

**Problem:**

mark 5:19-20 - personal witness is over dramatized - famous actors and athletes not needed for science -

we are not the message - Christ is

1 Cor 9:19-23 - culture context is over contextualized - culture is not neutral -

culture is not our ally - The Spirit is

**Main Idea:**

the messenger is not the message

the culture is not convicting

Christ is the message

The Spirit is convicting

**Text:****The messenger is not the message**

John 1:19 ¶ And **this is the testimony of John**, when **the Jews** (almost always adversarial 1:11) sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

John 1:20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "**I am not the Christ.**"

John 1:21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "**I am not.**" "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "**No.**"

John 1:22 So they said to him, "**Who are you?** We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

*I am not the Christ, I am not, No! - John did not want to talk about himself-*

*Jn 3:26-30; 2 Cor 4:5-6*

**The culture is not convicting**

John 1:23 He said, "**I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said.**"

John 1:24 ¶ (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.)

John 1:25 They asked him, "**Then why are you baptizing**, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

John 1:26 John answered them, "I baptize with water, **but among you stands one you do not know**,

John 1:27 even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."

John 1:28 These things took place in Bethany **across the Jordan**, where John was baptizing.

*make straight the way of the Lord - Isaiah (40:1-5; 42:1-9; 49:1-7; 50:4-11 - servant song 40-54); 52:13-53:12*

**you do not know / Across the Jordan - culture was hostile**

*Scott mcknight in his book - kingdom conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church this word "culture" seems to be replacing the Bible's word 'world'. Put less discreetly, just sprinkle some baptismal water on 'world' and we can now call it 'culture'. in this sense, 'culture' becomes the redeemed elements of the world, but with the connotations of world dismissed. Why say this? Because the word 'world' does not come off so well in the New Testament. (p. 16; emphasis mine) -*

*Matt 10:24-26; Jn 15:18-19*

**Christ is the message**

John 1:29 ¶ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**"

John 1:30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes **a man who ranks (pluperfect - comes into existence) before me**, because **he was** before me.' (Jn 1:15; 1-5)

John 1:31 I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, **that he might be revealed to Israel.**"

**Implication/application**

*He is our proclamation - John was not the message and neither are we*

*we are not the message - make sure your story is His story - **humility** -*

*Christ is the message - He is the good news, He is the object of our faith*

*and it was His blood we must never forget - 1 Cor 5:7- Behold the Lamb*

*(Gen 22:1-14; 2 Chron 3:1; 7:1-5; John 19:7; 3:16) (Exodus 12:1-14); Isaiah 52:13-53:12*

**The Spirit is convicting**

John 1:32 And **John bore witness**: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.

John 1:33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see **the Spirit** descend and remain, this is he who **baptizes with the Holy Spirit.**'

John 1:34 **And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."**

**Implication/application**

*culture was not the medium then and it is not now*

*culture is not our ally-*

*-apologetics require a marketplace - think Athens/ when we get the moment to speak do so with perspicuity, or clarity, and grace*

*-the problem is that we are more like babylon (no market place) we were cultural aliens but we are becoming again cultural enemies (the world is wanting us in the spotlight- not to debate but to mock and humiliate not to outwit but to overpower **-think Daniel lions den***

*The Spirit is our ally* - so proclaim Him and have the **courage** to be foolish in this world - John 16:5-11; 1 Cor 1:18-2:16;

**Worthy is the Lamb**

*the world wants us to be ashamed of the gospel - to be timid and weak - never forget how God proclaimed it for thousands of years - John brings it up - but worthy is the lamb who was slain for us - rev 5*

**Implication:**

you are not the message - make sure your story is His story - **humility**

Christ is the message - He is the good news, He is the object of our faith

**culture is not your ally**

*-apologetics require a marketplace - think Athens/ when we get the moment to speak do so with perspicuity, or clarity, and grace*

*-the problem is that we are more like babylon (no market place) we were cultural aliens but we are becoming again cultural enemies (the world is wanting us in the spotlight- not to debate but to mock and humiliate - not to outwit but to overpower*

The Spirit is your ally - so proclaim Him and have the **courage** to be foolish in this world

**Application:**

worthy is the lamb - be bold and courageous - the world wants you to be ashamed - to make the gospel fit their narrative

articles for further study:

<http://www.gty.org/blog/B110922/contextualization-and-the-corruption-of-the-church>

<http://australia.thegospelcoalition.org/article/stage-two-exile-are-you-ready-for-it>

<http://fallenflawed.com/your-personal-testimony-problem/>