

Ephesians 5:1

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.

Here is something to think about today. “*When sheep are together and there are wolves around, how do they protect themselves from the wolves?*” Before you answer that, think about us as Christian’s and how we are portrayed as sheep. But how do we protect ourselves from the wolves that are out there? If you are wondering what those wolves look like, Jesus described them to us and how we can spot them.

† **Matthew 7:15-16a** *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.*

And if you think about it, the only reason a wolf is around sheep is to kill and devour them, and the same is true of the wolves of this world.

But how often do Christians protect themselves by taking on the appearance of the world (a wolf). Many would say that they don’t do that, but how many Christians and even churches try to imitate the world, and they do so because they think it will draw more people to Jesus. But does the bible teach us to imitate the world to win the world to Jesus? I don’t think so.

Look at the example Jesus gave, He did not imitate the world, even though He walked in the world. He did not become a drunk or a prostitute or a tax collector to win people to God and Himself. No, He was different, and a good different that people wanted.

Now let’s go back to my first question and see how Christians try to imitate the world, and how the question would be answered for those who do.

“*When sheep are together and there are wolves around, how do they protect themselves from the wolves?*” Well, they put on wolves clothing, howl like wolves, and hang out with other wolves so they will be accepted by the wolves and not eaten by them.

Now I know that sounds crazy, or like a stupid answer, but think again how the church or some Christians will imitate the world to be accepted by them. Sometimes it’s because they don’t want to be persecuted (devoured) or rejected by their friends, family and coworkers, so they will try and be like them to be accepted.

But what does today’s devotional verse tell us to do? ***Be imitators of God as dear children.***

The world has enough of the world, so why does the church and Christians try to offer them what they already have? Shouldn’t we be showing them as Christians that we look and behave different. Sometimes in how we dress, but it’s so much more than how we dress. It’s how we talk, the movies and TV shows we watch, the places we go to, or should I say don’t go to, as well

as so many different aspects of our lives that have changed because we are new creations in Jesus Christ.

Let's say for ten years you ate nothing but hamburgers and fries everyday. And after ten years you have gotten tired of that lifestyle, because you know it's not good for you. So you walk into a Mexican restaurant because you have heard it is better than hamburgers and fries. You sit down and all they offer you is only Hamburgers and fries, maybe with a little salsa because it is Mexican food, but really it's pretty much the same thing.

You would walk out thinking, why even bother, because you want something different, something better and if you wanted a hamburger you would go to a hamburger joint.

Now if you ask me. Mexican food is so much better than a hamburger and fries, and we know that. So why would you offer a hamburger and fries to someone who is sick of them, if there is all these great Mexican dishes that they could enjoy?

So why is the church, or Christian's, offering the world the same thing they already have, or a tiny bit of Jesus added to what they already have instead of a much better lifestyle, and that is a true relationship with Jesus, which is way different, and so much better than a relationship with the world.

† **3 John 1:11** *Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.*

Also, if sheep want to protect themselves from the wolves out there, they don't imitate the wolves. No, they look to the shepherd to protect them. So shouldn't we look to our Good Shepherd, Jesus to protect us as well, instead of trying to look and act like the world to be accepted by them?

† **John 10:11-14** *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.*