

Dare to Be Different: Stand Firm in a Woke World | Colossians 2:8 | Biblical Truth vs. Culture Clash

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[0 : 00] This morning, talking about living differently. We should really be the odd ones out, shouldn't we, as God's people! We should be different, living different.

And how can we stand firm in this world? You could call it a wobbly world. It's a shaky world, isn't it? A world that's contrary to God. And I suppose in a nutshell, my message today to you is don't be afraid to think differently, to live differently from the world.

Or don't we be that peculiar people, a called out people? Peculiar? Really peculiar. In a good way, peculiar.

Peculiar. Has the world gone crazy or what? You wonder what the next headlines are going to be. What's the next crazy thing?

It can feel like a topsy-turvy world. And you could think, really, there's a lot of confusion going on. And we're going to look at some of that confusion this morning.

[1 : 08] The confusion of our world. Right is called wrong. And wrong is called right. You could say it's a war going on that's being waged on many fronts.

So we're going to look at some of those aspects. Really, it's a battle for truth, fundamentally. And what we know as the absolute truth, the final authority, is constantly questioned by our world. And truth, they say, is it depends on our personal feelings. That's contrary to the truth of God. And think of it. Realise this war that's going on. It's a culture war at the heart of it. A truth war. And it's real.

And you're the target. Confusion. Sin is normalised. Men pretend to be women. Choices that go against God's plan are called brave.

[2 : 22] Words are redefined too. Speaking God's truth now, they call it hate speech. Surely it's a strange world.

There's this fear of the climate. But where's the fear of God? There is no fear of God in their eyes. Even the word love. It's changed now. Love. It's changed so much now that it no longer matches what God teaches us about love.

It's an upside down way of thinking. And they call it woke. Woke. But really they're asleep. They say how you feel becomes what is true.

You decide for yourself who you are. No matter what God says. And everybody else is expected to agree with your choice.

[3 : 31] What should be? Our relationship with the world is the question. What should it be? Strangers and pilgrims.

That should be the truth. The Bible teaches us we are in the world. But we are not of it. And Paul wrote a letter to warn of such things.

And this is the verse we'll take a look at in particular. And it's telling us to be careful about wrong ideas that come from the world.

Paul writes to the Colossians in Colossians 2 verse 8. And he says this. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit.

After the tradition of men. After the rudiments of the world. And not after Christ. Paul says beware.

[4 : 30] Watch out. He says. Lest you be spoiled. It means captured. Like a prisoner. Captured by bad ideas.

There's philosophies all around us. Swirling around in this confused world. Really they're empty human thoughts that con people. It's woke thinking they call it.

They create rules about who we are. What is fair. And what is good. But all without God's guidance. Our world truly.

It's broken. At the heart. At war with God. That's the reality. It fights against God. It disbelieves him.

And it hates him at the same time. And it uses words like justice. Love. Truth. But the meanings are completely changed. What the Bible calls something terrible.

[5 : 28] Abomination. The world calls it. Being true to yourself. It's vain deceit. Truly. Vain deceit. It's like a trap. A seduction.

That pulls people in. These empty lies. Lies are all around us. We need the solid truth from the Bible. It's in contrast to all of this. False philosophy.

We need the truth. In a world that shifts like sand. And there's this spirit that opposes Christ. That's spreading. Right through every aspect.

Every sphere of life. Think of it. In schools. Children are taught to question the identity God gave them. And this is happening right from early days.

They want to capture our children from K to 12 to lifelong. Lifelong learning. Every sphere.

[6 : 27] Children. Children. Taught in schools. The media. They're pushing these ideas. Constantly pushing. That make wrong things seem normal.

And it's all about being inclusive. Inclusive. Which ultimately means ignoring what is right. And it's happening even in some churches sadly.

Where people talk more like the world than like God. The Bible's not there. The gospel. Confusion. It's confusion. Really it's confusion about what is right and what is wrong.

And many people today say that right and wrong change. Confusion. Depends on the situation. Or what someone feels. The technical term moral relativism.

I might feel this way one day. And another way the next. Talk about confusion. And Romans talks about such a time.

[7 : 32] Such a goings on. Romans 1.25. Of a people changing the truth of God. Into a lie. Then what happens. It reads on. God gave them up to vile affections.

The women changing the natural use into that which is against nature. Likewise also the men. Leaving the natural use of the woman. Burned in their lust one toward another. Men with men working that which is unseemly.

Whoa that's counter-cultural. That's counter-cultural. God says the truth. But men trade God's truth for lies today. And God lets them follow their own path.

Which leads to wrong ways of living. Turning from God. Ultimately it brings trouble. Messed up lives. And God's judgment. It's going to bring this culture collapse. Woke.

Woke ideas. They say truth is different for everyone. It relativises truth. Your truth.

[8 : 32] My truth. Anyone's truth. Except God's truth. But the Lord tells us. John 14.6. I am the way.

The truth. And the life. No man cometh unto the Father. But by me. The world says truth is based on feelings. Live your truth. Truth.

But honestly. But honestly. Truth is real. And it's fixed. Truth does not change. With the fashions and fads. The fickle ways of men. God defines truth.

It's defined. It's in black and white. And red. In your Bible. God decides what the truth is. And the Lord Jesus says. And you shall know the truth.

You can know it. Personally know it. And the truth shall make you free. Truly free. He does not say you make your own truth. He says discover the truth that I have for you.

[9 : 29] It already exists. And it's a constant. And live by it. Think of it. The truth. God made us. The Bible is his guide. It's his road map for life.

When we ignore it. And make up our own rules. Things go wrong. God's word still tells us. What is good or evil? Right or wrong?

Male or female? True or false? This does not change. It's a constant. Consider the contrast then. Of these kind of.

Woke ideas. These woke ideas. And God's truth. On the one side you have the woke idea here. My feelings are truth. But God says no.

Truth comes from my word. He says. Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth. God's word is the truth. Not my feelings. Don't get it round the wrong way.

[10 : 28] Our feelings can be true. When they accord with God's truth. Otherwise they're not true. On the woke side you see. They say. Truth is what you feel inside.

God says rather. The heart is deceitful. And desperately wicked. Who can know it? Feelings can trick us. And that can happen in churches too.

Wow. The worship feels good. The teaching feels good. Makes me feel good. Is it true though? Feelings can trick us.

Truth should guide us. Not feelings. Truth should guide our feelings. Not the other way around. And on the woke side they would say.

People are mostly good on their own. But the Bible says no. No one is good. Not one. As it is written there is none righteous.

[11:24] No. Not one. We're not good without God. And these false ideas. They come from human traditions. And the world's thinking. Not our Lord.

Philosophy. The word philosophy. Literally it means. Love. Wisdom. Loving. Wisdom. But the problem with the world's version of philosophy.

is they forget where wisdom really comes from. God. And God makes the laws. He makes the rules. They would say the Bible's old. Biased. But the truth is that God's word lasts forever. The Lord is our lawgiver. The Lord is our king.

He sets the rules. And his word it says forever oh Lord. Thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations. Thou hast established the earth.

[12:21] And it abideth. Forever oh Lord thy word. It's forever his word. There's many more warning signs we could think. Of these warning signs. Of this topsy turvy world.

Schools. They push this non-biblical world view. On young minds. And they teach shame about the past. Instead of pride. I can remember when I was at school.

And I learnt Australian history. As a pommy. It was a new subject for me. To learn Australian history. To learn about the pioneers. And the explorers.

And the founders. And we can have some element of pride about the heroes. That founded. Civilisation here.

But now. They say we should be full of shame. Instead of pride. And look at the world all around us.

[13:18] Go down the shops today. And what do we see? What are we confronted with? All around us now. Halloween commercialism. Glamourising. The grotesque. As if it's fun.

Honestly. Honestly. You see them in Bunnings. These giants. This garish. Ghoulish. Ghastly. Grotesque.

Look. Do we care to even notice the ugliness. The dark side. Of Halloween. What's it all about? Fundamentally. What does it truly stand for?

It's not about fun. It's about the dark side. Isn't it? Why would we want anything to do with it? But that's the culture that we're living in, isn't it?

What about the headlines? Have you seen the headlines? I know we've seen some amazing things going on. Of unity. Of joining together.

[14:15] Charles praying with the Pope. The first time this kind of unity is so evident. And what a blaring alarm it is going off.

Of ecumenical compromise. It's huge. And it's fully contrary to biblical principles. Now talking about the 31st of October.

Halloween. But it also marks the Reformation Day. Where Martin Luther nailed some challenges on the Church of Rome's door.

Well, he stood up for the truth. At least as far as he could see it. And now we see this spiritual decay where there's this reversal.

It's going back to Rome. We should be alarmed. And in society there's an engineered control. A great thing. They're talking digital IDs now.

[15:12] It's conforming. And it's good for us, they tell us. This big brother kind of watching over us. This surveillance.

New technologies. Digital IDs could control people even more. And this is the culture of our world, isn't it? They're telling us it's all good for us.

Way betide you if you dare to question any of that. And the one behind lies we know is Satan. He's the father of lies. John 8.44. Think of it, brother, sister.

The early Christians, they were said to be a people who turned the world upside down. When the Christians came to town, these accounts are cultural people. And as God's people, we're meant to live differently, differently by living for God.

And the wisdom that we can know, it's not the world's wisdom. In 1 Corinthians 3.19, it says the world's wisdom is foolish to God.

[16:14] We're to be counter-cultural, pushing back, God helping us. We need God's wisdom. And of God's wisdom, it tells it's pure, it's peaceful. This wisdom descendeth not from above of the earthly wisdom, but it's earthly, sensual, devilish.

That's the world's wisdom. But then he contrasts it. The wisdom that is from above, that is heavenly wisdom, he says that is first pure, peaceable, gentle. Honestly, people, there's a clash of cultures happening right now.

And we're in it day by day, every day. At the heart of it is our identity as a people. The world says you can be anyone you want to be.

Actually, no. It's God who gives us our identity. What does it tell us of the beginning? So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.

Male and female created he them. Binary, two. Male, female. That's the choice. And here's the truth about our identity. We have real value.

[17:20] We're created in God's image. That's precious. You're image bearers of God. We are not mistakes. And God decides who we are.

God decides. And he made us what? Male and female. And it is a good design. That's simple.

There's no confusion there. Work says you define yourself.

A man might say he is a woman. The next day he might flip again. It depends how he feels. You know, honestly, isn't that foolishness?

Confusion? The truth is God's designed us. We see that right back in the womb. Psalm 139, verse 13. In part it reads, For thou hast possessed my reins.

Like the innermost being, the fibre of who we are. Thou hast covered me, it says. In. Inside my mother's womb. He saw you there. And he says, I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

[18:22] Designed by God. Even from the womb. That's the truth. Another clash of cultures we see is on the home front. The family. God's plan for the family.

There's no confusion there. God's plan for a good life is the family. God designed the family. He invented the family. His design is perfect. It says, Unless God builds the house, they labour in vain that build it.

Psalm 127. The world says family can be any way you like it. They hate the family, as God defines it, don't they? Marriage does not need to be a man and a woman, they say.

They would say dads are not important. But what does it lead to? Broken homes, confusion, sadness. God's plan, rather, is that God made the family, starting with marriage.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh. God's design for marriage. One man, one woman, for life.

[19:29] Matthew 19, our Lord echoes it, Have you not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female? What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Don't split up what God's put together. There's a man and a woman, there's marriage. And that's God's design. Strong families. God helping us will have that.

And it's the basis of a good society. Patriarchal families, dare we say it. Patriarchal. Oh, patriarchy. That's a no word in the woke culture that there should be a man who's leading the family as the head of the home under Christ.

Patriarchy. Actually, it's a good thing. It's a God thing. And woke praise is free love, free choices in love. But the Bible says, save it for marriage.

There's no free choices in love. It's in the context of marriage. This is the will of God. Even your sanctification, that you should abstain from, fornication. God's design, it's not confusion, it's that purity, it's that marriage bond.

[20:41] Men and women should embrace their God-given roles. Think of it. Men. You're meant to be protectors, leaders, who give yourself. It tells of that in Ephesians 5, of husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.

This is God's plan, isn't it? In the ideal, we know sometimes husbands don't measure up and they drop the ball. How sad. Rather be a husband who loves like Jesus loves, with your everything.

If you're a man, embrace biblical manhood. Be strong, be a protector, be a provider, lead with humility and sacrifice for others.

Women then, be strong helpers, bring life and use your gifts well to the home. As strong as wise women, as in Proverbs 31, who can find a virtuous woman for her price is far above rubies.

If you're a woman, embrace biblical womanhood. Be strong, be a nurturer, use your unique gifts and bring life and beauty into your sphere of influence in the home.

[21 : 59] And you see, this is God's pattern, there's no confusion there. Both men and women are equal in value, showing God in different ways in the home. And for the children, they need a mother's care and a father's guidance.

Of course, we know it doesn't always happen that homes split up for whatever reason. That's a sad thing. I'm just presenting to you the biblical model, God helping us, that will aspire to that.

We'll do our part. And studies show that kids do best when they have married parents. As parents then too, let's teach our children to test things.

1 John 4, 1 talks about trying the spirits. Uphold the truth. It tells the parents of teaching the word of God. Teach them, your children, diligently.

Teach them diligently. Deuteronomy 6, verse 7. It's our role, mums and dads, to teach the children. And when men and women live God's way, families grow strong.

[23 : 00] The children feel safe and society stays steady. In this topsy-turvy, shaky world, we can't have steadiness. Another area of culture clash, you could say, is freedom.

Freedom. Freedom. The woke crowd would say, freedom means no rules. Nobody telling me what to do. No authority. But true freedom is from Jesus our Lord.

It's not doing whatever we want. The world calls freedom, do what you want, no judging. But it traps people into bad habits. But then, in Christ, there's real freedom.

He tells, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. There's an enslavement, there's a bondage there. But then it reads on, if the Son, therefore, shall make you free, you shall be free.

Free indeed. And so, who the Son sets free is free indeed. Jesus frees us, for real. And sin is not freedom. It's not freedom.

[24 : 03] The woke crowd was saying, yeah, do what you want, just rebel, just no rules. Anything goes. Free for all. But true freedom is living as God made us.

His rules protect us. You think of the Ten Commandments. They're like guardrails for life, aren't they? When you're driving down the road, you want to have those guardrails sometimes. Don't you? And the Ten Commandments, think how His rules protect us. No cheating, saves marriages. No stealing, it keeps peace. No lying, it builds trust.

Rest days, help us recharge. They're all good for us. They're all for our betterment. Without rules, free choice, it breaks hearts, causes sickness, leads to addiction.

There's misery there. No authority, no leaders. It means chaos. a society will crumble without true freedom, which is really only in Christ, that true liberty that Christ gives.

[25 : 16] And in reflecting on these things today, you could pose five important questions. And it covers these aspects we've touched on a little about our identity.

Who am I? The world says, the woke says, you decide who you are. But God says, I made you. I made you in my image.

I've got a purpose for you. Morality is the next one. What is right or wrong? Who even knows anymore in the woke world what is right, what is wrong?

It's whatever people agree on at the time. They would say, but God says, what I say is what is right and what is wrong. He says, my word is a lamp unto your feet.

He decides what's right and what's wrong. God's rules do not change. There's clarity there.

Marriage is one man, one woman. That's it. There's no redefining of that.

[26 : 16] That's it. Full stop. Morality. Another aspect is justice. Justice, what is fair? Nowadays, there's all this blame going on, this blame game.

Oh, you've got white privilege. Oh, you've got, you're from the wealthy west. They're blaming the groups. They're blaming colonialising. They're blaming this or that and we've got to have some constant payback forever.

Feel ashamed of our race or our background. But the world is wrong. What is fair is actually we're personally accountable to God.

We're accountable to him. Every soul, the soul that sinneth it shall die. We've got to get right with God. That's the ultimate right is to know God, to be right with God, to know him, to be saved.

Another question is authority. Who's in charge? Who's running this show? No. The world would say, the woke would say, there's no one over me. I'm my own boss.

[27 : 22] I'm the master of my own destiny. No one tells me what to do. But God says, I set leaders. There's a structure. There's authority.

He has ministers even in our worldly governments in the sense that they're servants. He sets things in place. There's a structure that God sets authority in place.

And ultimately, without God as the ultimate authority, everything's going to fall apart. Who's in charge? God is. When people cast off God's authority, you get chaos.

Another question is about salvation. What saves us? The world, the woke would say, just be an activist. Do good and just do your own thing. Be benevolent.

Do this or that. And that's how we get saved. We save the planet in the process. But no, God says, salvation is by grace through faith.

[28 : 19] It's by the new birth. You must be born again. And salvation, what saves us, that's really important. Of course, isn't it? That we must be born again to see the kingdom of heaven.

So in all these things, we see this clash of cultures. And you think back in biblical days of Daniel for one, he refused to bow down to Babylon's culture.

He didn't argue, he just stood faithful. And like Daniel, we can stand quietly for God. We can stand for God. Think of these two world views.

They're colliding. They're in contrast. They're contrary. Two world views. Of course, you know, the picture illustrates of Matthew 7, our Lord's parable of the wise man who built his house upon the rock and the foolish man who built his house upon the sand.

And it tells there, our Lord explains, whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, he says, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock.

[29 : 29] It's either the woke world view that's built on sand, on our feelings, on self, on rebellion, just do our own thing, or it's the biblical world view that's built on the rock.

There's truth, there's Christ, there's righteousness. There's two world views in conflict. And it boils down to what foundation do you have?

Is it going to be those shifting sands? That house is going to collapse, the rain comes, the storm, and it's going to be swept away. The house built on the sand.

A life built on our own nous, our own woke ideas, on our own feelings and fancies and rebellion against God. Our self-will, I did it my way, it's the house on the sand.

Or we can do it God's way. Build a house on the rock, the solid rock, that is Christ, his word, his truth. The solid rock. It boils down to the foundation, this clash of cultures.

[30 : 39] And God's word is going to stand, it's going to stand. There's a comfort there. Our Lord says, woe unto them that call evil good and good evil.

The woke way is the wrong way. It's confusion. And our Lord tells us, learn not the way of the heathen. Brothers and sisters, we've got God's blueprint and it's his word.

The Bible, it makes sense. There's no confusion there. It makes sense that the Bible honours mums and dads. Men providing, women caring. God made male and female.

God made the male and female. Mark 10 verse 6. We see the woke sacrifice the voiceless for convenience. It's just a blob. It's just a clump of cells.

But God says, he's made us special from the womb. And we can say, as Psalm 139 says, I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

[31 : 43] He knit you together. Your body, your wiring, your story with intention right from the beginning, from conception. You're not an accident. You're a masterpiece of his making signed by your creator.

And God can redeem your story. He can save us. He can make beauty from ashes. Think of this battle of the worldviews.

The woke would abandon the blueprint. There is no blueprint. There is no plan or purpose. It's all how you feel from one day to the next. A battle of worldviews.

And we must enter the fight and confront the culture. There is an old time message from a man, C.T. Studd. You can look it up. It's called Chocolate Soldiers.

Chocolate Soldiers. And it tells about a metaphor of Christians, some as being like chocolate soldiers, you know, like Freddo Frogs, as it were, you know, but they're soldiers wrapped in silver foil.

[32 : 52] These soldiers that they would give as sweets for children. And he says that some Christians are like chocolate soldiers, half-hearted, lukewarm, like toy soldiers that melt in the heat. They look strong, but they give up so easily. And he talks about the sleepy, the lukewarm, the faithless, the namby-pambies.

He says, wilt thou be to Christ a militant or a chocolate soldier? A chocolate Christian? Will you fear or will you fight?

Christ's life is so amazing, so divine, demands your life, your soul, your all. Are we going to be like a chocolate soldier that melts when the heat is on?

Rather, may we be soldiers for Christ in this confronting of the culture. We're in this very real fight. Let's not melt in time of trouble. Brother, sister, this is not a time to melt, but to bear the heat of battle and battle on, to be solid, to be brave, to fight the good fight.

[34 : 03] Take some bold steps for God. And when you think, as in Esther's time, there was a challenge there and Esther was challenged to think, who knows whether you'll come to the kingdom for such a time as this.

Who knows whether you're in this time frame, where this culture clash is going on, where this woke world is happening, that you are where you are because God's got a work for you to do, to be that salt, to be that light, to be the one for such a time as this.

That's why we, in this present day that we live, that we can make an impact. Every one of us, we've got a place in God's plan. And as God's people, can we live in such a way to live with grace and truth and courage, to not be a chocolate soldier, but to be valiant for the truth, to stand and be counted, to crown him your king.

Truth is worth standing for. Think of it, truly souls are at stake and people matter forever. In this woke world, even in woke churches, sadly the gospel's missing or tainted, it's corrupted, it's lacking. we need to stand and be counted with love, not pride, with humility, to love enough to tell people the hard truths that there's a gospel, we must come to the saviour.

[35 : 43] Can I urge you, dare to be different in this woke world. There's a constant pressure to conform to the world, isn't there?

And we know we ought not to conform to the world, but be transformed. Can I urge you, dare to be different. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that you are the truth, your word is truth.

Lord, in a world full of lies, as the father of lies, the devil would deceive so many. Help us, Lord, to be alert, to try the spirits, to test the spirits, to discern right from wrong by the measure of your word. Guide us, Lord, we pray by your Holy Spirit into all truth. Help us, Lord, we pray for each one present or hearing this message, that each one might have that heart's trust to know they're saved by the virtue of your shed blood, forgiving us of our sins, fitting us for heaven.

Lord, help us, we pray, to walk in your truth, to be that salt and light, to confront the culture. Lord, to not be afraid, to stand and be counted, to dare to be different. Be glorified, Lord, not that we can claim any prideful heirs or claim that we're better than others, but simply that it's only the grace, it's only the grace of God that we are saved, that we have your blessing.

[37 : 12] Lord, help us to be militant, not melting, as soldiers that will be brave and fight the good fight in Jesus' name.

Amen.