

SESSION 01 - A TWO-KINGDOMS – ONE MISSION: THE CHURCH IN ACTION FOR THE SAKE OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE GOSPEL.

*The Bible teaches that God is God at Work in the world. It teaches that all authority and power are still subject to Him and that in and through Him all things are moving towards His purposeful future. To engage the world on His terms, the Bible says that He seeks both to preserve and to save the world. To be faithful to His action, Christians must be able to engage the culture then with a **Dynamic Differentiation Mindset** that understands how God works in the world, for the world. Such a mindset provides a framework of engagement that can offer direction for the church in two particular areas: it can help the church serve as a **mediating presence in the unfolding of public events** so that the work of the church is useful to the civil demands of the moment; and it can also help the church provide potential solutions to the community that are uniquely offered in a Two-Kingdom dialogue for the sake of the community and the Gospel.*

1. How does God engage the world?

a. Creator and Owner of heaven and earth

- i. The dignity of being “created” human beings
- ii. The perfection of God’s gift

b. The Ancient Dilemma and the Modern Dilemma.

- i. Sin, rebellion (Genesis 3, Genesis 9, Eph. 2, Acts 2) real... **must be engaged!**
- ii. **The Saving offer** - God’s redemption action IN CHRIST – The enduring offer of Redemption Freedom to Repentant people
- iii. **The Preserving NEED** – The practice of freedom in the incapacitating hands of unrepentant, sinful people
 1. Jesus to Pilate – John 19:8-11 - Authority
 2. Our Misuse of authority – notice the issues today with mass travel, mass communication, mass weaponry – to what end?

c. God MUST BE at Work to preserve and to save!

2. So, what is the Bible’s Solution? God Engages the World Two different ways!

- a. God Engages the World to Preserve and to Save (effects believers and non)
 - i. To preserve – He orders the world
 - ii. Moral foundations written in every human heart – the Curbing Law
- b. To save – He sends His Son, Creates His Church, Proclaims Gospel
- c. Two ways, Two realms, God at Work
- d. 22 – God at Work Two Distinct Ways....

3. Christians Engage the Word IN HIS NAME then...with a unique motivation - Romans 12:1-2

4. Christians engage the World with a unique perspective. See Jeremiah 29:11

- i. In the Community, for the Community IN HIS NAME, AT HIS SERVICE.
- ii. In the World, not of the World, but IN HIM, for the World. John

5. A lifetime of purpose, now and forever.....striving for excellence in ALL WE SAY OR DO, giving God glory and serving others IN HIS NAME.

In an LCMS mission, the church will be active in the community, working repentantly, humbly, with a Reformation-restraint mindset, as it differentiates the two kingdoms so that it works in the community both for the sake of the community and for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH HIS MINDSET” – How to’s

- A. Public Engagement:** the Church is called to engage public issues both for the sake of its witness of the Gospel, but also for the sake of undergirding God’s work in the community from a Left-Hand Kingdom perspective for the civic righteousness and peace of the community. This engagement *seeks the good of the community*, whether people in the community come to faith in Jesus or not. (Jer. 29; Gen.12; Acts 17).
- B. Reformation Restraint:** the Church is called to engage such issues with *tempered expectations* and an *attitude of “reformation restraint.”* With a biblical understanding of God’s Left-hand kingdom engagement in the world through His Law, such a restraint *recognizes one’s own sinfulness and limitations*, honoring the fact that God engages the temporal world through various *public vocations*¹ that He has created to restrain humankind’s predilection towards sin and evil, compelling a basic outward righteousness by all for the community’s temporal blessing and peace. The church practices such a restraint with regards to public proclamations of policy or public matters of adjudication or enforcement of outward behavior because it is not the only moral agent in the world,² and it has not been tasked with the coercive role of ordering society for its temporal, civic good.³ *The church’s role in society is to undergird, inform, even educate those who are faithfully called into vocations to accomplish such things while maintaining its unique “reformation” role in the world of proclaiming eternal salvation for all as a free gift of God’s grace through the person and work of Jesus Christ alone.*

¹ Such vocations are not unique to the Church, but are part of the sociological-economic-political ordering of society for its temporal blessing of justice, civility, and blessing. Such vocation would include, but not be limited to the vocations of father, mother, husband, wife, family, law enforcement, politician, magistrate, businessperson, employer, employee, etc.

² This view honors the fact that God’s law is in the world, calling all people to civic righteousness as well as calling all people to repentance. See Rom. 2:14–16, where it says, “Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.”

³ See Rom. 13:1–5.

C. Two Kingdom Differentiation: the church then is called to embody such a dynamic, Two-Kingdom engagement of the world, *differentiating the method, the purpose, and the content* of God's engagement in His Left-Hand Kingdom work, for the sake of the community and for the sake of the Gospel, God's right hand kingdom work.

6. With two different ways....

- a. with the pre-eminence of Grace, with the penultimate work of the state in relationship to the Church....
- b. Christians boldly proclaim the Gospel, and humbly apply the law.....AND IN REFERENCE TO PUBLIC, MORAL POLICY.....
- c. WE HAVE A GRID OF ENGAGEMENT THAT HONORS BOTH GOD'S PRESERVING AND SAVING WORK....
- d. preferring A and B, to C and D.....but doing C and D when necessary!

THE PUBLIC POLICY ENGAGEMENT GRID

THE CHURCH THROUGH ITS PEOPLE

- a) **INDIRECT AND UNINTENTIONAL** – Through individuals (Prot. Work ethic, commitment to service etc.)
- b) **INDIRECT AND INTENTIONAL** – Through individuals (talk about in Bible study, small groups etc. with no direct application)

THE CHURCH TOGETHER INSTITUTIONALLY AS ONE

- c) **DIRECT AND UNINTENTIONAL** – Church as a whole speaks prophetically
- d) **DIRECT AND INTENTIONAL** – Church as a whole – engages the issue with time, talent, treasure to fight for a specific end.

7. Mom and Pop Papers- putting this mindset to work for Religious Liberty and Life!

- a. **Dynamic Differentiation** – putting things in proper perspective
- b. **Reformation Restraint seeking the truth** – always aware that God is at work
- c. **Vocational Respect seeking justice** – Priorities and transparency are both necessary
- d. **Not everything is a Federal issue**
- e. **WWWJD....WWFD....WWJRD**
- f. **Important Public** things don't always have to be political
- g. We strive to be good citizens
- h. Left-Hand Kingdom "mission work?"