

Worldliness

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[0 : 00] My subject is worldliness. Worldliness. It's an addiction to the empty pleasures of this passing age.

! And yet some Christians argue we need to become like the world to win the world.! Now, maybe to some degree, as the Bible does say, we need to be like the Romans to win the world. But I think there's a limit to that. There's certainly a limit to that.

And the problem is when you cross that line. When you cross that line, it's a dangerous thing. Worldliness. We know that old analogy of the frog in a bowl of boiling water.

If you chuck a frog in a bowl of boiling water, it's just going to immediately jump out. But if you take that same frog and you put it in a bowl of cool water and then slowly heat the water, the frog will eventually boil to death.

And that's what can happen with worldliness. It can creep up on us. It can creep up on you. In this carnal, self-pleasing culture that is Australia today. Even some seemingly harmless things, even such as what our children are exposed to and our youth when they enter university and such things, that the supposedly scientific programs of the world try to evolutionise away God, don't they?

[1 : 31] We know it's so common in the way that God's glorious creation is presented. They evolutionise away God. They just refer to Mother Nature or some other concept of man and try to scientifically remove God.

And yet it's not real science. We know for those that are into the detail of that, and I can't go into that, that you can see that it's just totally false because such science is science falsely called.

And God calls the highest wisdom of this world foolishness. It says, for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

The culture of this world, the highest wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Because friends tonight, the reality is that this world is hostile towards God.

It's an avowed enemy of God. It's hostile to him. And the threat and danger of the world to our spiritual life and growth is something we all need to take attention to and be guarded about.

[2 : 41] I need to be guarded. We need to be guarded. The Bible powerfully warns us about this danger. It warns God's people not to mess with that, not to toy with it, with the world.

We know the word exhorts us to watch out even for a little leaven, a little bit of yeast. In that lump of dough, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

It makes the whole lump swell and be affected, be influenced by the little leaven. And it's like that in the church of God too. We need to be guarded as God's people.

There's a need for purity of God's church. That's not to say we're going to look down our nose at someone who might be in open sin and such like.

But they can't be received as a brother because they are not living in accord with God's truth. It's a little leaven and we want to exhort such a one to put their trust in Christ and to be saved and to live a pleasing life to God.

[3 : 47] In Romans 12 verse 1 and 2, we know that familiar passage. It's a lovely, cherished passage that we can all apply and take heart in. It's telling us something has to happen.

Paul urges the people in Rome, he says, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Be not conformed to this world. What does that mean? To conform, it's a pressure, isn't it? It's a compliance.

It's an external pressure that's pushing you and shaping you and making you something else. And that's what the world wants to do, to conform us. But instead of being conformed, we are instead to

be transformed by the renewing of our mind.

[4 : 57] And people who conform to this world are such that think like the world, they mix with the world, they talk with the world or like the world, they dress like the world, and they enjoy being entertained by the world.

Such people are not of Christ, but of the world. Now, there's times, just trying to balance that, that it's not about necessarily external things, such that you might look like you're a Christian and be quite the opposite.

It's not about how you look. But there are some things that you have to question. Why does someone who professes to be a Christian talk like the world? Use the gutter language of the world. Why would a Christian do that? We've got to wake up to such things as being. Questioning ourselves, examining ourselves, if you're in the faith. Watch your tongue.

We know that when we mix with the world, it can have a damaging effect. And being entertained by the world, as we know, the entertainment of the world is bombarding us with anti-God messages all the time.

[6 : 07] And so, the question is for all of us, what is it that you conform to? It shows who you really belong to. Now, that's not to say that it's the whole measure of what is a Christian.

Because there are some very upstanding Mormons that I know or I've met around the place. And other folk from all kinds of different religions, very upstanding citizens of our nation.

And have got much good character traits. So, I'm not saying that living like that makes you a Christian. But I'm saying a Christian will want to live as pleasing to God as he possibly can.

The Bible talks of people who love as a pleasure more than lovers of God. That's a danger, isn't it? It's pleasure at a higher level in your estimation, in your value system than God.

Or shouldn't it be rather that God is the first place? God takes that first place in your life. You're lovers of God more than lovers of pleasure. Lovers of God.

[7 : 11] Our Lord tells us of the cares of this world as being a dangerous plant in a garden as such. He talks about the sower, as the picture is of the man going out with the bag of seed and casting it on the ground.

And he explained that this seed was the word of God. It was a picture of the word. And the various types of ground, the different kinds of ground that that seed fell on. And he talks about one of the kinds of ground as having thorns.

In Matthew 13, 22. And he explains this, that the one that received the seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word.

And he becometh unfruitful. Now I've got some dangerous choking weed in my garden. Morning glory. It looks nice. Nice purple flowers. And it just grows like you don't have to water it.

But it just takes over the whole garden. I don't know if you've got some in your backyard. But it's just an infesting weed. And it chokes things out of your garden. It basically takes over.

[8 : 18] And the world can be like that in our lives, can't it? The world can come like a choking weed and just take the life out of us. And the world can be so full of such things.

It talks about the care of this world. Our lives can be full of cares. Full of cares and anxieties and concerns and worries. Now there's times we need to pay attention to our necessary practical affairs of life.

But we can cast all of our cares upon him. Some of you might have some money worries. You can cast those worries on the Lord. It says casting all our care on him.

Whether you've got job worries, whether you've got home worries. Casting all your cares upon him. But for the ones who are in the world, the care of this world comes. It chokes them. It chokes the word.

It chokes God's truth from being planted and being flourishing. And for their salvation to happen.

The world's cares just take over. And this world, it can be an all-consuming thing.

[9 : 20] It can demand our time, our energy, our devotion. Such that it takes away God's place. And it can damage your fruitfulness as a Christian. Friends, we need to be challenged.

Because it will leave you empty and unfulfilled. Many folk are like the picture of the man who was like the seed that fell on the choking thorns.

Wasn't anything wrong with the seed, but there was something wrong with the ground. The ground was full of choking thorns of those cares of the world as it represented in that man's life. Such that the seed could not germinate and that he could not be saved.

It was shallow ground. There was rocky ground. There was shallow ground. There was thorns that were infesting the ground. We need to watch out for shallowness.

Shallowness. In our Christian life we can be shallow. We can be superficial. We cannot have a depth to our relationship with God. To our spiritual life. And friends, we all need to be challenged to go deeper with God.

[10:27] To go deeper. Deeper with that spiritual life. Deeper in your faith. To a deeper level with him. To dig deep. To dig deep into the word. To mine it for its precious truth.

To dig deep as a Christian. Instead of settling for shallowness, be firmly planted as the man. Psalm 1. He was firmly planted by the refreshing water of the word.

As we see pictured in Psalm 1. Be firmly planted in the word of God. The world. It's a question about love. It's about love.

Love not the world we read in 1 John 2. Verse 15. Another familiar one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any men love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

[11:31] And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. But here that doeth the will of God abideth forever. It's about love. Now I looked in the thesaurus in preparation for a word that defines love.

That describes love. You know, a thesaurus is a book where there's like words to define a word. And the word that really stood out to me to define love was commitment.

Commitment. The world wants your love. It wants your commitment. It wants to take your commitment, when really your commitment ought to be to the Lord.

To love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength. The world wants your love. The world wants you to love it.

But God says, love it not. Love not the world. Neither the things that are in the world. The world wants to befriend you. It wants to be your mate. It wants to seduce you.

[12:44] It wants to steal your heart. It wants you to be relaxed and comfortable about its ways. To be comfortable and resting in its presence. To win your heart.

But friends, we should not be relaxed about the world. It should not be something we're relaxed about. Or carefree about. But instead be wrestling with. Not relaxed with, but wrestling with.

As we read in Ephesians 6, 12, For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities. Against powers. Against powers.

Against the rulers of the darkness of this world. Against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Ephesians 6, verse 12. It's a wrestling match.

This is intense. It's in your face. It's hand to hand. It's face to face combat. A wrestling with the rulers of the darkness of this world.

[13:45] This world is a dark, dark place. What God do you follow? That is the question. What love is uppermost in your life and heart? Is it the God of this world, small g, that takes your love?

That takes your devotion? That takes your energy, your time? That your whole life is consumed with making a buck? Or with just chasing the almighty dollar, as the world would call it?

Or trying to make a name for yourself? Or is it that God is the one who merits your love? Who you give your love to?

We wrestle not against, including the rulers of the darkness of this world. There's forces arrayed against you. It's a battle. And I know it was said, it's not a playground.

It's a battleground. I've heard someone say in recent times. This world is religious. You can be religious and be worldly.

[14:47] You can follow another God. It says in 2 Corinthians 4 verse 4, Of the world and of those who follow the world, In whom the God of this world, small g, The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

He's lurking in those dark shadows.

Lurking in the dark shadows of a world without God. He's there and he's active. It says that, you know, I gave a message once and I said, The devil's got quite a good CV.

You know, if you're looking for someone to employ. If you're looking for a good worker, there's a lot to commend the devil. He's hard working.

He's roaming about seeking him, he may devour. He doesn't take too many sickies or smokers. You know, he's pretty active. He's a hard working force.

[16:02] And he's determined to dog your steps. Whether you're saved or lost tonight. He's public enemy number one.

And he's got a lot of good character traits. Of course I'm talking completely tongue in cheek. Because we know he's the epitome of evil. And he's the one who's really God's ultimate enemy. And ours too. But I'm just trying to put the picture that Satan doesn't rest. He's quite hard at it. Because he's committed to his cause.

As he has been right from day one. And the God of this world is blind in people's minds so they cannot believe. A sly, sneaky, substitute God, small Jew, the devil.

And here's the power behind the world. Here's the power behind it. The driving force for its blindness. And people rock on. And what do they do? Rock on. Addicted to his catchy beats.

[17:02] Blindly following him. As they bop along all the way to hell. Amazingly and astoundingly, the worldly church's response to worldliness is to compromise with it. To join forces with it.

The term rocket roll, it means fornication. It's the street known for sexual immorality. It's wrecked the lives of teenagers, of many through suicide, drug abuse, immorality, perversion, satanism. Sadly we're living in a day where many Christians are allowing this demonic music into their churches. is to compromise with it, to join forces with it.

The term rock and roll, it means fornication. It's the street known for sexual immorality. It's wrecked the lives of teenagers, of many through suicide, drug abuse, immorality, perversion, Satanism. Sadly, we're living in a day where many Christians are allowing this demonic music into their churches, thinking and claiming that the music is holy and sanctified because the lyrics are changed to include some religious words.

It justifies it in their mind. Where is the discernment for that? Why is that? Why are Christians losing the ability to discern, to judge between the evil and the good, the clean and the unclean?

[18:12] The fact is demonic music, even in the church today, it's proof of the moral and spiritual decay, of the spiritual decline in the church of God today.

And it's across the board. You know, this is not a Pentecostal thing. This is not a Baptist thing. It's everybody's. You know, it's endemic in Christianity, churchianity today.

It's not that one denomination is above another in this regard because there's a dire lack of discernment in the body of Christ today.

We're being invaded by hard rock, acid rock, punk rock, new wave, heavy metal music under the guise of religious rock and roll. Now, I'm not saying here today that God can't give us new songs to sing.

And he does. And there's some good godly songs that are contemporary. But when the religious rock is the domain, we've got a question.

[19:20] Rock and roll has got no godly foundation at all. And so what is the Christian's true response to such a thing, to the world? Should we speak out or tone it down?

Should it be this kind of a message? Should it be something that's... We put that on the shelf. We put that on the dusty shelf.

That's from the dark ages. We don't dance to criticise such things today. Let's just go with the flow. Or should we rather sound forth the trumpet?

Sound the alarm. Shake the saints from their slumbering and wake them. We must yield to God's word. That must be centre stage. Again, I'm putting this across.

Not saying that we've got it all together. But I know, as was talked of Saturday, humbly relying on God. That is where we must start from, isn't it?

[20:23] Humbly, humbly relying on God. Surrendering to Him. And wanting to please Him. To give Him all the glory. That is what motivates us. Not a preference or a pickiness or some religiosity that drives us to dislike certain kinds of music.

But a driving force of wanting to love the Lord with all of our heart. To honour Him in every aspect of our lives. And in particular, in the church of God.

That should be His holy place. We must be yielding to His word. We read in 2 Peter 1 verse 4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.

That by these you might be partakers of the divine nature. Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Great, exceeding great and precious promises.

Now this Bible was one that was read by a man of God. And I was personally privileged to know. And I thank God for him. This last week is the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible.

[21 : 33] I thank God for the King James Bible. I thank God for the men and women of God. Who bled and died so we could hold this book in our hands today. The word of God. Exceeding great and precious promises.

And this man here. He made a point of saying. The blood of Jesus Christ. His son cleansed us from all sin.

That was his last motto. And he used that phrase all the time. And there's exceeding great and precious promises here. And they're real and for now.

And by then we might be partakers of the divine nature. Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Friends, as far as your relationship to the world as a godly man.

As a woman of God today. We want to escape the world. And its pollution and corruption. It is the world that killed our Lord.

[22 : 34] The sins of the world were laid upon him. Our sins. As he went to the cross to die for sinful mankind. We want to flee from the world.

The world is your enemy. It ought to be. It ought to be your enemy. James 4.4 it says. Ye adulterers and adulteresses.

Know ye not that friendship of the world is enmity. With God. Eminency. That's hatred.

With God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world. Is the enemy of God. We cannot join forces with the world. We cannot treat the world as our mate.

Our buddy. Our friend. Now that said. We want to reach them. We want to reach the lost. We want to reach the gutter most.

[23 : 33] We want to reach the uttermost. I was there. So are you. None of us are deserving of his grace and mercy. And every lost soul. Even the darkest. Foulest.

The furthest. God wants to reach. And you are the messenger to reach them. We want to reach them in love. It's like we said. Yesterday in the seminar.

As I was talking to one of the speakers. We love homosexuals. It's the lifestyle that we speak against. Because God speaks against it. We love the Muslims.

We love the lost. Because we were once in their shoes. We know the one who can save them.

And we implore them. We are beseeching them as God's ambassadors. To declare the only hope that can save them. And we are not wanting to be standoffish.

[24 : 32] And holier than thou. Putting others down. And thinking that we are somehow above others. In any way, shape or form. But because God has saved us. We want to please him.

That's the driving force. And so the world is not our friend. Friendship with the world is hateful. It's enmity with God. Now some would say.

That's going a bit extreme. They laugh at such things. They laugh at those who stand with conviction for the truth. There are churchy people who want to hang on to their worldliness.

But they ultimately are standing against God's truth by doing that. Some in churchdom today appeal for increasing worldliness. They want more of it. It's like there's a bit of a catchphrase that you hear in some circles.

They want to take it to the next level. Let's take this church to the next level. They're thinking, you know, somehow they're going to get more and more. More and more.

[25 : 34] More and more people are going to come in. More and more people are going to come. And we're going to get prosperous as a church. And we're going to have our name in lights. And everyone's going to know we're the church of so and so. And we're going to take this church to the next level.

Higher and higher they're thinking. But really it's down, down, down, down, down. To the next level. To the next level. Until there's no difference with the world. Friends, we've got to be careful of that.

All of us need to be careful of such things. Because the world is an avowed enemy of our God. Of our saviour. And all apostate religions are of the world.

And it's sad when God's people do not weep over sin. They do not weep over the lost. They do not stand faithfully for the word of God. It's like they want to tone it down such...

They've lost the whole message altogether. The salvation message is not... It's watered down so weakly that... It's only by the grace of God that someone can be saved in such a service.

[26 : 36] And God still does that, I know. But... What a loss it is. What a loss. Where are those who will not tolerate the spirit of the world in their own life?

There's a cost to that. A cost to confronting the world. But what at the cost of doing nothing? What at the cost of doing nothing? We'll just go to the next level.

Here's a quote. If the pastor allows foolishness and evil to come in, it will affect God's blood-bought people in a negative way. By causing worldliness, carnality and backsliding.

On the other hand, if they keep out evil and concentrate on building up God's people with the word of God, the church will grow and mature. That's what we want.

We want a hunger and thirst after righteousness so we can be filled. I want to urge you, fellow believers tonight, to holiness of mind, of life, of home, of heart. In 2 Corinthians 7 it says, Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

[27 : 43] Sometimes it's needful to rebuke. The Bible talks about rebuking. I know I find that hard to do. I don't know about you. Sometimes I get some rebuking myself, which I need.

But I find it hard to rebuke people. To say, look, thus saith the Lord. But we must. We must in love. In love. And I know there's loved ones that we know that we just want to shake them and wake them.

Keep them up. Just give them a prod. A loving prod. To provoke them. Unto love and good works. Friends, to discipline them.

In godly love. In godly discipline. If somebody says we want to confront them lovingly. And gently. As the word says, watching our own selves last week.

You know, make a mess of it. In the Andrew Craig version. So Christians are called to be separate. And we want to urge other believers to that separated life.

[28 : 47] And to take stock of our own personal spiritual life. And friends, what now? What now? After this message you've heard, I just want to leave you with a challenge. Leave myself with a challenge.

To read and heed God's word. Let it live. Nourish it. Commit to a local church. Be fully committed. Instead of following the religious rock and rollers.

Who want to sound and look like the world. And be accepted by the world. And to play on MTV. And to get on the charts. Secular and gospel. Be one of those that the world will hate you.

The world will hate you because you're just so sold out for the cause. We know, as I was talking. When I asked on a program of late. Who I look up to.

As a Christian. And I had to think of a street preaching gospel preacher. I look up to those men of God. Who are willing to be ridiculed.

[29 : 47] And to be scoffed at. And to be cursed. And spat upon. I look up to those people. Because they are the ones. That have got the guts to do something.

And yet. What can I do? What can you do? Will it be that you're so out and out for Christ. That the world will hate your guts?

That should be the case. It should be the case. As the Lord Jesus tells us. In John 15, 19 and 20. If ye were of the world. The world would love his own.

But because ye are not of the world. But I have chosen you out of the world. Therefore the world hateth you. The world hates you.

Because you love me. He says. Do you love me? He says. If so, the world will hate you. As Paul writes. Yea. And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus.

[30 : 47] Will suffer persecution. Christians will not be loved. By the world. Now you're not going to be popular. You're not going to win the popularity contest.

As it were. With the world. And you know. It's not going to help your promotion prospects. In your place of employment. If you're an out and out Christian. As I know. It's not going to help your material prospects.

If you're a Christian. At times. But. How much rather. To please him. How much rather. To honour him. Instead of being loved.

And accepted by the world. And being one of the mates. Of the world. We don't want to be buddies. With the world. That rejected our saviour. That still curses his name.

Still uses his name. As a gutter word. We want to not conform to that. But to be transformed. Transform. Transform. By the renewing of your mind. Steps that you can take personally.

[31 : 47] Friends. Set a watch over your heart. In Proverbs 4.23. It says. Keep your heart. With all diligence. For out of it. Are the issues of life. Proverbs 4.23.

Keep thy heart. Guard it. Watch your heart. Be a discerning Christian. Get some material. Get some material. That will help you to discern. Now the material I get.

And I don't even necessarily agree with all of that. That I do get. But I get material that will challenge my thinking. That will challenge me about doctrine. That will challenge me about teaching.

That will challenge me about what is popular. So that I am informed about that. And I can make an informed decision. By looking at the scriptures.

And considering whether it is so. Friends. God commands us to keep our hearts. And lies under the rule of his word. And that must be the ultimate. It's not about what is the top of the pops.

[32 : 45] The cry through the land is for revival. Someone said. But how can it come. When Christians are in love with their TVs. And rock music. All this at the expense of Bible reading. Prayer.

Holiness. And separation from evil. It's a question we've all got to consider. Where's my family going? As I'm setting the pace. As I'm setting the direction.

Protect your family. Don't be a mate of the world. We don't want a bar of it. Be careful what you expose yourselves and your children to. Christians are called to live a God honouring.

Wholesome life. That you love the Lord. With all your heart. And you want his glory to be that preeminent driving force. Behind all your decisions that you make. And his purity and truth will be evident.

In your fellowship. In your spiritual walk. Let us pray.

[33 : 45]