

February 7, 2021

The Sunday View

"Sir, we wish to see Jesus." — John 12:21

Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate at the entrance. Thank You

Schedule

The Lord's Day Assemblies

Three assembly opportunities,
in the building:

9:30 AM / 10:30 AM / 11:30 AM

Livestream at 10:30 at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLEmwy21YxrL7ZUgTiZTVqA>

Speaking today: David Posey
The State of the Church II
Revelation 2 & 3

Young People's Classes Today

High School & Up: 4 PM (Inside)
Contact David Posey for information at
(530) 558-5057

Middle School: 5 PM (Inside)
Contact Dan Stegall for information
(818) 209-9810

Weekly Online Classes

Tuesday 10 AM ("Conformed to Christ")

Check with David Posey at dpaulposey@mac.com
or text @ 530-558-5057

Wednesday 7 PM (Faith: Hebrews 11)

Check with Jack Horak: jshorak98@gmail.com

Saturday AM Men's Breakfast

7 AM, second Saturday of the month
Contact Tyler Wade @ tyler@ppldev.com

Additional Online Classes

There are some other small online classes.
If you are interested in participating in one of them,
please contact David Posey

Information

Website & Online Presence

Visit our website at www.folsomchurch.com for updates and material on current and past classes, and recorded sermons and classes. You will also find a directory of churches on page one. If you are a member of the church here at Folsom, see one of the deacons or elders to inquire about access to the password -protected members section. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/folsomchurch>

Classes & Home Studies (Temporarily Suspended)

We have classes for children from 18 months and up. Please see the map in the hallway or ask any of the members which room is appropriate for you and/or your child. There are several Bible studies in progress on Sunday afternoon and evening. Check with David Posey if you have questions.

Restrooms (Enter through side door; limit 2 at a time)

There are two sets of restrooms: one off the first hallway to the right of the lobby and another at the end of the first hallway to the left. Ask anyone and they'll be happy to point you in the right direction.

For Small Children (Temporarily Closed)

There is a special room for nursing mothers and a separate "cry room" at the rear of the auditorium. You enter them from the first hallway to the right, across from the restrooms.

View & Junior View (Let us know if you don't get a copy)

Be sure to pick up a copy of the View and Junior View; both are sent out weekly to our member list and hard copies are printed on Sundays and available in the foyer.

Prayer Requests & News Items

Send to David Posey at dpaulposey@mac.com or text at 530-558-5057

“The Scandal of Peculiarity”

Additional Notes on Revelation 2 & 3

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light...” (I Peter 2:9).

That’s the way I Peter 2:9 was quoted when I was a kid and for many years after that. “Peculiar” means “strange” or “odd.” The newer versions say, “a people for his own possession.” But the KJV has a point: the people who belong to God are supposed to be conspicuously noticeable for their difference. If you’ve ever had someone say to you, “*there is something different about you...*” then you may be doing something right.

In *Revelation* — before we can get to the really good stuff: the battles between good and evil, the war that, in the end, God wins hands down — Jesus is reminding the churches (“groups of people for his own possession”) that there is no such thing as a “worldly Christian” (that’s as ridiculous as saying there’s “a heavenly devil”). Too many churches were, and still are, trying to fit themselves into the culture instead of influencing the culture for Christ as “salt” and “light.” We’ve see that in the five churches that Jesus criticizes.”

This “fitting in” thing takes different forms, but those forms fit many churches from AD 30 to AD 2021. That may be why the Spirit chose the number “7.” In *Revelation* it usually stands for the numerical symbol of completeness. So the Holy Spirit chose these seven real churches to represent all churches of all times.

We, as the church in Folsom, are supposed to learn from this that we are to be different, “peculiar” to those around us. “There’s something different about that Posey guy...” they should say. It often comes in the form of “I notice you never curse...” but it could be many other things. Jesus intended for the people in his churches to be different.

Someone said, “*If I object to nothing, I have no courage. If I object to everything, I have no credibility.*” It’s not always easy to know what to object to and what to accept. Put another way, knowing what to approve of and what to criticize is simple but not easy: We’re the body of Christ so we approve what Jesus approves, criticize what Jesus criticizes. This is why it is so incredibly important that we study Jesus through his own words and deeds in the gospel and through the inspired writers of the New Testament that are reflecting what Jesus approves and criticizes. A good starting place is right here in *Revelation 2 and 3*.

We know that Jesus values, approves doctrinal purity (Ephesus). We know he values hard work, perseverance, resisting evil and courage (Smyrna). We know he approves faith in the face of danger (Pergamum), love, faith, service, endurance and growth (Thyatira, 2:19). We know he approves churches big and small who keep his word and hang on, endure (Philadelphia, 3:8, 11).

We also know what Jesus criticizes, objects to — even *bates* — teaching without love (Ephesus, 2:4); false teaching for any reason including to avoid harm, persecution (Pergamum, 2:14, 15); of course, it’s no surprise that Jesus hates sexual immorality of all kinds (Thyatira, 2:18-25) and Jesus cares nothing about a church’s reputation (or any *individual’s* reputation, for that matter). He cares about results (Sardis, 3:1-3). Finally, we know that churches (and individuals) who think they are something when they are not makes Jesus want to throw up (Laodicea, 3:14-17).

“Keeping his word,” repeated several times in *Revelation 2 and 3*, includes knowing what Christ approves and what he criticizes. We can know that, but we have to be in his word as much as possible to know that. Notice in the severe rebuke of Laodicea that Jesus reminds us that he is speaking the truth in love (3:19) and he is knocking at the door, pleading with us to let him in (3:20).

When we step back and look at what these chapters teach, we see that the leaders in churches that demand that we stick to Christ instead of to the culture are the only leaders that please Christ. All others come under condemnation. This makes perfect sense. If a local church is just like every other entity in society and wants to be as much like the society it dwells in and is afraid of offending society — what’s the point of that church? If it’s just another version of something already in the culture, why would anyone want to be a part of it?

Cultural churches take many forms:

- Some churches are just spiritual amusement parks, *Six Flags Over Jesus*, the Discovery Kingdom instead of the Kingdom of God. There are even churches that have bowling alleys and theaters.
- Some churches are just an extension of a political party; that happens on both right and left.
- Some want to accommodate the desires of members so you’ll find a few Starbucks (or around its large “campus.”
- Some churches opt to be concert halls; their budget allows them to bring in some excellent musicians and even comedians for entertainment.

There are churches doing all of these things. Why? It must be to accommodate those who are bathed in the culture but want to go to church to feel “spiritual.” These churches want be part of the culture rather than influence the culture. They want to fit in.

In his *Revelation*, Jesus is speaking to churches that have the same problem only expressed in different ways. They want to fit in, not offend anyone, be accommodating to the culture they are in.

We saw that last week with the church at Pergamum. Some of the members of that church ate food sacrificed to idols and engaged in sexual immorality *as a religious practice*. They participated in the cult. Why? Not because they believed in that stuff; they did it to keep their jobs, to keep their families safe. Out of fear, they compromised their faith in Christ. They went along to get along. They avoided the “scandal of peculiarity” to save face or their skin.

Elton Trueblood, who was a noted 20th-century American Quaker author and theologian, a former chaplain at both Harvard and Stanford universities. Here are some excerpts from some of his writings (his term was the “scandal of particularity”). His words challenge us.

“Faith in Christ is marked by a burning conviction and the consequent desire to see it spread. It is narrow and unapologetically so (Mt. 7:14). There is a world of difference between the frank acceptance of the narrow way and the popular notion that one way is as good as another. Today, anything that has a sharpness of outline is rejected... Christianity in the ancient age survived because it accepted with glee the ‘scandal of particularity.’”

“...People do not oppose vague things. What people oppose is the conviction that God really is, that Christ was telling the truth when he said ‘no one comes to the Father except through me’ (John 14:6) and that God’s purpose involves moral distinctions.”

“Our response to our minority status too often is to become uncomfortable with it. Therefore, we try to make the gospel conform to what the world already respects. Make the lines fuzzy, alter the gospel so that it goes down easy.”

“For the most part, the church has succumbed to the temptation of appearing ‘successful’ like a business in the world. Many Christians are opposed to the kind of Christianity represented in the New Testament. The claims are much too strong; the price is much too high; the fire of evangelism burns much too hot... The New Testament describes a hot fire, we prefer the damp wick.”

As I often heard our friend Paul Earnhart say, “Jesus didn’t come to get a crowd together.” The church is a group of people who love God, are fiercely devoted to Jesus and want to worship him in spirit and in truth. To do that effectively, we have to buy to the scandal of particularly, or peculiarity.

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Quotes

Humility

William Carey was a great linguist who translated parts of the Bible into no fewer than 34 different Indian dialects. But he began life as a cobbler, fixing shoes. At a dinner party in India (locked into the caste system) a snob said so all could hear, “I hear, Mr Carey, that you once worked as a shoemaker?” “Oh no, your lordship, not a shoemaker, only a shoe repairman.”

Who is Jesus?

People are willing to go only so far, so they subsume him to a category they already know, then pay him a compliment saying He is the “best in that category”: E.g., Teacher, moral exemplar. But he escapes the human category and become, as he is, the unique God-man, in a class by himself.

— Vic Pentz, 1988

When Charles Colson wrote a piece about “Jesus Christ” his editor said, “that represents an editorial judgment.”

“I can more easily envision the Lord sweeping the streets of London than issuing edicts from its cathedral.”

— Dick Sheppard

Perseverance

God’s road is all uphill
But do not tire
Rejoice that we may still
Keep climbing higher.

— Arthur Guiterman

Impact

Here’s a poem I heard many years ago at a sales conference. It was told by an NFL line judge who spent the offseason doing platform speaking engagements. I’ve always liked it and I memorized it.

Isn’t it strange that princes and kings
And clowns that caper in sawdust rings
And common people like you and me
Are builders for eternity

To each is given a bag of tools
A shapeless mass, a book of rules
And each must build, ere life has flown
A stumbling block or a stepping stone.

Age Humor

At 20 years of age, the will reigns, at 30 the wit, at 40 the judgment. (Ben Franklin, possibly)

At 20, we don’t care what the world thinks of us; at 30, we worry about what it is thinking of us; at 40 we discover it isn’t thinking about us at all.

Attendance

If we begin to regard the assemblies as an end in themselves instead of what they are meant to be, the means, it’s like going on vacation so that we can stop at the gas stations

— Bob Owen