



How aware is a fish of the water in which it swims? Not very. Similarly, we swim in cultural water everyday, often without realization or examination.

To complicate the matter, we live in a very polarizing time. American culture demands that we adhere to certain cultural dogmas, but it takes great thoughtfulness and courage to stop and consider whether or not these dogmas have Biblical basis or truth.

In this eight-week series, we will examine eight prevalent messages our culture preaches that, for better or worse, create the “water in which we swim” everyday. We will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of each when considered in light of the gospel.

NOTE: There may be slight changes to what follows, primarily in the main passage(s) used. However, the ones shared below will be a great start and very applicable for the sermons.

The History Narrative...

A Brief Definition:

"The ancients saw history as cyclical and endless, while Christians understood it to be under the control of God, who was moving it purposefully through light and darkness toward a great and irreversible climax. Late modernity picked up on the idea of historical progress (hence the term 'progressive') but detached it from any idea of divine control. Now history is seen as automatically making progress in every stage. Today, therefore, we make judgments through what C. S. Lewis called 'chronological snobbery,' namely 'the assumption that whatever has gone out of date is on that account [alone] discredited.' Many of our government officials now denounce actions or positions as 'having no business in the twenty-first century,' as if every chapter of history is by definition better than the one before. Whatever is new is automatically better."

- Tim Keller¹

? What are your thoughts on this definition? What would you add or change?



Three pastors discuss the phrase "you are on the wrong side of history."
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/carson-keller-and-piper-wrong-side-history/>



Discuss the video.

? Where do you see this cultural understanding of history narrative play out in your daily life?

? How can working to remove our biases as we examine history be a good thing?

¹ Keller, Timothy. Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism (pp. 130-131). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

? How has the cultural norm of “being on the wrong side of history” impacted your thinking and the way you interact with people in your circles of influence?

? As a follower of Christ, how are you tempted to get caught up in the idea that your beliefs put you on the wrong side of history?



Revelation 5 (NIV)

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” ³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. ⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

⁶ Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased for God
persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.

¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign^[b] on the earth.”

¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹² In a loud voice they were saying:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!”

¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!”

¹⁴ The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.



2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 (NIV)

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

⁵ Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. ⁷ For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, ¹⁰ and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie ¹² and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

¹³ But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as first fruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. ¹⁴ He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁵ So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.



Discuss the passages above.

? How do these passages relate to our culture's current history narrative?

? How are we to view this cultural narrative in light of the gospel?

? How has the cultural shift from looking to the church as the "chaplains of society" to now as the "dictators of an old age" affected the way our society sees Christianity and the church?

? Do you think history is getting better or worse for the cause of Christ? Why do you think that?

? How can we, as followers of Christ, best respond to the statement, "Christians are on the wrong side of history." How can our response change in different situations?

? As culture shifts and swirls around us, how can we lean into the truth that Jesus is, and will always be, on the right side of history and will one day come again to set all things right?