

THE WORLD IN ME VS. ME IN THE WORLD

One thing that's been on my mind lately is what a Christian's worldview should look like. With the protesting and situation with the police going on, a lot of youth (that I personally know) have taken to Instagram and other social media to post some very strongly worded opinions in an un Christ-like way. Not only that but some have shown support for actions (such as looting) that are not Christ-like even if they may be understandable, and given support to organizations that promote this. The point of me getting this specific is to say that one problem with the modern youth is a lack of perspective (God being in control and #1 priority) caused by a confusing and information-saturated world.

Not only is there a global pandemic now, but now a racial war going on outside. Personally, I don't get too invested. God calls us to love and that's what I do. Our world is broken and without Him our world will continue to be broken . . .

My only problem that I have struggles with is the attack on social media. You can't go on social media without seeing judgement after judgement (which personally I find ironic that people are standing up to judgement by judging). My personal social media always felt like a safe place to share my life and be an example through another medium. Now posting or engaging in anything on social media is draining and scary. Also because most everyone on social media now has made their decision and now have closed their heart to hear anything. I feel like I use social media for a good purpose, but how can I use social media now when I feel like whatever I say will just stir up more strife even if it's as simple as posting a scripture verse? Is it best to just remove myself for a while? Or is now the time to really get out there and spread the gospel? Is there a different medium besides social media that can be used during a pandemic? Those are questions I've been bouncing around in my head. Maybe you can provide insight on that topic . . . As youth, our "boat" looks different because we are still being built. We are stilling learning how to be a good worker for Him and then we're thrown out into the storm. It takes humility on our part to be able to recognize that we don't know everything and we need help from others for us to really be able to make it through the storm — and we need to allow others to help us.

That's really what I would love to focus on: learning how to be a vessel for good use in the middle of the storm.

Well, I'll be honest - if you hadn't requested this topic I don't know if I would have devoted a whole lesson to it. Partly because I'm trying to find the wisdom myself about how to handle it all. In the church you'll find those who think we should leave it alone and those who think we should address it head on. There's reasons behind both opinions. One could even argue there are scriptures to could support both positions! I'm being a little light hearted, but Proverbs hits this reality: *"Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes."* (Proverbs 26:4–5) Then there's another layer - if you do address it - WHEN do you address it and HOW do you address it? For example - I put this at the end of our series in order to give more thought to the topic and to allow things to (hopefully) cool a bit.

Let me tell you what I'm not interested in doing - I'm not going to go down the road of arguments made from both sides regarding racial tension. There's a time and place. Do I have some personal thoughts? You bet I do. Do I believe that all sides are running from some truths they don't want to face? You bet I do. Do I believe going down that road will only stir? You bet I do. I fear it it won't be productive (though I could be wrong). I know that some of you may want to hear my personal beliefs, but here's why I don't want to get into that right now:

- I'm the only one with the podium. I want to be fair. You don't get a chance to follow up with any questions.
- This will be released to YouTube land and I don't want my words to be twisted or misunderstood.

I am more than happy to speak to you privately or as a group. Not because I want to teach one thing privately and another publicly (in fact, we can talk about this as a group later if you'd like), but because this isn't the best setting (in my judgment).

Having said that, specifically you need to know that I hear truth and lies coming from both sides. I hear assumptions being made inappropriately when Jesus taught John 7:24, "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." I've see common sense being abandoned. Jesus would call people out on what they should know/or did know, but wouldn't admit. I see hate and a lack of peacemaking from many sides. It's tough.

However, I do want to consider what I understand to be biblical and worth saying. These are biblical truths that no one should have a problem with and if we do, the problem is with ourselves. This is for us, as Christians, to remember. Whether someone is being mistreated because of their race or ethnicity or not, it makes no difference to a Christian. We remember who we are and what God expects. Whether people are calling a red flag on racism during times it's happening or not . . . we need to remember how God feels about it. Whether people are calling you a racist and you are or are not, we need to remember something. God's people are never off the hook of His expectations.

- There are weighty and lighter matters ([Matthew 23:23](#)). Justice and mercy and faithfulness are weighty. Loving your neighbor as yourself is weighty. Jesus said, "On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets" ([Matthew 22:40](#)). Racism, brethren, is weighty.
- Jesus did address such challenges in [Luke 10:25-37](#).
- The church was doing so well in the first few chapters of Acts. Everyone is as one and selling their property to take care of one another. No one is being overlooked . . . that is until you get to [Acts 6](#). You had Jews who were from Palestine speaking Hebrew/Aramaic and then Jews from outside of Palestine who spoke Greek and had Greek customs. In other words - different ethnicities. These "outsiders" were being neglected in this daily distribution. So, you see, this was a challenge. However, on a positive note, the church addressed it and made sure they were provided for. I'll come back to this later, but this, I believe, should be our first practical priority - love among our own before we can love those outside. It was addressed and the widows were cared for and the goal of spreading the gospel could be accomplished by the apostles. Notice that both were accomplished.
- A beautiful transition in history in the church is found in [Acts 10](#). Listen, I guarantee you that after Peter left Cornelius' home that day, he was no longer a gentile. He was Cornelius. He saw a face

and family associated to him. We need to do that - see each other as children of God - made in His image.

- In fact, many people have missed a key component in Romans. Romans is about faith and how it "works", and if you understand how it works, then you understand it's offered to all - Jew and Gentile.
 - As far as Facebook? This is your brother's opinion. It's what I think is wise, but I may not be, okay? Stay out of it on Facebook. It's probably not the first time you've heard this, yeah? You're not effective. Sorry to tell you that. If you have been, then I apologize. Do it face to face. It makes a big difference. A black sister in Christ called me this week and we discussed these issues. It was a great conversation. Things good for me to hear and I believe good for her to hear. But more than anything, we spent time reminding each other of the love and bond we have in Jesus Christ. To keep that strong - **the world is falling apart, but we grew stronger, so take that, Satan. We escaped your snare you sneaky snake!**
- As Paul wrote in [Ephesians 2:11-16](#) "Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility."
- Let us remember [Galatians 3:23-29](#), "Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."
- You want to talk about justice? There is definitely a time and place for that, but not before we talk about Jesus. Where was His justice? And He justified us! Brethren, there's no time for this hatred inside the body of Christ. We're all one. We're all the same. It doesn't mean we don't see the difference, it means we see it, embrace it, and love each other as one. The church, ultimately, has one race and culture. We are Christians.
- My young brothers and sisters. You be a light to the world. Teach them and WOW them with Jesus.

I want to share a story - something that God blessed Billy and I with recently. We were out fishing one morning and a man with his niece were near by. His niece, Rowan, offered us the rest of their worms because they weren't catching anything and were about to leave. I offered the little girl to come over and catch some smaller fish. So, she did and was on cloud nine. It seemed to move her uncle. Billy began to speak to him and mentioned us worshipping together and me being a minister. They man's face changed and said, "I've got some questions. Is this a God thing?" We told Him we believe that God brings seekers together, so if He's seeking God provides answers. He said he's been a mess with "all this stuff going on?" We said, "you meant the political/racial tension?" He confirmed. I'll share with you what I told him and I hope to encourage you all with it - to focus our

thoughts and actions. In front of us was a pond. I said, "the world is like this dirty pond. Most people are in it and will struggle their whole lives, in vain, to purify the pond. But, every now and then some make it out and head over to a fountain near by. It's a fountain of living water. They never knew it existed. Once they drink from it they are totally satisfied. The issues of the past don't go away, but they are put into perspective and their focus changes. The issues of the past are not as significant anymore. There's something greater to focus on."

I've done my best to discuss this complicated topic to the best of my ability. I am more than willing to sit down with you one on one or a group where we can have back and forth. But, it's on you to come to me to seek clarity. If you go away attributing ill will or false conclusions without talking to me . . . that's on you. It won't be right. I agonized over this - trying to be wise, honor God and speak truth. So please come to me if you have any questions.