



June 26

Contrast
Community

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College Pastor

Introduction

This week, Pastor Erik Dunkin presents a message on who the church is and what God called the church to do. In this message, he explains how the nation of Israel was the original community God used to represent His contrasting standards to the other religions and nations of their time. Today, the church has inherited the same mission of representing God's principles and standards to the world around us.

Discussion

1. When someone mentions the word "church," what comes to mind and how do you naturally respond? How would you respond if someone asked you to define the word "CHURCH"?
2. Why did Pastor Erik use an Old Testament reference to teach on the subject of the New Testament Church? **Read Ephesians 3:6** and discuss.
3. **Read Exodus 19:3-4.** How does Pastor Erik draw a parallel between the salvation of Egypt in the Old Testament with Christianity in the New Testament? **Read 2 Corinthians 5:20**, and discuss how we as believers both collectively [as the church] and individually are called to represent God to the world about us.
4. **Read Exodus 19:5-6.** Discuss Pastor Erik's statement, "The church is a contrast community created by God to reflect His glory to all the earth." Define "contrast community." How might a contrast community look in your locality? Discuss some specific ways the church should be contrasting to the world's standards.

Think About It

If most of us would take a few minutes to think about it, we could recall someone in our past who we thought was an oddball at the time but looking back realize they were a trendsetter. A son often commented the flannel-lined jackets his father wore were "old fashioned." The father responded, "They are comfortable." One day, the son went into his father's closet and borrowed one of the jackets, because as he put it, "They are now in style." The father responded, "See, I was a trendsetter." Following God's ways may seem out of step with the world, but actually you may be the person who is a trendsetter for others who are sick of the world system and don't know where to turn.

Do Something

1. Take some time this week to understand what it means to be a contrasting person part of a contrasting community. Recognize, as a Christian, our contrast isn't the product of trying to be different simply for the sake of being different, but our contrast will develop naturally as we choose to obey God's commands.
2. Ask God if He is calling you to do something contrary to the practices and beliefs of the world around you. Ask God for the strength to help you carry out that practice or belief in a loving manner.
3. Take the time this week to talk with fellow believers who may also struggle with the fear of standing firm for God in a workplace or neighborhood where God is not honored. Pray with each other about your circumstances.