

# PM 1 John 2:12-17

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Preacher: Rev Robert Dale

[ 0 : 00 ] Let's just come before God initially in prayer. I'll give out the notices after prayer.

Heavenly Father, it is a solemn thing to come into the presence of the living God. We do come with a sense of our own unworthiness, but also with a sense of your great glory and of your great love and of the wonderful welcome that is extended to us through the Lord Jesus Christ, your Son.

We thank you that he has said, Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. And we would come to you tonight, and we would seek not only spiritual rest, but spiritual refreshment, spiritual enlivenment.

We would seek that we may hear the word of God in our hearts, and we would seek that we might know the love of God and the glory of the gospel.

Grant to us, O Lord God, that our meeting together tonight may be to your praise and honour, and grant that it may be for our spiritual good.

[ 1 : 35 ] Draw near to us then, O Lord, as we draw near to you, for we ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. A few notices tonight.

Wednesday night we have our usual Bible study and prayer meeting, which will be led this week by Norman. Next Lord's Day, 11 o'clock and 6 o'clock, our preacher is Alan Thompson from Dow and Vale.

The contractor, we hope, is going to start work on the dry rot problem on Wednesday. And that does mean that we won't be able to use this upstairs area for two to three weeks.

So during that time, the meeting will be downstairs, and you will need to enter from the lower car park. The General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, which met two weeks ago, record their concern over the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the overall health and well-being of our people, as well as its impact on the national economy.

They note with sadness the spiritual and moral decline of recent times and the apparent failure to acknowledge the name of our God and to reach out to him for help as the crisis worsens.

[ 3 : 22 ] They appoint a day of prayer to be observed in all the congregations on the 25th of October. So that's next Sunday. And you will find details of that call to prayer on the sheet that is available just inside the door.

I mentioned in the course of my sermon this morning some figures that I'd found of people's attitudes towards the Ten Commandments, which were quite alarming.

From memory, just at random, not everyone even agreed that murder and stealing were wrong. A substantial number didn't think it was necessary for children to obey their parents.

And even amongst Christians, to me this was the most astonishing statistic, 44% of people who said they were Christians thought it was okay to worship idols.

It underlines for us, doesn't it, our great need to pray for our nation. We do that at all times, but the General Assembly has asked us to do so especially next Sunday.

[ 4 : 45 ] Just to remind you also that the clocks go back next Sunday morning. gives you an extra hour in bed.

Let's hear the singing of a psalm now. And it is Psalm 148. And we're going to hear the verses 11 to 14.

There's a special reason for choosing these particular verses. And if I read just the opening words, bear these in mind when we come to our study in 1 John later, you'll see the connection.

All nations and earth's kings, princes and all who reign, young men and maidens too, both children and old men, and all who reign, young men and maidens too, and children and old men, the Lord's great name by them be praised, his name alone on high is raised.

All nations and earth's kings, princes and all who reign, young men and maidens too, both children and old men, and the Lord's great name by them be praised, his name alone on high is raised.

[ 6 : 25 ] His glory shines abroad, above the earth and heaven, and his Lord's songs and landings too, from the shadow of West andorie, and the Messiah comes into the broken ties.

All kind of grace of an apostles' sense, members who reign, and the Lord as he, and the humble you are maintained. On behalf of the of the triumphs of Christ, because the kingdom and our God is raised. Let him style you praise the Lord, they are raised people, praise the Lord.

Amen. Amen. Let's hear now from the Bible, the Word of God, and I'm going to read first the whole of John chapter 15.

So taking up our reading, in fact, from where we left off this morning, John 15, and then afterwards just a few verses from 1 John chapter 2.

John 15 verse 1. I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser.

[ 7 : 44 ] Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. For apart from me, you can do nothing.

If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch, and withers. And the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

[ 8 : 53 ] If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you.

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends. For all that I have heard from my Father, I have made known to you.

[ 10 : 22 ] You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide.

So that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own.

But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, a servant is not greater than his master.

If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

[ 11 : 37 ] If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me, hates my Father also.

If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.

But the word that is written in their law must be fulfilled. They hated me without a cause. But when the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning. Now we turn over to 1 John chapter 2.

And just a few verses, which we will look at later on. Verses 12 through to 17. 1 John 2 verse 12.

[ 12 : 56 ] I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong.

And the word of God abides in you. And you have overcome the evil one. Do not love the world, or the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, and the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

[ 14 : 13 ] And the world is passing away, along with its desires. But whoever does the will of God, abides forever.

Let's come now before the Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you that most of us here can say with confidence that we know you.

And we know Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. We thank you for this great and glorious blessing. And we realize that it has not come about by our own searching.

It has not come about by our own merit. It has come about by grace. You have chosen us out of the world.

We did not choose ourselves, but you chose us. Lord, we thank you that it is so. We don't pretend to understand every aspect of that deep truth.

[ 15 : 31 ] And yet we believe it. That you chose us simply because it was your will to choose us. And having chosen us, you sent your dear Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to die for our sins.

And you have raised him up to be the head of your people. And to be the Lord of glory forever. He is indeed the chosen one.

And we, as your chosen people, would follow him. We thank you for both the encouragements that we have read in your word and the warnings.

We take to heart the warning against unfruitfulness. That solemn warning that if we bear no fruit, we can expect to be cast aside as branches.

We take to heart the solemn warning that even if we are faithful, we can expect some form of persecution.

[ 16 : 44 ] That the world will hate us. And Lord, we feel something of that even in this country at the present time. We know ourselves to be out on a limb.

Holding views that are now despised. And even regarded perversely as immoral. We take to heart your warning too.

That we should not love the world. That this world is passing away. But Lord, we thank you that even in that there is encouragement.

This world is passing away to make way for a better world. A new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. And we look forward with longing to that.

We thank you for the multitude of blessings along the way. Thank you for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Help us to love them with a pure heart.

[ 17 : 41 ] Thank you for the joy of following Christ. Indeed, it is no hardship to follow your commandments.

But it brings us joy to do so. Thank you for all your loving care day by day. Which every one of us has experienced.

And we can all testify that the Lord has been good to us. We pray that you will make us fruitful. Make us fruitful here in Dumfries Free Church, we pray.

We know that we face an uphill task here in this town. Not only because of our own smallness. But because of the hardness of people's hearts.

But Lord, help us that we may be faithful proclaiming the gospel. We pray for all the churches in this town. That they may be fruitful in serving you.

[ 18 : 46 ] Even taken together, we know that all the congregations in this town. Are but a small proportion of the total population. But Lord, we pray that your spirit will be at work in us all.

To fulfill your purposes in this area. We pray for the churches of God throughout the land. And throughout the world.

That we might yet see a day of reviving. Lord, there have been many years that have gone by now. Since the last revival in this area of southwest Scotland.

We long for such days to return. When the multitudes will turn to the Lord and be saved. We pray, Lord, for your persecuted saints in every part of the world.

We pray for all who are under pressure or suffering in any way. We think, Lord, of those who are caught up in the warfare in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

[ 19 : 51 ] For those who are in lands afflicted with great poverty. And for all who are afflicted by this present scourge of coronavirus.

Oh, Heavenly Father, we trust you as the God of power. But also the God of love. That even this little virus that spreads through the earth causing havoc.

That even this is under your sovereign hand. That it is allowed for your wise purposes. And we pray that good may yet come out of this evil.

We pray that there will be some who will think of man's helplessness in such situations. We'll realise the limitations of science.

And we'll realise the need to call out to God. Oh, Heavenly Father, that our nation would call out upon the living God how we long for this. We pray for our leaders for wisdom in all their decisions.

[ 20 : 58 ] But above all that they may look beyond themselves. And realise that there is a King of Kings. And a Lord of Lords whom we all must serve.

Draw near to each one of us in whatever personal needs we have. You know our hearts. You know the individual circumstances that we're all in. Grant blessing upon each and every household.

Thank you, Lord, for the young families amongst us. We pray for the little ones that they may be brought up faithfully in the knowledge and love of God.

We pray, Lord, for older ones too. Some suffering much with all kinds of illness. Lord, grant that from beginning to end of our lives, we may be faithful to God.

And we may serve you in whatever way is appropriate to our circumstances. Grant us, Lord, that even as we approach old age, it may be with graciousness.

[ 22 : 04 ] That we may approach that great day when we will be called up higher. Lord, we pray for the Lord Jesus who died for us.

We're going to hear another psalm being sung now. That second psalm is Psalm 25.

Psalm 25, and we're going to hear verses 1 to 7. This is in the Scottish Psalter version, which begins, To thee I lift my soul, O Lord.

My God, I trust in thee. Let me not be ashamed. Let not my foes triumph o'er me. To thee I lift my soul, O Lord.

Lord, I trust in thee. My God, let me in all day, I share it.

[ 23 : 47 ] Nor foes triumph for me. Let touch me.

But those that with the force transgressed will shame upon men fall.

Show me thy ways, O Lord, thy path so teach thou me.

And to the King be in thy truth, may thy teacher be.

For thou art born the dust, to me salvation set.

[ 25 : 17 ] And lie upon thee all the day, expecting to attend.

Like tender mercies, Lord, I pray thee to remember.

I'm loving kindnesses for thee, a being of hope forever.

My sins and faults of you, do thou, O Lord, forget.

After thy mercy, think on me, and for thy goodness grace.

[ 26 : 43 ] Amen. Do not love the world, or the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. In our first three studies in 1 John, we've seen how the grand theme of this letter is real Christianity.

We've seen how real Christians know God, obey God, and love God's people. We're not perfect.

We're not perfect. We all sin. We all need forgiveness. And John has reminded us of the

forgiveness that we have in our Lord Jesus Christ. But our desire is to walk in the light and in the love of God.

Well, here in our text tonight, we have another mark of real Christianity. Separation from the world.

[ 28 : 32 ] Now, I have to admit, this is not a popular subject. I haven't heard very many sermons on it. I haven't preached very often on it myself.

Many Christians, I find, are resistant to the whole idea of separation. But here it is in Scripture, and I believe that it's very important to us.

Worldliness is one of the great weaknesses of the church today. We want to be accepted by the world.

We want to be part of the world. We want to enjoy everything that the world has to offer. And our witness to the world is weakened by that.

I used the illustration this morning of testing for gold. Testing gold to see whether it's pure.

[ 29 : 43 ] But what if someone has some genuine gold, and they deliberately add some impurity to it?

So instead of pure gold, we end up with a mixture of gold and some base metal. That is essentially what worldliness does to us.

It corrupts the pure gold of faith. Corrupts it with the false gold of an unbelieving world. I want us to consider this evening three matters from this passage.

Who he is writing to in verses 12 to 14. What he says in verse 15. And why in verses 15 to 17.

First though, we need to clear up an apparent contradiction. In John 3 and verse 16.

[ 30 : 59 ] Possibly the best known verse in the whole of the Bible. We read, For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.

That whoever believes in him should not perish. But have eternal life. It's John himself who records those words.

God so loved the world. And yet now he says to us. Do not love the world. How can we reconcile those two verses?

Well it seems to me that there are two vital differences. First, in what we mean by the world.

It's the same Greek word, *cosmos*, in both verses. But the context is entirely different. In John 3.16 it is fallen humanity.

[ 32 : 07 ] In need of salvation. Here, it is a fallen world system. Opposed to God.

It's the difference between whoever and whatever. God loves the people of this world. And so must we.

Whilst rejecting the sinful practices of this world. Second, there's a difference in what we mean by the word love.

Again, it's the same Greek word in both verses. *Agape*. But it's used in two different contexts. In John 3.16 it is God's self-giving love.

Reaching out to the lost. Which we need to have ourselves. Here, it is a self-seeking love.

[ 33 : 09 ] Which only thinks of our own desires. And that we must reject. These two verses then are entirely compatible.

We must be inspired by the one. John 3.16 And warned by the other. 1 John 2.15 So let's come now to this passage in 1 John chapter 2.

And first let's consider. Who he is writing to. John addresses here. Three kinds of people. I'm writing to you little children.

Because your sins are forgiven for his namesake. I'm writing to you fathers. Because you know him who is from the beginning. I'm writing to you.

Young men. Because you have overcome. The evil one. He then appears to repeat himself.

[ 34 : 14 ] With some slight variations. I write to you children. Because you know the father. I write to you fathers. Because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you young men. Because you are strong. And the word of God abides in you. And you have overcome. The evil one. Now you could take these three categories.

Literally. As different age groups. The church does after all. Include people of all ages. That's why I chose that opening psalm.

One four seven. Where it says. Kings of the earth. And all peoples. Princes and all rulers of the earth. Young men and maidens. Old men and children. Let them praise the name of the Lord.

That is God's ideal for the church. That it should embrace all kinds of people. Even in a little church like ours.

[ 35 : 22 ] It's a great joy that we do have. Some of us who are older. Some young men and young women. And some children. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had some princes.

And kings of the earth as well. Well. The church is all embracing in that sense. The gospel is for all kinds of people. Most commentators however.

Take these three categories here. To be three stages of spiritual maturity. Babes in Christ. Newly converted.

Young men who are strong in the Lord. Fighting the Lord's battles. And spiritual fathers. Mature in the faith. And full of wisdom.

Calvin incidentally takes a slightly different view. He suggests that the little children. Is an affectionate term for the whole church. After all. Chapter two begins.

[ 36 : 29 ] My little children. Addressing everyone. John. On that view. There's only two groups. The old. And the young. As to the repetition.

All kinds of ingenious explanations. Have been offered. Some think that John. Was interrupted. And repeated himself accidentally.

Others think it was a scribal error. I would prefer to see it as a deliberate repetition. For emphasis. Repetition is not uncommon in the scriptures.

It's actually. Quite frequent. In Hebrew poetry. And John. John. After all. Was Jewish. And he would have thought. In Hebrew.

Or Aramaic. Repetition would come. Naturally to him. But taken over all. We can say.

[ 37 : 31 ] That John. Is addressing here. Everyone. The whole church. Whatever age we are. Whatever stage we've reached.

In the Christian life. We all need. This warning. Against worldliness. It's true.

He only uses male terms. Fathers and young men. Nowadays. He would get into trouble. For that. Wouldn't he? But they're used. As representative terms.

I hope that you. Understand that. We could. Say. Very similar things. Of mothers. And young women. Here is a warning.

Then. That is. Needed. By. The whole church. But these verses. Twelve to fourteen. Before we leave them.

[ 38 : 28 ] They are a very. Encouraging passage. Even the children. In the church. Children. Children. Children who believe.

Know the forgiveness. Of sins. And they know. The father. Isn't that extraordinary. That even children. Can know God.

We saw. Our granddaughter. Last week. Down in London. One of the joys. And one of the joys. Of that visit. Was to see. Our son.

Interacting. With his little daughter. He is a very loving father. And she is a very knowing daughter. She knows her father.

Six months old. But she knows her father. Father. And it is the same. With the children of God. Even from the very day.

[ 39 : 28 ] That we are converted. We know. Our heavenly father. The father's meanwhile. He is full of praise.

For them. Isn't he? Indeed. He is full of praise. For the whole church here. They have a deep theological understanding. They know him who is from the beginning.

That's a more theological expression. Isn't it? Rather than just the father. They understand the theology. He could mean there.

Either the father or the son. It would be true of either. But probably his speaking of Christ. Since he used almost exactly the same expression.

Back in chapter one. Concerning the son of God. No doubt as fathers in the church. They set an example.

[ 40 : 27 ] No doubt they are full of wisdom. No doubt they keep watch over the younger ones. In the congregation. I thank God that we do have fathers.

In our congregation here. The young men meanwhile. They are strong. And have overcome the evil one. Both in their own personal.

Daily battle against temptation. And in the work of the Lord. We wrestle not against flesh and blood. But against principalities and powers. And these young men in the faith.

They have their victories to record. Not through their own strength. But because the word of God. Abides in them. That's how.

We will be victorious against the evil one. If we know and love the Bible. If the Bible is written upon our hearts. Paul calls the word of God.

[ 41 : 27 ] The sword of the spirit. Again. I thank God that we do have some young men. Both. Literally and spiritually.

In our congregation here. We need young men. And young women. To go out onto the front line. As it were. Today. John.

Loves these people. And he wants to affirm them here. In these verses. As genuine Christians. The kind of things that he's saying. All the way through these letters.

He's probing into our hearts. He's causing us again and again. To question. Am I a real Christian? Here he wants to reassure them.

Yes I know. You really do know the father. You really do know him. Who was from the beginning. You really have triumphed.

[ 42 : 25 ] Over the evil one. You are real Christians. But even so. And here is the point.

Even so. They need to hear this warning. Do not love the world. And we need to hear this warning as well.

No matter how close our relationship with God. No matter how deep our theological understanding. No matter how high our position is in the church.

No matter how great our past spiritual achievements. worldliness. Worldliness. Can still destroy it all. So let's come now to that warning.

And to our second heading. What he says. In verse 15. Do not love the world. Or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world. The love of the father.

[ 43 : 29 ] Is not in him. John sets the world here. In diametric opposition. To God.

Which indeed it is. He has in mind. Possibly. That saying of Jesus. In Matthew 6. No one can serve two masters.

For either he will hate the one. And love the other. Or he will be devoted to one. And despise the other. John was there remember.

He heard that sermon on the mount. He would remember those words very vividly. On that occasion. The Lord Jesus had applied them.

Specifically to. The love of money. You cannot serve God. And mammon. But here he enlarges it. To include worldliness.

[ 44 : 28 ] In general. You can't serve God. And the world. You can't love God. And the world. It's one or the other. Or he may have in mind.

Our Lord's own words. At the last supper. Again. John was there. And he heard. And he recorded these words. You are not of the world.

But I chose you out of the world. But what exactly is the world in this context?

And what exactly is worldliness? Some of you. Not many. But some of you.

Are old enough to remember. When Christians were given lists of things. That they ought not to do. Keep away from the pub.

[ 45 : 26 ] We were told. Avoid the cinema. And the theatre. And the dance hall. Young women were warned against wearing makeup. In some circles.

Television was frowned upon. All these things were seen as worldly. Avoid these things. Tick off the list one by one. And you'll be okay.

Then came the swinging sixties. So called. During which I was brought up. And young people especially. And young people especially. Rebelled against all of these restrictions.

And to many today. They probably sound very quaint. And old fashioned. Now it seems to me. That those old rules.

Were well meant. And those who imposed them. Had a genuine concern. For godliness. And they ought not to be. Just cast aside.

[ 46 : 31 ] As something that just belongs to history. There's wisdom in them. But they never really touched. The heart of the matter.

And they could so easily. Become pharisaical. Outward rules. Covering over. Inward corruption. John himself. Defines worldliness. For us here. And he doesn't. Define it. In terms of a list. Of do's and don'ts.

He defines it. In verse 16. As. The desires of the flesh. And the desires of the eyes. And pride. Of life.

Three very broad principles. Sinful lusts. Covetous looks. And arrogant ambition. Or perhaps we could say.

[ 47 : 31 ] Boasting in our achievements. You can see. All of those three things. Right at the beginning.

Of the Bible. The fall of mankind. Begins with a kind of worldliness. In Genesis 3. In the account of the fall.

You remember how. Eve was tempted. By Satan. To eat of the forbidden fruit. The fruit of the tree. Of the knowledge of good. And evil.

The one tree. That God. Had forbidden them to eat. And it says. When the woman. Saw. That the tree.

Was good for food. And a delight. To the eyes. And that the tree. Was to be desired. To make one wise. She took of its fruit.

[ 48 : 28 ] And ate. And gave to her husband. With disastrous consequences. Do you see. What's going on there. This combination. Of factors. It looks nice.

It tastes nice. It'll be very satisfying. And. The serpent. Has told me. It'll make me wise. It'll make me like God. I want it.

Never mind. What God said. I want it. That is worldliness. In essence. Now God.

Is not a killjoy. God. God. He had actually. Given Adam and Eve. A beautiful garden. To live in. With all manner of fruits.

All of which. They could freely eat. God. Wanted them. To enjoy. This. Beautiful world. That he had created. But within the boundaries.

[ 49 : 30 ] That he had set. He had also given them. Work to do. Looking after the garden. At the end of the day.

They could have sat down. With a real. Godly. Sense of achievement. And enjoyed. Fellowship with. God himself. But no.

They wanted more. And so it is. Likewise with us. God. Wants us. To enjoy. This world.

Paul says. In 1 Timothy 6. God has given us. Richly. All things. To enjoy. But only. Within the boundaries. That he has set.

The problem comes. When we want things. That God has forbidden. Or when we want. The things of this world. More than we want God. Or when we want.

[ 50 : 30 ] To set ourselves up. As equal with God. Or even greater than God. That is worldliness. A love of this world.

That exceeds. Our love of God. It's worldliness too. When we. Adopt the opinions. Of this world. Because we love. The praise of men. More than the praise of God. God. God. God. God. God. God. Last Wednesday. Jack. Jack. Spoke on Psalm 1.

And you have there. A warning. Against worldliness. The godly man. We're told. Walks not in the counsel. Of the ungodly. Nor stands in the way.

Of sinners. Nor sits in the seat. Of scoffers. Three ways. There in which we can. Take our stand. With the world.

[ 51 : 27 ] As opposed. To God. That is worldliness. You see the very opposite. Of worldliness. At the end of the Bible.

Revelation 21. 22. In the account. Of the new heavens. And the new earth. There you have. A scene of. Indescribable beauty.

With the new Jerusalem. Coming down. Out of heaven. Radiant with the glory. Of God. With its streets. Of gold. And its gates. Of pearl.

And the river. Flowing through it. Like crystal. And the tree of life. On either side. With its twelve fruits. And that great. Gathering of God's people.

From all. Parts of the earth. Freed now. From all the sorrows. Of the world. Enjoying a world. Of perfect joy.

[ 52 : 28 ] Now I'm sure. That. God's people. Then will. Enjoy. That glorious. New creation. I'm sure. They will enjoy. Each other's company.

But what. Do they enjoy. Most. In Revelation 22. The throne. Of God. And of the Lamb. Will be there.

And his servants. Will. Worship him. In other words. God. Will come. First. No matter. How wonderful. That new creation.

Is. God. Himself. Will still. Be the focus. Of attention. Here in this world.

However. All too often. This world. Comes first. In our affections. Rather than God. Now why is this wrong?

[ 53 : 25 ] Why is it so dangerous? Let's come now. To our final heading. Why. John. Issues this warning. And we. See in these verses. Three reasons.

First. As he says. In verse 15. If anyone. Loves the world. The love of the father. Is not. In him.

These two. Are. Mutually. Exclusive. The one. Squeezes out. The other. We can. And we. Should. Enjoy. This world. As God's creation. And as the gift. Of God. God. But the moment. It becomes. More. Important. To us.

Than God. More attractive. To us. Than God. Then. We have fallen. Into. Idolatry. You shall.

[ 54 : 22 ] Love the Lord. Your God. With all your heart. And with all your soul. And with all your strength. If you love God. With all that you have. What do you have left.

For the things of this world. It's God. Or the world. One or the other. Second.

Verse 16. These worldly desires. Are not. From. The father. But from the world. James says. Every good gift. And every perfect gift. Is from above. Coming down. From the fathers of lights. With whom. There is no variation. Or shadow. Due to change.

Those are the gifts. We want. Those pure. Perfect gifts. That come down. From the father. Why choose.

[ 55 : 18 ] Earthly things. In preference. To heavenly things. Finally. In verse 17. These things.

Don't last. The world. Is passing away. Along with its desires. But whoever does. The will of God. Abides. Forever. Even in this life.

The things of this world. Will pass away. We were on holiday. A few weeks ago. In Islay. And we visited. Finlaggen.

Which is the ancient palace. Of the lords of the isles. In its heyday. It must have been magnificent. But now.

It's just a ruin. Just a few stones. Out on a lonely marsh. All gone. All the glory of man.

[ 56 : 16 ] Has passed away. There's a famous poem. Isn't there? By Shelley. Called Ozymandias. About a ruined statue.

Out in the desert. On the statue. Are written the words. My name is Ozymandias. King of kings. Look on my works.

Ye mighty. And despair. The poem concludes. Nothing else remains. Round the decay. Of that colossal wreck. Boundless and bare. Where the lone. And level sands. Stretch. Far. Away. Such will be the end.

Of all the pride. All the glory. Of man. There's a Latin phrase. Isn't there? Sic. Trancic. Gloria.

[ 57 : 13 ] Mundi. Such is the glory. Of this world. It passes away. And the day is coming.

When everything. In this world. Will be swept away. This world itself. Will come to an end. And God will create. New heavens.

And a new earth. Why cling. To that. Which is temporary. And passing away. In contrast.

He says. Whoever does. The will of God. Will remain. He means. Of course. In the context here. Faithful Christians. Not that we ever do.

The will of God. Perfectly. Only Christ. Does the will of God. Perfectly. And therefore. He remains. He remains. Forever. Jack reminded us.

[ 58 : 11 ] Of that. In. Psalm 1. On Wednesday. Speaking of the leaf. That does not wither. Christ. Will never wither. He is the perfect man.

Who remains forever. We remain forever. In him. Because we are his. But if we are his.

If we belong to Christ. We will want to be like Christ. And we will want to live. For God. And not for this world. God. To be with God.

And not for this world. So let me ask you then. As we draw to a close. Where does your heart lie? With God? Or with the world? If you are not yet a Christian.

Then you will be taken up wholly by the world. And you need to assess your situation. You have chosen the wrong side. You need to come to Christ.

[ 59 : 13 ] For salvation. But if you are a Christian. Take heed to this warning. As Paul says in Colossians.

Set your heart on things above. And not on the things of this earth. Separation from the world is not easy.

Because it marks us out as different. And it can make us unpopular. Even though we are very careful. Not to judge others.

Sometimes they can feel judged. By our behaviour. Jesus warns us. That the world will hate us. John 15.19 I quoted that verse earlier in part.

But the full quote reads. If you were of the world. The world would love you as its own. But because you are not of this world. But I chose you out of the world.

[ 60 : 15 ] Therefore. The world hates you. Jesus says that. We are not going to escape from it. Are we? It is the truth.

Peter says. They are surprised. When you do not join them. In the same flood of debauchery. And they malign you. But they will give account to him. Who is ready to judge the living. And the dead. Separation marks us out as different. And we may pay a price for it. But it is necessary.

It is necessary. Both for the sake of our own souls. And for the sake of the world itself. We are called to be salt and light to the world.

Salt and light. And light necessarily have to be separate. And distinct. Otherwise they don't work. If the salt has lost its taste.

[ 61 : 15 ] Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount. It is good for nothing. Except to be thrown out. And trampled underfoot. If the light that is in you is darkness. How great is that darkness.

The world needs from us. Pure salt. And pure light. There is a wise saying.

That we should be in the world. But not of it. Many Christians think that comes from the Bible. It actually comes from a second century writing.

Called the Epistle to Diognetus. Though there are similar sayings in John 17. But it is an excellent saying. Which we should take to heart.

God wants us in the world. He has placed us in the world. As a witness to the world. To show and to share God's love for the world.

[ 62 : 17 ] But we must never allow our hearts to be overcome by the world. We must never let the world. Take the place of God.

Many Christians have gone astray over this. Think about Demas. In what to Timothy chapter 4. There is Paul having been faithful to God.

In prison in Rome. Expecting execution. And he has to lament. Demas. Demas. Has deserted me. In love with this present world. In many churches today. You get the impression. That people are more concerned with this world.

Than they are with God. They are taken up with making money. And with enjoying themselves. And all their conversation is of the world.

[ 63 : 22 ] And if pressed. They will compromise over anything. In order to win the favour. Of the world. May the Lord make us different.

May our hearts be radiant. With the love of God. And with the love of Christ our Saviour. Amen. Amen. We are going to close by hearing a hymn.

A hymn by Robert Murray McShane. Speaks of the glory of the world to come. When this passing world is done. When has sunk yon radiant sun.

When I stand with Christ on high. Looking o'er life's history. Then Lord shall I fully know. Not till then. How much I owe.

But God's consequences. Come AND layers ich- Ezio' life. Thanks God. May our hearts be show. May our hearts be joyful joy. Thank God. I thank God. Thank God.

[ 64 : 28 ] Thank God.

Lookin' on My sin's summary Bein' yourself My clothing all A real old, bell, one site's old To pray myself before the throne, Grace in beauty of my own.

When I see thee as I lie, The holy hymn of sin be had.

Then our son are fully known, Mother, Hot ulem, Hotduss Ah ■■■ud.

Chosen God for heaven in me, Waking up from heaven in me, Living in the Savior's sight, I will swim inside the heart, Teeth beyond our heaven's shore, Thine, my love, our love, our love, our love.

[ 66 : 37 ] Oh, thy love, beneath my heart, The heart has been by the heavenly side, But when fear is at His high, Jesus comes and all is high, Blessed Jesus, give Him His soul, God, He saves from all the child, When the praise of heaven are here, God has come to see, God, He saves from all the heavenly side,

Jesus comes and all is high, He saves from all the heavenly side, He saves from all the heavenly side, In your child I could be known, I will live from the sight of all.

Now may grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit be with you all evermore. Amen.