



"And now I am no more in the world,
but these are in the world..." (John 17:11).

Use this recent news story to help your students see the relevance
of this week's lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®
or Standard Lesson Quarterly®.

HATING?

Expressions of anger rolled across America last week when a Christian owner of an Indiana pizzeria said he wouldn't cater a same-sex wedding if requested to do so. His business was even threatened with arson. It was all part of the ongoing furor that has erupted regarding the state's recently enacted Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The sponsors of the bill say it is intended to prohibit government "from substantially burdening a person's exercise of religion," while opponents call it an "anti-gay law." Over \$800,000 has been raised to help the owner of the pizzeria defend his livelihood from boycotts, legal challenges, etc.

LOVING!

Today's lesson text challenges Christians to love one another (1 John 3:11, 23). Mutual love demonstrates the unity among Christians that the world should see for the gospel to be presented effectively to unbelievers (John 17:20-24). The gospel that teaches of God's love for the world (John 3:16) also teaches that sin must be confronted (John 8:10, 11; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; etc.).

1. Does the love we are to show to a fellow Christian who takes a stand (as did the pizzeria owner) depend on our concluding that the stand is biblically correct? Why, or why not?
2. Do you know people who have expressed strong opinions on Indiana's religious freedom law but have not read the actual text of that law? If so, what do you say to them?
3. How would the pizzeria owner's decision not to cater same-sex weddings be similar to (if at all) or different from (if at all) a refusal to cater, say, a Hindu wedding?
4. Regarding the current culture war over so-called gay rights, where is the line to be drawn between the Christian's obligation to obey the law of the land (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-5) and obligation to engage in God-honoring civil disobedience (Acts 4:18-20; 5:29)?
5. Which verse from today's lesson text do you find most personally challenging? Why?

—Charles R. Boatman

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