were crucified and buried with Christ, ending any identity with this satanic world system. But wait a minute - it gets better.
2. **Colossians 3:3** says, "*For ye are dead, and your life...*" Remember, God placed us in Christ. Christ died and put away sin, but what did He do three days later? The Bible says we are risen with Him! **Colossians 3:1** We are dead to this world system, but we have life. **Galatians 2:20**
3. The spirit of this world was operative **in us** before salvation, but now the Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead is alive **in us**. **Romans 6:11, 8:11; 1 Corinthians 2:12**
4. By virtue of your death with Christ, you are delivered from Satan's worldly kingdom, but by virtue of your resurrection with Christ, you have been resurrected into a new kingdom. **Colossians 1:13** In fact, you're already seated there. **Ephesians 2:6**
 - You also have a new title to go along with this new position - **saint!** **Colossians 1:12**
 - When you were part of the satanic world system, your title was **sinner**. Now **1 Corinthians 1:2** says you are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be a saint.
5. Through His atoning death, the sin issue was dealt with in your life and you were forgiven and cleansed and you died to this world system (Satan's kingdom). **Colossians 1:14**
6. But through His resurrection, God has placed His life in you and raised you up to dwell in a new heavenly kingdom (Christ's kingdom).

Christ has insured for us a glorious future.

1. We are physically in Satan's world system, but we are not a part of it. We are the proverbial "duck out of water." Of course the reason for this is so someone can be here to tell others how to escape Satan's world system.
2. But one day it will all be over and Christ shall appear. **Colossians 3:4** When this happens, Paul says that we will appear with Him in glory. We will literally share in the glorification of Jesus Christ in eternity. **Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17**
3. We will be living demonstrations of His grace in the ages to come as we radiate His glory and carry on the business of heaven. **Ephesians 2:7**

In Conclusion:

1. Here is an obvious question: If Christ has delivered me from this present evil world, resurrected me into His glorious kingdom, given me a glorious future, why would my affection be for Satan's world system?

2. When a Christian loves the world, wants to be like the world, lives like this world is his home, this is the ultimate contradiction. What has Satan and his world system done for you?
3. We are not part of this kingdom. You are living for a kingdom you no longer belong to. Our inheritance lies in the heavenly kingdom of Jesus Christ.
4. Satan wants to capture your heart (your affection) with the pleasures his worldly kingdom can offer you.
5. But God lovingly calls out to you, "*If ye then be risen with...*" **Colossians 3:1-2**
6. Will you make a decision today that your #1 desire will be to set your affection on Christ?

Series: The Believer's Place in a Wicked World
"How to Make an Impact in a Wicked World - Part 1"

Introduction:

1. Last week we saw in God's Word that there is a satanic world system established on this earth right now. The Bible refers to it as "the world." It is decidedly anti-God, anti-Bible, anti-morality, rebellious, lawless, immoral, etc.
 - **2 Timothy 3:2-4** gives you a little snapshot of "the world." These are the things the world values.
2. The spirit of the world once worked in all of us (**Ephesians 2:2**). But the day we trusted Christ as our Savior, we received another Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ. **1 Corinthians 2:12**
3. At the moment of salvation a complete identity change occurred in you. You are now no longer part of this world system (Satan's kingdom). You have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. **Colossians 1:13; Galatians 1:4**
 - You are a member of Christ's heavenly kingdom, but here's the kicker - you are living physically on the earth in the midst of Satan's kingdom.
4. You no longer are part of this world system, yet you must function and live in it every day. Why would God place you in such a precarious situation? It's very simple - you were left in this world system so that you could impact other people for Jesus Christ.
5. There is a battle going on right now for the souls of people (**Ephesians 6:12**). You are a threat to Satan's purposes and all that he wants to accomplish through his world system.
 - Make no mistake about it, he desires to neutralize you and make you a non-factor in this world.
6. On the other hand, God wants to use you as His ambassador on the enemy's turf. God has graciously made you a new creature, given you a new identity (**2 Corinthians 5:17**), equipped you with a life-changing gospel, and given you a ministry (**2 Corinthians 5:18-20**).
7. God wants to use you to be a radical agent of change and transformation (of people's lives) in this wicked world system in which we live. God hasn't called you to reform this world system, but lives can be transformed within this world system. How can you fulfill that calling?

By zealously proclaiming the gospel

- The word zealous means "intense, to be hot, glow." We say, "He's on fire for God."
1. How did you get saved? Somebody told you the gospel. You heard it. You understood it. It brought conviction. You trusted Christ to save you. His Spirit entered into you and began to change you from the inside out.
 - Isn't that what the Bible says the gospel has the power to do? **Romans 1:16**
 - But that whole string of events hinges on one thing - somebody had to explain and proclaim to you the gospel of Christ.
 2. The gospel is full of divine power, but God knows and Satan knows that if there is nobody to carry it to the lost, it cannot change one life. **Romans 10:13-14**

- **Illustration** of hand grenade - if there is nobody to pull the pin, it's useless.
3. Do you know how Satan wants to neutralize you in his world system? He wants to intimidate you to keep your mouth shut about the gospel. He doesn't want you to be zealous about it. **Romans 12:11; Revelation 3:19**
 4. This was a constant prayer of Paul, that he would keep proclaiming the gospel, even in the midst of persecution. **Ephesians 6:19-20; Colossians 4:3-4**
 5. Satan's goal in this dispensation of grace is clearly revealed in **2 Corinthians 4:3-4**. He wants to blind lost souls from the truth of the gospel. He hates churches that are equipping people to take the gospel to the lost.

By renewing your mind through God's Word

1. God's desire is for you to think about this world system and all that's in it (the lust of the flesh, eyes, and pride of life), the same way He thinks about it. **Philippians 2:5**
2. God knows you can't be an effective ambassador if you think like the world thinks.
3. Here's the problem - when you got saved, you spent all of your previous years before salvation thinking like the world. When you get saved there is no "delete button" in your mind that you can push. All that worldly thinking is still there.
4. So what is the answer to this dilemma? **Romans 12:1-2**
 - How insightful this passage is. If I am not going to conform to this world system, then my thinking cannot conform to it. I need a renewed mind which leads to a transformed life.
 - How do I get a renewed (renovated) mind? There is only one way - through the truth of God's Word. As you store up sound doctrine in your soul, and seek to apply it to the details of your life, this Book causes you to look at everything around you differently. **1 Thessalonians 2:13**
5. Everything in this world system takes on a different look when you look at it through the lens of God's Word. This is God's desire for you.
 - Example: entertainment - the world puts a high premium on fun and entertainment. As believers immerse themselves into the world's entertainment industry, we forget that we are in a battle. **1 Peter 5:8** But believers who find their delight in God's Word views all forms of worldly entertainment through the lens of God's Word. **Philippians 4:8**
6. Satan's goal is to corrupt your mind from the simplicity that is in Christ. **2 Corinthians 11:3**
7. How does Satan corrupt your mind? He must continually seek to indoctrinate you in the world's way of thinking. If he can develop an appetite in you for that, he knows you will hunger and crave the sound doctrine of God's Word less and less. **Colossians 2:3, 7-8**
 - When you allow a child to make a steady diet of cotton candy, he will no longer crave good, solid, nutritious food.
8. We must be constantly alert and guard our minds from that which would indoctrinate us into the world's way of thinking. I understand you can't completely isolate yourself from the world's philosophy. This is why we are admonished in **2 Corinthians 10:5...**
9. But the problem is that you have believers today who **knowingly** indulge in and feed on worldly things. The result is a worldly life-style. Worldly believers lead to

worldly churches. Then, to accommodate the worldly mindset of the people (keep the crowds and offering up), churches begin to compromise and water down the truth of God's Word.

- This is how you end up with churches like that of Laodicea.

Revelation 3:15-17.

10. Paul said they have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. They know how to play church and play religion, but the power of God's Word is not changing their thinking or their daily lives. Satan laughs, "Another ignorant believer that I have assimilated into my world system's way of thinking."
11. How about you? Does your daily life give evidence of a renewed mind?

In Conclusion:

1. God left you in this world system for a reason. That reason is so you can be a light and help bring other people out of the darkness of Satan's world system.
2. You can be an impact player on God's team, but Satan desires to neutralize you and your influence.
3. Today we learned two important Biblical truths that will help us to impact others in this evil world.
 - Zealously proclaim the good news of Jesus to others.
 - Renew your mind through God's Word.
4. Next week we will learn one more vital Bible truth to go along with these two.

Series: The Believer's Place in a Wicked World
"How to Make an Impact in a Wicked World - Part 2"

Introduction:

1. We have learned from God's Word that there is a satanic world system established on this earth right now. The Bible refers to it as "the world." Satan is the god of this world. This world system is decidedly anti-God, anti-Bible, rebellious, lawless, immoral, etc.
 - **Romans 1:29-32** gives you a little snapshot of Satan's world system. These are the things the world values, promotes, and revels in.
2. The spirit of the world once worked in all of us (**Ephesians 2:2**). But the day we trusted Christ as our Savior, we received another Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ. **1 Corinthians 2:12**
3. At the moment of salvation a complete identity change occurred in you. You are now no longer part of this world system (Satan's kingdom). You have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. **Colossians 1:13; Galatians 1:4**
 - You are a member of Christ's heavenly kingdom, but here's the kicker - you are living on the earth in the midst of Satan's kingdom - an anti-Christ mindset.
4. You no longer are part of this world system, yet you must function and live in it every day. Why would God place you in such a precarious situation? It's very simple - you were left in this world system so that you could impact other people for Jesus Christ.
5. There is a battle going on right now for the souls of people (**Ephesians 6:12**). You are a threat to Satan's purposes and all that he wants to accomplish through his world system.
 - Make no mistake about it, he desires to neutralize you and make you a non-factor in this world.
6. On the other hand, God wants to use you as His ambassador on the enemy's turf. God has graciously made you a new creature, given you a new identity (**2 Corinthians 5:17**), equipped you with a life-changing gospel, and given you a ministry (**2 Corinthians 5:18-20**).
7. God wants to use you to be a radical agent of change and transformation (of people's lives) in this wicked world system in which we live. God hasn't called you to **reform** this world system, but lives can be **transformed** within this world system. How can you fulfill that calling?

By zealously proclaiming the gospel (review)

By renewing your mind through God's Word (review)

By separating from this world system

1. There is a philosophy that will absolutely devastate the effectiveness of the church. Here it is: the church needs to become more like the world in order to win the world.
 - If we can just show the world that we are a lot like them, they will want to come to church, and hear about Jesus and the gospel.

- Churches, pastors, and believers are buying into this philosophy by the truckloads.
2. Yet, God's call is so clear. God's Word tells you that this world system is racing towards judgment and condemnation, and God's call is to "**come out.**"
2 Corinthians 6:14-18
 3. God's call to separate is two-fold. Separate **from** the filth and contamination of this world system, and separate **unto** God our Father and the renewed mind He gives.
2 Corinthians 7:1
 - We are not to seek the applause, approval, or commendation of this world.
Galatians 1:10
 - We are not to seek the sinful pleasures and passions of this world.
1 John 2:15-16
 4. The way we make a difference in this world is by the world seeing a **clear difference** in us. **Ephesians 5:10-11**
 - Our love for the Father should be so strong that we not only separate from the works of darkness, we reprove them.
 5. If I were to ask you - "Why did Christ give His life for you?" - what would be your response? I have a verse that tells you why - **Titus 2:14.**
 - The word "peculiar" doesn't mean weird or strange. It means "to belong especially to someone."
 - **Illustration:** This wedding ring is peculiarly mine. It is mine in a special way that is not true of anyone else. It may even seem strange to others. Why? It isn't their wedding ring.
 6. We are peculiarly God's. What is the result of this? It should be that we are zealous of good works. God bestowed His grace upon you so that His grace can now live through you, by you reproving the evil works of this world system and being zealous of **good** works.
 - God's desire is for you to come out and live a separated life from Satan's world system, and approve things that are excellent. **Philippians 1:10**
 - Satan's goal is to indoctrinate you and integrate you so much into his world system that you are a non-factor. There may be a Christian gloss, but you are walking lockstep in line with this world.
 7. There is a movement among Christians today that is frightening. It is the philosophy, "Let's get as close to the world as we possibly can, but still say we believe the Bible and love Jesus." Of course this is a recipe for disaster. Remember Lot and his wife?
 8. We excuse our worldliness under many guises: I'm under grace, not law. I have Christian liberty. I'm trying to reach worldly people with the gospel. I'm trying to be relevant to our culture. People use **1 Corinthians 9:19-23** out of context to justify it.
 - The truth is, it is a heart problem. There is a secret love for this world system and the pleasures it offers. There is not a heart like Moses'. **Hebrews 12:25-26**
 - There is a heart like Demas', outwardly a faithful companion of Paul who loved God, but inwardly there was a secret longing and desire for the temporal things of this world.

9. We can look the part, but inwardly there is a love for the depravity, perverseness, blasphemy, lewdness, nudity, and violence of this world's movies, TV shows, books, magazines, video games, Web sites, and music.
 - Inwardly we love the world's clothing and fashion styles (even if they are a bit immodest). We fall at the idol of sports, entertainment, worldly pleasures, and money. Inwardly we are covetous of the world's houses, cars, boats, play toys, and prosperity.
 - We inwardly love these things, and in many cases, are addicted to them, but have convinced ourselves we can love God, too.
10. Pastors are likewise addicted to these same things. This is why they don't cry out against worldliness and they are willing to allow the world's way of thinking into the church. They love the world, too.
11. Every once in a while, some kooky preacher will come along hollering about "*Love not the world, neither the things...*" He will warn about God's call to come out of the world and not be conformed to it, but they say, "He just isn't culturally relevant and he doesn't understand the new methods God is using today."
 - Okay, **Romans 14:10, 12** says "*... for we shall all stand before the judgment...*"
12. As for me, I'm going to stick with what Paul gave me. The way to impact this wicked world is to separate, come out, and be distinctly different. At the same time, with love and grace, preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Teach it clearly, teach it with boldness, and preach it with passion in the power of the Holy Spirit.
13. As believers do this, lives will be genuinely transformed as they view your godly life, coupled with the message of the gospel.

Series: The Believer's Place in a Wicked World
"The High Cost of Worldly Thinking"
Genesis 13-19

Introduction:

1. I don't know that there is a sadder, more tragic story in the entire Bible than the story of Lot and his family.
2. It is an absolutely heart-breaking story of the gradual demise of a man and his entire family. Lot and his family had a love affair with this world. The beginning of the road looked so promising and prosperous, but their story ended in tragedy.
3. Lot and his wife stand as an everlasting monument to the devastating effects of worldly thinking. We live **in** the world, but Jesus said we are not **of** this world; Paul said we are not to be **conformed** to this world, and John said we are not to **love** this world.
4. The story of Lot is obviously an important story. Jesus made mention of it in Luke 17, and Peter likewise made mention of it in 2 Peter 2. **2 Peter 2:6-8**
5. Paul said the stories of the Old Testament are written for our admonition (**1 Corinthians 10:11**). In other words, there are valuable lessons to be learned as we study these things.
6. What is the primary truth that we learn from this story of Lot? The high cost of worldly thinking. When you allow a worldly mindset to creep into your thinking, you need to understand that there are consequences. There is a cost.

Worldly thinking will lead you places you never intended to go. Genesis 13:12-13, 14:12

1. Lot was Abraham's nephew. After leaving the city of Ur, they settled in Canaan for a rural life in which they both became prosperous farmers. **Genesis 13:5-7**
2. For the sake of peace, they decided it was time to split up the land with definite boundaries. Lot had a choice to make. **Genesis 13:9-11** (Satan's system was alive and well.)
3. Lot journeyed east towards the worldly city life that existed. From this point on we see a steady downward progression over the next several years.
 - Next he pitches his tent toward Sodom. 13:12-13
 - Next he is living in Sodom. 14:12
 - Next he is sitting at the gate of Sodom (a social gathering place). 19:1
4. Lot had a secret love in his heart for the world. He wasn't like Abraham (18:19). Did he think it would ever lead him to a place like Sodom? **Jude 7** describes this wicked city.
5. Do worldly believers think that their secret love for this world will lead them to adulterous affairs, fornication, sexual disease, pornographic Web sites, ungodly chat rooms, soliciting a prostitute, a teenager pregnant out of wedlock, nightclubs, arrested and in jail on a DUI, out of the ministry for a lucrative job, etc.
6. When you allow a love for this world to creep into your heart, it will lead you places you never intended to go.

Worldly thinking will callous your heart towards sin. Genesis 19:5-8

1. Paul said that God gave the law so that sin might become exceeding sinful.
Romans 7:13
2. As we read, study, and hear God's Word, it reproves (of sin), corrects, and instructs us in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**
3. Do you know what Satan's counterpart to that is? Filling your mind with thoughts pertaining to his worldly system. As he accomplishes this (via worldly forms of entertainment, worldly literature, music, friends, etc.), Satan knows that he can break down any inhibitions you might have against sin in your mind.
4. Look at **Genesis 19:5-8**. Is this not unbelievable? Lot was going to throw his virgin daughters to this perverted pack of wolves. The world had warped his mind.
 - This is about as stupid as Christian parents throwing their kid into a bedroom with the Internet and cable TV at his fingertips, or allowing their kid to run the streets until all hours of the night, or allow their teenage daughter to dress like a streetwalker and get in a car alone with a boy to go to a dance or movie.
5. **2 Peter 2:8** says that Lot vexed (tortured) his righteous soul in seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds. Verse 7 says he vexed himself with their filthy conversation.
6. As you fill your mind and feast your eyes and ears on the things of this world, your mind becomes twisted and warped, and instead of sin looking like a deadly rattlesnake, it looks like a cute, little furry puppy. **James 1:15**

Worldly thinking brings a shattered testimony. Genesis 19:12-14

1. As believers living in a wicked world, we have to decide - do we want acceptance or respect? We can excuse our worldliness and blend in with this world system, but do not think that we will have any influence for Christ in the time of crisis.
2. To me, the most gut-wrenching part of Lot's story is found in **Genesis 19:12-14**. He seemed as one that mocked.
3. Lot was a hypocrite. He knew the Lord, but he loved the world. His verbal testimony meant nothing because his living testimony was so worldly.
4. Can you imagine the complete horror of hearing your own flesh and blood consumed with fire and brimstone and knowing that you could have prevented it?
5. Do you desire acceptance by the world? **1 John 3:1, 13**

Worldly thinking destroys those closest to you. Genesis 19:24, 26, 31-31

1. Could Lot have imagined what his worldly thinking would lead to? His daughters, sons-in-law, and sons were all consumed in fire and brimstone. 19:24
2. As he and his wife were fleeing, they were instructed not to look back. God desired to see a heart change in them. The world had such a tight grip on her heart, and she had so little esteem for God's Word, that she looked back. 19:26
3. Lot ends up in a cave with only his two youngest daughters. 19:31-32
 - He took his daughters away from the world to a cave, but he couldn't get the worldly thinking out of their heart. What a lesson for parents.
4. We don't know what happened to Lot after this, but can you imagine the tears and regret? He was a broken man with nothing but two grandchildren born out of incest.

Worldly thinking brings irreparable damage.

1. We can always repent of our sin, separate from this world system, and love God with all of our heart. As long as we are alive, it is never too late to do this. I hope Lot did this.
2. But his repentance wouldn't bring back his wife, children, and grandchildren. It wouldn't undo the incestuous relationship he had with his daughters.
3. So many times, our worldly decisions and worldly actions bring tragic consequences that can never be undone.

In Conclusion:

1. I guess the saddest thing about this story is the fact that nobody on the earth had more opportunity to know God than Lot and his wife.
2. There was no written Word during this time, but by virtue of their relationship with Abraham, they had privileged access to divine revelation.
3. What unparalleled opportunity, but they squandered it because of a love for this world.
4. What opportunity you have today. I pray there won't be any Lots here in our midst. Are there elements of this world system that you have fallen in love with? Allow God's Word to work in your heart, purge that out of your life, and love God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Series: The Believer's Place in a Wicked World
"Standing Strong in This Present Evil World"
2 Timothy 2

Introduction:

1. God saved us and delivered us from Satan's kingdom of darkness. We have already been translated and made citizens of Christ's heavenly kingdom.
2. But physically God has left us in this satanic world system. We are in enemy territory and we are in warfare. **2 Corinthians 10:4** declares, "*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.*" **cf. Ephesians 6:10-11**
3. I am very concerned that in America we have learned the art of how to gather a crowd and build ministries, but are we building and equipping soldiers that are sober-minded, with a fervent attitude about their Christian lives?
4. Has a Laodicean mindset gripped our hearts? We want to serve the Lord and have a Christian glaze, but also love this present world and value what it values. It won't work because God sees the heart. **Revelation 3:15, 19**
5. Turn to **2 Timothy 2:1** and notice what Paul tells Timothy. Paul pleaded with Timothy to stand strong in the grace of Christ. Christians, God's call is the same today.
6. God desires for you to possess a fervent attitude about your Christian life and ministry. God doesn't want you to just accept His grace, but stand strong in His grace. How can you do this? Paul explains to Timothy.

Invest your life in people. vs. 2

1. Paul had taught Timothy sound doctrine and he admonishes Timothy to teach this sound doctrine to others. cf. 3:10
 - Paul had invested his life in men like Timothy, Titus, Luke, Silas, Tychicus, etc.
 - Remember this: you impress lives from a distance, but you impact them up close.
2. I'm convinced, one of the primary reasons that we don't invest more time in people is because we are so consumed with the things of this world.
3. How much of our life is spent in self-centered entertainment (surfing the Web, watching TV, shopping, playing computer games, listening to music, etc.)?
4. There's nothing sinful about these things in their proper place, but when we feed on large doses of the world's entertainment, it robs of us of time we could spend helping and investing in people.
5. As we stand strong in His grace, the question is no longer – "How can I be entertained?" – but – "How can I help someone else to grow in His grace?"

Simplify your life for God's service. vs. 3-4

1. When a soldier goes out to war, he can't carry a lot of excess baggage. It will weight him down and entangle him. He travels light. He takes only what is needed.
2. That is the picture we get in verse 4. Timothy, travel light, take only what is needed, don't bog yourself down with all the things this world system says you have to have.
1 Timothy 6:6-8

3. Why is it so crucial that we have the proper mindset about money and things?
1 Timothy 6:9-11 Many a Christian and preacher has fallen into this snare.
4. God's soldiers are not called to a life of ease and material prosperity. vs. 3
5. This world is not our home. We are soldiers in a battle with Satan for the souls of men and women.
6. Christians, don't complicate your lives by allowing the world's attractions and possessions to ensnare you. Keep yourself free from the entanglements of this life. Why? Verse 4 says so that you can please Him who hath chosen you to be a soldier.

Build your life on God's Word. vs. 15

1. It is becoming very popular today for preachers to preach light-hearted, syrupy, motivational messages, sprinkled with a little bit of Scripture (usually out of context).
 - We live in an age in which people love “feel-good” churches and light and fluffy messages, and entertainment-driven churches.
2. This may pack buildings, but God's Word (rightly divided) builds lives.
 - Notice God's command to Timothy and to us. Study. Dig into it and learn how to rightly divide it. Then preach what you've learned to others. 4:2-4
3. People may not turn out in droves to hear sound doctrine. The guys with the cotton candy may be more popular, but Paul tells Timothy, "You stick with the stuff I've given to you. It's the real deal and it will change lives."
4. Remember this, a love for this world will quench your desire for God's Word. 4:10 Jesus talked about the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choking the Word and it leading to unfruitfulness.
5. Studying God's Word must be the driving passion of your life. Your life, your marriage, your home, your ministry must be built on the meat of God's Word, not the cotton candy of this world.

Prepare your life for the Master's use. vs. 21

1. I love verse 21 – “...*meet (fit) for the Master's use.*” You are prepared for Christ to live His glorious life through you in this wicked world. How do you prepare yourself?
2. You must build your life with the right materials. There are two kinds in verse 20.
 - Silver and gold - a life built upon the study and right division of God's Word.
 - Wood and earth - this represents the things of the present evil world (iniquity - vs. 19, and youthful lusts - vs. 22).
3. We flee from the sinful lusts and passions of this present world, but as we store up the sound doctrine of God's Word in our souls and then apply it to the details of our lives, we follow after ... verse 22
4. As we do this, we become soldiers that God can use in a powerful way to impact lives, and at the end of our sojourn through this evil world, we can face death without regret and say what Paul said in 4:6-8.

The Christian's Response to Government and Society Romans 13

Introduction:

1. This week a new president was inaugurated in our country. There are some who are excited about this new administration. There are others who are very disappointed. Then are those who are crying out, "The sky is falling. America is doomed."
2. I thought it would be timely to teach you what the Bible says about the Christian's relationship to government and society. While we are not of this world (we belong to Christ's heavenly kingdom), we do live in this world (temporarily).
3. Does the Bible give us instruction on this subject? The answer is "absolutely." But this is another one of those issues that a Christian must go to God's Word and rightly divide it. If not, confusion will reign.
4. There are many Christians and preachers today who believe it is their job to reform the government, and decry the government when it does wrong.
5. They go to Scriptures where the prophets are warning and admonishing the nation of Israel and their kings and leaders. They try to function like a Jewish prophet and they rail on everybody and everything they don't like in government and society.
6. But what does the apostle Paul teach the church about this? What is our doctrine for today? What should be our response to government and society? Romans 13 teaches us very clearly. This is our direct mail doctrine for today.

We should respond with a submissive attitude. vs. 1-7

1. This passage teaches us clearly what civil government's responsibilities are:
 - It is to preserve order. vs. 3
 - It is to promote justice. vs. 4
 - It is to provide protection. vs. 6-7
 - This is a major reason why we pay taxes. Government is to protect us from enemies who would overtake us.
2. The concept of governmental authority originates from God (vs. 1-2). Government is there for the orderly maintenance of society and our God is a God of order and structure.
 - "...ordained of God" is not referring to God putting **individuals** in an office. It is referring to the general concept of national government. Governmental powers are God's idea. It is the "*ordinance* (arrangement, institution) *of God*."
3. What should be the Christian's response to government? Paul says that we should have an attitude of subjection. Twice he uses the word "*subject*." vs. 1, 5
 - This word "*subject*" means "to obey, to subordinate." cf. **Titus 3:1**
4. Keep in mind, Paul was living under the oppressive and dictatorial Roman government when he wrote this. You don't see Paul on a soap box decrying the wicked Roman government or trying to get the church to rally and picket government structures.
5. Paul never advocated trying to change government or culture by force or religious coercion. He wasn't trying to lead a revolution and take over power structures.
6. What was he doing? He was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel has social impact, but not by attempting to take over power structures. The gospel of

Christ has impact by purifying the hearts of the people **within** those structures and culture.

7. Paul says, "Be a good citizen, pay your taxes, and show respect for those positions."

We should respond with true love. vs. 8-10

1. One of the basic functions of government is to provide boundaries - not only national boundaries, but boundaries that govern how its citizens relate to one another. It provides freedom within restrained limits. I don't have the **freedom** to kill you or steal from you.
2. But believers, indwelt by God's Spirit, should not need a governmental law to force us to show forth a loving attitude. We should love instinctively because we have experienced and understand God's love. **1 John 4:7-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:9**
3. What a shame when Christians get the label of being hateful, mean-spirited, and angry people. This happens when they treat society and culture with the attitude, "I'm God's child, you are the lowly heathen, so let me show you how to run your business or government, etc."
4. Paul said in our text, "Be a good citizen, pay your taxes that you owe, and owe no man anything, but to love one another..." vs. 8
5. In verse 9, Paul basically says to believers, "You should not need a list of laws - just simply love your neighbor as yourself." **Galatians 5:18**
6. **Titus 3:2** instructs us as to the attitude we are to possess towards government and our surrounding culture. We are not to compromise with this world system on the principles of God's Word, but we aren't to intentionally antagonize them either by displaying an arrogant and obnoxious spirit.
7. Paul says that we should be praying for governmental leaders. Why? "...that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life..." **1 Timothy 2:2** Do you want to love people and have a right attitude towards them? The best way to do this is to pray for them.

We should respond by showing forth Christ in our daily walk. vs. 11-14

1. Paul tells the church, "You know the time we live in." Do you know the time we live in Christian? The next verse explains. "*The night*" refers to sin and spiritual darkness. We live in a time in which wickedness abounds, but God's grace more abounds.
2. God is temporarily withholding judgment on this world and allowing sin to continue. Why is this? So that He might offer grace and reconciliation to sinners everywhere.
3. So what is the answer to the darkness in this world? Is it to try to reform government and pass laws so sinners can't sin anymore? No, when a person is a sinner and is in bondage to sin, they are **going** to sin. Why does this surprise us when they do?
4. The answer is for believers to live a life that is distinctly **different** than this world. "...cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." vs. 12-13
5. If you are saved today, you have been placed **in Christ** and He lives **in you**. God's desire is for you to live out who God has made you in Christ. This is what He means in verse 14 - "...put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

6. Christ lives in you, but God wants you to put Him on each day. As we refuse fleshly lusts, allow Christ to live through us, and proclaim the gospel in love, we demonstrate to this world of darkness the transforming power of God's grace.
7. Too many Christians have a defeatist mentality. They focus on the wickedness of the world, the world's disdain for Christians, political corruptness, etc. They get a negative, cynical, defeated attitude. They bad-mouth everybody and everything.
8. What a shame. Let me remind you that we are people of **hope** (vs. 11). Our deliverance will be when Christ returns for the church. We are looking for this blessed hope. When He returns we will bid adieu to this old world and lay hold on eternal life. **Titus 2:13**
9. Our lives and attitudes should reflect the **hope** and **victory** we have in Jesus Christ. **1 Corinthians 15:57; Romans 8:37**

In Conclusion:

1. What should be our response to the governments of this world and the society and culture we live in? We are not to try to Christianize the world and make it a holy place.
 - Only Christ can do this and He will at His Second Coming to earth.
2. Christian, you are called to live out the grace of God in your daily walk with the responses we saw here in our text.
 - We are not to have arrogant and defiant attitudes, but submissive attitudes towards civil authority.
 - We are not to be hateful and mean-spirited, but full of the love of Christ.
 - We are not to be combative with the world, but rather show them a different life by allowing Christ to live His life through us.