



Cutting Through the Darkness: Being Christ's Witness When It's Hard



Living a Life for Christ in the Middle of a “Woke” World
July 9, 2023

INTRODUCTION

- **Matthew 5:14-16** – ¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

A couple of things we learned last week to keep in mind throughout the series:

- *Light is never affected by darkness.* No matter how deep or vast the darkness, the light cannot be consumed.
- *Darkness is always affected by light.* The darker it is the more noticeable the light.

WHAT DOES “WOKE” MEAN?

*Being **AWARE** of the injustices of society
and taking up the **CAUSE** to make them right.*

What kind of social injustices are we to be “woke” to?

- ✓ *racism* - discrimination/prejudice based on race
- ✓ *sexism* – discrimination against women
- ✓ *xenophobia* – discrimination against foreigners/ those of other nationalities
- ✓ *homophobia* discrimination against the LGBTQ community
- ✓ *ableism* discrimination against the handicapped
- ✓ *ageism* – discrimination against the elderly

Since Jesus lived during a time of great social injustice, and He was aware of these injustices, how did He respond?

WHAT KIND OF “SOCIAL INJUSTICES” EXISTED IN JESUS’ TIME? (and how do they compare with the injustices we have today?)

- *Many people were forced to assimilate into a language and culture not their own.*
 - **Hellenism:** The devotion to and systemic effort to convert other societies into Greek thought and culture, including language, philosophy, religion, architecture, and economy.

- *Many people were politically disenfranchised, having no vote in who would govern them.*

- *Many were fearful of the authorities because they were subjected to oppressive, discriminatory laws.*
 - Matthew 5:41; Mark 15:21

 - Acts 22:22-29

 - Matthew 2:16-18

- *Many were subjected to unjust taxes that impoverished them for political agendas.*

- *The economic divide between the privileged and the poor was severe.*
 - Patricians (Upper Class):

 - Plebeians (Middle Class):

 - Slaves:

- ***Racism, xenophobia, and sexism were commonplace.***
 - **They profiled people based on how they talked.**
 - Mark 14:70
 - **They placed value on people based on where they were from.**
 - John 1:46
 - **They looked down on people of other ethnicities, especially those who were mixed.**
 - John 4:9

WAS JESUS AWARE OF THESE SOCIAL INJUSTICES?

- ***Forced assimilation into a language and culture***
It is likely that Jesus spoke up to four different languages!
- ***Political disenfranchisement***
 - John 19:10-11
- ***Fear of authorities and oppressive, discriminatory laws***
 - Matthew 5:41
 - Luke 13:31-32
- ***Unjust taxes for political agendas***
 - Luke 20:25 (Matt. 22:15–22; Mark 12:13–17; Luke 20:20-26)
 - Matthew 17:24-27

- ***Economic divide between the privileged and poor***
 - Matthew 25:44-45

 - Luke 14:12-14

- ***Racism, xenophobia, & sexism***
 - John 8:48-49

 - Matthew 22:34–40; Mark 12:28–34; Luke 10:25-37

DID JESUS TAKE UP THE CAUSE TO RIGHT THE INJUSTICES?

- ***Luke 4:18-21*** – ¹⁶*So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:*

¹⁸*“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me
 To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹To
 proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”*

²⁰*Then He closed the book and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”*

If Jesus, being God is ***able*** to end social injustices,
 and Jesus Himself is a ***victim*** of social injustices,
 and Jesus has ***taken up the cause*** of social injustices,
 then **why do we still have social injustices today?**

- ***Forced assimilation into a language and culture***
 - John 4:19-24

- ***Political disenfranchisement***
 - John 18:36-37

- ***Feared authorities and oppressive, discriminatory laws***
 - Matthew 5:41

 - Matthew 10:28

 - Matthew 8

 - John 3

- ***Unjust taxes for political agendas***
 - Luke 20:25 (Matt. 22:15–22; Mark 12:13–17; Luke 20:20-26)

- ***Economic divide between the privileged and poor***
 - Mark 14:7 (Matt. 26:11; John 12:8)

- ***Racism, xenophobia, & sexism***
 - John 4

 - Matthew 15:21-28

WHY DID JESUS COME?

- **John 6:38** – “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
- **John 10:10** – “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.
- **John 12:46** – “I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.
- **Luke 19:10** – “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

HOW CAN WE LIVE A LIFE FOR CHRIST?

- **John 8:31** – Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.
- **John 13:35** – “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- **John 15:8** – “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

ONE FINAL WARNING

- **Matthew 7:21-23** – ²¹“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²²Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

Don’t let a temporal cause trump an eternal purpose! It’s a tactic of the Devil!