



TENSION 2

Separate Yet Connected



How do we manage the tension / correctly handle the truth? We going to need:

- Deep, revealed, nuanced understanding of TRUTH.
- Catch the HEARTBEAT of JESUS.
- Be open to the WISDOM of the HOLY SPIRIT.

THE TENSION: 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 & Mark 16:15-16

- * Both those verses are hugely COMPELLING, great THEOLOGY and MISSION CRITICAL.
- * How do we stay HOLY, yet still MIX with the WORLD?
- * Should we AVOID CONTACT with all things horribly stained with sin? YES!
- * Should we be in the THICK of the ACTION with sinners who desperately need Jesus? YES!
- * It is BOTH / AND, not EITHER / OR.

→ *How do you feel as you read 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 and Mark 16:15-16? Do they fill you with joy or trepidation? How are you doing with each? Which way do you lean? Anywhere either of the ditches (below)? Are you successfully managing the tension?*

→ *Is it possible to become so like world that they can't tell difference? Is it possible to become so unlike world we become unapproachable, unavailable, unintelligible?*

Is there a different that's attractive or is different just weird?

THE DANGER: There's a DITCH on either side of Separation Street

Ditch #1 = ISOLATION (Hyper-SEPARATION)

Ditch #2 = COMPROMISE (Hyper-CONFORMITY)

FLIRTING with the world (Lot) v IGNORING the world (Pharisees)

→ *What does it mean to 'flirt with the world'? How might one ignore the world?*

THE BALANCED POSITION

A. AS A SEPARATED PEOPLE, WE SHOULD BE RADIANT & ATTRACTIVE

- * People should SEE that SEPARATION all over us.
- * Our radical holiness should be BEAUTIFUL, ATTRACTIVE & COMPELLING.
- * Our PURITY, INTEGRITY & CHRISTLIKENESS should SHINE.
- * We should give off sweet, attractive, irresistible AROMA OF CHRIST.

→ *How does this picture of holiness differ from the Pharisees approach? Do you know anyone whose holiness shines? How have people in the world reacted to you as you have attempted to be Christ-like?*

SEPARATED FROM

- * There is no doubt that SIN is a PERILOUS thing with GRAVE consequences.
 - * You don't FLIRT WITH anything that wants to kill you (2 Timothy 2:22, 1 Thessalonians 5:22)
- *Is there anything right now that you need to be separated from?*

SEPARATED TO

- * The world is CRYING OUT for something DIFFERENT: transcendent, superior, beautiful.
 - * With Christ IN OUR LIVES, shouldn't we BE / LOOK / SMELL different ... so we STAND OUT?
 - * We may be EARTHEN VESSELS, but we contain a remarkable TREASURE (2 Corinthians 4:7) ... the PRESENCE, POWER and NATURE of the HOLY One.
 - * As we LET HIM IN, He TRANSFORMS us into something new, pure and beautiful.
 - * The power is in WHOM we are separated TO.
 - * The pressure is off when we realise HIS is the HOLINESS.
- *Is holiness for you hard work, sweat and effort or shining Jesus? How might you become shinier?*

B. PRACTISE CONTACT WITHOUT CONTAMINATION

- * Mark 16:15-16 tells us we need to be IN the world ... 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 tells us that we mustn't be OF the world ... Romans 12:2 tells us not to CONFORM to the pattern of the world.

How do you practise contact without contamination? Get REALLY STRONG on the INSIDE.

- * FEED yourself on the things of God.
- * Develop deep, strong RELATIONSHIPS with the WORD of God and the SPIRIT of God.
- * Build your house on the ROCK.

If your HEART is PURE, the externally IMPURE cannot DEFILE you (Ps 19:9, Prov 4:23).

→ *What are the tensions you face? Is it the parties you're invited to? The music you listen to? The TV/films you watch? How culturally aware should we be? Can't we reach them if we're don't understand where they're coming from? But it there then a danger that we get defiled by that edgy media? Is there a danger that over time you become immune to the shock of worldliness?*

→ *How in your current context could you be a positive influence without being negatively influenced? Is that balance hard? Why?*

→ *If we're not IN world, we have problem. There are churches that are dying because no-one is IN world. Discuss.*

→ *Similarly, if we're OF world, we have problem, because we're called to be different, not to fit in, but to stand out. We have to be in place to offer Good News. Discuss.*

→ *We're going to win the world by being WITH them, not by becoming LIKE them.*
Discuss.

C. JESUS SET US A PERFECT EXAMPLE

- * Jesus was definitely IN the world ... far TOO DEEP for the Pharisees.
- * He could go there because He was 100% SECURE in His holiness.
- * Sinners RAN to Jesus, and, if we have it right, perhaps paradoxically, they'll RUN TO US, too.

WHAT DID JESUS MODEL?

- a) Jesus didn't live in ISOLATION, though He did frequently ISOLATE Himself.
- b) Jesus spent plenty of time in the SYNAGOGUE, but He also went to PARTIES, WEDDINGS, WELLS.
- c) Jesus wasn't concerned what RELIGIOUS people THOUGHT ABOUT HIM; In fact, He almost seemed to take JOY in winding them up
- d) He always looked through the lens of GRACE, not LAW.
- e) Jesus always ERRED on side of GRACE, even though He was harshly and repeatedly CRITICISED for it.
- f) Jesus never CONFORMED His BEHAVIOUR to His ENVIRONMENT; in fact, He TRANSFORMED the ENVIRONMENT by His BEHAVIOUR.
- g) He was prepared to take a RISK because He could see the potential REWARDS.
- h) Jesus was well-aware of the SPIRIT of the WORLD, but more aware of the SPIRIT of the LORD.
- i) He paid more attention to KINGDOM FRUIT than potentially awkward EARTHLY CONSEQUENCES.
- j) Jesus was led by COMPASSION rather than EVALUATION ... by TRUTH rather than TRADITION ... by FAITH and never by FEAR.
- k) Jesus always saw the HEART and not the ISSUE / SIN / MASKS → People were victims, not statistics.
- l) He didn't CONDEMN the sinner, but did tell them to GO and sin NO MORE.
- m) He always turned their WEAKNESSES into His OPPORTUNITIES.
- n) He always became their SOLUTION rather than adding to their PROBLEMS.
- o) He was far more interested in their RESTORATION than His REPUTATION.
- p) He wasn't drawn to POPULARITY, but He was always drawn to the UNDERDOG.
- q) Jesus spent time with A WIDE CIRCLE of diverse people, but also had a SMALL STRONG support network
- r) For Jesus, there was no SIN too great / no LIFE too lost / no PERSONALITY too quirky / no PAIN too deep / no SHACKLE too tight / no HEART too broken.
- s) Jesus never CONFORMED, but He always TRANSFORMED.
- t) He didn't necessarily FIT IN, but He always STOOD OUT.
- u) People were ATTRACTED to His radiant holiness; only ones REPELLED by it were religious hypocrites.
- v) He didn't avoid MESS, but dived right in.

w) Jesus never ran FROM anyone, but uncanny how often they ran TOWARDS Him.

→ *Work your way through these, and being really honest, decide on which side of the equation you fall each time. How good are you in each case, and what do you need to work on?*

→ *If you had to pick the three most significant from this list, what would they be?*

→ *If we get the balance right, will they run to us like they ran to Jesus*

RESPONSE

Are you secure in your holiness?

Are you in the world, with the world, available to the world?