

Do not love the world

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[0 : 00] We're going to turn and look at John's letter, first letter, chapter 2. And our focus this evening is going to be on verse 15 to verse 17.

The psalmist there in Psalm 49 was talking about people putting their trust and confidence in wealth. They have become exceeding rich.

But yet, he says, they are missing something. None of these his brother can redeem in any way. Nor can he unto God for him sufficient ransom pay.

Their soul's redemption pleasures it and it can never be. But still he should forever live and not corruption see. The psalmist there is reminding us of where we are to put our confidence.

Not in the riches of this world. Nothing can pay the ransom that is due to God. But as we are remembering this morning at the Lord's table, the ransom has been paid.

[1 : 24] For the Lord gave his life as a ransom for many. And as we turn to John's first letter in these verses, verse 15 to verse 17, that challenge is brought before us again here.

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 pride and possessions, 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.

Apostle John was writing this letter in his old age. He would have been called an elder statesman in the church.

[2 : 28] Someone who had experienced and seen so much in his life. Having been with the Lord Jesus. Seeing his public ministry. Seeing his crucifixion.

Seeing his resurrection. Seeing his ascension. And seeing how the church has spread. Now he is in his old age. And it's almost like he's reflecting, looking back in part.

That also he has this real sense of both love and urgency. As he writes to the people of God. The people of God who have spread to many different parts, many different places.

And yet he is writing to them with this sense of urgency. You see, the people he was writing to were being deceived. They were being led astray.

Taken away from the love of the Father. And brought into this love of the world. And he is writing with this warning. And he gives us a reason why he is writing to them.

[3 : 39] In chapter 1, verse 4. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. Is it just his joy he is talking about?

Is he the one that wants to be happy and full of joy? Or is he talking about them all? He is talking about those he is writing to as well. How is your joy going to be complete?

It is not by being led astray by the ways of the world. But by keeping looking unto God.

As we begin our service this evening. Where is your sense of joy? What is it in your heart this evening that fills you with a sense of joy?

There can be many different things that give us a sense of joy in our lives. But so many of them are only temporary.

[4 : 47] So many of them only last for a moment. And so many of them we only think about joy in the sense of giving us this buzz. This happiness for a time.

Yet the joy that John is writing about is a very different joy. It's a joy in the midst of hardship, of trials. Joy in the midst of happy times and glad times.

It is a joy that is of the Lord. And something that doesn't change. Here he is in his old age. And he's writing to these people.

And you see he just had the warmth of his letter. How often he calls them my little children. Or my beloved. There is a real sense of feeling behind these words.

He is writing, having experienced so much and learned so much. And now wanting others to hear and understand from his experiences. And learn from his experiences.

[5 : 49] And not to be distracted and led astray by the ways of the world. He wants what is best for them. Have you ever experienced this for yourself?

A sense of compassion and concern from someone being shown to you. Someone with a real concern. And an urgency for you to take the right path in life.

To choose the good path that is found in Christ. I'm sure many of you have experienced it. It might have been a parent that would put a Bible into your bag as you were leaving home.

This concern that you would take the word of God with you. It could be a friend who has shared a tract with you. A word that has been important to them.

That has meant much to them. And they want you to share in it as well. To see what is special to them. That they have come to know in the Lord. And they want to share it with you. It may have been a complete stranger that has come to you.

[7 : 01] And shown compassion and concern for your soul. In my own life I can say I've experienced all three. I was once given a tract by someone and it stayed with me.

The words of it stayed with me. I didn't do as the tract was saying. Yet the words would not go away. Have courage my boy to say no.

The one who gave it to me gave it to me out of a sense of love and concern. A concern for my soul. And a concern that he knew in going into the world with all its temptations.

What was going to come my way. But saying have courage my boy to say no. Well that is what John is doing here. As he is writing to all of these people.

And to ourselves today. He is writing to us to remind us of the world that we live in. And the hold that it so often has on us.

[8 : 07] But writing with his concern. That we will come to love. Not the world in all its ways. But come to love the Lord. He is writing to them.

In the midst of all these temptations. That they are facing up to. There are things he is saying that will pull at your emotions and your desires.

But he is warning to love these things more than God. Is foolishness. The phrase all that glitters is not gold.

Is a phrase that has been around for a long time in many different formats. But the reality of that is still so true. And we see it in the book of Proverbs.

Something very similar said in Proverbs 23 verse 4. Do not toil to acquire wealth. Be discerning enough to desist.

[9 : 05] All that glitters is not gold. All that this world has to offer us is not gold. All that this world has to offer us.

So much of it is going to pass away. But what God has to offer us in Christ. Will never perish.

Never fade. But will remain forever. Are you becoming weary? And trying to conform with the ways of the world.

Trying to achieve comfort and possessions in this world. Things that take all your time. All your energy. And at the end of the day.

What will it bring? What earthly good will it do? And what eternal good. More importantly. Will it do for you?

[10 : 02] Because the things of this world are passing. So John is saying these things at the end of the day. They're worthless.

And what they will do is they will rob you. Of the love of the Father. And the joy that is to be found in him. And they will pass.

But he is saying look. Here is something that will abide forever. Look to the Lord.

So he gives us. First of all we can see a word of caution. A word of caution. You see that in verse 15.

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.

[11 : 03] Do not love the world. Or the things in it. What do you think the reaction of the people. Who first heard this would have been? Probably the same reaction that we would have today.

It's just typical isn't it? The man of the church telling us. Not to enjoy ourselves in the world. Do not love the world.

Or the things in the world. The church is just there to ruin people's fun. Is that really what John is saying? Is that really what the church is saying to our society today?

Do not love the world. Or the things in it. Because we want to spoil your fun. What is the world that John is speaking about here?

The world is a word that John uses often. But in different ways. Sometimes the meaning of the world is the people of the world. Sometimes it's the created world.

[12:09] But here John is speaking about the systems of the world. The lure of the world. And what he is saying is.

Not don't enjoy any of these things. But don't love them. But don't love them. Don't love them more than you should love the Lord.

You see in the world system that we have today. And the same would have been through in John's day. There are so many things that have put out pleas for our attention.

They pull us in different directions. And that is a real struggle that we all face. We all have to face up to the temptations of this world.

The things in the world. Are any of us immune to them? We're not. They are there. They are there all around us. Every day of our lives.

[13:14] We are being told how we should live. What we should do. What we should have. But the question is. What do we love? Do not love the world.

Or the things in the world. Because there is a danger in that. If anyone loves the world. The love of the Father. The love of the Father. Is not in them.

The two are not compatible. So what grabs your attention? What grabs your desire? When you wake up in the morning.

What is your instant desire? What do you want each day? What do you look forward to most? What are you working for? What are you striving for?

You go to work. You earn a wage. You look to buy something. You look to save up for something. It's a system that just goes on and on. And the world system is there before us all the time.

[14:17] Trying to get us to buy into this way of living. We need to have the latest thing. Or else we are being left behind. The iPhone 8 is just about to come out.

And months before they start talking about it and say. Pre-order now because you have got to have this. It is the latest thing. You need this. But six months or a year down the line.

It's old. It's past. It's new one minute. Flashy one minute. But then it's past. And then what? We keep going.

We keep looking for something else. For something else to fill that void. And that is the danger of loving the things in this world. They take all our energy.

All our desires are put into that. And what are we missing out on? Well John through all his years of experience is saying.

[15:22] You're missing out on the most precious. The most important thing there is. The love of the Father. If anyone loves the world.

The love of the Father is not in them. And that is missing out on the most important thing. As one writer puts it.

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould. But let God remould your lives from within. What is pressing hard on you today?

Is the world trying to squeeze you into its own mould? There's no doubt we're all under that pressure. The young, middle aged and old.

Every one of us has to face up to all these temptations and trials that are put before us. But he says do not love the world or the things in the world.

[16:30] So the caution is there for us. Do not let the love of the Father fall away. Do not lose out on that love. Because you love the world more.

The second thing that John shows us here is he shows us the cause of this problem. If the love, if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

He goes on to say in verse 16 though, For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and the pride and possessions, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

So John goes straight on to highlight the root cause of the love of the Father being taken over by the love of the world. It's these wrong desires and pride.

And three things that he highlights for us in this verse. The desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions.

[17 : 37] Here speaks someone who has learned over many years of experience. These are the things that so easily take our attention.

The desires of the flesh, desires of the eyes and pride in possessions. Do we not know these problems ourselves?

Are our hearts not so easily inclined towards these desires ourselves? The desires of the flesh. We live in a day and age where these desires are being put before us all the time.

Desires of the eyes. Desires of the eyes. Are we seeing? What are we looking at? What is grabbing our attention? Pride in possessions.

Are any of us not guilty in that? Pride in possessions. They are all things that grab our attention.

[18 : 45] They are all things that distract us away from what we should be really focusing on. And he goes on to say, this is not from the Father. This is not why we were made.

This is not the purpose that God has given to us. But this is from the world. You see there is opposition here all the time.

It is a battle, it is a struggle that is going on. Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. But we keep going away from that. Man's chief end we say is to glorify self and to enjoy ourselves. That is the attitude of the world.

God doesn't matter. At the end of the day, what is he going to do for you? People say he is not even real.

[19 : 53] But John is saying this, I have seen him. I have seen him in the person of Christ. And he is real.

All these desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and pride and possessions. Not what the Father wants for us.

This is what the world wants for us. And so he is warning us. What kind of things does the Bible talk about?

Paul has led it to the Galatians. He says the work of the flesh is evident. Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgy and things like these.

It is like the list goes on and on. The works of the flesh are evident. They are all around us. Can we go through that list and say that there is something there that we haven't done?

[21 : 04] You say, well, some are more serious than others. But they are all on the list. Jealousy. Rivalries. Divisions. Envy. All these things. There are so many that we are guilty of.

And as we look at the ways of the world, so much of it is a problem of our heart. If your heart is captured by the world, you will love the things of the world.

But if your heart is captured by the love of God, you will be drawn to him and to the things of God. John is known for using the word love so much.

He uses it of the people he's writing to hear. My beloved. You who I love. And he is saying this because he knows the love of the Father for himself.

He's saying all these things will take your joy away. That goes for believers and seekers.

[22 : 15] It goes for us all. These things try to grab our attention. To take our desires and focus away from God to the things of this world.

Let us be captured by the love of God in Jesus Christ, his Son. May that be what we come to see more and more.

That is what we need. John here goes on to say. He talks about not giving you, not writing you a new commandment, but an old commandment.

And what does he say there in verse 7? That you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. And he goes on to say almost the same thing in verse 24.

Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.

[23 : 19] What is he talking about? He is talking about the love of God. The word that you have heard. And you have all heard this word yourselves.

It's nothing new. The world offers us something new every day of our lives. But John doesn't say, oh I've got something new to tell you. Something new to show you. No. This is an old commandment. But it's still the same. Because God doesn't change. The love of God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

So what grabs that love? You must choose to love the Lord. Because you either love the world or you love the Lord.

You cannot love both. You cannot have one foot in one camp and one foot in the other and say, oh but I can get the balance right.

[24 : 29] It's not going to happen. Jesus himself warns when it comes to riches. He says in Luke 16 verse 30, no servant can serve two masters.

For either you will hate the one and love the other or you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. So in the same way, you cannot love the world and love God.

It just won't work. So where is your heart tonight? What is taking hold of your desires?

Do you not have to come down on your knees and pray to God? Lord, take these desires away.

And fill me with a desire and a longing for you.

He is waiting for us to come to him. He is calling on us to come to him. All these desires, the desires of the flesh, desires of the eyes, the pride of obsessions.

[25 : 42] All these causes behind our love being taken away. They are there for us to see all around. But so is God.

God is there for you. To call upon him. To ask him for help. So the cause is there for us all to see.

The final thing I want us to take from this section is to see just why is John giving us this warning.

Why is John in his old age writing such loving words towards us?

What is his purpose? Well, he is saying change is coming. In verse 17, the world is passing away along with its desires.

But whoever does the will of God abides forever. Change is coming. You see in verse 8 there how he says, The darkness is passing away.

[27 : 02] And the true light is already shining. What is he saying to us? Why should we not love the world and the things in the world?

Well, he said, Because if you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you. But he goes on to say, But there is more. What he says in verse 17 is the real warning to us.

The world is passing away. Along with all of its desires. All these things are temporary.

None of these things can satisfy you ultimately. They are no good for eternity. You may have temporary pleasure.

You might enjoy these things for a time. But ultimately, all these things are passing away. The world is passing.

[28 : 07] And it's an ongoing process. A process that has already begun. And will come to completion with the return of the Lord Jesus. But we say, The world is just advancing.

The world is showing us that we are being given more and more knowledge. We are learning more things. We are beginning to see that it's not about God. It's about ourselves.

We don't need God. You can say, Well, the world may last. May last hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of years.

We don't know. But how are we reminded that the world is passing? Well, all we have to do is look at ourselves.

Every time you look at yourself, you see a change. Every time you look at a photo of yourself, you see things are changing. We are not the same.

[29 : 15] We were five, ten, fifteen, twenty years ago. We are changing. We are passing. We will not remain forever.

The day is coming when we will be taken away. But then what? We are reminded this world is passing along with all of its desires.

So what are we living for? What are we doing with our time? Are we continuing just to try to fulfill our own desires?

What are we seeing? Wait a minute. Things are moving on. Things are just temporary. We want eternal youth.

But what about eternal life? That is the wonder of the word of God. The offer is there. You see, God's word is like a forecast to us.

[30 : 21] It's forecasting us everything that's going to come to pass. And John here is saying the forecast is this world is passing away. And all of its desires.

It's going to go. It's going to pass. But what then? Are we heeding the warning of the word of God? We have seen in these past weeks forecasts of hurricanes going to hit in America.

And we've seen the devastation that they've caused. It's amazing how they can predict the exact plaque that they're going to take. The power that there is behind them.

But it's not always been the case that they've been able to predict with such accuracy. And if you go back to the year 1938, on September the 21st, a huge hurricane hit the east coast of America. It had not been expected to be a hurricane. They didn't even think it was going to be a serious storm. So people weren't prepared. A man who lived in Long Island had been up in New York and bought a barometer a few days before the storm came.

[31 : 37] And it arrived in the post in the morning of September the 21st. And he opened it up and saw it. And he was a little annoyed. The needle on the barometer was pointing very low.

It was indicating a hurricane. And he was saying to himself, there's something wrong with this. He tried tapping it. He tried knocking it. Tried everything to get it to move.

But the needle would not budge. So he decided, well, I'll have to take it back to the shop. And even in the short time he was away, the hurricane struck.

And his house was destroyed. The forecast was there. But he didn't believe it could be true.

The weather looked so calm outside. The hurricane came so quickly with such devastation. And is that the way we can be with the word of God?

[32 : 41] We don't like the forecast that it's giving us. So we blame the barometer. We blame God's word and say, this is just ridiculous.

Who wants to listen to this word that is so ancient, so old, so pasted? We know so much more now. Or we can just say, oh, I'm just going to ignore that. I don't need that. Or we can even just throw it away and say, no point. But the warning is there for us.

The world is passing away along with its desires. But he says, whoever does the will of God abides forever.

You know, everything that you're working so hard for, everything that you spend your time and your energy giving, that is loving the world, it's all going to go.

[33 : 48] So what is the answer? Whoever does the will of God abides forever. Everything that we're looking for, everything that the world system sees that we can have but never gives us, we have it before us in the word of God.

Do the will of God and you will abide forever. What is the will of God for us?

The greatest command is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and all your strength. Don't love the world and the things in the world.

Doesn't mean don't enjoy the world. But make sure that the love of God the Father, the love of Jesus Christ, is your utmost desire.

where is your love today? John writes with this concern.

[35 : 12] How often have you had someone show concern for you? How often have you heard someone pleading, listen to the word of God?

Well, again I say to you tonight, hear what God is saying. The world is passing along with all of its desires.

But you, my friend, you can abide forever if you will do the will of God. Hear what he is saying and do as he says.

Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you for your word. We ask that you will bless it to us, that you remind us so much in it, Lord, that we need to hear just what you are saying to us.

And we pray that by your spirit this evening you may apply it to all of our hearts to be aware, O Lord, of the dangers of this world, of loving it too much, but to love the Father and to do his will that we might abide forever.

[36 : 27] So Lord, bless us and go before us. In Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing again to God's place.

In Psalm 19, Psalm 19, the Scottish Psalter version. We sing from verse 7 to verse 11.

God's law is perfect and converts the soul in sin that lies. God's testimony is most sure and makes the simple wise. The statutes of the Lord are right and do rejoice the heart.

The Lord's command is pure and doth light to the eyes in part. We'll sing from verse 7 to 11 to God's praise. Amen. So slow is perfect and converts the soul in sin that lies.

God's testimony is most sure and makes the silver wise.

[38 : 02] The statutes of the Lord are right. and do rejoice the heart.

The Lord's command is pure and doth light to the eyes in part. The Lord's command is pure and doth light light to the eyes in part.

The Lord's command is pure and doth light and doth light to the eyes in part. It is the fear of God. And of death and pure forever. The church and soul, the Lord are right.

The Lord are true and righteous and the Lord are right. The Lord are right. The Lord are right.

[39 : 13] The Lord are right. The Lord are right. After coronation each love the Lord who laisset die God The Lord are river andche And she sails and free are in part

Than honey, honey from the cold That brought the sweeter fire Moreover they thy servant born And he his life should bring A great reward provided it For them that keep us safe We're going to conclude now by singing to God's praise in Psalm 84

Psalm 84 verse 10 to the end of the psalm For in thy courts one day excels a thousand Rather in my God's house will I keep a door And dwell in tents of sin For God the Lord's a sun and shield He'll grace and glory give And will withhold no good from them that uprightly do live Do live. We'll sing from verse 10 to the end of the psalm To God's praise.

Thank you. Amen. For in thy courts one day excels a thousand My God's house will I keep a door And dwell in tents of sin For God the Lord's a sun and shield He'll grace and glory give And will withhold no good from them that uprightly do live

O love thy dark and all your host Thou man is truly blessed Who by assured confidence On thee alone doth rest Now may grace, mercy and peace from God Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon And abide with you all now and forevermore. Amen.