Series: Different

Session: The Cheese

- Subject: Wordliness
- Central Theme: Rejecting Worldliness
- Objective Statement: We can reject the pattern of this world by taking these 4 steps.

Hook:

Connection-

- The year is 1945.
- The US has been fighting on two fronts- Europe and Japan.
- The Japanese are trying to get Tokyo and to get to Tokyo you have to get through certain Islands.
- This man is Hiro Onada. (Show Picture)
- He was dropped off on an island called Lubang Island in the Phillipines on December 26th, 1944.
- He was instructed to conduct guerilla attacks on Phillippino and American forces and to lead 4 or 5 of his men.
- 9 months later the war comes to an end, as you know.
- But these men in the Philippines are still on the top of this mountain in a jungle conducting attacks.
- In October of that year, the allies begin to drop leaflets telling them that the war was over and to go home.
- Hiroo thought that this was propaganda, and so he didn't believe it and stayed in the jungle.
- Then they sent newspapers from Japan and letters from his family, and still they did not believe.
- "There is no way this war is over."
- HIroo's mother gave him a dagger before he went off to war to say, if you are ever caught use this to kill yourself.
- They were devoted to the cause. They thought their emporer was god. His commanding officer represented God and so did he.
- So, Hiroo would not give up.
- He and his men stay in the jungle through the 1940's, 50's, 60's, and into the 70's…
- In 1974 is the only one left.
- The other three have died or given up.
- In that year a Japanese tourist goes to Lubang Island, looking for the legend of this Onada guy. He goes into the jungle wearing black socks and sandals.
- Hiroo sees him. He's about to shoot him. But then realizes that this person is truly Japanese.
- "Why are you here?" "I was looking for you. The war ended 29 years ago. Come home.
- Hiroo said, "I will not give up until my commanding officer tells me to give up because that's what he told me to do. He said keep conducting the war until I tell you its over."
- This man goes back to Japan and tells the government about Onada and what he said.
- Onada's commanding officer is found. He is now a bookseller in Japan.
- They put him on a plane, fly him to Lubang Island, send him into the jungle and finds Hiroo Onada.
- He tells him to stand down. The war is over. I'm your commanding officer.
- So on March 9, 1974 at 51 years old, Hiroo Onada walks out of the jungle on Lubang Island still wearing his uniform. He has 500 rounds of ammunition, several grenades, a working rifle and his ceremonial sword polished and in good shape.

- On March 11, 1974, Hiroo Onada offershis military sowrd to Phippine president Ferdinand Marcos on the day of his surrender.
- The president pardons him for the 30 or so murders, that he didn't know were murders, because he thought he was conducting the war over the previous 29 years.
- He would not disobey his commanding officer.
- He thought his commanding officer represented God.

Tension-

- Now here is my question for us:
- Who is your commanding officer?
- If Jesus Christ is our commanding officer, why do so many Christians not obey Christ?
- Were we only supposed to follow Jesus until it gets difficult?
- Did Jesus say, "Occupy until I come….or they unfriend you on facebook?"
- Of course not.
- He said, "In this world you will have trouble, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."
- The text we have been studying are among the most well known in the book of Romans.

Let's read it.

Romans 12:1-2

(1) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

(2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

- Last week we began this series on these two verses, and it was my desire to plead with you like Paul is pleading to make a choice.
- What was the choice? To present your body as a living sacrifice to God.
- He really is our commanding officer.
- We said that we should do this for three reasons:
    - 1. Because of what He has done.
    - 2. Because of what He deserves.
    - 3. Because of what God desires.
- So last weeks sermon was called "The choice" because this is the choice every person must make after they get saved to follow Jesus Christ.
- This weeks sermon I am calling "The Cheese".
- Why would I call it "the cheese"?
- What does the cheese do? "The cheese stands alone".

- Like Hiro Onada, we have a commanding officer.
- But our commanding officer is Jesus.
- We learned last week that He deserves for us to make this choice to offer ourselves as a sacrifice to him.
- Today we begin to see what that choice looks like, and it starts in verse 2.

"And be not conformed to this world…"

- The word translated "conformed" in this text is the word
- suschēmatizō-*soos-khay-mat-id'-zo*
- It means, "to *fashion alike*, that is, *conform* to the same pattern (figuratively): - conform to, fashion self according to.
- If you don't have a good pattern, you won't have a good product.
- You and I have a problem and that is that we have a pattern.
- And if we're following the wrong pattern, the pattern of this world, then we'll end up with the wrong results.
- Remember that the Holy Spirit through Paul is pleading with us— Because of what God has done, because of what he deserves, and because of what he desires live as a sacrifice to him. It's the logical, reasonable response...
- And he says part of this reasonable response is to not be conformed to, or not to follow the pattern of this world.
- What is the pattern?
- Well in 1 John 2 the scripture explains what it looks like...

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1 John 2:15-17

(15) Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

(16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

(17) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

- The pattern is described here pretty well- systems and patterns of thought the appeal to:
    - The lust of the flesh
    - The lust of the eyes
    - The pride of life....
- The world here is not talking about...
    - Not loving people
    - Not loving nature and the natural world...
- He's talking about what is described in 1 John and Romans as this worlds pattern.
- And the truth is this pattern is nothing new.
- And if you are going to live a life that is the logical response to what God has done, what he deserves and what he desires, **then you'll have to stand alone against the flow or the pattern of this world.**
- In the Bible there are all kinds of examples of people who stood, often alone, against the pattern of this world.
- Today, I want to take a look at one kind of famous example in the Bible of people standing alone against the patterns of this world..
- And by studying their example we can reject the pattern of this world
- Now the narrative I want us to look at is in Daniel 3...

And I want you to see how we can reject the pattern of this world by seeing these 4 steps..

Book:

- Explain the context- Babylonian Captivity

The book begins in 605 B.C. when Babylon conquered Jerusalem and exiled Daniel, his three friends, and others. It continues on to the eventual demise of Babylonian supremacy in 539 B.C., when Medo-Persian besiegers conquered Babylon (Dan 5:30-31), and goes even beyond that to 536 B.C.

- There are three young men in this section- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego-

- As a kid I liked this story because my brothers name is Shadrach…

- These young men are Jews living in a foreign land…
  - BTW- We are citizens of another country…living in a foreign place…

- And like many foreign conquerors in history have done, the conquering nation takes the best and the brightest from the conquered culture and begins to try to assimilate them into the new culture.

- So they begin to change things about these young men.
  - Their names are changed
  - Their geography is changed
  - Their clothing was changed…

- They were making decisions about what they would participate in and how they would live in this place that didn't recognize their God.

Remember…we can reject the pattern of this world by seeing these 4 steps..

Step #1- Identifying the pattern.

Dan 3:1-7

(1) Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. (2) Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.(3) Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

(4) Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, (5) That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: (6) And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. (7) Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Application:

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2. Defy the pattern.

Dan 3:8-23

(8) Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.

(9) They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever.

(10) Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image:

(11) And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

(12) There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

(13) Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

(14) Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

(15) Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

(16) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

(17) If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

(18) But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

(19) Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

(20) And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

(21) Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

(22) Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

(23) And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

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3. Overcoming the pattern.

Dan 3:24-27

(24) Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

(25) He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

(26) Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

(27) And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

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4. Changing the pattern.

Dan 3:28-30

(28) Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

(29) Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

(30) Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

Look:

So, my question again for all of us is this….

Should the life of a Christ follower look different?

- How we entertain ourselves and what we take into our eyes…
- How we use our bodies…
- How we think about sex…
- How we see our relationships…
- How we do family…
- How we handle our time…
- How we handle our money…
- How we think about the world…
- How we think about God and the Bible…

Of course we should…

Don't be conformed to the pattern of this world…rather be transformed by the renewing of your mind…

Took:

- Who is our commanding officer? The World or Jesus Christ?
- There is this old question that I think is interesting:
    - "If you were on trial for being a christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"
    - If we were to point to the pattern of this world (the lust of the flesh, eyes, pride of life) would that be the pattern of your life?

- “Are you living a life that is different?”