

Sermon Notes

Theme: The integral connection between holiness and mercy. This is a reminder that we are called to personally pursue Christ, which means, on one hand, we are to let Him shape us, and not be shaped by the world's way of thinking.

James 1:27 (NIV)

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress **and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.**

1. Background: definition of the “world”

2. Parallel passages:

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 8:29 (NIV)

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

3. The meaning of the passage

a. God wants to shape us – but that conflicts with the pull of the world

i. In moral conformity

ii. In conforming our passions, desires, and priorities

b. Old Testament examples of “pollution” by the “world” (the negative side of culture)

Ezra 9:11 (NIV)

... **'The land you are entering to possess is a land polluted by the corruption of its peoples. By their detestable practices they have filled it with their impurity from one end to the other.'**

4. Implications

a. Resist monk-like outward behavior or retreating from the world

b. Evaluating actions, thoughts and priorities