



In the World-Not of the World



Theme: We are called to be separate from the world

Object: A clear bottle with a top, water, vegetable oil, food coloring. Fill the bottle about 1/3 full with water, and add enough brightly-colored food coloring to make it readily visible. Add vegetable oil until the bottle is about 2/3 full. The oil will float on the water, but when the jar is shaken vigorously, the oil and water will appear to become one. But, if left to stand for a brief period of time, (about 30 seconds) they will separate again.

Scripture: They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. John 17:16,18 (NIV)

There are two things in this bottle. Can you guess what they are? Colored water --- and oil. When we look at this bottle with oil and water in it, the first thing that we notice is that they remain separate from one another. Now, watch what happens when I shake the bottle. The water and oil appear to become one.

Have the oil and water really become one? Let's let the bottle stand for a little while and see what happens. Look! The water and oil have become separate again. That shows us that even when they were all mixed together, they were never really one.

This bottle is a pretty good picture of what Jesus wants us to be like in this world we live in.

Before Jesus was crucified, he prayed for his disciples. He prayed that as they lived in the world, they would not become part of the world. He wanted them to add the gifts he had given them to the world -- just as the water added some color to the oil -- but he did not want them to become stained by the world. He wanted them to remain the person God made them to be. He wanted them to know his love and to share that love with others.

This prayer is for us too. Jesus said that just as his Father sent him into the world, he has sent us into the world. We must live in this world, but Jesus has called us to be separate. Just as this colored water remains separate from the oil, Jesus wants us to be separate from the world.

Dear Jesus, help us, as we live in this world, to remain faithful to your call to be separate from the world.

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