

# Becoming an Overcomer in Today's World Being a Christian in a Non-Christian World

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## I. Introductory Remarks.

In this series of messages we are dealing with what it means to be an overcomer in today's world. We live in a world that presents many challenges to our faith and we must be able to overcome and cope in such a way that shows and proves that greater is He who is within us than he who is in the world.

In this message I want to talk about how we must maintain Christ-like attitudes in a world that is heavily influenced by the evil one and all of his evil attitudes and devices.

***1 John 5:19*** *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.*

When it says the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one, it means the world is under the controlling influence of the devil. It means the devil or the wicked one is using all of his ability to exercise influence and authority.

Jesus warned us of these attitudes and Paul warned Timothy in letter to him. We find many passages in the Bible that give us a good idea of the kind of attitudes that are being promoted and influenced in today's world with much authority.

***Matthew 24:12*** *"And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.*

***2 Timothy 3:1-5*** *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: <sup>2</sup>For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup>unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup>traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup>having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

These are many of the attitudes that Christians have to deal with and contend with every day of their lives. They are also attitudes that are promoted heavily through the media.

If the world were full of godly characteristics wouldn't it be easier for us to put on the wonderful characteristics of Christ's nature. But it is not and that makes it much harder to put on the clothing that belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. The world hates those attitudes.

***John 15:19*** "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

***John 17:14*** "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

## **II. The Challenge for The Christian in Today's World.**

### **1. We Are Encouraged to be Blameless and Holy.**

***Philippians 2:14-16*** Do all things without complaining and disputing, <sup>15</sup>that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup>holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

***James 1:27*** Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

This means that we cannot afford to allow our attitudes and characteristics to be molded by the world. We are called to resist the mold of the world.

***Romans 12:2*** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

### **2. We are Called to be Salt and Light.**

Our calling and destiny as Christians is to be salt and light in the world which we find ourselves.

**Matthew 5:13-14** *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. <sup>14</sup>"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.*

What this Scripture is encouraging us to do, is to be the controlling influence in the world.

In order to be the kind of controlling influence in the world that God has called us to will mean that each one of us takes on the responsibility of putting on the Lord Jesus Christ and all of His garments. It is as we do this that we truly become salt and light and act as a preserving agent and begin to flavor the world around us.

### **III. Christ-like Attitudes that Help us to Resist the Conformity of the World.**

#### **1. We Should Conduct Ourselves with Simplicity and Godly Sincerity.**

**2 Corinthians 1:12** *For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.*

#### **2. We Must Exercise a Righteousness that is Not Phony.**

We must strive to be holy without being self righteous or appearing as we are snubbing the world. Our goal should to become more and more like Christ, whose presence welcomed sinners and made them comfortable.

A description of Christ's character concerning righteousness gives us a glimpse of why He was able to resist the conformity of the world without being self righteous is found in Hebrews.

**Hebrews 1:9** *You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."*

Jesus did not merely act righteously; He loved righteousness. He didn't merely abstain from sinful deeds; He hated wickedness. His holiness was more than skin deep. It wasn't outward conformity to a moral or religious

code. It went beyond His thoughts, words and deeds. Jesus' emotions were holy. His motives were holy. Everything He did was with the intent of pleasing His Father.

The key to walking in a true holiness and righteousness is that of putting on Christ's characteristics as well as putting off that which is worldly and sinful.

***Ephesians 4:22-24*** *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,<sup>23</sup> and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,<sup>24</sup> and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*

If I am just merely trying to put off without putting on, then what will happen is that I will become very self-righteous in my attitude towards the world and the people caught up in its snare.

Just as we desire to put away the sinful practices, we should be equally pursuing the positive character traits such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

If my focus is simply on what I need to put off rather than what God is calling me to put on, I will begin to walk in a holier than thou attitude, which is a great turn off to unbelievers.

It is when we are walking in the fruit of the Spirit and good works that allows us to preserve and flavor the atmosphere of our world. It is through my good works and fruit that the light of the gospel shines through.

***Matthew 5:16*** *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

### **3. We Must Exercise the Proper Response When we are Reviled.**

***2 Timothy 3:12*** *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

We know from the Word of God that when we endeavor to live a godly life before unbelievers and the world, we will experience a certain amount of persecution, mockery, etc.

How does Christ want us to respond when we experience these things? Jesus actually answered this question for us when He was being persecuted for righteousness sake?

**John 18:36** *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."*

**1 Peter 2:21-23** *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: <sup>22</sup>"Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; <sup>23</sup>who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

We must purpose in our hearts to always respond with Christ-like attitudes during these times otherwise we put out the light and our persecution and suffering is all in vain.

As Christians we must learn to handle rejection, because if we don't we will compromise and be drawn back into the mold the world is trying impose upon us.

#### **IV. Concluding Remarks.**

We have seen in this message that, as Christians, God does not want us to get caught up in the sway or the influence of the world, but rather to seek to be blameless and holy and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

We have seen that we can do this by conducting ourselves with simplicity and godly sincerity and exercising a righteousness that is not phony and then purposing not to revile when we are mistreated. This is what enables us to be blameless and walk as an overcomer in the world.