

From, Among, Separate, Unto

Read Romans 13:11-14 ...

Paul presents a picture in Colossians 3 of the unity of believers. That unity is based upon the common salvation that is found in Christ where there “is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free” (v.11). Paul presents Christ as the completing, filling, and unifying force between these disparate groups. Yet, at the end of the same chapter, almost in the same breath, Paul notes roles that cross gender, economic and social classifications (3:18-4:1). Almost paradoxically Paul is identifying both unity and diversity in the same line of thought. One of the wonderful abilities of the human mind is the capacity to hold competing ideals to be compatible under certain conditions.

Consider this ... Christians come **from** the world; the only place for Christians to come **from** is the world. Paul makes this point in 1 Corinthians 6 as he tries to get them to understand that Christians don't behave the way they used to toward other Christians, they are changed people. Paul reminds them of the terrible things that some had done *before* they had become Christians. They were fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners – those that will not “inherit the kingdom of God” (v.9, 10). Paul does not mince words, “And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (v.11, NKJV).

But then, once people are converted out of the world and become Christians, they are to come together with like minded individuals to draw strength and encouragement from one another ... to be **among** the brethren. This is exactly what Luke records the early Christians

doing at the end of Acts 2. Those early Christians met together to find encouragement and mutual support (v.42-47). This encouragement and mutual support are also to be extended among Christians of all time. The Hebrews writer makes note of this in 10:24, 25. We meet for mutual encouragement and exhortation – there is strength in our unity, which comes from being **among** one another.

Closely related to being among is the idea that Christians are also supposed to be **separate**. The people of God are to remain **separate** from the world for the express reason that the world causes corruption and temptation to sin. When defining true religion, James reminds us to not only remember those that might be isolated from familial contact, but to also “keep oneself unspotted from the world” (1:27). John reminds us not to love the world or anything in the world (1 John 2:15). One of the saddest comments that Paul might have made was about Demas, a fellow worker at one time (Phil. 1:24), but eventually left because he “loved this present world” (2 Tim. 4:10).

But even as Christians come **from** the world, are supposed to seek to be **among** other Christians, and to be **separate** from the world and the corruption therein, Christians are also supposed to go **unto** the world. This is, in fact, the great missional command given to all Christians as part of the final words of Christ (Matt. 28:18-20) – and thus another conflicting idea from the Scriptures. Even as Christians are to be apart from the world, they must be among the world to carry out the task of evangelism. As Christians remove themselves to prevent the contamination of the world, they must at the same time insert themselves back into the world to bring the erring back into the fold. It's time to put on the armor of God and get busy.

The Mystery of Godliness

** God was manifested in the _____.

This is a direct comment on the _____ incarnation of God.

John 1:14 – “And the Word became _____ and dwelt
among us ...”

** Justified in the _____.

The Spirit of God rested in Jesus _____ measure.

John 3:35 – “The Father loves the Son, and has given _____
things into His hand.”

** Seen by _____.

Those heavenly servants attest to the Lord's _____.

** Preached among the _____.

The book of _____ is a record of this truth!

** Believed on in the _____.

Millions continue to believe on the Lord _____.

John 20:29 – “Blessed are those who have _____ seen and yet
have _____.”

** Received up in _____.

This is more than just His ascension, this is Christ's
_____.

Phil. 2:9 – “Therefore God also has highly _____ Him ...”