

NEW TESTAMENT ISSUES IN SEPARATION EVERYDAY NON-CONFORMITY.

A greeting of Christian love to each who is here in the house of God this afternoon on this Lord's Day.

Everyday non-conformity is seven days of the week and it looks radical to many people and sometimes the battle feels radical. I never fought in a physical battle as far as the military scene, I think that people would feel radical there too, in a different sense. It is radical but it is God's way of proving on this earth His own good and acceptable and perfect will of God, that comes from Romans chapter 12 where we have these words also: Be not conformed to this world.

Maybe some of you've had some kind of project with plaster of Paris where your teacher had numerous options of moulds in which you poured plaster of Paris and when it got hard there was something beautiful, but before that could happen that liquefied product had to conform to the shape of the mould.

My subject this afternoon is to not do that. The options of the mould are one and yet many and what we are saying this afternoon, what the Scriptures tell us, that to be non-conformed is a battle because the mould in the form of the world is before us and we don't see it as something different than what we are and we so easily as we move along become part of the process as we live in the world although we should be like it.

Jesus' disciples lived in an ungodly society and Jesus' teachings were directly geared to a non conformed walk and we would like to use some thoughts from the eight blessed attitudes from Matthew chapter 5. This whole idea of nonconformity or getting to the place where we don't want to become conformed brings us to the point where we can say we have been redeemed. Galatians chapter 1:4 starts with a rescue or otherwise there would be no battle, we would not need to be conformed in order to be part of this world system, it speaks of Jesus who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father. That is the rescue. That is redemption.

The subject today focuses on the rescued, those of us already rescued, staying out of spiritual trouble, and yet at the same time we do have to admit that while we seek to be non conformed we readily realise how conformed many times we are. And so what attitude springs from the heart when we think of not being conformed after we have once been rescued and our focus is on staying rescued.

[2 Corinthians 6:17](#): "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, ¹⁸And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Right here we have not only the "rescue from" (the unclean things) but we have a "rescue unto" (becoming God's sons and daughters) and that is what gives us the footing for today in life, in the battle we all face daily.

[Matthew chapter 5](#). The attitudes that are necessary for us to be non-conformed.

Attitudes that govern everyday nonconformity.

1] *Verse 3: The poor in spirit, the attitude of being poor in spirit.*

That spirit recognises the grace of God at work in one's life and that what we are we are by the grace of God. Paul said in another place that we will not boast of things without (outside) our measure, and what is our measure? Let's go just a little bit to Romans chapter 12 where I started, there we have the word measure also in verse three, "... not being conformed to this world: but being transformed, proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." [[Romans 12:2-3](#)]

Scriptures talk about faith as a grain of mustard seed the smallest seed of all, [[Luke 17:6](#)] This word measure means a particle and so what is our measure? It is a limited degree, and that is to be sober in

thinking about ourselves and about God, about life and the battle like verse two and three tell us in Romans 12. Sober thinking, those that have a “*poor in spirit*” attitude are thinking soberly about God and about themselves. The world is drunk, I was talking about being sober, the world is drunk, intoxicated with self and that is true no matter where we are in the world.

As I move about in the States here for a short time I am immediately impressed with the intoxication with things and there is intoxication in various areas, or whether it is dress or whether it is vehicles or whether it is religion, it goes on the right back to the thing being drunk with self.

We as a people do not conform to the world system of politics and holding positions in communities or in higher governments and one of the reasons that we don't want to do that because we belong to God's Kingdom not the world. Once again I am seeing picketing and signs all around here and we have terminology describing the candidates self, there is an opponent to that candidate and in order to be successful in a political campaign and gaining the position one has to be literally drunk with self. That is why we do not conform to that, that is one issue. We never see a candidate boasting about his opponent's credentials and we know why.

Submission to the authority and self abnegation are part of Jesus' teaching and our evidence of the grace of God at work. Have people ever commented to you how someone could control himself or deny himself and the reason they say that is because it goes so counter to what people are normally taught to do and be. I think a *poor in spirit* individual is one who while not being gullible, neither will he be one who will be so individualistic that he gives himself the liberty to rethink and repattern methods of church life that have been proven. It all comes back to what we call humility. Blessed are the *poor in spirit*.

I think this whole attitude that we are talking about is one of the most important attitudes in our concept of the church and whether we are going to make it spiritually or not as individuals in a church and as a church in the world. Being *poor in spirit*.

2] Verse 4: Those that mourn.

I think this is an attitude that is a proper perspective of life, a serious outlook, it relates to true repentance of sin in our lives, it relates to a proper attitude and concern at sin in a group, and sometimes we maybe have some older brethren that mourn things, maybe they have a perspective of things that we need to gain in fighting the battle of nonconformity. It also has to do with our perspective and attitude about sin in the world. We so easily speak about the evil world. Jesus spoke of a people that drew nigh to Him with their lips but “their heart is far from Me,” [Matthew 15:8] and we can, while condemning the world, be doing that too. We want to have a proper attitude, a serious attitude about things in relation to sin. Also death as it relates to nonconformity. Death is a serious matter it is not a celebration, we mourn. The proverb writer says it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. [Ecclesiastes 7:2] And so hilarity and foolishness do not become a child of God, it does not become a Christian and that is radical in the world.

3] Verse 5: Meekness.

In this world meek people are rare, truly meek people are rare people, there are few of them, and those who are meek in the godly sense are rarer yet. There are many wimps in this world, there are few meek people. Meekness is a premium and I think that the way to describe a meek person is someone who is willing to walk with Jesus by doing what the brotherhood has made applications to as being separated from the world and we are all ready to walk with Jesus. The Scriptures say that come and learn of me Jesus said, for I am meek and lowly of heart. [Matthew 11:29] We don't like to be that way, not like Him. Just think how Zachariah portrayed Jesus coming, His whole carriage, His manner of bearing, there were no glitters when Jesus rode into Jerusalem and even long before when He came to Bethlehem, as He taught the people and healed it was solid truth and teaching that cut across men's hearts, but it was meek. He did not walk with a high ahead nor with a Pharisees hairstyle, He was meek and maybe if we have to be tapped a bit about our hairstyle may be we should consider how Jesus was and how we should walk as meek people. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.

I asked one youth sometime ago from the States here, what are some battleground details of nonconformity here? He said after thinking a while; Travel clothing. Clothing that presents a meek Christ is what we want. I am impressed with a few men, a very, very few men and the Bible records their manner of dress and body carriage and most of us would hardly want to dress like it. John the Baptist and Elijah, I don't know why the Bible specifically mentions them, a few people like that.

Just a few weeks ago I travelled to the Dominican Republic and like it is when you go to a brand-new country your eyes are opened, you have never been there, you cannot picture who the brethren will be who you will meet, in fact you don't even have a concept of brethren there, you are travelling in the airports and the airplanes almost feeling polluted by the world all round you, and you know what it's like if you have travelled when you come into the airport to somehow in that sea of people see one or two that are your people. And I like to see meek people when I meet them and I did, I did a few weeks ago. A brother was there clearly identified. Meekness is an attitude that shuns the gaudy and the vain and lays hold on treasures that fit into heavenly accounts.

4] Verse 6: *Spiritual hunger.*

This verse we like and I think one of the reasons is because we know exactly what hunger is, we know exactly what it is. For this is the kind of spiritual hunger has pangs just like we know hunger pangs just a few hours ago or a few days ago in work maybe they were greater. The spiritual kind has pangs for eating the Scriptures every morning, this morning or evening, and sometimes our pangs are greater or lesser. Pangs that we know can be satisfied and can give us spiritual energy and power for the battle, pangs that being satisfied and can actually satisfy the soul and I wish we could get hold of the soul concept a little more, we know what it is, we know what it means to be satisfied in heart and soul. The world ignores the real good things that we need, I would venture to say that if you would speak to people during the day in your work, a high percentage of them if you would ask them if they read their Bible today would say: No. And statistics tell us many people don't know those well-known details, well known to us about the Scriptures, those well-known even basic truths so many people anymore don't know. They don't know what spiritual hunger is, they feel something but they don't identify with the spiritual hunger a soul needs. And so the world ignores the real good and exploits the evil, parading it before men and women as a treat that they deserve, evil, drunk with self. A fantastic movie, an exhilarating ride, the person deserves it now.

Romans 12 verse nine, I wanted to say at the beginning there is a very interesting couplet here with Matthew five and Romans 12 just going right down the same train of thought. [Romans 12:9](#): "Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good." We have to have hunger for that which is good. There is a mind food versus a soul food and then there is just plain entertainment. The one satisfies and the other two no. We talked about reading the Bible, that's a pretty big jump to start talking about. What about something like reading a newspaper or else what would be in that category? Reader's Digest? There is a lot of difference between that and the scriptures, we know that. Mind food, soul food or entertainment? We know that newspapers are addictive and when I hear about Reader's Digest I think they are too, addictive, and we have some pangs of something that just likes to get that newest issue. If we compare the Scriptures to good solid basic substantial food, we have to compare these other things to cotton candy and maybe carbonated water, and you know what cotton candy does, you get sick if you just eat it and nothing else and will wear your teeth out too, you couldn't chew meat after a while. Thinking about the Scriptures versus this, I'm not sure but I think sometimes maybe Reader's Digest produces more belching then spiritual building as does carbonated water.

Hunger for spiritual things, hunger for righteousness. Family worship, that little time that a couple spend on their knees together each day, at night before they go to bed. Spiritual hunger, praying, facing the battles in their own lives, in the lives of their youths before they are teenagers. Spiritual hunger pangs that only are satisfied by holy reading and holy fellowship. What you did all day so far, except may be eating a meal, looks like folly to men. The world couldn't care at all about listening to these kind of things. I travelled just a short little trip yesterday and you know how many opposing activities are going on. We know some anyway. Family worship, taking time to read the Scriptures together as a family and

go to church like we did and discussing the Scriptures and hearing a message and just a whole lot of other things - be not conformed to this world. How strong are the pangs for soul food this afternoon?

5] Verse 7: Showing mercy.

The Bible talks about that. I like to think of it like this also: mercy in the form of caring for elderly parents and the elderly among us, that is opposite to what the world would do and does. Mercy to our children. We know what the world wants, a mother away from home, we say a mother at home without any bending. Our children need their mothers at home and that is a life full of mercy towards the children. We don't think about that as often as we should. Discipline for the child. Curbing his self indulgence. "He that loveth his child, he that has mercy on his child chasteneth him betimes." [Proverbs 13:24] That is blaspheming to the world, that's wrong, that's cruel. Children's rights and careers for women, children left of themselves to the computer screen of the TV or it used to be the funnies in the papers but that's way outdated. Mercy.

6] Verse 8: Purity of heart.

"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." The world does this and we try it. Most people are fooling themselves day after day by trying to prove that they are someone they are not. Purity in heart is sincerity, whether it is religion that covers it up, for a lot it is professionalism, how many times have we been appalled or shocked at some professional person's life, the core? Let's not be conformed to this world. There is so much energy that is expended in our own lives we must admit, so much energy that is expended and wasted by trying to quiet the conscience or trying to be something that we know we are not. Trying to convince ourselves that the authority that made the rule that we broke isn't really authority, we use a lot of precious energy at times in our hearts and minds. Honesty, we must maintain honesty in our speech, not be telling exaggerated or stories that leave false impressions, some people are good at telling stories, I am not, I can't tell stories. I think it would be a real, real temptation to stretch and to contort, perfect a story for the sake of tickling the ears of our audience. Let's build strong convictions for a pure heart and mind. 3 John 1:12 says: Demetrius had good report of all men and truth itself. Guarding the mind and heart from that which feeds the corrupt flesh in me. There is a lot of carnality in our flesh, a lot of flesh in this group right here, it is all there. And we shun the theatre, we shun television, we shun radio and we shun the web and we shun a lot of things in the world so that that flesh doesn't get fed, it should starve, that is what we are trying to do, starve what you want in your canal nature. That is not what the world is doing. The world educates people to do the exact opposite, that is what billboards are all about, that's what magazine racks are all about, that make weak men helpless and tantalise the strong.

Let's build and keep strong, deep contentment at home in the family, a godly environment in our Christian schools and bring forth serious maturing youth that are interested in pure courtships and strong homes.

7] Verse 9: Making peace, peacemakers.

We need to be at peace with ourselves first of all by complete surrender to Jesus Christ and His Lordship and following in absolute obedience to God's law in all things. Making peace. We suffer wrong instead of using the law, how easily we could conform. I'm not sure how it is here I have not lived in these circles enough to know it in recent times but where I live that thing of using the law is so close to what we do or could do and it takes people to help us to see the right way, it takes brethren. We help each other in some of those delicate issues of what is really using the law. What is suffering wrong? Romans 12 talks about recompensing to no man evil for evil and as much as possible as much as lieth within you live peaceably with all men. Feed a hungry enemy, overcome evil with good.

8] Verse 10: Joy and suffering for righteousness.

The whole cause that we are fighting for is large and it's wide but the world thinks it is not worth its while, that's why it is the way it is with them. And those who are not ashamed take a stand on separation issues right in our churches, time proven traditions, we know what it is to be ashamed we struggle with that that is our battle, but those who are not ashamed to take a stand on separation issues have always faced some low profile persecution right here and now, that's the battlefield that you have to talk to your son or daughter about most times. Persecution hurts, it is radical and it has always been that way and I

think it is especially acute in times of prosperity and freedom when there are other issues that help to suppress some of that persecution naturally.

Jesus talked about the great reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you. [[Matthew.5:12](#)]

Let's focus on the great reward, that's why battles are fought. Remember the world suffers too and we don't know the half of the trouble the world is into and gets into because of not having these attitudes.

The world's slogan is; "Something for me."

Those who are not conformed we say; "Something for thee." speaking of Christ.