



## **Sermon Series: The Church In An Upside Down World**

Christ First Church  
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Sermon 1: THIS BIZARRO WORLD

Isaiah 5:20-21

**INTRO:** Take a moment to find your place in God's Word at Isaiah chapter 5. While you are looking it up, let me take a moment to introduce you to the new sermon series I am starting today, titled, "The Church in an Upside Down World". I have chosen to call this first sermon, THIS BAZARRO WORLD. To say that we are living in a crazy time is a colossal understatement! To make such a simple claim is the equivalent to saying that Mt. Everest is a nice little climb. The day in which we live is unprecedented. The world is unraveling at the seams. Our country is on the verge of imploding. And to make matters worse, the church in America has lost it's way, and consequently, it's testimony.

The truth of scripture, which used to be the guiding light of our great nation, has been replaced with the vile notions of so called progressives that think the Bible is antiquated and out of touch with reality. Gone are the days when God's Holy Word was revered and it's truths sought out to govern our land. Today, God's sacred book, the Bible, has been abandoned in favor of divisive ideologies and theories by those who have particular interest, and who demand that the world capitulate and bow the knee to their evil desires.

These are sinful people, who hate everything that the true church has stood for since it's inception. They go by many different acronyms but their message is the same, "Do what we say or else". They spew venomous hatred. They wish only to divide and conquer. They turn children against parents and grandparents. And they lie about their true motives. And they call the EVIL that they perpetrate GOOD. And the LOVE of JESUS which many have sincerely taught and practiced through the years, these people call EVIL.

Romans chapter 5 tells us that, "sin came into the world by one man, and death by sin. And so it was that a death sentence was passed upon all mankind because all have sinned." That is an evident truth that has not changed since the time of Adam. Since Adam chose to blatantly disobey God's simple command, sin has filled our world. BUT ALTHOUGH sin has ALWAYS been a problem, still, there have been many different times throughout history when sin RAMPED UP, so to speak, times when sin went seemingly unchecked and grew worse and worse. Then came the point when God could no longer look upon our great sin, and calamity and judgement would follow. Just a few of the most well known times of great sin and judgment are; The time of Noah and the great flood. Sodom & Gomorrah. The Tower of Babel. The Exodus and the Judgment of Egypt. All throughout history there have been times of extraordinary sin. Those times were either met with the judgment of God or a time of revival that led to a spiritual awakening, such as the account of Nineveh after the warning of God delivered by Jonah.

We are at yet another crossroads today. And time will tell the story of what choice we made.

Let me say before I get into the sermon, I am more than likely going to need a little extra time this morning. The good news is, if you choose not to walk out on me in the first few minutes, or somewhere in the middle, I suspect you will find the sermon interesting enough to want to stay. I hope you do.

So what do I mean by, "The Church in an Upside Down World"? What I mean is that there has been a major shift in the ideologies of those who identify as being of this world over the last 20 years. Christians have never claimed to be of this world. Scripture teaches that as followers of Christ, by necessity, we must be separated from the world, for the world is at enmity with God, and because of that, it is impossible to have relations with the world and still have a right relationship with God! So scripture commands, "Come out from among them and be separate says the Lord" (2 Corinthians 6:17)

**BUT AS FOR THE WORLD**, the Bible tells us what will happen near the end of time. **2 Timothy 3: 1-5, 12-13** *"But understand this: In the last days terrible times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, without love of good, 4 traitorous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Turn away from such as these!... 12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil men and imposters go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."*

Does that sound like what we know to be true of our present day? It does! **AND LISTEN TO ME**, Paul told Timothy that these things would happen in the last days of this world. **WE ARE LIVING IN THOSE DAYS!** And because we are, very soon, we know because scripture tells us so, Jesus Christ is coming back for His bride, the Church! He is coming back soon! **BUT UNTIL HE DOES**, we are here in this crazy, mixed up, deceived and sinful world, and **WE ARE HERE FOR A REASON**. To share the love, and Gospel, of Jesus Christ, and to take everyone we can to Heaven with us when He comes!

Now, let's look at Isaiah 5 for a few minutes and see what the **WORD OF GOD** says.

**Isaiah 5:20-21, 24-25a** *"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who turn darkness to light and light to darkness, who replace bitter with sweet and sweet with bitter. 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight...for they have rejected the instruction of the LORD of Hosts and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel. 25 Therefore the anger of the LORD burns against them..."*

Now, let me stress the importance that we look at this passage through an exegetical lens and do not read into it any bias, which would be easy to do. So, I need to give you the backstory and context of this section of scripture.

The writer, of course, is the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah lived and preached about 750 years before the birth of Christ. God raised him up during a very troubled time in the life of Israel. Isaiah has two major themes, the judgement of God's people, followed by their ultimate salvation. The Book of Isaiah is called by some, the fifth gospel, because of it's prophecy of the coming Messiah and it's description of Christ dying for the sins of the world.

Isaiah is writing to the children of Israel. He's not writing to us! **BUT**, the warnings declared are just as applicable today as they were when first recorded. These warnings are given a honored place in scripture, and have been passed down through generations because, human nature never changes, and our sin is the same today as it was in Isaiah's day. And God's judgement is just as sure. So what can we learn from Isaiah?

Notice a few things that he brings to our attention...

**I) THE PERVERSION:** v 20 *“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who turn darkness to light and light to darkness, who replace bitter with sweet and sweet with bitter.”*

It has been said, “Sin will take you farther than you intended to go, keep you longer than you intended to stay, and cost you more than you intended to pay”.

SIN IS ALWAYS PROGRESSIVE! It never starts out the way it ends up. Perversion starts out as morality “tweaked”. We take what is good and wholesome, and we just tweak it enough to feed our own lust and desires. That’s how it starts. But it never ends that way. We know from reports that serial killers start out, usually as children, acting out in ways of lesser evil acts, such as torturing and killing animals. Or they start out with bullying and abusing before finally reaching that climax as one who repeatedly kills other people. There is a progression of sin in their lives that finally reaches a place of PERVERSION.

What is true on a personal level, can also be true of a society, a collective of people led away by the influence of evil. The progression is actually easy to see. At one time our country and it’s people were generally moral. In other words, they believed, or at least revered, God’s Word, which is the moral base for all mankind. But then people became AMORAL, meaning they walked away from the moral base and became unconcerned with morality. AMORAL is the same as NON-MORAL. It means to have no morals at all. That’s a bad place to live your life. But it’s not the worst. The next stage and the worst of all is REVERSE MORALITY. Reverse Morality is when you view something that is evil and both your mind and heart tells you it’s good. And the opposite is also true, a person with a sickened sense of reverse morality can look at something that has for generations been viewed by the masses as good and wholesome, and they see it as vicious and evil.

In an online Philosophy Q&A G. Thomas wrote, Morality gives a certain structure to society. It puts everyone, or at least the majority of people, on the same page concerning how to treat others. Those that do not fit within this code of how to treat others are restricted by the rest of the population in some way. Without this structure in place how would the world be different? If our current moral structure were completely reversed and bad became the new good and good became the new bad I think this would be detrimental to society. People would not have empathy or compassion for anyone else and only care about themselves. How would society learn to work together? Furthermore, what exactly would it mean to reverse our current moral orientation? Would that mean killing, stealing, hating and lying would become things to strive for? Would that mean honesty, love, kindness, and service would become things to avoid? If this would be the case, then I think we can all agree that a world with these preferences would crash and burn fairly quickly. A world like this would not promote the growth or well-being of our species. Right?

He seems to make a very articulate and persuasive point. But let me read the comments following his statement...

1. I would argue that a glance at any newspaper will show that on the contrary, such a world is flourishing around us.
2. The Question is absurd. Good = Bad, Bad = Good, what does that even mean? What’s the difference between good and bad?

**I) THE PERVERSION:** v 20 CONTINUED 3. A prescribed morality is not necessary because as Kant's 'Perpetual Peace' suggests, even a group of devils could form a perfectly tolerable society so long as they were rational. They could have the worst of moral orientations, as you might describe it, but provided they were not completely self-dependent (in which case they they would not need to form a society) they would have to adjust their behavior to suit each others' needs.

The progressive mindset is this, that as long as we can get enough people to agree that we are right, then that, in and of itself, makes us right, or "moral". It's the thought of A NEW MORALITY; Evil now is called good, and the good of the past is now evil.

**II) THE PREJUDICE:** vv 21,24 *"Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight...for they have rejected the instruction of the LORD of Hosts and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel."*

Dictionary.com defines Prejudice as, "An unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought, or reason."

When Isaiah wrote these words, he was speaking to the incensed nature of all mankind, when we get to a place where we think we know more than God! It was true in his day, and it is true in ours!

The world, our culture today, is prejudice toward God, toward the things of God, and the people of God. Why do you think the world hates the church? OH, THEY SAY, it's because all we do is judge them. But the truth is, that the church has for hundreds of years stood on the banks of history and cried out into the dark, JESUS LOVES YOU! He gave Himself for you! He paid the price for your sin and mine. He died for you. Just come accept Him, He loves you! That has been the common rallying cry of every church through the years. And we are still shouting that today! But the world hates the church! They are PREJUDICE! The true church, true Christians, don't look like the world, act like the world, run with the world, and because of that, the WORLDS HATES US! It is blatant prejudice!

**III) THE PREDICAMENT:** v 25 *"Therefore the anger of the LORD burns against them..."*

**Romans 1: 18-23** *"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness. 19 For what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from His workmanship, so that men are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking and darkened in their foolish hearts. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images of mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles."*

**2 Corinthians 4: 4** *"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God"*

Man without God is a contradiction, a paradox, a monstrosity. He sees evil as good and good as evil. Their life's values are confused. Paul found the cure for his violent, destructive disposition, not at the feet of Gamaliel or in the culture of Greece, but on the road

**I) THE PERVERSION:** v 20

**II) THE PREJUDICE:** vv 21,24

**III) THE PREDICAMENT:** v 25 CONTINUED to Damascus when he met Jesus Christ. Later he wrote: *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death”* (Romans 8:2).

Before his conversion, Paul saw Christ as the greatest evil, and the Bible says in Act 9:1 that Paul breathed out *“threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord”*. But after he encountered Christ on the Damascus Road, he loved what he had so fervently hated. At last he could see evil as evil and good as good, and, according to Acts 9:18, *“there fell from his eyes something like scales.”* His values were straightened out because his nature had been changed by the redeeming grace of God.

Christ can do the same for you. When Paul heard God's voice, he said: *“Lord, what do You want me to do?”* (Acts 9:6). Jesus Christ is calling you out of a world of delusion and deception in which evil is called good and good is called evil. Only if the scales fall from your eyes can you acknowledge Him as Lord. You must have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

For anyone who is confused about your sin, I have good news! Christ Jesus died on the cross for you. He shed His blood for you, and the Bible teaches that *“the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7). Today you can come to the cross and be forgiven of every sin that you have ever committed.

When you come to know Christ, there dwells within you the Holy Spirit, who gives you supernatural strength to overcome temptation and evil, so that when you face it, you don't face it alone. The Spirit of God gives you the power that you need to be successful in your walk with Christ.

**CONCLUSION:** Listen my friend, don't believe the lies of Satan, and those who follow him without care. Know the truth, Jesus does love you! And so does the church. God desires to do great things for you... and through you. You have a place here. You can find family in this place. But you have to walk away from the lies. Leave behind this world and take Jesus by the hand. John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. That whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*