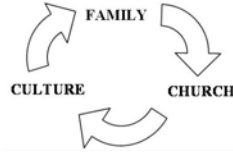


**△ Glorifying CHRIST . . .**

**□ . . . lives of CREDIBILITY . . .**

**○ . . . love for the COMMUNITY. . , pt. 2**

**Glorifying Christ through lives of credibility and love for the community.**



- † *Love the community of family.*
- † *Love the community of the church.*
- † *Love the community of our culture.*

**CULTURE?**

Drugs, immorality, crud language and behavior, homosexuality, alcohol, cursing, disobeying God, evolution, liberalism, rudeness, abortion, loud music . . . etc.

How could I love that unholy mess?

**Jesus**, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*” (John 3:16-NIV)

**Romans 5:8**, “*God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” (NIV)

The question is not “*How could I love that unholy mess?*”

The real question is “*How could God love our unholy mess?*”

**Dictionary.com** defines **CULTURE** as *the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings, transmitted from one generation to another.*

CULTURE is the habits, choices and behaviors of people.

**When we condemn culture we are condemning people.**

Presented on **Sunday, March 8, 2009** at **COLLIN CREEK CHURCH** in Plano, Texas.  
If you would like a CD copy of this message complete the registration form in the **COLLIN CREEK CHURCH NEWS**  
and place it in the basket at the entrance to the Worship Center. **Suggested donation for the CD - \$5.**

## **No wonder the unchurched see us as judgmental!**

**Jesus**, “*Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.*” (Matthew 5:44-45-NIV)

*“Love your enemies . . .”*

## **If our enemies are the culture, how do I love them?**

*“Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, and it is not proud. Love is not rude, is not selfish, and does not get upset with others. Love does not count up wrongs that have been done. Love is not happy with evil but is happy with the truth. Love patiently accepts all things. It always trusts, always hopes, and always remains strong. Love never ends.”*

(1 Corinthians 13:4-8-NCV)

Church Consultant, Eddie Gibbs has the church ask these two questions:

*Does God or the world need more Christians like me?*

*Does God or the world need more churches like mine?*

When it comes to Love for the Community, we go to extremes:

Hate it!

Conform to it!

Jesus says, “Love it!”

## HATING THE CULTURE

Ministry called, *Word Made Flesh*

*Simple Christianity*, by Chris Heuertz

The sign in front of the church read, “*All are welcome here.*”

## **Jonah wanted nothing to do with God’s Heart.**

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*Jonah—means “dove.”*

- † Noah sent a dove out to see if the earth was renewed.
- † Solomon compares his beloved’s beauty to that of a dove.
- † The Psalms and the Prophets speak of the dove’s swiftness.
- † Doves were offered to God as sacrifices.
- † The dove symbolized the Holy Spirit.
- † Jesus said His followers are to be “innocent as doves.”
- † In modern times, the dove, with an olive branch in its mouth is a symbol of peace.

The dove symbolizes: Hope. Renewal. Grace. Beauty. Innocence. Spirit. Swiftness. Sacrifice. Good News. Peace.

**Jonah was no dove.**

**Jonah looked out on lost humanity and said,** *“The culture is disobeying worse than ever. Back in my day we would never act that way. So don’t bother me, I want nothing to do with it. God’s going to judge them or He will have to forgive Sodom!”*

**Jonah rejects God’s word.**

*“The word of the Lord came to Jonah.”* (Jonah 1:1-NIV)

*“Go . . .”* (Jonah 1:2-NIV)

Jonah is called to go to the *enemy*.

**Jonah 1:2,** *“Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before Me.”* (NIV)

- † *“wickedness”* – sinful, disobedient, ungodly
- † *“great”* – significant or valuable

**Jonah 4:11,** *“Should I not be concerned about that great city?”* (NIV)

Have you ever seen our community's . . .  
blemishes . . . beauty,  
filthiness . . . festivity,  
wickedness . . . wealth?

If all we see is wickedness, we'll miss humanity's potential and  
the greatness God has for them.

If all we see is greatness, we'll miss humanity's brokenness and  
desperate need for God.

**Jonah runs away from God.**

**Jonah 1:3**, "*Jonah ran away from the Lord.*" (NIV)

Jonah was a consumer of God's blessings.

He was entitled to God's blessings.

*"What's in it for me?"*

The violent storm came not because of the sin of the sailors, but  
the sin of the "SAINT!"

We can do God's will and work, yet miss His Wonders!

Jonah 4:1-3, "*Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. He prayed to the Lord, 'O Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.'*" (NIV)

## **“Jonah syndrome”**

10. You seek God’s blessing, but not His presence: you’re a consumer, not a worshipper.

9. You ignore unchurched people, and continually judge their actions.

8. You confess, witness, or obey only when forced to: when the guilt of disobedience exceeds the pain of obedience.

7. You pray only when you’re in trouble and only about your own problems and predicaments.

6. You would rather die than carry your cross.

5. Your happiness is directly tied to getting your own way, not seeing God get His way.

4. You’re consumed with your own comfort and angry when it is threatened or removed.

3. You are not bothered by the thought of people facing God’s wrath.

2. You gladly receive God’s grace but don’t extend it to others and you don’t celebrate when God extends it to them.

1. You see culture’s wickedness but are blind to its greatness.

Do you test positive for any of these symptoms?

**1 Peter 2:9-25, 9** *“You are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light. 10 “Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God’s people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God’s mercy.”*

*11 Dear friends, I warn you as “temporary residents and foreigners” to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. 12 Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when He judges the world.*

*13 For the Lord's sake, respect all human authority—whether the king as head of state, 14 or the officials He has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right.*

*15 It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. 16 For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. 17 Respect everyone, and love your Christian brothers and sisters. Fear God, and respect the king.*

*18 You who are slaves must accept the authority of your masters with all respect. Do what they tell you—not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are cruel. 19 For God is pleased with you when you do what you know is right and patiently endure unfair treatment. 20 Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased with you.*

*21 For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in His steps.*

*22 He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. 23 He did not retaliate when He was insulted, nor threaten revenge when He suffered. He left His case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. 24 He personally carried our sins in His body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By His wounds you are healed. 25 Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.*

**1 Peter 3:1-9**, *“1 In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse*

*to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over 2 by observing your pure and reverent lives.*

*3 Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. 4 You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.*

*5 This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands. 6 For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.*

*7 In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.*

*8 Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. 9 Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and He will bless you for it." (NLT)*