Step into It - Part 3
"What Role is Social Media Playing…"
November 18th, 2023

Intro:

- Step into it - We've covered a lot of ground in this series! - Get Caught up!
- Truth Over Tribe Book - Say Tagline

- We didn't design this series to give you all the answers, but instead to give you PAUSE to actually rise above what we now see as "Normal" in our society & ask the H.S. how He wants us to approach this in the next 12 mo's!
- We do not have to go through the next 12 mo's the way we did in 2020!
- But we cannot be ignorant of what is happening around us!
- Today: What Role Social Media is Playing!

PRAY

- ? Why are we talking about this today?
- We believe we have a responsibility as Pastors & Shepherds in your life to apply the Word of God to our Everyday Lives… it is relevant!

Hebrews 13:17 "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you." (ESV)
- Today, we're going to talk about Social Media & the affect it has on us!
- Just 20 years ago… none of this even existed!!!

- STEPPING ONTO A MOVING WALKWAY ILL.
- At the Airport, once you step into it, you start moving in a direction rapidly & there's no going back!
- I saw in the Spirit this week: This is a picture of Social Media today!
- We, as a Society, have stepped onto something that is Moving us in a Direction that Most of us are Not even Aware of!!!

- We are living in an unprecedented time where Info, Opinion, Facts & Beliefs are being Aimed at us in a way that Humanity has NEVER faced before!
- Internet: only 30 yrs old! **- Smart Phones - 2007 / SM - FB - '08!**

- HOW WE USED TO GET OUR NEWS: 1, 30 min. window called "The Evening News," & there were only 3 takes or perspectives on it!!!

- OR… IN THE NEWSPAPER… you had to read it!

- Here's my point: We've Never been This Way Before in Human History!

- & that means we as Followers of Jesus can't just take all of this as Common Place & Normal!

- We must examine it b/c it influences our souls!!!

- I believe Social Media started out Neutral & maybe even Positive…

- But what it has become, with all of the AI Technology & Algorithms has made it Anything But Neutral…

- So… b/c it is not neutral, then we must wrestle with our involvement in it & our approach to it.

- Just like Alcohol or Pornography or Raunchy Movies or Swearing or anything else in our Culture that is NOT NEUTRAL!!!

Matthew 16:6 "Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

- & I believe that is what we are dealing w/ today w/ Social Media!

1 Chronicles 12:32 (NLT) "From the tribe of Issachar, there were 200 leaders of the tribe with their relatives. All these men understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take."

- As Followers of Jesus, we must "Understand the signs of the times" we are living in…

4 Categories to Think Around for Ourselves:

1. Our Consumption of it.

A. As Christians, we must be aware of what we're feeding our minds & hearts on a constant basis. - Again, none existed 20 years ago / still new

Mark 7:20-23 "He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy,

slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person."

B. We can't be naive to what social media is doing to our spirit man.

- Jealousy, envy, gossip, slander, anger, bias, jadedness

- I believe our Mental Health Crisis is a Direct Result of Social Media's impact on our Souls! - & at a Younger & Younger Age!!!

Colossians 3:2 "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

C. MIP: As Followers of Jesus, we must Wrestle w/ our Approach to Social Media b/c it is NOT NEUTRAL.

2 Corinthians 10:5 "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

D. MWK - "Mindless Scrolling" - I see someone who left the church!

2. Our Contribution to it.

A. The temptation is, *"If it's doing so much harm, then maybe we should just Not go near it at all!"* - For Some: H.S. may say CUT IT!

- However, if 4.7 Billion People are living there now, then we, as Christians, should probably be present there too, right?!?

- Apostle Paul - Right Arm!!!

- Jesus said it this way…

Matthew 5:13-16 "You are the salt of the earth… You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

- Here's the catch to being Salt & Light…

C. Being Salt & Light is about Drawing People to Jesus… not to us or Any Other Message!

D. MIP: So if we're on Social Media to Draw Attention to ourselves or our thing or make people think or believe a certain way or to fight or argue or refute what someone else said,

- then we probably need to <u>Rethink & Ask the Holy Spirit</u> to help us discern what's going on in our hearts!!!

E.? Why are we posting what we are posting?

- ? Are we looking for Affirmation & Acceptance from people we don't know or who don't have our best interest in mind or truly care about us?

- ? Are we Angry at something someone else just Posted / Said?

- None of these are Good Enough Reasons to Post (or Repost)… & they Certainly do not fall into the Salt & Light Category!

F. MIP: So… Should we, as Followers of Jesus, be Contributing to Social Media?

- Perhaps, as long as it is for the Right Reason & to be promoting the Right Thing… Jesus!

- If it is to promote our "Party's Agenda" or our "Opinion," than maybe not? (Stay Fatherly…)

- & for sure, if we are posting those things, let's don't call it "Being Salt & Light!"

G. One More Thing… Let me make <u>a Comment about Comments</u>:

- ? How many hearts are actually changed b/c of a debate in a "Chat Room" or "Comment Thread"… Really?!?

- So many of us are spending So Much Time Reading Comments / Debating / Arguing / Posting / Commenting / & it is Fruitless!

Proverbs 26:4 "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him."

Proverbs 26:5 "Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes."

H. Pastor Matt - That's what I'm doing!!! (Answering those fools!!!)

? Has your opinion ever Truly been changed b/c someone Commented to you online? - NO! It takes personal interaction!

- So, Church - If you actually want to Influence someone in a Comment Thread, ask them to meet you for coffee so you can have a civilized conversation w/ respect / honor / listening & prayer.

- The Bible says that's how you actually "Answer them!"

I. Rule of Thumb: Never say something online that you wouldn't say to the actual person's face!

- It's cowardly / It's not Honorable / It is not Salt & Light / It does not Honor God.

3. The Business Model of it. <u>(What we Must Understand:)</u>

1) Social Media is Designed to Keep our Attention.

- STOLEN FOCUS BOOK: GUY WHO INVENTED "INFINITE SCROLL!"

- Proven: <u>50% more time</u> b/c it just keeps feeding you more & more

2) It is Designed to Exploit the Worst Parts of our Humanness.

- EVER WONDERED WHY… We don't see what we want to see, we see what they want us to see!

- B/c that's not the Most Profit-Inducing way to keep us on there!

Quote "There's a quirk of human behavior. On average, we will stare at something negative and outrageous for a lot longer than we will stare at something positive and calm."

- Negative Words: 20% more Retweets & Likes!

- "Hates" "Obliterates" "Slams" "Destroys"

- Point: The Medium is NOT Neutral!!!

2 Corinthians 2:11 "…in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."

3) They are making money from us.

- SEEING AN AD / THINK YOUR PHONE IS LISTENING

- AI is Predicting & it's gotten THAT Good!!!

- The machine is not built to Serve Us, it's built to serve their paying customers which are Advertisers.

Romans 6:16 "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?"

H. MIP: Here's my Point Family: We cannot be naïve to the Fact that there is a Billion Dollar Business Model underneath what is being offered to us to consume for FREE!

- And its affecting the way our brains work & the way we Think / Act / & Behave!

4. The Agendas within it.

A. We must be careful of those online or in the media who "Sound" Spiritual or Christian but actually are not!

2 Timothy 3:12-14 "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it…"

B. Church - if their message is not Jesus… not Goodness, Rightness or even Righteousness, but Jesus… then we must be sooo careful!

- If their platform is being used to perpetuate Hate or Angst against "the others," than that's not Jesus glorifying!!!

- EVEN IF they quote Scriptures and talk about God!!!

We all know John 3:16 "For God so loved the world…"

- But do we know what comes IMMEDIATELY after that???

John 3:17 "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

D. THAT is our Message - If anyone on Social Media or your Favorite News Channel is using God's Name to promote ANYTHING other than that, be SO Careful!!!

- In the next 12 mo's, BOTH PARTIES are going to use the Bible to Fortify & Solidify their Arguments as to why THEY are God's Candidate & why their Approach is the Correct Approach!!!

E. So if we are going to be about the way of Jesus then we cannot get caught in the trap of Us vs. Them / Good vs. Evil / Right vs. Wrong / or even Right & Left.

- There is a verse that gives me chills every time I read it…

Matthew 7:15-16a "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them."

v. 21-23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

- According to Jesus, it is possible to say all the right things & even do "good things," and quote Scriptures & actually NOT know Him!!!

F. Church - Let's be so careful this year of those in the Media, on Social Media & even Running for Office who know how to "Sprinkle some Jesus," on their language & make us think they are "God's Candidate or Person," when in reality they are using the Bible to advance their Agenda.

- Remember: "By their Fruit you'll Recognize them…" Not Words!

- Do they have REAL Fruit in their Life???

- Character Matters… Not just Quoting the Bible!

SLIDE: Our Consumption / Our Contribution / Business Model / The Agenda

Here's my Appeal to you:
Philippians 3:17-21 "Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

v. 19-21 "Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."

- Church - We live in a Fallen World that will NEVER be right until Heaven!

- We are called to Be Salt & Light here, but we cannot fall into the trap of believing that the Right Politician or Party will make everything good again!

- It won't, that's what Jesus will do in Heaven 1 Day!

- So, in the meantime, we must live as Jesus wants us to live, that is what matters most!!!

Time of Reflection:

SLIDE: Our Consumption / Our Contribution / Business Model / The Agenda

1. What would Jesus want for me concerning my Consumption?

2. What would Jesus want concerning my Contribution?

3. In light of the Business Model that is presently in place, what boundaries do I need to put in place to protect myself and my family?

4. Have I gotten caught up in an Agenda that is not Christlike?

- The way you'll know is if it in any way makes a "them" that Jesus died for an enemy or adversary!

- Or if the messaging uses Fear or Extreme language to perpetuate its message.

FADE AWAY SONG - MERGE

Speak to Me, You're the Only Voice I want to hear…

CHORUS:
If You're not in it, then I don't want it… Let all else Fade Away

Take the Whole World / Give me Jesus / Let all else Fade Away

BRIDGE:
You're Name is the Only Name that Matters / You're Heart is all that I desire

Not my Will but Yours alone forever / Here's my Life have Your Way