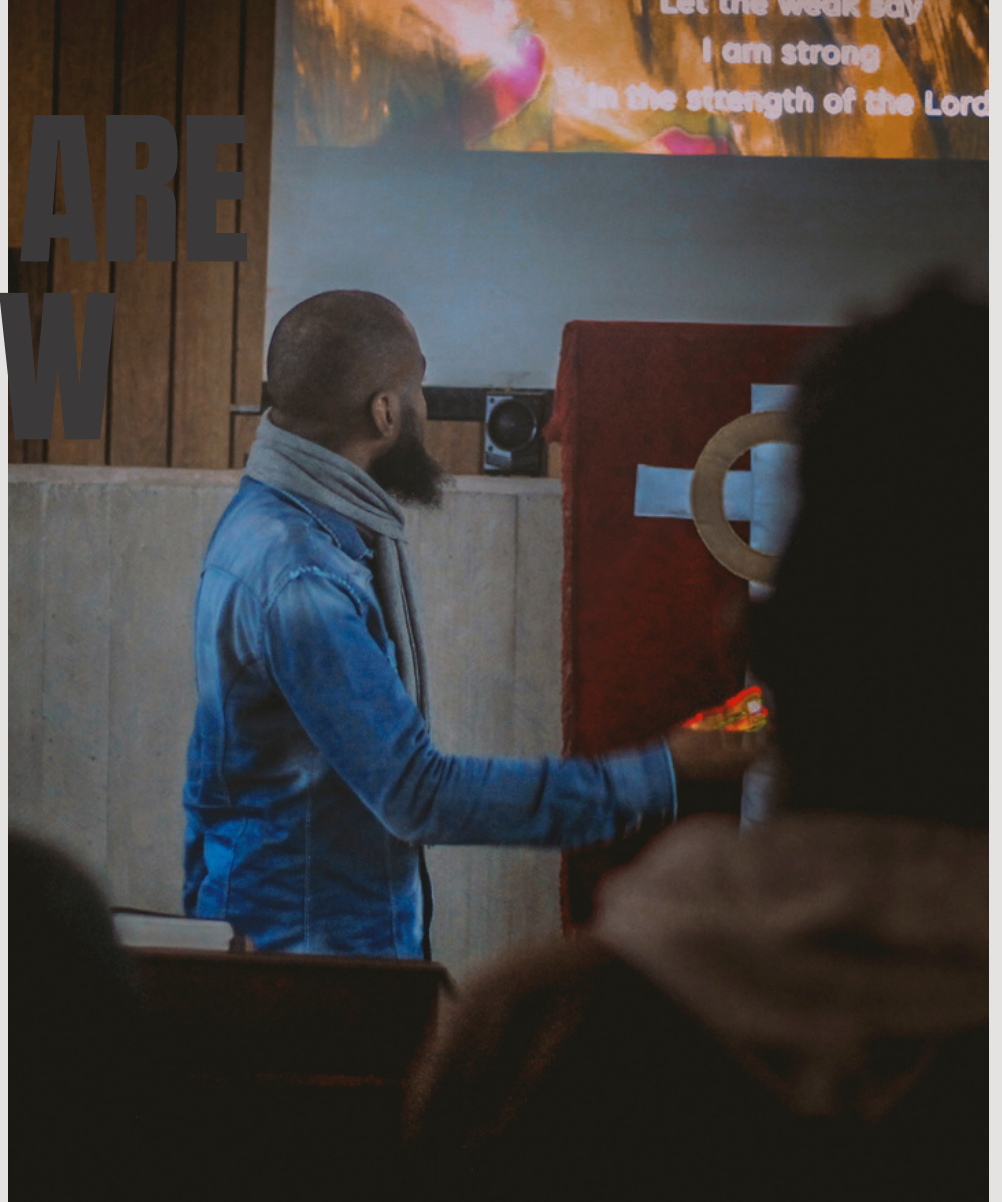


WHERE ARE YOU NOW

MATTHEW 12:30-37

Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad." You are either for or against Jesus; there is no room to be between grounds [neutrality]. There is no room for impartiality in this situation; you must choose a side. By default, if you don't select Jesus, you are siding with the opposition. Because a witness is only as reliable as their testimony, those around you need to know that you are the Lord's. You need to be clear about your beliefs, and others should be able to see that you are a follower of God just by looking at you. By supporting Jesus, you establish a relationship with Him that enables you to be open to receiving.

Being neutral means not taking a side, and it's fairly typical for people to wish to remain neutral. One of the reasons why people want to stay neutral is to take the safe route; they would rather stand in the middle than choose a side out of fear of rejection. So, neutrality might result from a desire to stay in one's comfort zone or a fear of being criticized. Often people remain impartial due to a lack of clarity.



Being neutral puts you in a position to avoid making judgments, but it's also highly risky because you risk becoming a target of conflict. Being neutral breeds confusion because it gives the enemy a place to attack you when you don't take a position. As a result of having no established roots, you become inefficient and fruitless. Furthermore, you won't grow because you aren't planted somewhere, and occasionally you might even make others stumble. Because you don't belong to anything and can't influence anyone, it also leads to an identity dilemma. Although neutrality seems like a safe and cosy zone, it is harmful.

God assumes that you are not with Him if you are neutral. Satan views your neutrality as a license for him to enter your life and abuse you. Additionally, being impartial allows others to define you. Because you neglected to make your views clear, people end up assigning you an identity that you are not.

In Genesis, after Adam sinned, God asked them [Genesis 3:9], "where are you now?" When God asked this question, He spoke of a relationship, not a specific location. It is possible to be physically present with someone while remaining emotionally distant from them. God wanted to know Adam's situation because He was worried about him. Similar to how He wants to know where you stand today. You should likewise ask those around you so that you are aware of your position.

Adams's response to the question can be found in verse 10: he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself." Adam did not explicitly respond to the question, but he did explain how he felt and what he did (he hid out of fear). Fear and loneliness are signs of a crisis in the relationship—a change in dynamic. A change of mind will cause the dynamic of any relationship to change. True harmony in a relationship starts with having the same mind and heart, not necessarily physical proximity. Two people cannot walk together if they disagree [see Amos 3:3]. If the hearts and minds are not together, it becomes difficult to go forward.

"Fulfill my delight by being like-minded, having the same affection, being of one accord, and of one thought," Philippians 2:2. Your heart's devotion is essential if you want to get the full benefits of a particular relationship. As you abide in Him, you will come to have one mind and heart with God [see John 15:1-16]. Not your geographical location, but your place in Him, is what matters when you respond to the question, "where are you?"

People in this world are seeking those who are steadfast in their positions. When people are unsure of your identity, it is challenging to communicate the gospel with them. Choose a side so that your message is not diluted by being neutral. Choose Jesus' side, and you'll be more effective in your mission.

