



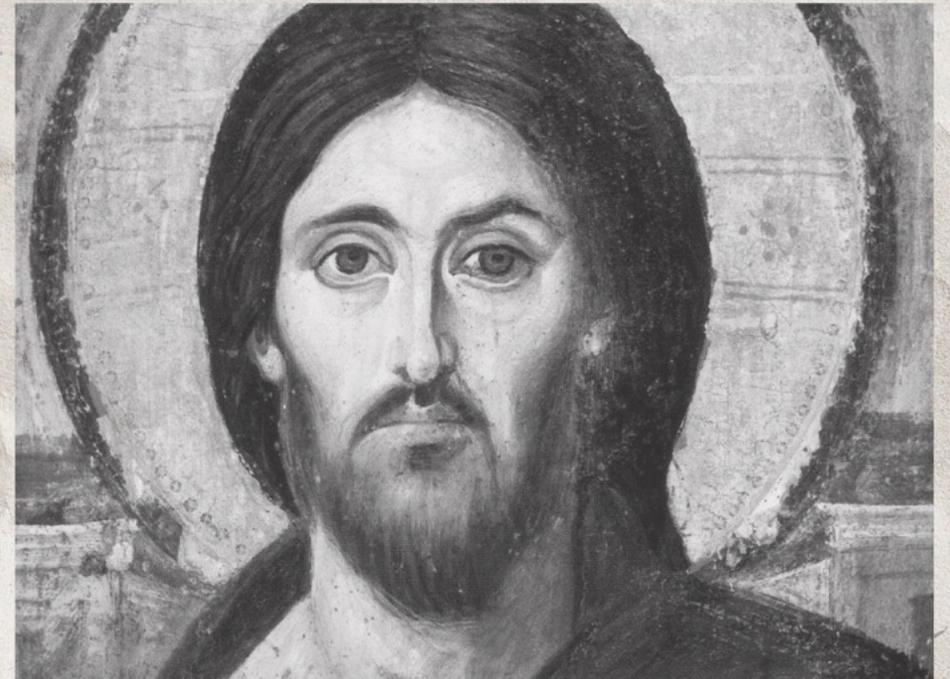
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BRETHREN IN CHRIST

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.”

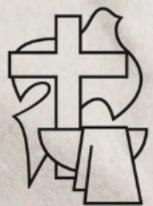
- The things we make
- The meaning we make

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)



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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



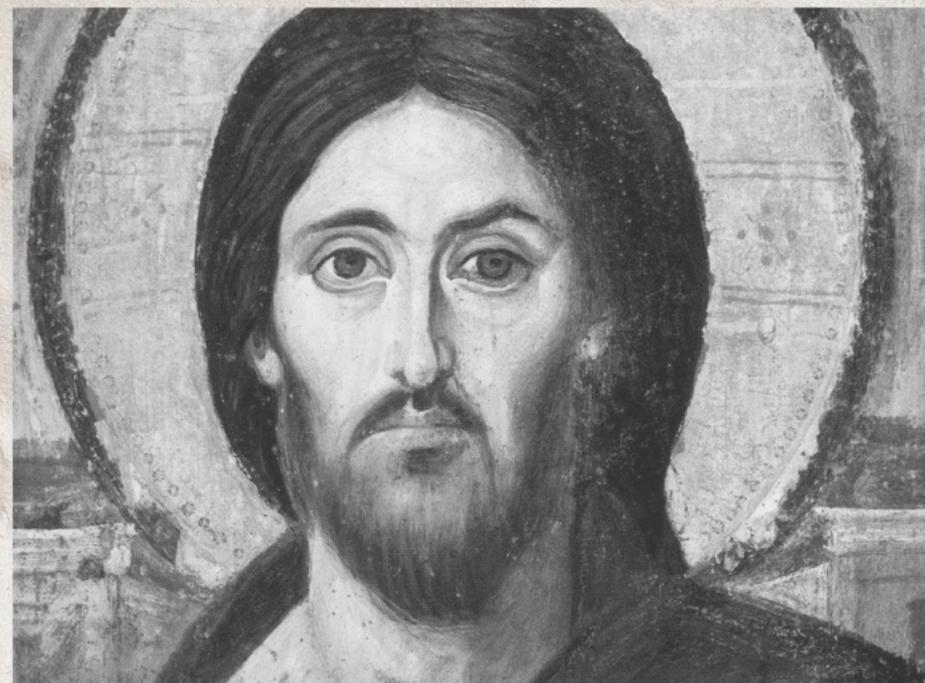
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For the Good of
the City (2 of 7)

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Genesis 1:24-31

Genesis 1-11

1 - 2 – God creates the world; humankind is to be image-bearers, caretakers and culture-makers

3 – Adam & Eve given a choice; they “fall” into sin

4 – Cain kills his brother; leaves to found a city

5 – a righteous line down to Noah

6 - 9 – The Flood; Noah’s family saved

10 – humans multiply again

11 – a sinful city; the Tower of Babel





The City in Old Testament Times

- What was a city? It was about *density*, not population size.
- Ancient cities offered safety from enemies (walls), stability, community, diversity, productivity, conveniences, and creativity.
- They were centers of commerce, culture and political-legal order.
- However, cities were also seen as places of sin, idolatry, crime, corruption, etc. (e.g., Ur, Sodom & Gomorrah, Babylon, Nineveh)
- Israel's view becomes more positive after they enter "The Promised Land" in Canaan (cities of refuge); then Jerusalem – a city for God
- Jerusalem eventually falls and goes into Babylonian exile (597 BC)

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

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

⁵ “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶ 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.

⁷ Also, **seek the peace 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.”

Hebrews 11:13-16 NIV – Longing for the City of God

¹³ All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were **foreigners and strangers on earth**. ¹⁴ People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ Instead, **they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one**. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for **he has prepared a city for them**.

Paul, Philippians 3:17-21 NLT

¹⁷ Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn from those who follow our example. ¹⁸ For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that **there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ.** ¹⁹ They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth.

²⁰ But **we are citizens of heaven**, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. ²¹ He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.

Matthew 5:13-16 NLT

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.

¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.



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Questions for reflection and response:



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For the Good of the City

Questions for reflection and response:

1. How do you see our culture building towers to ourselves?

For the Good of the City

Questions for reflection and response:

1. How do you see our culture building towers to ourselves?
2. Where are the main centers of culture and places of influence where we live in the greater Harrisburg area?

For the Good of the City

Questions for reflection and response:

1. How do you see our culture building towers to ourselves?
2. Where are the main centers of culture and places of influence where we live in the greater Harrisburg area?
3. Are you using your culture-making power to glorify God and bring more of heaven to earth where you live, work, etc.?



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