



*The Podcast Focused on
Revitalizing Conventional Christianity
—One Person at a Time*

Inside Jimbo's Head™

Series 1, Cultural Christianity Versus Kingdom
Christianity

Episode 12, How Should A Christian Interact with
Their Native Culture: Hide, Seek, or Something
Else? Part I, The Historical Perspective©

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Introduction

Ok, my friends. Let's get down to business and open up Jimbo's head one more time, just for kicks.

Sound Effects: Opening Jimbo's Head

My head's a pretty crazy place, alright! By now, you should understand how my perspective on Christian life and faith is somewhat unique, interesting, and, to many stuck in conventional Christianity, controversial. Yet, I hope, if you have done more than just listened to these podcasts, you are discovering the power of living in the reality of kingdom Christianity.

You see, my friends, this week's Lifeline Production skit points to how each of us who are in Christ through active faith has been set aside to exclusively be a part of God's holy purpose. This is what is meant by sanctification. His exclusive purpose for us is the expansion of the kingdom Jesus established through His incarnation, life, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. When we move outside that purpose, we no longer have the ability to glorify the one who is to be our exclusive focus in this life in the same manner as He will be in the next. I would think when we focus on other purposes, it's like using God's toothbrush to clean the bathroom. Who

wants to use that toothbrush ever again for its original purpose! Not me, not you, and I'm certain, not our holy God!

When the young lady Apostle Randolph and I met at JDC began to understand how Jesus was to be both her savior and her lord, her entire demeanor began to change. To this day, I will never understand how so many, including myself for many years, have missed the kingdom of God and thus the lordship of Jesus as the central issue of becoming a Jesus follower.

Now, before you say, "not following Jesus but believing in Him," as I have heard some tell me, let me remind you that the word "believe" in Greek is the verb form of faith. Thus it is an active faith that produces salvation, and active faith always produces obedience—obedience to King Jesus!

From the moment of conception into the family of God, we are raised to the position of Sons in His kingdom, the kingdom where He reigns as Lord. This is actually where the whole concept of obedience fits into the everyday life of a Jesus follower. How could anyone miss that!

The kingdom over which Jesus reigns is very different from anything we have previously experienced in our natural life, as we learned in the past five episodes. In fact, God's kingdom is so different, so exclusively unique, the culture of that kingdom is antithetical to the culture of any kingdom we lived in before our new life in Christ. As you will soon see while we are in the world, in those kingdoms, we are not of those kingdoms.

It is that new life in Christ and our translation into this new kingdom that sets us aside from the cultural realities in which we once lived. When we mix those two realities, well . . . "Houston, We Have a Problem!" Remember episode one of this series and the reason we are taking this long look at Cultural Christianity Versus Kingdom Christianity? If conventional or cultural Christianity was working, there would be no need for this series. But it is failing and has failed big time!

Which brings us to our question of the day. If you have been tracking along with our discussions on what is cultural Christianity and what is kingdom Christianity, this question should be developing in your head. If you have sought to live what you have learned, I am sure this question comes through in almost every one of your thoughts. It is my prayer that this question has permeated your prayer life as you seek to live in communion with Father, His Son, and the Holy Spirit.

What is that question? How should a Jesus follower interact with their native culture—hide, seek, or something different?

Inside Jimbo's Head Theme Music

Opening—Where are we Going

Today I am going to attempt to define for us what the attitude of a person living in Christ and thus living in kingdom Christianity should be toward our native culture.

First, we will look at five basic ways the church has historically looked at this issue.

As we do that, I will share what I see as the advantages and the problems of each. I will also share the aspects of that perspective we should value and emulate.

Finally, I will define what I believe to be a biblical approach to this issue and why this issue is so essential to the life of both the individual and the community of faith in which the individual finds communion.

Section I: How Has the Church Looked at this Question?

The question of how we, as Jesus followers, are to interact with our native culture has been an issue ever since the church began to lose sight of how those who are in Christ are part of a kingdom and culture that is separate from their native kingdom and culture. When the church begins to focus on a coming kingdom and not the kingdom that is here, well, do I have to say it again . . . Houston We Have A Problem!

As I have studied church history, I saw the seeds of the church losing focus on being a part of an already established kingdom, beginning all the way back to the middle of the second century. At that time, The Apostolic Church Fathers, those who had been trained by the Apostles, were passing from the scene. Those who had been great Western philosophers (the Greeks) who came to Christ soon began to become the major "thought leaders or thinkers" of Christianity. We now call them the "ante-Nicene Church Fathers." It was at this same time, and maybe because of it, the Jewish perspective on why Jesus came and why He taught what He taught began to wane. Of course, that Jewish perspective was the establishment of the promised kingdom of God. As this happened, the biblical concept of the spiritual kingdom was lost, and the Christian focus moved toward salvation without a kingdom purpose and began moving toward making the kingdoms of this world and, of course, their cultures into the kingdom of God.

This move from the loss of a kingdom perspective to making the kingdoms of this world and their cultures into the kingdom of God was solidified in the earlier fourth century when Constantine, through a proclamation and the council of Nicene, made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. Here is where the lines between the church, which was to represent and expand the kingdom of God, and the kingdoms of this world became totally blurred.

Often, after this, when the church sent out missionaries, their first objective was to convert the monarch of a kingdom and thus bring the entire kingdom under Christendom. This further blurred the difference between Jesus followers belonging to a unique, separate kingdom with a unique, separate culture.

Many of the leaders struggled with our question of the day during the time of the reformation, and that struggle continues to this day.

Today, many Christians and especially evangelicals in the United States are trying to create, recreate, or reestablish a Christian nation, in other words, a Christian kingdom. While many focus on this issue often using political methodologies to accomplish their end, the overall main

emphasis of the Western church is not the kingdom of God and that kingdom's culture established by Messiah Jesus. Instead, we focus on "going to heaven when we die and doing our best until then." All of this, my friends, has led to "Houston We Have A Problem!" The size, scope, and depth of that problem cannot be overestimated.

As I pointed out in an earlier episode, it is only through looking at the four gospel accounts, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, through the lens of Judaism that one can understand the central part the kingdom of God and His culture plays in the incarnation, life, teachings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

Let's get back to our question of the day, "How should a Jesus follower interact with their native culture—hide, seek, or something different?"

In 1949 Richard Niebuhr published the book *Christ and Culture* and suggested five basic ways the church has dealt with this question throughout its history. For the last seventy years, these five concepts have become the standard for most discussions of this issue with theologians and church leaders believing they have to choose one of the five for the basis of their teaching and the lives of Jesus' disciples. All five miss the mark!

Let me give you an overview of these five concepts and what I see as the positives and the negatives of each.

Christ Against Culture

This first perspective proposes that a Christian should stand in opposition toward their native culture and calls for total separation from it. Thus Niebuhr called this perspective "Christ Against Culture." The attitude this perspective produces is one of hostility toward one's native culture.

The proponents of this perspective see the sole authority of the Christian being Christ with the logical conclusion of the individual rejecting their native culture's claim to loyalty.

They see Christians as constituting a "third race," different from Jews and Gentiles, who are called to live a way of life quite separate from their native culture. Jesus' authority over the authority of culture should lead a Christian to reject the world and its kingdoms and cultures because of the distinct, antithetical viewpoints of each.

Here are the problems I see with this perspective:

First, this has almost always led to a legalistic approach to how we are to live our Christian lives—do this, don't do that, go here, stay away from there.

It also misses how the incarnation of Christ brought Him into the culture of His time and how He used cultural realities to explain the kingdom He established as the Messiah. In fact, the whole concept of a Messiah was richly woven into Jesus' native culture.

This perspective also causes a Jesus Follower to be hostile toward all aspects of their native culture. Because of this, Jesus' followers lose perspective on how Christ used cultural realities to explain the kingdom of God to people of that culture.

The antagonistic attitude developed by this perspective often negates the ability of the Jesus follower to set an example of the difference between their native culture and the culture instituted by Jesus in His kingdom. Often people following this perspective try to fight their native culture, not serve their native culture as exemplified by Jesus. Thus the very way a Jesus follower is to expand Jesus' kingdom by connecting with people thoroughly encased in their cultural reality is lost.

I also see some very positive aspects of this perspective.

It warns us how a lack of proper separation from human culture causes us to "water down" the culture of the kingdom of God. It leaves what should be seen as a reflection of God Himself as something less than the almighty, holy, loving, truth of God's character. In its place is left only distortion, confusion, and impotence.

This perspective also recognizes the antithetical difference between the culture of the kingdom of God and the cultures of the kingdoms of this world.

It also does not try to change the native culture. Its goal, which is often blurred by the issues mentioned above, is to set an example for those who live in the native culture of the different, higher, purer, more powerful cultural reality found in Christ and His kingdom.

This perspective gives us two key aspects to value and emulate.

We should value and emulate how this perspective sees the sole authority of Christ over the Christian and causes them to reject their native cultures' claim to loyalty.

We should also value and emulate the fact that Christians constitute a "third race" or a unique holy nation, different from the Jew and the Gentile, different from each of their cultures, and different from each of their kingdoms. This brings the Jesus follower to a calling to live a way of life quite different from the way those from their native culture live both in their morality and in the use of processes when different from kingdom processes.

Christ of Culture

The next way the church has historically answered our question of the day was called "Christ of Culture" by Niebuhr. This perspective is one held by many liberal theologians and adherents of liberation theology, process theology, and the feminist theologies. It was also the perspective of the founding fathers of the United States who we discussed in a previous episode.

It seeks to be the exact opposite of the Christ Against Culture perspective by attempting to bring the native culture and Christianity together, regardless of their differences.

Those who hold this perspective see Jesus as the Messiah of their society's culture. He is seen as the one who fulfills the hopes and aspirations of that society by merging society's culture with kingdom culture. They find themselves at home as much in their native culture as they do in the culture of the Christian community. To this extent, being at home in one's native culture as well as the pseudo, conventional, Christian culture, I have observed many from the mainline denominational churches living through this perspective. I have also observed the seepage of

this aspect of this perspective (or maybe even the flooding of it) into more conservative elements of the church as well as some modern evangelical circles. But let us go on with other aspects of this Christ of Culture perspective.

While this perspective seeks to mesh secular culture with Christian culture, they do not expect Jesus to sanction everything in their native culture, but only those things they judge to be the best in their secular culture.

They judge much of Jewish tradition about God and Jewish history as barbaric or outmoded and seek to disentangle Christ from these brutal outmoded notions.

The concept of a Christian Civilization, or a Christian nation that has been so prevalent in America for generations, is key to this perspective. As I stated prior, this concept was birthed in the Roman culture by Constantine and has often been the desire of the church down through the ages.

The Great Enlightenment was very influential on those with this perspective and was the impetus behind their desire to keep Christianity within the "limits of reason." Remember, this was the attitude of the eight key American Founding Fathers I spoke of when we began to define the American culture.

Because of a desire to mesh Christian culture with their native culture, the proponents of this perspective focus on the more cultured and sophisticated people of their society, especially those acquainted with science, philosophy, politics, and economics. Thus they focus on political and philosophical processes to mesh their native culture with whose areas of Biblical teaching they deem as reasonable. This is why a "reasonable belief system" is needed to mesh the two cultures into one.

The strongest proponents of this perspective reject the doctrine of a once-and-for-all act of redemption and thus see Jesus as the great moral teacher who sought to instruct us on a higher plain as Socrates and Plato had done before him.

I'm sure the problems with this perspective are evident to most of you. However, let me list just a few for the sake of our discussion.

This perspective does not grasp how endemic sin is, how it corrupts not only all human beings but all of human nature. They also do not recognize how sin has changed even creation, which is the Christ of Culture perspective's basis for focusing on their native culture. Thus they do not realize that human culture is not the culture God intended in creation.

This perspective's focus on Jesus as the Messiah of all society, coupled with their desire to separate Christianity from its Jewish roots, never allows them to understand the implications of Christ's kingdom as the fulfillment of the Old Covenant. Instead, they see the kingdom of God as the association of all humankind brought about by the moral actions of its members toward one another.

Finally and above all other problems you may see in this perspective, the key problem for me is the elevation of enlightened human reason as the basis upon which the revelation of truth must be judged.

Because of all this, I find absolutely no positive attributes in this perspective nor any aspect to value or emulate.

Now the next three perspectives on how a Christian or a community of Christians living in communion with God and each other should relate to their native culture can best be summed up in three terms: the synthesists, the dualists, and the conversionists.

Christ Above Culture

The synthesists (or those who take a little bit of one thing and a little bit of another to make a new whole) were seen by Niebuhr as those proposing what he entitled the Christ Above Culture perspective.

The key to understanding this perspective is how these people see Christ as the head of all cultures and use human culture to accomplish His purposes.

Those following the Christ Above Culture perspective maintain the gap between Christ and culture as those from the Christ Against Culture camp yet see Christ as sovereign over culture as He is over the church.

These proponents use, as their biblical basis, passages such as Matthew 22:21, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" and the Romans thirteen's exhortation to Christian to be subject to the governing authorities as those whom God has instituted.

They see that Christ invites Christians to attain more than their native cultural standards by the grace of God yet are not against human culture. They see God using human culture's best products as instruments in His work to move humankind and the Christian into achievements they cannot reach on their own. Thus they take what is seen as the best aspects of culture and synthesize it into the culture of Christianity.

With this in mind, those holding the Christ Above Culture differ from those holding the Christ of Culture perspective in that they see Christ as the one who determines what is acceptable within a human culture, not the "enlightened minds" of the rationalist.

Once again, I see the following problems with this perspective.

The attempt to bring together through synthesis into a neat system, the spiritual and the natural, which reduces the greater things, the spiritual realities, into something far less by incorporating them with fallen human processes.

Throughout the history of the church, every attempt to synthesis Christ's kingdom culture with human culture leads to an outcome that is conditioned by human culture rather than a true spiritual outcome that reflects the character of God.

These attempts at synthesizing the culture of God's kingdom with human culture always leads to the institutionalization of Christianity rather than living communities of Jesus followers living in communion with the persons of the Trinity and each other.

The results of those following this perspective become those things that are humanly possible such as humanly developed systems of change, not the possibilities and transformation produced by the Spirit.

While Christ is sovereign over culture, that fact of Satan's position as prince over the kingdoms of this world is not balanced in this perspective. The whole concept of the evil, i.e., sin, in all human work, whether moral or immoral, because of the sin nature of unregenerated humankind, is not taken into account as well.

The expansion of the kingdom of God through the spiritual transformation of individual people does not seem to be the goal of this perspective.

I do see the following positive aspects of this perspective.

This perspective maintains Christ's sovereignty over culture.

They see Christ as the one who determines what is good in culture and not the enlightened reason of people within a society.

It does, in some ways, maintain the gap between the culture of God's kingdom and human culture.

It does assert the limited responsibility of the Christian Community to human culture and its governmental institutions. They assert this by seeing governmental institutions as agents for peace, by seeing money as part of human culture belonging to governmental institutions and by seeing the Christian belonging solely to Christ.

This perspective recognizes how the Christian community's and the Christian individual's actions affect culture and produce the view held by those belonging to that culture concerning Christ and all spiritual realities.

I would encourage you to value and emulate from this perspective, the limited relationship between the Christian community and the civil authorities in the areas of money belonging to the civil authorities and respecting laws that establish peace.

Christ and Culture in Paradox

The dualist view defined by Niebuhr is called Christ and Culture in Paradox. Those who follow this perspective would define the term paradox as a statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is perhaps true. However, I find a second definition more fitting, "a self-contradictory statement that at first seems true."ⁱ

The "Christ and Culture in Paradox" perspective observes that the Christian belongs to two realms, spiritual and temporal, and must live in the tension of fulfilling responsibilities in both.

This perspective theologically sees the line between God and all humankind, yet it sees no such line between the Christian and the secular world.

It passes judgment on all humanity, including themselves, causing them to see both human works outside the church and from within the church as corrupt.

These dualists join with the Christ Against Culture perspective in pronouncing the whole world of human culture to be godless and sick unto death. However, they see themselves as part of that culture and cannot extricate themselves from it. Because of this, this perspective is undergirded by a belief that all men have a sinful nature, even the redeemed Christian.

Those following this perspective see the Christian as being both in Christ and the fallen culture and encourages the Christian to use the fallen culture to the fullest extent of what one might attain from it, including areas such as philosophy. Why? Because the Christian is sustained by God as they live in the fallen culture through that fallen culture.

They see all human endeavors as a means by which Christians can serve their neighbor and obey God.

Martin Luther, one of the major proponents of this perspective, saw death as the only solution to the Christian living in and participating in both Christ and the fallen culture.

I see the following problems with this perspective.

It denies the fact that the Christian is not only set free from the guilt of sin but also the power of sin for their sinful nature was crucified in Christ and replaced with a new nature, God's nature. Thus they live no longer as slaves to sin but slaves to righteousness—Romans chapter six.

It does not take into consideration the concept of an already established kingdom as real as if it were physical. Thus they lack the understanding that a follower of Jesus has been translated out of the kingdom of darkness, including following its cultural standards and into the kingdom of God and its higher cultural standards.

Parallel to this is a problem produced by this perspective's insistence on the following concept. While all humankind is separated from God, Christians are not separated from the culture of the kingdom of darkness, nor can a Christian extract themselves from it. This leads to a huge problem. If one follows this line of thought, all the commands of the New Covenant cannot be kept in this age—the age in which they were intended to be kept. Thus the purposes of Christ, our king, cannot be accomplished.

This leads to a further flaw in this perspective. When dualists say, "a man cannot extract himself from the kingdom of darkness, they are right in that no human effort can do such a thing. This shows the emphasis the dualist puts on human effort. However, the dualist misses the reality that the separation from the kingdom of darkness is the work of the Holy Spirit, which has already happened in the past at the moment of regeneration.

When those from this perspective hold to the idea that all works of man, whether regenerated or not, are corrupt, they deny that the Christian can do the works Father calls us to do, the

expansion of His kingdom, as Christ did the works Father called Him to accomplish in the establishment of the kingdom. Thus living in conformity to the image of Jesus both morally and pragmatically is thrown out the window.

In having the follower of Jesus use the methods of the fallen world to accomplish the work of God and to sustain themselves, including human philosophy, direct commands in the New Covenant are negated. This includes the whole demand not to love the world or the things of this world and not living by the elementary principles of this world.

However, I do see these positive elements in the Christ and Culture in Paradox perspective.

It sees the whole world of human culture to be godless and sick unto death, and it sees all human work as corrupt.

It sees all human reason as corrupt, including theology developed by the use of a Western philosophical mindset, though they would not use those terms.

This dualist's perspective sees that the Christian has a role in their native culture. However, it is a totally wrong perspective on this truth. Christians are to have a redemptive role with the people living in their native culture, not a participatory role. We, like Christ, should also use native cultural realities to explain biblical truth.

I see two aspects of this dualistic perspective as things we should value and emulate.

First, the reality of a corrupt human nature and, thus, a corrupt human culture, including the abilities of human reason.

And second, the fact that Christians have a role to play in their native culture and a call to use their native culture. However, they are not to use their native culture in the way the Christ and Culture in Paradox perspective define such use of human culture.

Christ, the Transformer of Culture

This brings us to the fifth and final perspective Niebuhr defined for how the church has viewed the way a Christian should react to their native culture. This is the conversionist view, or what he entitled "Christ, the Transformer of Culture."

The term "conversionist" paints a clear picture that the proponents of this perspective seek to convert the values and goals of their native secular culture into the service of God.

Thus their focus is not exclusively on the conversion of individuals. It includes the conversion of individuals but adds to that a separate concept of the conversion of their native culture.

The conversionists hold fast to a radical distinction between God's work in Christ and Man's work in culture as well as Jesus' sharp judgment of the world and all its ways. This leads them to see those who reject Christ as living in darkness, doing evil works, and ignorant of the Father.

They do not seek to isolate themselves from their native culture nor the institutions of human culture but see their position in society and its prescribed duties as ways to live in obedience to their Lord.

The conversionist recognizes the reality of God's presence in this life more than other perspectives and sees history as the story of God's mighty deeds and of man's responses to those works of God.

The conversionists eschatological future has become for them an eschatological present. They see the gift of God provided in Christ as "eternal life" and is to be substantially enjoyed now with what that means both to humankind and culture. In keeping with this eschatology, the conversionists sees a future where every person is "in Christ" with the culmination of human destiny being one where all humanity becomes one even as the Father and the Son are one.

The conversionist sees creation as not only the sphere for the setting of redemption but the sphere in which God's sovereign, ordering work operates. Thus they do not see the fall as having physical consequences, only moral and personal consequences.

Here are the problems I see with the conversionists.

The first is how they seek to convert cultural values and goals to be used for kingdom purposes. The kingdom of God has its own values, goals, and processes, which are antithetical to most of the values, goals, and processes of a person's native culture. Seeking to convert native culture leads to using the institutions and process of that native culture for kingdom purposes, which again are generally antithetical to those of God's kingdom.

Here, once again, the focus in on the conversion of culture to reach the individual, not the making of disciples (kingdom conversion) to bring them into a new cultural lifestyle—the lifestyle of Jesus—and a new kingdom—the kingdom of Christ.

As we have seen in some of the other perspectives, connecting with civil institutions by converting an institution to biblical principles is not only not the focus of the New Covenant but one that undermines Christian community, often replacing it with an institutional mindset.

Within the framework of God's kingdom principles, something can only be changed to its values through a spiritual transformation, not simply a change of direction. Thus this is only possible for spiritual beings, not culture or institutions.

The conversionists live and function in a hopeful future for the fallen culture developed by fallen man rather than living and functioning in the present kingdom culture and the recognition that their native culture will be destroyed and replaced by the kingdom culture at the return of Christ.

They seek God's ordering of creation, which they see as having no physical flaws from the effects of the fall in the present age rather than seeing the transformation of the physical creation in an eschatological future. Roman's eight makes it clear the redemption of the creation, including our bodies, will only take place when Christ returns.

The conversionists focus on the power of sin as the ruling principle of life for all mankind, including the redeemed. The redeemed should not focus on sin being the ruling principle of life for them because they now are slaves to righteousness, not slaves to sin. (Romans 6) However,

it is folly to consider the nonredeemed as not eternally under the power of sin and its consequences.

Here are a few positives I see from the Christ, the Transformer of Culture perspective.

They hold fast to the radical distinction between God's work in Christ and Man's work in culture as well as Jesus' sharp judgment of the world and all its ways.

They see humankind, so far as they reject Christ, living in darkness, doing evil works, and ignorant of the Father.

They do not isolate themselves from the culture of the world. However, their lack of isolation from the culture and its institutions is misguided, leading them to seek the conversion of these human institutions.

While they recognize they have duties to the cultural institutions, they also believe they are responsible for all duties of a citizen of their native state and its culture, not simply those limited ones commanded by Jesus and His early followers.

They recognize we now live in eternal life as defined by the eternal nature of God.

They focus on the now rather than the past or the future.

They see history as the story of God's mighty deeds and of humankind's responses to them.

I encourage the following aspects of this perspective to value and emulate.

The radical distinction between God's work in Christ and man's work in culture as well as Jesus' sharp judgment of the world and all its ways.

Recognition of those who reject Christ as knowing the Father as they live in darkness, doing evil works.

The recognition that eternal life is now present in all who follow Christ in active faith and that they possess all the benefits of the coming kingdom now. The only limitation on this is the lack of the redemption and transformation of the physical both the created world and the human body.

A focus on the now rather than the past or the future.

The power of sin over all of mankind. However, even though the conversionists do not recognize it, we must recognize that this is limited to those who are not in Christ. Sin no longer has power over us—Romans 6:14.

The view of history as "HisStory," i.e., the story of the mighty deeds of God and mankind's responses to them.

Section II: The Missing Link

Wow, aren't you glad this is not a college course, and you will be tested on these perspectives? I know it is easy to get lost in the weeds as I went over this outline. However, while the conversionists come the closest, there is one essential, non-negotiable issue missed by each of

these five perspectives. It is the very issue we have been discussing in this entire first series of the Hello, Jimbo Speaking podcast.

The kingdom of God has been established by Jesus the Messiah. It is here. It is now! This is the fulfillment of all that was promised to Israel, but because of their disobedience has been extended to those from Israel who become disciples of Jesus through active faith as well as all gentiles who do the same.

When looking at how we should relate to our native culture, the key to the entire answer comes from the realization that we have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness and, in all actuality, our native kingdom and its culture, and placed into a new kingdom and a new culture. Now when that average person thinks of this, they have no problem realizing that a Jesus follower must see themselves as people not to follow the immorality of their native culture. However, that is just scratching the surface! Christianity is about more than living a moral life. I know. I get it! You are probably saying, "Jimbo, that is hard in and of itself!"

My friends, you must understand how living a moral life is the part that is already accomplished for us. I do not have the time to get into it here, but please realize you have not just been set free from the guilt of your sin and forgiven, but you have been set free, in this age, from the power of sin. Your old sinful nature is dead. You are now alive in Christ, and your slavery to sin has ended. You are now a slave to righteousness. Father's righteousness now drives your life in the same way sin used to drive your life. Please take the time and read Romans chapter six. Don't try, at this point, to figure it out. Just accept what it says for what it says. All by itself stands as the inerrant, inspired word of God. Then spend time quietly before the Lord mauling those passages over and over again in your mind.

Closing Thoughts

Man, oh man, we sure have covered a lot today. I don't want you to get bogged down in these historical perspectives. I just wanted you to get the idea of how the church has tried to answer this question without an understanding or sincere commitment to the kingdom of God. Oh, many times, the kingdom is mentioned. However, rarely is its present effect so key to the doctrines and practices of the church, as I have shared with you on the podcast.

And that my friend separates the "men from the boys," so to speak. Next week, I will pick back up on this question of how a Christian should interact with their native culture as we look at what I consider a kingdom perspective.

So until then, please be sure to subscribe to this podcast, consider becoming a support partner at either the \$0.99, \$4.99, or \$9.99 per month level, and check out the Hello, Jimbo Speaking webpage at jimbo-speaking.org.

So, until next week, go out there and by God's grace make it a great day that honors and glorifies Him through faith that produces obedience. Do not settle for anything less. No More Excuses! See you next week.

ⁱ Both definitions taken from the Merriam-Webster online dictionary; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/paradox>