



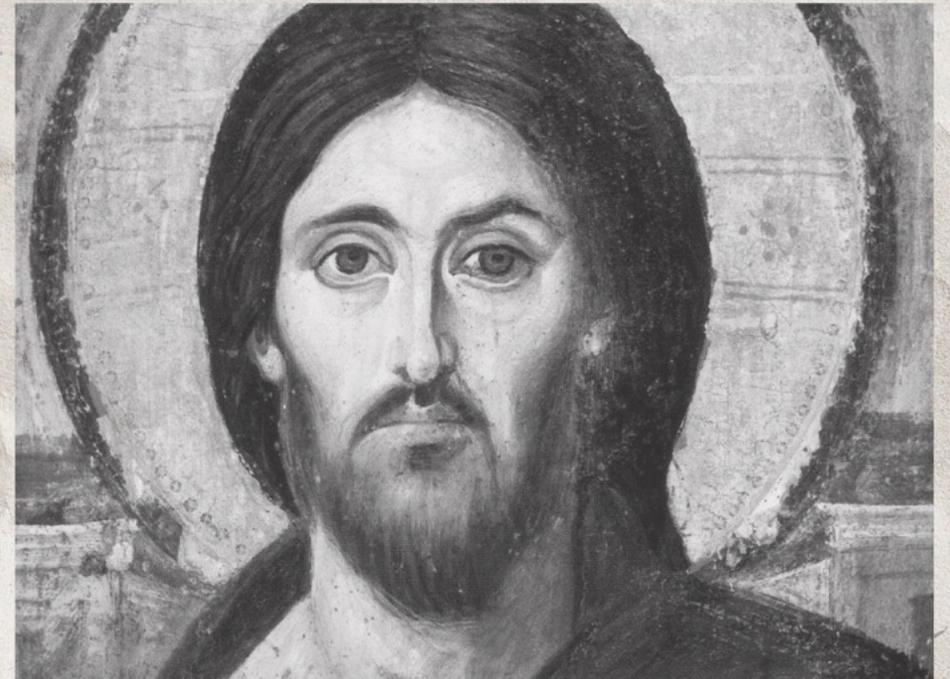
Grantham  
Church  
BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Fall 2022 Sermon Series

# Christ & Culture

## Following Jesus in a Fallen World

As followers of Jesus, we are called to embrace his teachings and example, proclaim the truth of the gospel, and engage the world around us by embodying the good news. What does that look like today? The Scriptures are a guide in helping us to faithfully navigate an idolatrous world as the people of God. As we read the Bible, we can see that it takes a mixed view of all human cultures. While many elements of culture can be affirmed, we must avoid uncritically



## What is Culture?

Ken Myers (Christian cultural critic) said that culture is:

“What human beings make of the world – in both senses.”

- The things we make
- The meaning we make

Therefore, the culture of a people and place will ultimately reflect the dominate worldview, beliefs, values, etc.

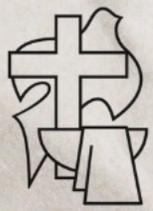
---

**–From “Culture Making” by Andy Crouch**

## The Christian & the World: Unhealthy Postures Toward Culture

---

- **Condemn** culture (withdraw or war against it)
- **Critique** culture (only discuss & debate ideas)
- **Copy** culture (offer cheap imitations & alternatives)
- **Consume** culture (mostly mindless conformity)



Grantham  
Church  
BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Christ & Culture

---

---

# The Christian & the World: A Kingdom Approach to Culture

---

Disciples create culture and follow Jesus by:

1. Entering the culture (affirming what we can)
2. Challenging the culture (confronting its idols & darkness)
3. Appealing to its listeners (offering a new story & vision)

—From **"Center Church"** by Tim Keller



Grantham  
Church  
BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Fall 2022 Sermon Series

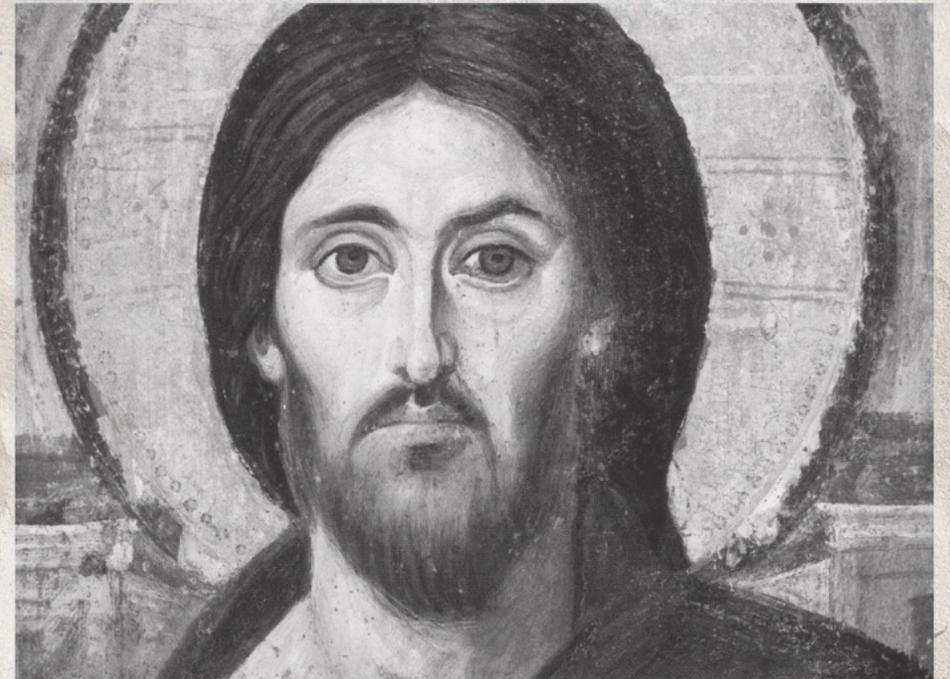
---

# Christ & Culture

---

## Confronting the Idols of Culture (3 of 7)

As followers of Jesus, we are called to embrace his teachings and example, proclaim the truth of the gospel, and engage the world around us by embodying the good news. What does that look like today? The Scriptures are a guide in helping us to faithfully navigate an idolatrous world as the people of God. As we read the Bible, we can see that it takes a mixed view of all human cultures. While many elements of culture can be affirmed, we must avoid uncritically



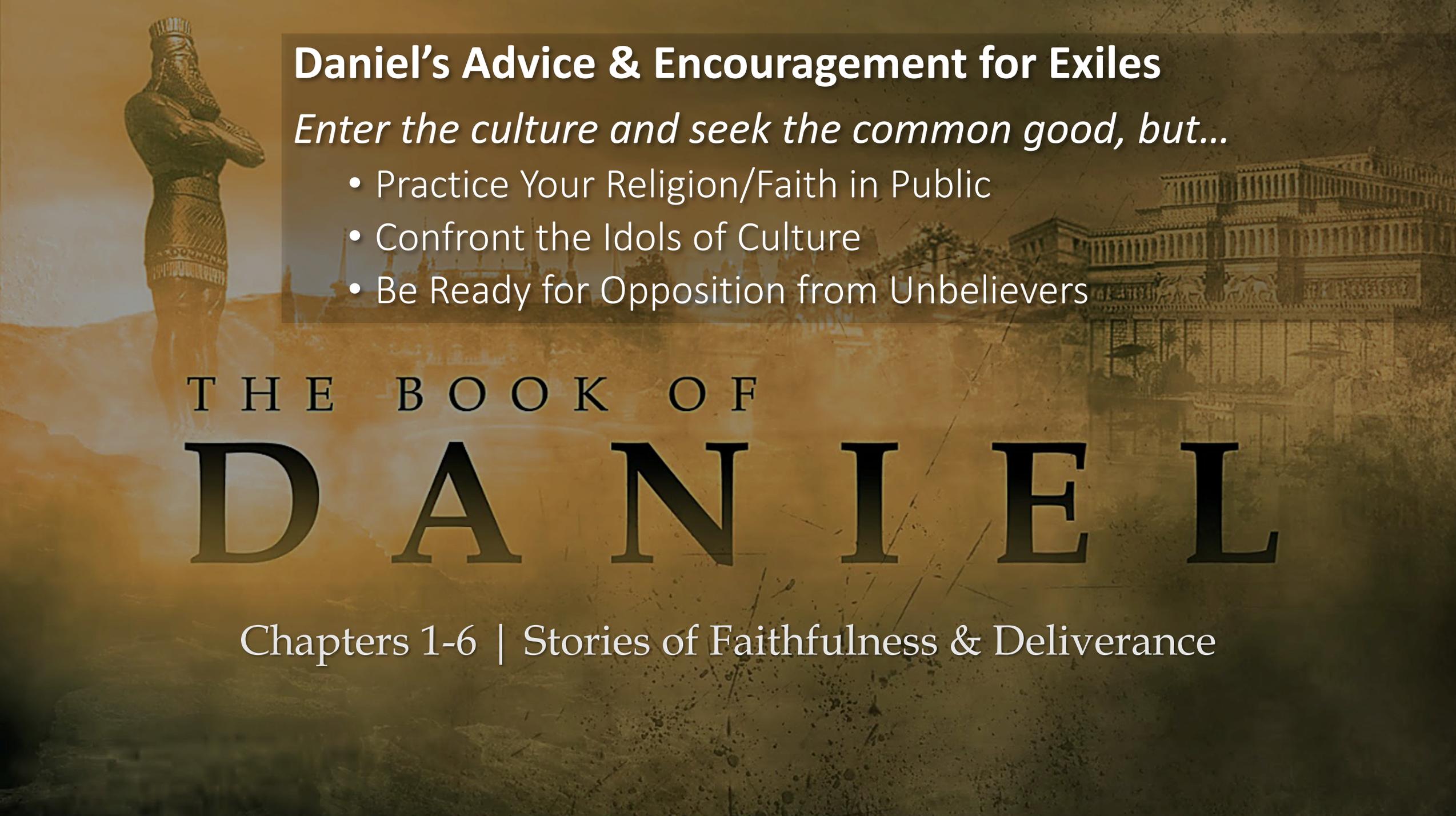
## Jeremiah 29:4-7 NIV – Letter to the Exiles in Babylon

<sup>4</sup> This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:

<sup>5</sup> “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. <sup>6</sup> Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.

<sup>7</sup> Also, **seek the peace** [*shalom*] **and prosperity of the city** to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”

c. 597 BCE



# Daniel's Advice & Encouragement for Exiles

*Enter the culture and seek the common good, but...*

- Practice Your Religion/Faith in Public
- Confront the Idols of Culture
- Be Ready for Opposition from Unbelievers

THE BOOK OF

DANIEL

Chapters 1-6 | Stories of Faithfulness & Deliverance



Grantham  
Church  
BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Christ & Culture

---

**Daniel 3:1-30**



“You shall have no other gods before me.” - **Exodus 20:3**

## What is idolatry?

“An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, “If I have that, then I’ll feel my life has meaning, then I’ll know I have value, then I’ll feel significant and secure.”

- **Tim Keller, Counterfeit Gods**

We can have “idols of the heart” (Ezekiel 14:1-5)

The Apostle Paul said there are cultural idols (Colossians 3:5-6)



Grantham  
Church  
BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Christ & Culture

---

**Romans 1:18-25**

# Idols of American Culture

- Money/Greed
- Success & Fame
- Sports
- Individualism
- Sex/Sexuality
- Entertainment
- Food
- Power/Domination
- Technology
- Consumerism
- War & Violence
- Nationalism
- Political Ideologies
- Social Activism

## Paul, Romans 12:1-2 NLT

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to **offer your bodies** as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> **Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

## Matthew 22:36-40 NIV

<sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” Jesus replied,

<sup>37</sup> “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments



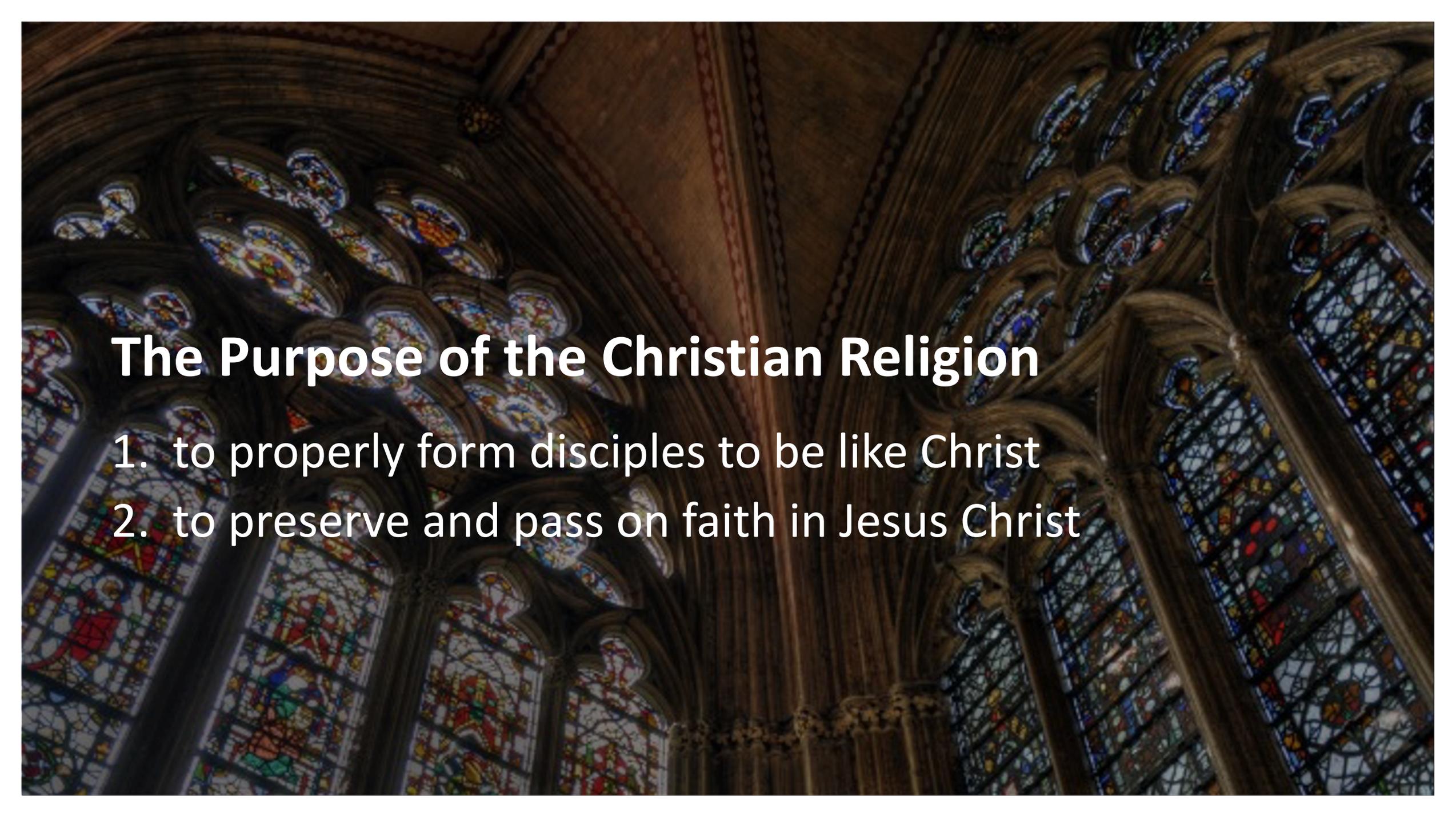
# Spiritual *and* Religious

**What is religion?**      *religio* – “to bind” to something

**Religion** is a socio-cultural system of designated beliefs, values, behaviors, and practices that provide meaning, purpose, and direction to a person’s life and to the world around them.

**A functional definition of “religion” for Christians:**

Practices of prayer, Scripture, sacrament, liturgy, etc. handed down to us so that we would be properly formed in worship.



# **The Purpose of the Christian Religion**

1. to properly form disciples to be like Christ
2. to preserve and pass on faith in Jesus Christ

## 1 Peter 2:11-12 NLT

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, I warn you as temporary residents and foreigners [NRSV: “aliens and exiles”] to **keep away from worldly desires** that wage war against your very souls.

<sup>12</sup> Be careful to **live properly** [NIV: “good lives”] **among your unbelieving neighbors**. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world.

# Confronting the Idols of Culture

---

**Questions for reflection and response:**

# Confronting the Idols of Culture

---

## Questions for reflection and response:

1. Do you notice the idols in American culture today? Does your identity as a disciple shape the way you see them?

## Confronting the Idols of Culture

---

### Questions for reflection and response:

1. Do you notice the idols in American culture today? Does your identity as a disciple shape the way you see them?
2. Which idol(s) do you need to confront in your own life? Is there something other than Christ at the center of your life?

## Confronting the Idols of Culture

---

### Questions for reflection and response:

1. Do you notice the idols in American culture today? Does your identity as a disciple shape the way you see them?
2. Which idol(s) do you need to confront in your own life? Is there something other than Christ at the center of your life?
3. How is the Spirit calling you to confront an idol of culture?



Grantham  
Church  
BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Fall 2022 Sermon Series

# Christ & Culture

Subscribe to  
Our Weekly  
Sermon Podcast



APPLE  
PODCASTS



GOOGLE  
PODCASTS