Sermon: **“Do not love the world or anything that belongs to the world”** (1 John 2.15)

**Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind.** (Romans 12.2)

Our world is an odd place. Christians have reacted to the world in different ways.

Monks/nuns and weird cults have often separated themselves from the world.

Those Methodists who began Trades Unions and the UK Labour Party wanted to get stuck in.

Some church-run social services have tended to become so part of the world, not distinguishable.

TEXT.

In what ways are we in the world? We are on earth; human; part of society; ‘the world’ is all around us.

As before ‘world’ here is used in a special way, but not to mean something ‘against’ God, but life which carries on as if God either did not exist, or was not important. We have to admit that sometimes this has been our attitude.

In what ways are we different? Our true home is not earth; we feel we are pilgrims; we hold lightly to ‘things’; we sense a discordance between ourselves (& Kingdom of God) and life around us – this might be in terms of values and standards. How many would have voted for more taxes, even if those extra taxes would have helped the most disadvantaged? TEXT.

Just as the Kingdom of God is like yeast, salt, light, pearl of great price, a mustard seed, so are we called to be.

* Yeast makes the bread rise, become edible.
* Salt gives essential flavour.
* Light helps us understand more clearly our situation.
* Pearl gives us a goal beyond this life, and demonstrates different values/standards.
* A mustard seed grows from tiny to huge.

Our example is Jesus, who after Ascension demonstrates being In but not Of the World. If we are In but not Of the world, this is not of our making, but only as we allow God to transform us (Romans 12.2)