

The Timeless Voice: How a simple trap muffles the Church

To be the “Timeless Voice,” the Church needs to be a voice of timeless truth into the culture, not just another voice of culture itself. In other words, “In the world, not of it.” But this recent Thanksgiving revealed to me just how hard that can be.

I had been reading Ezekiel recently, and a verse about Egypt really stuck out to me: “But they rebelled against me and would not listen to me; they did not get rid of the vile images they had set their eyes on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt” (Ezekiel 20:8). God was upset with Israel, because they never removed Egypt from their hearts. Egypt had more of an effect on them than they did on Egypt. That made me think of my own heart. How much of Egypt is still in my heart? How much does this world still impact how much I think?

This reality of “Egypt” still being in my heart overflowed this Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is one of the few days a year that I buy my local newspaper ... because I want the ads. I want to see the Black Friday deals. Now, being excited for deals in and of itself is not the issue. What it does to my heart is the issue. Thanksgiving is supposed to be a holiday where we reflect on all of the provisions God has given us and be thankful for them. It is a holiday of contentment. For me and for so many other Americans, however, it has become the kickoff day for the season of wanting more – the season of shopping and obsessing over all the things we long to have or believe we now need, as the culture around us tells us we need them.

Alas, this is not the only time that happens. I feel a need to

buy the Under Armour brand, and when I see sales on Under Armour, I use them to justify my purchases. Why do I feel compelled to buy? It is not a premeditated thought. It is just an overflow from my heart. My eyes see Under Armour every day, everywhere, and my heart begins to think I need it.

This world is after our hearts. It wants us to embrace and find life in the things it has to offer. When we give in, however, we lose focus. We lose the bigger picture. We are no longer ambassadors of Christ, but we become ambassadors for "Egypt" instead.

Yet resisting the world's siren call is not as simple as changing a few of our actions. It is not as simple as, "Just quit buying things and remove yourself from the world." "Egypt" is a problem in the heart. There is a reason God tells us to guard our heart, because everything we do really does overflow from it (Proverbs 4:23).

And changing the heart begins with realizing we are most productive for the kingdom of God when our eyes are focused on the kingdom. We are most productive when we have an eternal perspective, look at the unseen, and put our treasures in heaven. Life cannot be found in the things of this world. They cannot satisfy our innermost desires. And if we are going to share this freeing message, this timeless truth, with the world, then we must actually believe it and illustrate it to others. Only then can we have an eternal impact on culture.

For those who are in Christ, Satan cannot separate you from God, but he can distract you and take you off mission. Your flesh and this world ally with him in this endeavor. Therefore, we must guard our hearts. We must tear down the idols of "Egypt." In a world that never seems to find contentment, satisfaction, rest, or peace, let us instead show them rest, satisfaction, contentment, and peace – the kind that can only be found in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Be content this holiday season. Be joy-filled, and let not the world sway you. And when the world asks why you are not doing as they do, point to Christ (1 Peter 4:4).

Brothers and sisters, let's live a life that stands out in one of the greatest empires of world history. Let's guard our heart to be the timeless voice.