

Refuge City Church — November 6, 2022

“Perspective: Culture”

Introduction

- **What is the importance of having perspective?**
 - That’s the focus of this series, as we discuss our biblical worldview, politics, and culture.
- The ‘world’ will do everything in it’s power to eliminate God from every aspect of life. How are we going to counteract that influence?
- What is or should be your worldview towards culture & society?
 - *Worldview*: The lens through which you look to see & understand the world.
 - Is it going to hell in a hand basket, therefore nothing we can do? Or is there an opportunity before us?
 - We’ve defined a biblical worldview, and last week we took a quick look at how we are to view the political realm.

What defines our culture?

- **Culture**: the set of shared values, attitudes, goals, and practices... *The characteristic features of every day existence.*
 - **QUESTION**: Can you define American culture? [[state or regional characteristics](#)]
 - Probably not, unless it’s defined by shared American traits granted to all Americans [[rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution](#)]
 - Culture is not inborn, but rather observed, learned, and adopted.
 - Ultimately, *what* & *who* you allow to influence you will affect your cultural perspective, and how you live/interact with the world around you.
 - Nowadays, based on your age/generation, you’re most likely lumped into a cultural identity whether you like it or not [[Baby Boomer, Gen X, Millennial, Gen Z... and coming soon, Gen Alpha](#)]

Who is influencing you?

- **QUOTE**: “Even though we come from different cultures and backgrounds, we must learn to listen to Jesus above all else...the truth is not bound to how society acts but to God Himself.” [Jason Hiles]
- Consider Lot’s movement towards Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - **Genesis 13:10**, “And Lot *lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley* was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)”
 - **Genesis 13:12-13**, “...Lot settled among the cities of the valley and *moved his tent as far as Sodom*. Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.”
 - **Genesis 14:12**, “Lot...who was dwelling in Sodom...”

- **Genesis 19:** Lot would offer his daughters to the wicked men of the city...His sons-in-law didn't believe him that the city was going to be destroyed...Lot *lingered* before the angels forced him to leave the city...Lot's wife so enamored by the city, looks back while fleeing longing to stay...Lot's daughters get him drunk on two occasions, sleep with him, and bear his children.
 - **Hebrews 11:9-10, 15-16,** "By faith [Abraham] went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God... If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return [Lot's wife]. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city."
- The depravity of a godless culture can have dire affects on us and our loved ones if we don't keep ourselves pure from it's influence.
 - **Romans 2:13,** "For merely listening to the law doesn't make us right with God. It is obeying the law that makes us right in his sight."
 - **2 Corinthians 10:3-4,** "For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds."
 - **2 Corinthians 5:18-20,** "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."
- Lot lived his life as he wanted, not keeping God at the center, keeping his eyes on the world around him, and his family suffered because of it.
- Abraham obeyed and appealed to the Lord, and he was found righteous before God. Because of this, Lot's life was saved.
- **QUOTE:** "In every aspect of the religious life, American faith has met American culture—and American culture has triumphed." [Alan Wolfe]
 - Too many that profess to be Christian have not pursued Christ as Lord, therefore putting up no fight against the schemes of the devil [nominal Christian]
 - **John 17:14-17,** "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. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."
 - Too many are ignoring the prayer & petition of Christ on our behalf! [rich young ruler/prodigal son]
 - Paul's letters to the early church serve as encouragement *and warning*, that culture can have a detrimental impact on us, and even infiltrate the church.
 - Just to the church in Corinth, he wrote multiple warnings against sexual immorality and idolatry... *too many were wanting to have their cake and eat it too!*
- **QUOTE:** "As God's people get to know Him better and more fully understand His calling for their lives, they were to increasingly turn outward in their

influence within the world. But that we seem to have swung to the opposite extreme, blending into culture rather than influencing culture. [James Emery White]

- We are *in* the world, but not *of* it!
- We are sanctified as followers of Christ. Set apart to do the work of Christ in the world around us.
- **Romans 12:2**, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
- **Matthew 5:13-16**, “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Be counter-cultural!

- **QUOTE:** “The political and politeness pressure on us is to reduce theology to etiquette and to let etiquette rule by modern standards. We just can’t do that. We may be considered standoffish and horribly judgmental, but I think that’s a part of the scandal of the gospel we have to bear in this generation.” [Albert Mohler, Jr.]
- **James 4:4**, “You *adulterous* people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”
- **1 John 2:15**, “Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you.”
- **READ Ephesians 4:17-32**
 - Look to Jesus: He touched the untouchable. He loved the unlovable. He befriended the outcast. Jesus is the epitome of living counter-cultural!
- What are the major cultural-shaping issues of our day? [cultural statistics]
- **Poverty:** 12.3% of our state lives in poverty. Supplement that with ‘cost of living’ rates, and it makes California one of the top states in the nation in poverty rate.
 - Riverside County: 11.2%
 - Lake Elsinore: 13.7% [all surrounding cities below 10%; except Perris]
- **Abortion:** Roughly 154,000 performed in California alone in 2020; up 16% since 2017.
 - If **Proposition 1** passes, that number is sure to skyrocket!
- **Human Trafficking:** California is the largest site for trafficking in the US—3.8 victims per 100,000 people.
 - Majority are sex cases [forced prostitution] involving females; 268 cases involving minors in 2020 alone.
- **Pornography:** \$13 billion/year industry in the US.

- 90% teens and 96% of young adults respond encouraging, accepting, or neutral when porn is discussed among friends.
- On average, first exposure to porn is age 12.
- **Homosexuality:** 5.6% of Americans identify as a member of the LGBTQ community.
 - By 2020, 2% of Baby Boomers, 3.8% of Gen X, 9.1% of Millennials, and 15.9% of Gen Z identify.
 - 5% of those 18-29 identify as transgender; 1 in 5 of those who identify as trans are ages 13-17.
 - As of 2021, 69% of Americans believe it is morally acceptable.
- **Social Media:** 2005-5% of Americans; 2021-72% use at least one platform.
 - 70% of FB users are on the site multiple times a day.
 - 84% of those 18-29 use social media; with over 53% reporting use multiple times a day.
 - 64% of Americans say it has a negative impact on life [misinformation, hate, harassment/bullying, skepticism, censorship, material/secular influence]; only 10% say social media has positive impact.
- **QUOTE:** “The same gospel that compels us to combat poverty compels us to defend marriage. The same gospel that compels us to war against sex trafficking compels us to war against sexual immorality in all its forms... That kind of consistency won’t win us many popularity contests, but if we back up our words with lives of grace, truth, and loving action, we will change culture rather than surrendering to it. [David Platt]

Culture defined by Idolatry: Who do you say that I am?

- **Matthew 16:13-18**, “Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’ And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘*But who do you say that I am?*’ Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’”
- Consider the location of this conversation that Jesus had with his disciples [Caesarea Philippi].
 - A Roman city centered on idol worship of the god Pan; god of the wild, nature, sex, and fertility.
 - At the base of a cliff are temples, altars, idols, rampant prostitution and ritual sacrifice.
 - With a cultural backdrop of sin and death, Jesus asks the disciples to answer who they believe He is.

- In the midst of human depravity, a culture enveloped in sin and death, we need to declare that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God!
 - We need to stand on the truth of who He is, amidst a culture that wants to feed you lies of self-gratification, greed, and lust.
 - The cleanliness of your biblical worldview lens will determine your depth and clarity of purpose.

How do we think and participate in our culture?

1. Pray
 - **Matthew 7:7**, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”
2. We’ve been given the Great Commandment...pursue it!
 - **Matthew 22:37-39**, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.
3. We’ve been given the Great Commission...fulfill it!
 - **Matthew 28:19-20**, “Go therefore and make disciples of *all nations*, baptizing *them* in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching *them* to observe all that I have commanded you.”
4. We’ve been given a Great Responsibility...engage in it!
 - **Matthew 22:39**, “You shall love your *neighbor* as yourself.”
 - Be the light in this culture that Jesus calls you to be!
 - Salt this world with the preserving flavor of love of Christ!
 - Vote biblical values!