

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Are You An Alien Here?" (Colossians 3:16-17, Ephesians 4:17-24)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 7/27/2014

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As we continue our study of the Biblical doctrine of separation, I want to place before you a proposition, a truth, that is very seldom taught in the church today. In order to do that I want to begin by calling your attention once again to the passage of Scripture that has been the theme or anchor passage for this series of messages, in Colossians chapter 3, verses 16 and 17. Colossians chapter 3, verses 16 and 17.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Here is the proposition that I want to place before you today: The true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, the person who has truly been regenerated by the work of the Spirit of God and cleansed from his sins and saved from the wrath of God by faith alone, in the shed blood of Christ alone – that person is an alien in this present evil world. An alien. A stranger. A foreigner. And the fact is that the Bible uses every one of those terms to describe the true Christian.

This is the essence of Biblical separation. This is the distinguishing mark of the genuine Christian in this present evil world. That is the truth of God's Word. And it is also the truth of God's Word that if this distinguishing mark is absent from an individual, or is absent from a body of people who claim to be Christians, on the authority of the Word of God there is reason to doubt that the individual in question

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is truly a believer, or that the church in question is truly a church of believers in Christ.

### **A Proposition Supported By Scripture**

Now I know that I have just made some very strong statements, and these statements may in fact be new thoughts to some of you who are listening today. And you may wonder if these things are really so. But I would not say these things unless I could say them on the solid foundation of the authority of the Word of God.

And the fact is that we cannot understand these things unless we are obeying the command that we find here in Colossians chapter 3 verse 16, to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly – to let the Word of God have unrestricted access and unrestricted influence in our lives. To receive and to submit to the truth as we find it only in the pages of Scripture.

The proposition that the true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is an alien in this present evil world is not my thought, dear friend. It is not my theory. It is not my opinion. It is the clear teaching of the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God. And so I want to call your attention to the Word of God today. I want to call your attention to the proof that these things are true, and that these things are vitally important for you as an individual and for your church.

Now what I have just said is not commonly taught in the church today. In fact, this kind of teaching is not welcome in many churches today. And in fact, in far too many

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churches in which people and pastors profess to name the name of Christ today, we find the very opposite of this kind of teaching. We also find the opposite of this kind of teaching in many Christian educational institutions today.

### **Professing Christians Making Themselves at Home in This Present Evil World**

And it is a shame upon much of the visible church and upon much of the church leadership today, and a shame upon many who call themselves Christian educators today – it is a shame upon them that they do not teach these things, because they themselves do not submit to the Biblical proposition that Christians are aliens in this world. That teaching is not welcome in many churches and in many Christian schools today, and in fact it is openly rejected in many of them today. Let me briefly give you just three examples of this.

A few years ago a purportedly conservative Christian college invited a man to come as the speaker for their graduation ceremonies. This man was not a believer. This man is a secular novelist and he is a very active Roman Catholic. Nearly a dozen of his novels have been turned into films by Hollywood, and they are given ratings that inform the movie-going public that they feature nudity and profanity and other things that are to be no part of the life of the separated Christian.

But yet a purportedly conservative Christian college had this man come and give the commencement address to its graduates, and give them advice as to how they should live their lives. And of course nothing that he said had anything to do with the

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commandments of the Word of God. All he could give them is the false wisdom of men that is opposed to the wisdom of God.

And how did the leadership of this purportedly Christian college justify having this man come and speak? They said that we need to be more broad-minded. They said that we need to expose our students to other points of view. We need for our students to understand that other people may have truth that we do not have.

Dear friends, those kinds of statements make it absolutely clear that the leadership of this particular purportedly conservative Christian college does not understand the alien nature of the Christian walk in this present evil world. And clearly, the Word of Christ is not having unrestricted influence on that college's leadership. As so many people who claim the name of Christ are doing in our time, they are compartmentalizing their lives and their thinking.

And by their own example of inviting such a man to come and speak at their commencement ceremonies, they are setting an ungodly example for those graduates. They are telling them that it is acceptable and even necessary to compartmentalize your life, to say, in effect, that there are areas of your life and your thinking that are off-limits to the authority of the Word of God.

Let me give you another example. There is a man who is becoming prominent in our time who claims to be an evangelical Christian but also openly admits that he is a homosexual. He has received a great deal of notoriety because he has produced a

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video and written a book in which he says that God does not disapprove of homosexuality or so-called homosexual marriage.

Now the sad fact is that this man's false teaching is being readily accepted in many purportedly evangelical churches today. He is being invited to speak. His videos are being shown. His book is being read. And even many leading Christian speakers who say that he is wrong are saying it in a way that treats this man, who is in the most deep and unrepentant sin and who claims that God approves of his sin – these Christian leaders are treating this man as though he were a brother in Christ.

Listen to me carefully: The true church cannot tolerate this. Discrimination within the church of Jesus Christ against an individual because he or she is an unrepentant homosexual is the duty of the true church of Jesus Christ. Such people have no place, no standing, no admittance in the eyes of God to the true church of Jesus Christ, unless they repent and are converted and abandon that abominable way of living. First Corinthians chapter 6 beginning at verse 9 says this:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor idolaters, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were [past tense] some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

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And how do professing Christians justify such a stand? They justify it on the basis of the word "tolerance." They base it on a very perverted notion of Christian love. But Ephesians chapter 5 at verse 11 says this:

...have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

In the context of that passage, the Apostle Paul was, in fact, speaking of this particular kind of sin. He says earlier in that chapter, in verse five,

For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ in God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

Once again, dear friends, this is an issue of Biblical separation. This is an issue of the alien nature of the Christian life in this present evil world.

And let me give you just one other example, and that has to do with worldliness in the church today. In many, many churches today, what was once a service of worship

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of the one true and living God has now become nothing more than a weekly entertainment production focusing on the glory of man. Churches justify this because they think that this is what is necessary in order to attract the world to the church. And so they assemble so-called "worship teams" that are usually made up of younger people. These people stand up in front of the church and lead this weekly production.

Many pastors don't even care if the people that they are putting up there have a valid testimony of salvation demonstrated by a sanctified life. What they care about is that these people are good performers, and have the right kind of stage presence, and can play the right instruments, and sing the kind of music the world wants to hear.

And furthermore, choosing these people for positions of leadership violates a clear command that we are given in First Timothy chapter 3 verse 6 and elsewhere not to place "a novice" – a young, uninstructed believer – in a position of spiritual leadership. This, dear friends, is also an issue of Biblical separation. This is also an issue that has to do with the alien nature of the Christian walk in this present evil world.

We live in a postmodern society that nurtures the lie of the Devil that tolerance of all viewpoints and all practices is the only reasonable position to take. And that way of thinking has entered and corrupted many, many churches today. The church has believed that lie and practices that lie extensively today. And many Christian leaders and many Christian parents have bought into the false idea that it is wrong for them to raise their children as what are ridiculed as "hothouse Christians." And so they set

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about to deliberately *not* raise their children as aliens in this present evil world. They deliberately reject the teaching of the Word of God in that regard. This, again, is an issue of Biblical separation.

### **What Does It Mean To Be An Alien?**

And so, let me put the question before you: What does it mean for a Christian to think and to live as an alien in this present evil world? What does it mean to be separated in our relationships? How do we accomplish that – or rather how does God accomplish that through us and in us – while we are at the same time living in a world that is saturated with sin, and, sad to say, many of us attend churches that are saturated with sinful thinking on the issue of Biblical separation, churches that reject God's command to be separate?

To answer that question I want to place a series of propositions before you from the Word of God, and these are all subsidiary to that central truth that the true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is an alien in this present evil world, and that the true church of Jesus Christ is an alien body in this present evil world. First of all I want to place before you the entire list of those ten propositions, and then in the messages to follow I want to show you from the Word of God that these things are true.

- *Proposition number one* is this: Those who are now in Christ, those who are saved, those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ,



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those who have repented of their sins and placed their faith in Christ, were once aliens from God and from the kingdom of God.

- *Proposition number two:* The status of the true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ changed as soon as you are converted. The true believer in Christ is now an alien in this present world.
- *Proposition number three:* Christians have been redeemed from that alien status for an eternal purpose
- *Proposition number four:* Jesus Christ, the God-man, was an alien while He was in this world in a human body.
- *Proposition number five:* The Christian's alien status in this present world demands that we become increasingly conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.
- *Proposition number six:* The Christian, as an alien in this present world, is not to love this world.
- *Proposition number seven:* If an individual does not think and act as an alien in this present evil world, there is reason to question whether that individual is truly in the faith.
- *Proposition number eight:* We can only live as aliens in this present world by the power of the Word of God and the indwelling

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Spirit of God.

- *Proposition number nine:* The unbelieving world will hate the true Christian because of the true Christian's alien nature in this present evil world. And in fact we should welcome that as an indication that we are pleasing God and not sinful men.
- *Proposition number ten:* The Christian's constant earnest prayer, and the focus of the Christian's supreme effort, must be this – that the Word of God would do its work within you to make you less and less conformed to this world and more and more conformed to Christ, so that all that you do and say and think will be worthy of His name.

### **Separation: A Necessity of Christian Witness**

Dear friends, these things are of the essence of Biblical separation, both for the Christian individually and for the true church as Christ's body. It is only as these things are true of us that we can truly be Christ's faithful witnesses in this present evil world.

We do not bear witness for Christ by making friends with this present evil world, or by accommodating this present evil world, or by compromising with this present evil world. We bear witness for Christ when we recognize and practice and exhibit our alien nature because of Christ in us.

It is not our calling to be more and more at home in this present evil world but to

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be less and less at home in this present evil world. It is our calling to point those who are still living unredeemed in this present evil world to look to the world to come, the world that will last forever, and not be burned up as this world is soon going to be. And it is our task as aliens here, and citizens of that world to come, to call upon the world to be reconciled to God through Christ. It is our task as aliens here to call upon sinful men to take on for themselves, by the grace of God, by the redemption that is in Christ, that same alien status.

### **Are You An Alien?**

Now dear friends, I have placed these ten propositions before you today, and as I said earlier in this message, as we continue this particular part of our study of the doctrine of Biblical separation in our next broadcast, I want to point you to the Scriptures that set forth these propositions and relate them to one another, and relate them to you as a believer in Christ and relate them to your church if it is truly a body of believers.

Today because of the limits of time, as we close let me point you briefly to two very pertinent passages of Scripture that summarize these great truths for us. The first is found in this same book of Colossians, earlier in the book, at chapter 1 beginning at verse 21. Colossians 1, beginning at verse 21, we read this:

And you, who were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He [the Lord Jesus Christ] has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above

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reproach in His sight – if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which you heard...

The second passage is found in the book of Ephesians, and chapter 4 beginning at verse 17. Ephesians chapter 4, beginning at verse 17. The Apostle Paul, addressing the church at Ephesus, wrote this:

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, who being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness to work all uncleanness with greediness.

But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:17-24)

And it is with these things in mind that I ask you a final question today: If you are truly believing on the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation, dear friend, are you living as an alien in this present evil world? Is that your attitude toward this world, and the

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things of this world? Are you less and less at home here, and more and more looking forward to the New Heavens and New Earth with Christ forever?

That, too, is of the essence of the issue of Biblical separation. And the Lord willing, we shall begin to take up these ten propositions concerning the alien nature of the believer in Christ in this present world, in greater depth in our next message.

#### **About the Broadcast**

*The Scripture-Driven Church* airs each week across the United States and around the world. Our goal is to obey Christ's Great Commission: preaching the Gospel to all, and equipping believers in Christ to live every area of life by the sole authority of Scripture, to the glory of our Lord and Savior.

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