

Do Not Love The World

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[0:00] Let us pray. Lord, we are so grateful for the privilege of being able to sit under the preaching of your word week in and week out.

! Thank you for the privilege and the freedom to gather. Thank you, Lord, for your spirit here present with us. Thank you, Lord, that you've promised that when two or three gather, you will be there present with them.

Lord, we also pray now that you will help us, give us hearts and ears to hear what you have to say. Help us, Lord, to be encouraged by your comfortable words, to be strengthened and to be challenged by your warning.

And help us, Lord, to cleave to you, Lord Jesus Christ, above all else. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. So, this morning, I know that our reading was 1 John 2, verse 15 to 27, but we're only going to cover verse 15 to 17 this morning.

We'll cover the rest of those verses next week. So, I want to read again for us, verse 15 to 17.

Paul's, John's rather, command, do not love the world or the things in the world.

[1:21] 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 pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

And the world is passing away along with its desires. But whoever does the will of God, abides forever. Now, last week, we saw how seriously God takes the command to love God and to love one another.

John called it the new yet old command. We saw how Jesus perfectly fulfills this commandment.

And because of him, we have the Spirit of God that enables us to do the same.

The true light is Christ shining in our hearts. And the darkness is passing away, John tells us. And John reminds us of who we are.

Remember the poetic section in verse 12 to 14. He says to us, John says, John says to his readers, now, as his adopted children.

[2:50] Remember fathers, he says, you've known him from the beginning. Young men and women, remember that greater is he who is in you than he that is in the world.

Therefore, remember, remember that you are strong. Strong in the Lord because the word abides in you and you have overcome. Now, I want to remind, I just reminded us of those verses in verse 12 to 14 because it's the basis on which the command in verse 15 comes.

On the basis of who you are. Children, adopted children of God the Father. Strong. The word of God abiding in you. On the basis of all of that, verse 15, do not love the world.

Do not love the world. All the things in the world. Now, such a command can only be given to those who can keep it. Apostle Paul says in Ephesians, it reminds us that those in the world are dead in their trespasses and sins.

But here John writes this command to those who are true believers. And the very fact that he does so should give us pause. John recognizes that the love of the world is a constant temptation for every Christian.

[4:14] The struggle between love for God and love for the world is the struggle of our Christian life. It's a struggle that remains in our life until our graduation to glory.

But before we go further, it's best we understand what John's means when he writes, do not love the world or the things in the world. The word world is the Greek word for that is cosmos.

That's a word that we're familiar with in our English language as well. The cosmos. The world. It's one of those words that changes meaning depending on the context it's used in.

Another similar word like that is the word play. Right? Play. You can play a sport. You can play an instrument. Or you can go watch a play on Broadway.

So the word changes depending on the context. The world is similar to that. So it's important we understand what John means when he says the world. Because even the most famous famous verse in the Bible John 3.16 Do you remember how it starts?

[5 : 23] For God so loved the world. So what does John mean to say then when he says do you not love the world? After all God so loved the world.

So we ought to understand what context is John using this word. Right? And other folks understand what he means. There are three types of meaning of the word world.

That's a tongue twister. The word world there are three different meanings of that word in the Bible. I think John 1.10 will help us to understand those three different meanings.

Now if you John chapter 1 the gospel of John chapter 1 verse 10 says this He was in the world and the world was made through him yet the world did not know him.

Now John uses the word cosmos world three different times in those verses. But each different usage has different meaning tied to it. So He was in the world.

[6 : 29] That means the created world as we know. So we know the world is the world as the creation of God the created universe. That is the world. So Christ was in the world and the world was made through him.

Right? The earth all that is is made through Jesus Christ. The world was made through him. yet the world did not know him.

Now the third meaning keep in mind what it means the third meaning is the world meaning as the dwelling place of sin and sinners. The fallen world.

The world that is in subjection to the evil one. The world did not know him. That third meaning of the world as the place as the fallen place where sin and sinners dwell where all things are in subjection to the evil one.

The world in rebellion in outward open rebellion against God. That meaning of the word world is what John has in mind here when he says do not love the world.

[7 : 44] It is the third meaning that John has in mind. The system of the sinful world in rebellious opposition against God. John says if anyone loves the world then the love of the Father is not in him.

So love for the world is not compatible. That's what John is saying with love for God the Father. And I think Jesus himself tells us as much in Matthew 6.

He says no one this is Jesus' word no one can serve two masters for either you will hate the one and love the other or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

So I want us to know what John is saying here. He's saying that there are certain loves that are counterfeit loves. Why are they counterfeit?

They're counterfeit because they have their origin in the world and the cravings for those counterfeit loves is for the things of the world and their end goal is the world not God.

[8 : 53] So do not love the world the world in opposition to God the world in open rebellion against God. Paul goes on after he's given us that command do not love the world if anyone loves the world the love of the Father is not in him he set it up for us and then he goes on in the next two verses 16 and 17 to give us the ground on the ground or the explanation for why it is that we should not love the world verse 16 says the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life that is all that is in the world all these things are not from the Father they're from the world this wordliness that John describes it is not primarily the things we do or where we go I want us to see that they are that too that is part of it but it's not primarily that rather what

John is trying to emphasize is the motives the attitudes of our minds and wills which ultimately dictate our actions is what John is actually driving at in other words love has to do with our true affections you know that word affection that which you long for you know the early days if you're married of when you first beheld your wife the affection the person you long for that's that's the kind of meaning here of the word love the true motives and attitudes of our minds that makes us long and have affection and longing for something you know we can be in the right place doing the right things the right place doing the right things for the wrong reasons so Paul is John rather is asking us to examine ourselves what is your affection towards is it for God or the things of or is it for the things in the world

John wants us to ask ourselves honestly he tells us he gives let's just look at the three different description of the worldliness that he gives the first one the craving of sinful man that is the lust or desires of the flesh what is that it's the I think we know what it is to some extent right it is the cravings of our fallen nature the Bible describes what that looks like sexual immorality impurity sensuality note that some of these things not the way I've described them but the thing itself good things that God has created for our good use within the parameters of marriage between a man and a woman God created sex but the cravings of our fallen nature have corrupted it the loss of the flesh can be described in those terms but I think the loss of the flesh are not just confined to sexual matters alone the loss of the flesh can also be hear me out now as I describe other loss of the flesh bits of anger dissension division the desire for vengeance these are also loss of the flesh after all the flesh craves ultimately to express itself in these ways as well what happens when somebody offends you cut you off on your commute to work in the morning maybe even to church this morning what rises up within you right away anger and what do you want to do what is your flesh what is your flesh crying out to do these are loss of the flesh as well anger desire for vengeance division dissension the cry or the desire to have an eye for an eye that is loss of the flesh it's the craving all the flesh crave is ways it can satisfy itself the flesh manifests itself in self love not Christ like love of God and neighbor it manifests itself in seeking to please the desires of the flesh above everything else and it's often times we rightly think of those categories in sexual terms and we should often times it manifests itself in sexual immorality of all kinds but it also manifests itself in these other ways as well self love self care self gratification that's the gospel of our culture isn't it you are invited to embrace your fleshly desires at every turn in the culture we live in why would you resist or deny yourself why would you say that other people should do so as well that's that's that's the cry the gospel that the world preaches but John says do not these are wordliness these are signs of wordliness you shouldn't love them you should go depart from them the second example he gives is the loss of the eyes the desires of the eyes these are the cravings that are activated by what we see which then leads to covetousness and this is a broad umbrella as well it's easy to limit the loss of the eyes to just sexual things but I think the scope is bigger than just sexual things of course that's part of it we spend our time what we spend our time watching is important we live in an age where this is especially unavoidable we are a visual age we're inundated with all sorts of images every minute of every day from our phones to our television to the billboards that we drive around when we're in the doctor's office everything we're inundated especially sexual less anxiousness you cannot watch TV today even the news without encountering someone almost naked trying to sell you something and this is not to talk of the widespread accessibility of pornography or just the shows that we watch that are altogether pornographic in themselves and I don't want to get puritanical here but I want to point out how desensitized we've become to sexual graphic media in our world as I prepared this week for this I was convicted as I prepared at the level of the things that I've become so permissible in my own life it's so easy to excuse these things away but John is saying to us this is a form of wordliness this craving leads us away from the love of God and if we're honest again it's not just the sexual things is it I have great pity for children to grow up in this age there's Facebook and Instagram and the picture all over of the perfect woman or the perfect man are there before us the perfect home the perfect second home and third home around the lake and the mountain property all of those things people post the perfect sort of cultured image of their life we all do it really to some extent or other and we become inundated with all these images and what does it lead to in us what does it build up envy it builds up envy and jealousy it builds up a desire never to be satisfied with what

[17 : 51] God has given we become slaves then to consumerism and materialism because that person has it better so I must try to attain that I must strive for that never satisfied with what God has given never grateful always looking out craving coveting what others have these are what John describes as lust of the eyes and then he goes on thirdly he says pride in possessions the word here is the pride of life right the pride of life what Paul means by life there is livelihood possessions this third craving is boasting in what one possesses your material possession your economic status your education your image your respectability

I want you to know that none of the things I've said are bad in and of themselves none of them it's good to strive for economic stability it's a good thing actually it's being good stewards of the things that God has given it's good to be educated it's good to be respectable in the world it's even good to have things property possessions they're not in of themselves bad things but when these things the

glamours of the world become our primary pursuit when they become our primary pursuit when they become the source of our pride when our self-worth is wrapped up in them then it becomes a sinful desire the cravings for things of the flesh results in us erecting a God in our own image not all these cravings feed on each other and they're all in worship of the self pride of life being among the elite being among the known having a place among the respected and the notable becomes a craving there's a way in which it actually also happens the other way around the devil is very crafty right oh I don't want to be among those oity toity people I'm just a regular folk and that you can take pride in just your simple less too there's a way in which you can become prideful with anything you have yeah I don't want to be like those you know those people are you know I'm just I you know you know how it works and all of those things become we wrap that self worth in them become a garden to us and the root of all of that is the self the self is at the center of it all love of the self over love of God and neighbor remember what James says in James 4 verse 4 he says to us and his readers you you adulterous people don't you know that friendship with the world is what hostility toward God so whoever wants to be friends friend of the world becomes the enemy of

God John says if anyone loves the world the love of the father is not in him same thing Jesus says you cannot serve two masters same thing nothing the world offers if we pursue them as our end goal can truly fulfill us but it will take us away from the loving God it will take us away from the love of God those things will then demand our worship and we will give it to those things rather than the worship we rightly owe to God alone but it's not just that these things cannot fulfill and satisfy what John also wants us to see in verse 17 is that these things will not last look there look there in verse 17 and the world is passing away along with its desires it's all passing away but whoever does the will of God abides forever verse 17 so what

John is saying is true love for God means obeying his word right because he says whoever does the will of God abides forever true love for God means obeying his word doing his will notice here our John repeats himself we've been saying that right through the beginning of first John and it's been said by some please don't come and ask me who says so but it's said by some that I repeat myself a lot in my view one way or the other in that regard maybe it is true but I want to point out to you that the repetition here is not mine but Apostle John's he's repeating himself constantly true love for God means doing his will obeying his word and since John's letter is super intended by the Holy Spirit this means that John's words here are God's word then we should pause and ask why is God repeating himself here why does he keep telling us true love means obeying obedience [23:36] I don't want you to tune out or say oh I've heard that before but rather I want you to press in examine your life examine your heart by God's word let it wash over you let its light search all your dark crevices and I want you to submit to its truth the reason why John insists on repeating himself is so that we can understand the gravity of the choice before us it's a matter of eternity the world and its cravings as wonderful as they seem as irresistible as they seem is passing away in the scope of eternity eternity what John is telling us all of us is that we cannot afford to invest in the things of the world because it's a sinking market to use economic terms it's a bad investment because the world is passing away along with its desires and cravings all those things that you think you cannot do without all of them will perish the thing that you're holding on to so tightly basing your worth on that has taken the place of

God in your heart and affection that very thing will crumble like ash in your hands and be blown away they are passing away but what remains what remains really the answer or the question should be who not what because John tells us a particular kind of people will remain whoever does the will of God such a man such a woman such a child will abide forever for theirs is the kingdom of heaven so that's what remains when all have passed away I want us to know that not all the things we love are bad I don't want you to go home now and say I'm going to become a minimalist all these things are what's that lady

Marie Kondo that Japanese woman that's not what I'm appealing for here not all the things we love are bad in fact many of the! things like family like friends like a fulfilling vocation but even those things even those things can become worldly investments when they take affections away from God I say this with great soberness even love your of love of friends can become worldly investments when they take our affections away from God so how are we to discern what is legitimate or counterfeit I think John instructs us that it is by considering from what source does our desire arise and what is its ultimate object so if your desire originates from the sinful world and the ultimate object of its satisfaction is the falling world, if it competes in your heart for the love of God,

then it's a counterfeit love.

It's not a legitimate one. Two loves, those two loves cannot exist in your heart. You cannot serve two masters. So what's the antidote?

The antidote for not loving the world John has given it to us, is to love God. And true love for God means obedience to His will. And how do we know His will?

[27:44] It's not by some secret intuition in our hearts or feelings. Because those things will often lead us astray. We know His will for us through His word contained in the Bible.

And John points to us to the key for discerning this Godward love when he says in verse 17 that it is those who do God's will who remain forever. So, here's the indicator for us.

This is the indicator for whether a love is legitimate. Ask yourself, does the choice for that thing ultimately arise from a desire to do the will of God? Does it arise from seeking to fulfill the appointed role God has given you?

Is your ultimate object pleasing God or pleasing yourself? Is the source and end of your desire the pleasure of God's will and God's glory?

That's a question that we often have to keep asking. It's an ongoing question. It's not just a one-time thing. We have to keep asking ourselves. I'm going to say something that John, I quote, John Newton says this, the famous writer of the famous hymn Amazing Grace.

[29:03] He says this, perhaps our greatest danger arise from things in themselves that are lawful. He says, the devil can tempt us by our nearest and dearest friends and pervert every blessing of a kind providence into an occasion of drawing our hearts from the giver.

essentially what John Newton is saying is what Apostle John is saying that even the things that are seemingly good, even things in the church can become worldly possessions.

You can be a ministry leader, a parish rector or deacon, a long-time stakeholder, a member of a church and that can be a means of self-exaltation rather than God's glorifying pursuit.

You can redo all of those things even in the church and it can be about building your own little empire in which you exercise control and brook no descent. Then your worldliness is couched in spirituality but you're not seeking God's glory.

You're not seeking the advancement of his gospel to the lost. You're not seeking the spread of his kingdom. Those are not your cheap end but self-exaltation.

[30:31] See how subtle the worldliness can be. It's very subtle. So we ought to be careful and examine our lives, all of us, without exception. What happens when we live in this way is we begin to live as if God is not there at all.

We don't account for God because we become a God of our own little kingdom. But John is saying here to us that God is the only legitimate source and object of our love.

At least he should be. Everything else that is not ultimately in the ultimate end, the pursuit of God is a worldly craving that is going to pass away.

At the end of this, I don't want you to think, oh, okay, the only way to get out of this is to join a convent or monastery to run away from the trappings of the world.

Because the reality is that as long as we live in our earthly bodies, we will battle. The struggle between legitimate love for God and the counterfeit love for the world will always be a battle.

[31:52] So you can't run to the mountaintop and think that you're going to escape that battle. As long as you dwell in this physical mortal body, you will always struggle with it. So we need not live ascetic lives.

We must remember they're all good things from above from the Father of Lights. So it's okay to enjoy good wine, to enjoy good food with friends, to enjoy fellowship, to enjoy the good gifts that God has given you.

Sundays are feast days. Remember that when Lent comes. Sundays are feast days. So it's good to enjoy the good gifts that God has given us.

God means for us to enjoy them, to marry, to raise children, to be productive employed, to take rest, and to have joy in it all. But we must weigh whether our desire is in a thing that will pass away, that is our ultimate affection.

Are they in those things that will pass away? Do they remain in God, doing the will of God? We must ask ourselves, whose glory am I pursuing?

[33:00] Is it self-glory or God's glory? God's glory? Some of you have been freed by faith in Jesus Christ from the love of the world. You've been delivered from this world that is passing away into the

kingdom of the Son.

Let me encourage you, don't look back. You've been freed from the world and enslavement from the world. Don't look back. Don't be like the Israelites longing to go back into bondage in Egypt. Rather, fix your eyes on the promises of God. Fix your eyes on the kingdom that he has inaugurated, that he will consummate, that he will usher us into.

Don't fix your eyes on the things that are passing away. Don't long for the slavery of sin. Don't give in to the cravings of the world. Make God the object of your desire.

And he will remain as he promised your ultimate reward. And if you found that you don't have any love for God, you are totally enslaved to the cravings of the world, the fleshly pursuit that is described in verse 16, I want you to see that all of those things will eventually pass away.

[34:19] I urge you this morning to turn to Christ. Nothing in this world will endure. It will all pass away. Only the thing that remains is God, and those who do is will.

And that can be you if you turn to Jesus today and place your trust in him. I pray that you will. Let us pray. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Lord, we confess that we are so easily swayed by the trinkets the world offers. Our hearts are often prone to wonder from you, the object of our love.

Forgive us, Lord. In the words of the hymn writer, here's our heart, Lord. Take and seal it, seal it for that court above.

Make this our hearts through desire and delight, we pray. In Christ's precious name. Amen. Amen.

Please, stand your meal for the very few people as you are able.

[35:46] Perhaps the people can be telling you to hold us in right after coming up. Amen. In the power of the Spirit, the union of Christ, the earth, praise the Father, Savior, hear our prayer.

Almighty and every God, we have