



Sermon, August 21, 2016  
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Coburg and Junction City United Methodist Churches

Sermon Series: Come Meet Jesus  
**“Beyond the World”**

**Scripture: John 15:18-16:4a**

18 “If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, ‘Servants are not greater than their master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. 21 But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 Whoever hates me hates my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 It was to fulfill the word that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause.’

26 “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. 27 You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

16 “I have said these things to you to keep you from stumbling. 2 They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God. 3 And they will do this because they have not known the Father or me. 4 But I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them

**Rules, Rules, Rules**

We all need a set of rules to live by. But too often, we don’t really sit down and think about the rules we are actually living by. For example, consider these lists of rules:

*Meeting rules for managers:*

- 1) Never arrive on time, or you will be stamped a beginner.
- 2) Don't say anything until the meeting is half over; this stamps you as being wise.
- 3) Be as vague as possible; this prevents irritating the others.
- 4) When in doubt, suggest that a subcommittee be appointed.
- 5) Be the first to move for adjournment; this will make you popular - it's what everyone is waiting for.

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### Rules of the lab

- 1) If an experiment works, something has gone wrong.
- 2) When you don't know what you're doing, do it neatly.
- 3) Experiments must be reproduceable, they should fail the same way each time.
- 4) First draw your curves, then plot your data.
- 5) Experience is directly proportional to equipment ruined.
- 6) Always keep a record of your data. It indicates that you have been working.

Perhaps you remember reading the book by Robert Fulghum, *All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten*. In that book he came up with a set of rules that made the most sense to him:

Most of what I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandpile at Sunday school. These are the things I learned:

Share everything.

Play fair.

Don't hit people.

Put things back where you found them.

Clean up your own mess.

Don't take things that aren't yours.

Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.

Wash your hands before you eat.

Flush.

Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.

Live a balanced life - Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

Take a nap every afternoon.

When you go out into the world, Watch out for traffic, Hold hands and stick together.

Be aware of wonder.

**Group Question: What are the rules of baseball?**

### **The Worlds We Create**

We all have these rules that govern our lives, whether we acknowledge them or not. We may be at work, or at home, or visiting family, or at a VFW meeting, or Rotary meeting, or at church. And whenever people in a group or community or society all act according to a particular set of rules or “game plan,” they create a little world. You go to a baseball or basketball or football game, you enter a little world. Another good example of this is movies and television. I love watching science fiction shows. Not the horror kind, but the kind that depict possible futures, exploring space, time travel and the like. Science fiction functions as a vehicle for people to think about alternative ways of living or ways to address current social problems. Some of my favorites have been TV series such as Star Trek (all the various series), Star Wars, Firefly, The Time Tunnel, Lost in Space, Aeon Flux, Solaris, among others. What especially appeals to me is how these shows imagine and then depict a different world from that which I experience everyday. Think for a moment about how these shows depict a different world.

**Group Question: Pick a show many people have seen. Describe some of the rules that define that world.**

### **The World We Live In**

All of this applies to the world we live in today. Think of the world you grew up in. What are some of the rules that governed that world?

**(Group responses)** What is different today?

The “world” is never quite the same throughout history, or even around the globe, is it? How would you describe our world right now? What sets of rules are we operating by?

### **New World, New Rules**

Jesus tells his disciples, “If you belonged to the **world**, the **world** would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the **world**, but I have chosen you out of the **world**—therefore the **world** hates you” (John 15:19). Jesus came to show us a new world. This world is rooted in a

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direct experience and apprehension of the Presence of God in every event, every existing thing. Jesus brought a new way of thinking, a new way of acting, a new way of being. This new way of being brought with it new rules, and thus a new world. Jesus called it the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven.

Eugene Peterson describes this new world this way:

This world, this reality, revealed by God speaking to us, is not the kind of world to which we are accustomed. It is not a neat and tidy world in which we are in control- there is mystery everywhere that takes considerable getting used to, and until we do, it scares us. It is not a predictable, cause-effect world in which we can plan our careers and secure our futures – there is miracle everywhere that upsets us no end, except for the occasions when the miracle is in our favor. It is not a dream world in which everything works out according to our adolescent expectations – there is suffering and poverty and abuse at which we cry out in pain and indignation. “You can’t let this happen!” For most of us it takes years and years and years to exchange our dream world for the real world of grace and mercy, sacrifice and love, freedom and joy. (Eugene Peterson, *Eat this Book – A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading*, p 105)

### **New Life**

How do we resist or counteract the world system?

- Play by different rules. The Jesus Way is a whole different game. For example, as you listen to or read about current political wranglings, instead of regurgitating all the negativity, articulate a positive vision of what you want the world to look like. Hold our politicians and leaders to those standards. Insist upon hearing about what programs these leaders want to enact for the betterment of the world as a whole. Elevate the conversation.
- The new Way requires a download and new Operating System. My iPhone periodically downloads a new and (supposedly) improved Operating System from time to time. We need the same thing in our lives. That is what the Holy Spirit is all about. We have direct access to

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the Divine Source of Life and Love at heart of the universe, at the heart of all things. We can get a direct download. Jesus says he will not leave us orphaned. This new world is not simply a set of new ideas, it is an actual lived reality. God is here and now, with us, within us, all about us. That is what Jesus is telling us: abide in me, he says. I will abide in you. Here. Now. Scripture leads us directly into the new reality of the Love that holds the universe together. Our world is filled with strife, but God’s world is filled with the Love that holds all things together.

- Keep plugged in. that’s what Jesus means by abiding in him. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to be that Holy Presence residing within us. But we need to keep plugged in to that Presence. That’s what all the various Spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, contemplation, acts of compassion, worship, fasting, simplicity, keeping Sabbath are all about: keeping us plugged in to God.

This fall, we are going to explore how the Lord’s Prayer is actually an entire Action Plan filled with spiritual practices designed to keep us plugged in and abiding in God.

### **Conclusion**

It’s nice to live by rules we learned in kindergarten, or even the baseball field. But Jesus calls us to grow up and live in a whole new world. Play by different rules. Download a new Operating System. And keep plugged in. Who knows? We just might begin to change the world around us!