

Love Not the World

(1Jn 2:12~17)

At the heart of this passage, as well as the heart of the gospel, is a call for men and women to separate themselves from this world, to serve the Lord with singleness of heart. Our one desire, our one longing, is to be on that of the Lord, and His kingdom, and to know and do His will in our lives. That's it, that's the exhortation that John gives to the church of Jesus Christ...to turn from this world, and yield yourselves wholly unto the Lord.

I cannot emphasize enough to you, just how serious this matter of separating ourselves from this world, unto the Lord Jesus Christ is. It is so serious in fact, that prior to declaring this truth, John repeats himself to those he's writing to. (Point out he is writing to three distinct groups of people, "*little children*", "*fathers*," and "*young men*"...and the fact he repeats himself, basically saying the same thing twice.)

Very few times in scripture do you find God repeating Himself, and here we find one of them. Understanding that, this is very serious. This is something we need to take to heart. John says, "*Church, I need you to listen to what I'm about to say, and I need you to listen closely.*"

Wow...you might say, what is it that is so important? It is this warning concerning love for this world and the things of this world...¹⁵*Love not the world...neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* ¹⁶*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.* ¹⁷*And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abides forever.*

The truth of the matter is this...every one of us in this room, every man, every woman, are living their lives to one of two things. Your heart is either given to God, manifested by living to His will and His desires for your life, seeking things above, living for His kingdom...Or...your heart is still yet given to this world and the things of this world, manifesting they are still living to the desires and will of the flesh. It's one of the two. The great truth here is, you are either **OF** this world, or you are **NOT OF** this world. And depending on which one that is for you, is extremely important, because as John clearly declares here, which one that is will determine your eternal destiny.

Beloved, I need you to listen to me, and I need you to listen closely. We are living in an extremely dangerous day in the history of the Church... We are living in the days Paul warned us of in 2Timothy 3-4, that were coming to the Church. Due to a lack of sound biblical preaching, standing firm on "*thus saith the Lord,*" and calling people to repentance, and submission to Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives...due to the lack of that in our day, our churches are filled with people who think they're alright with God...when they're not! It is as Paul said it would be, "*a form of godliness, but just no content.*" In other words, it's nothing more than superficial religious activity, with no real content. Beloved, you've got to hear me, it's gotten to the point today that you can't tell the difference between the church and the world, other than the fact that some attend church occasionally. Which is exactly the way Paul declared it would be. When you study that passage, you would think that the people Paul was described there, were those of this world, and certainly not the church. But there he was describing those who identify with the Church of Jesus Christ. When you read that, you realize they are really no different than the world, other than the fact they attend church, which is what constitutes the "*Form of godliness.*" Other than that, they are just as "*Worldly*" as the world is! Other than the fact they attend church, they are just as materialistic, they still yet live for the here and now, they show no real interest in the things of God, or doing His will. Just like the world, they live for the here, living to their own will and desires in this life. And hear me, when I say that, I'm not talk about necessarily doing "evil things," just that they continue to live to self, and to this world. There's a lot of good moral people out here who don't do evil things, they live morally pure, but they make no claims of following Christ. But the problem with them is, they are still walking in the flesh, still living to their own will and desires. And even though it's not evil things, they still will suffer the judgment and wrath of God, because they have not believed the gospel and repented, turning from this world and submitted themselves to Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives.

Again, there is only two kinds of people in this world...those who are lost, manifested by the fact they are yet **OF** this world, by living to this world, and the things of this world. And those who are **no longer OF** this world, manifested by the fact, they no longer live to this world, or the things of this world. They have turned from this world, to yield themselves in humble submission to Jesus Christ as Lord of their life, living to His will and to His kingdom. It's one of the two, and as we shall see here, according to John, which one that is will determine their eternal destiny.

¹⁵**Love not the world...neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** ¹⁶**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.** ¹⁷**And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abides forever.**

The warning here is very clear...do not have anything to do with the world, separate yourselves from it, for the simple fact, it has no part with God the Father. This world and God have absolutely nothing in common. They are completely contrary to one another. The world represents darkness, while God is light. Darkness has no part in light, just as light has no part in darkness. Knowing that, separate yourselves, John says. The point of all this is this...God's people are to separate themselves from this world! Just as a foreigner "*stands out*" in the midst of a foreign country, God's people ought to stand out in this world. This world is not our home, God's people are to be as pilgrims and strangers, traveling through a foreign land, heading for a city whose builder and maker is God. Our sights are to be set on our home, in heaven.

With that in mind, let's look at this...¹⁵**Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world...If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."**

What does John mean by that, "...if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"?

Exactly as it sounds...*"If any man manifest's a love for this world, and the things of this world...it clearly reveals that the "Spirit of God" which is the "Spirit of Love," does not dwell in that man, regardless of his claims of knowing God.*

It's impossible, John says, for everything this world is, and stands for, is the antithesis of what God is all about! It's directly contrary to God... That's exactly what he says here, ¹⁶**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 WHAT? ... but is of the world.** There's the key statement to this whole section here...¹⁶**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.** Everything this world has and represents, has nothing to do with God. He has no part in it... His kingdom is not of this world right? The scriptures teach, that though we are IN the world, we are not WHAT? Right, we are not OF the world. Beloved, this world we live in, is a fallen world...one that is dark and depraved. A world that is ruled by the prince of the air, the "*god of this world*" as Paul called him. That's why John boldly proclaims, that anyone who "loves" this world reveals, that the love of God is not in them. Because everything about this world, is sinful, and revolves around, and caters to the "*sinful flesh*" of man. That's what John is referring to here in those three statements, "*lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*"... Each one of those reference **the fallen, sinful nature of a man**. The point John is making here is, that any man who loves this world, and the things of this world, reveals they are yet unregenerate men, walking in the "*flesh*," and not in the "*Spirit of God*."

Understood, it's basically the same principle Jesus shared in Matthew 6, when He said...*"No man can serve two masters, for he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon"*... (Mt 6) Jesus described two "*Masters*" here. He uses "*Master*," because we are all "*Servants*" of something! And here, He brings that something down to one of two things, it's either God, or this world. That's what the word mammon signifies. The point here is, our hearts can't be divided, they are given to one of the two. When He says, you'll hate the one and love the other, or you'll hold to the one, and despise the other, He is speaking to how the two are total opposites! If you love truth, you'll hate lies. If you love righteousness, you'll hate sin and so on.

Well basically, that's what John is saying here concerning God and this world... Here John describes this world as darkness, and that if any man loves the world, and the things of this world... then that simply reveals that *"The Spirit of God does not abide in that man,"* John says... because God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. Here's another explanation of what John was referring to there in chapter one, in his analogy of light and darkness. (Vs 5-6) ⁵*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* ⁶*If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:* ⁷*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanse us from all sin.* Using the context here in chapter two, it might be stated this way, *"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, yet love this world and the things of this world... we lie and do not the truth."* Do you see that? Whereas, *if turn from this world, separating ourselves from this world to walk in His ways, His will... we have fellowship with Him, and the blood of His Son cleanses us from all sin.* You see, it all come down to what you are living to, this world, or God. God is light... He has no part with this dark, sinful fallen world and its ways. Given that, if any man claims to know God and have fellowship with God... but manifests a love for this world, and the things of this world, than that just bears witness that this man's claims are not true. God does not abide in this man.

Once again, this truth here that John is proclaiming is basically the same truth as he shared earlier here in chapter two, concerning obedience to God's commandments. ³*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* ⁴*He that says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* John just makes it real simple, obedience is the mark or evidence that a man truly knows God. John says, if a man claims to know Him, and yet is not obedient, then he's a liar, and the truth is not in him. Someone may ask, how can John be so bold to declare such a thing? Because when it comes down to it, what John is basically declaring here is a *"Changed Heart."* It testifies more to the power of the gospel in a man's life, than it does to man. Basically what John is saying here is, that through the gospel, the disobedient are made obedient. Which happens through a *"Changed heart."* The one who once rejected and rebelled against God's authority, now humbly submits to His authority. It's just the proof of a *"Changed heart."* And now here, concerning loving the world and the things of this world, it's basically the same truth. John's point once again is, any man whose heart has been changed by Christ, will reveal itself in that he will no longer love this world and the things of this world. And if he does love the world, then it simply bears witness that his hearts not right, and regardless of what the man claims, he doesn't know God.

One final thing I want you to see here concerning that statement, *"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."* This *"love of the Father"* John's referring to here, is the overall emphasis of this whole letter. John first made mention of it here in this chapter, in verse five. ⁵*But whoso keeps his word, in him verily **is the love of God perfected**...* and then notice what he says, *"hereby know we that we are in him."* This is how we KNOW that we are in Him... this is the proof, John says. The *"love of God"* is being matured, or fulfilled in us. The point there is, true obedience is not merely "right actions," but rather a right heart, a heart like Gods. A man can do all the "right things," yet not be anything like God, if he doesn't show love towards sinners. John's point here is, that those who are truly obedient to God, it will manifest itself by a growing love and compassion for lost sinners. A love for our brothers out here lost and dying in sin, John says, verses seven through eleven. ⁸*Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines.* ⁹*He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now.* ¹⁰*He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.* ¹¹*But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.* Do you see the progression here? First John says the one who truly knows God, is marked by obedience to God. Then he says, the one who is truly obedient is marked by manifesting the love of God in his life. Which is revealed in that he loves his fallen brothers out here, dying in sin. You see that? See the progression?

Well it doesn't end there, still speaking in the context of walking in God's love, John declares he who does walk in His love will not love this world, or the things of this world... for they are contrary to God, and the things of God. ¹⁶*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.* Point being, if any man yet loves the world, it merely reveals that he is still walking in the flesh...and that the Spirit of God does not dwell in this man.

John mentions three things here, the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*... The first one, "*the lust of the flesh,*" we've already touched on, which is a reference to the desires of sinful flesh, the fallen nature of a man. Everything this fallen world is and has, caters to the desires of man's sinful flesh. For a man to manifest a love for this world reveals that he is yet walking in the flesh, revealing that he is a yet unregenerate in heart! His heart still belongs to this world...and not God. You cannot serve God and Mammon!

Next he mentions, the "*lust of the eyes,*" a reference to the "*Desires of the eyes,*" which is similar to the first, but is just another way to say, "*the things that appeal to the eyes*"... Using that, John is saying, "*everything this world has to offer that appeals to the eyes of man,*" ...is not of God either...but of the world! Don't miss what John is saying here, he's declaring that this world is "*Fashioned*" around the desires of sinful flesh, **to entice men and allure men away from God.**

Then finally he says, "*the pride of life*"... Given the context of the passage, this is best interpreted as a reference to the "*self-exaltation of man.*" That's what "*pride*" is, the "*exaltation of self.*" Whereas, the exact opposite is "*humility or humbleness,*" which is the "*abasing of oneself.*" When John refers to "*the pride of life,*" he seems to be referring to this world's "*exaltation of man*"...rather than "*God.*" Which is a signature trademark of this fallen world, right? We live in a world that has rejected the rule and authority of God, a world that rules and governs itself!

Given that, John basically says, "God has no part in this dark, fallen sinful world...other than trying to reach those trapped in it, those held captive by its clutches. Other than that, God has no part in this world! Therefore, anyone who loves the world, reveals they are living to the "**Flesh,**" and not God. The way of Christ is completely contrary to the ways of this world. This world caters to sinful flesh, whereas the way of Christ is to take up a cross, and crucify the flesh, with the affections thereof...and walk in the Spirit of God.

This brings us to the final part of this passage, where we find a two-fold statement. The first part is a "*warning*" to those who love this world, and live to this world...and then the second part is a word of encouragement to those who turn from it, to live to the will of the God.

¹⁷*And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abides forever.*

The first part of that statement insinuates that all those who love this world and live to this world, will perish right along with the world...whereas the second part is more of a promise to those who turn from the world, to pursue the will of God and to follow Christ, of everlasting life.

Beloved, it all comes down to this, there are only two kinds of people in this world...those who are "**Of this world,**" and those who are "**not of this world.**" There are those who love this world, and the things of this world, live to this world, living for the here and now, all caught up in this life, living to the desires of the flesh...and then there are those who have heard the gospel of Christ, and have repented, by turning from this world, and the flesh...to live their lives in humble submission to Jesus Christ as Lord of their life...living for the unseen, setting their affections on things above, seeking His will and His desires for their life. And according to what John says here, depending on which one that is in a man's life, will determine where he will spend eternity! ¹⁷*And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abides forever.*