

The Power of Love

1 John 2:15-18

June 3-4, 2017

Most Bible scholars believe the writer of this letter is none other than the famous apostle John who was perhaps the disciple closest to Jesus. At this point in his life he was considered an elder statesman. He was the only disciple of Jesus still living. He walked with Jesus, he ate the last supper with Him, he watched as Jesus healed the blind and caused the lame to walk, as Jesus cast out demons and calmed the wind and the waves at His command. John physically touched the resurrected Lord.

He's writing because the church is being disturbed by false teachers who are distorting the gospel with devastating consequences to those who follow their heresies.

John knows that strengthening their faith and establishing them solidly on the rock of Jesus Christ is the best response to false teachers. This book was written exactly for that purpose; John minces no words as he lays down the foundation for their faith.

There are several themes that John develops in this letter. One theme he comes back to over and over is the importance of what we love. Love is a transforming power and what you love is prophetic of your future.

These false teachers had found a way to wrap religion around worldliness and John was not impressed. Truth is not something to be trifled with or manipulated; it's something to follow and be transformed by.

These false teachers loved the world more than they loved God and that was the problem. What you love is prophetic of your future.

I. Love Not the World

- Verse 15 - Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
- This is John, the 'son of thunder' being bold and saying what needs to be said.
- What does John mean by the world and the things in the world? The word 'world' in the Greek is cosmos which can mean different things. It's foundational meaning is 'the order of things.'
- The word cosmetics comes from this word cosmos which essentially means to bring order to a woman's appearance. That's a good thing.
- It can mean the physical world, or the people living in the world, and it can mean the world system of which Satan is called the

prince and of the power of the air and the god of this world.

➤ Here's why this is so important...

A. We are Becoming What We Love

➤ Love is a transforming power, what we love, therefore, is prophetic of our future. I'm quoting from A.W. Tozer...

Illus – “We are all in the process of becoming. We have already moved from what we were to what we are, and we are now moving toward what we will be. Not only are we in the process of becoming, we are becoming what we love. We are to a large degree, the sum of our loves; and we will of moral necessity grow into the image of what we love most; for love is among other things, a creative affinity. It changes and molds and shapes and transforms.

What we love is therefore no small matter; it is of critical and everlasting importance. It is prophetic of our future. It tells us what we shall be, and so predicts our eternal destiny. Loving wrong things is fatal to spiritual growth; it twists and deforms the life and makes impossible the appearing of the image of Christ in the soul. Love is within our power of choice; true spiritual love begins in the will. We should set our hearts to love God supremely and joy is sure to follow.

- Doesn't that remind you of the challenge that Joshua brought to the people of Israel?

Joshua 24:15, "Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the people in whose land you are now living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

B. Love not the things in the world

- If anyone loves the world and the things in the world, the love of the Father is not in him because they are opposites.

Luke 16:13, 15, "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon"... And then He said to the Pharisees, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God."

- Mammon is the currency of 'the world system.' In another verse, Jesus calls it "unrighteous mammon."
- Have you ever noticed, though, that unrighteous mammon is how the world

judges? Status in the eyes of the world comes from how far you've climbed the ladder of success; how much of the world's things you have obtained.

Illus - In other words, have you ever been to a high school reunion?

- The problem with loving the world and the things in the world is that you can't love the world and love God your Father at the same time. They are mutually exclusive.
- If you love the world and the things of the world, the love of God in your heart is diminished. But if you truly love God, then love for the world and things in the world are diminished.

II. Choose the Soul Over the Flesh

- We all have within us the flesh with its fleshly desires and the spirit that desires spiritual life... and they are in conflict against each other.

Galatians 5:17, The flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

- They can't both be in control. They want very different things. The flesh doesn't think

about tomorrow, or the consequences of fleshly decisions, it wants what it wants and it wants it now.

- The Spirit within knows that if you deny worldly things today, you'll reap spiritual fruit.
- The question, therefore, has everything to do with your deepest desires; the results you want to see in your life.

Galatians 6:7-9, Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

A. What's in the world is not from God

- Verse 16 – For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.
- John is telling us why we should not love the world, because these things are not from the Father, they are from the world which is passing away.

- It comes down to where you identify who you are; are you ‘of the world’ or are you ‘of your Father.’

Illus - If you were doing some kind of sin and someone asked you at that very moment, “In your heart of hearts is this what you really want?” How would you answer?

- The lusts of the flesh are the cravings and desires of our sinful nature; it could be summarized as, “Me want stew; or, me want woman.”
- The lust of the eyes is the desire to have those things which are visually appealing. In other words, seeing something and wanting it, even though it’s not yours.

Psalm 101:3, I will set no worthless thing before my eyes.

Job 31:1, “I have made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman?”

- In the Garden of Eden Eve looked at the forbidden fruit and saw that it was “pleasing to the eye.”

Illus - Our two dogs are a lesson in the basic desire of wanting. No matter which bone Romeo has, he wants the one that Theo has.

- When Satan was tempting Jesus at the end of 40 days of fasting, Satan showed him “all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor” offering to give them to Jesus if He would fall down and worship Satan.

Matthew 4:10, Then Jesus said to him, “Begone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’”

Illus - To our dear African friends, much of is tempting to us is truly foreign to their understanding.

- Sepa doesn't have electricity five days a week. Raphael has a church of almost 250 and yet doesn't see a regular income, George has 43 orphans and prays that he has the provision just to feed them.

- The world is full of ‘eye candy’ with its false promises of happiness and fulfillment; but none of those things satisfy the soul. ***Unless God is giving something to you***, it's not yours to have.
- The boastful pride of life is anything that leads to arrogance, pride of self and boasting. Pride has been the problem from the very beginning...

Illuys - Have you ever noticed that when you tell a story you always build up your part in it to

make you a little smarter, a little more brave, or more heroic than you actually are? Isn't that because we want people to think highly of us?

B. The world is passing away

- Verse 17 – the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.
- Our flesh is only temporary, it's passing away, we're not taking it with us to heaven, praise God.
- In contrast, our soul is eternal. Therefore, choose the soul over the flesh.
- This world is passing away, and also its lusts. It brings death and it will end in death, but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

Illus - Talk about the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, I used to own a 1971 AMC Javelin. It was dark blue with a Starsky and Hutch stripe. It had extra wide tires in the back, air shocks to lift up the rear, glass packs for mufflers and a 360 in.³ engine with a four-barrel carburetor. This world is passing away and so did my Javelin. In fact, American Motors itself has also passed away.

Illus - But in that same year, 1971, there was an cover story in LIFE magazine that talked about hippies coming to faith in Jesus Christ by the thousands. Many things from 1971 passed away, but one thing remains the same, God is still saving souls and changing lives; that will remain forever.

- Martin Luther once wrote, “I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all. But the things I have placed in God’s hands I still possess.”

Illus - The famous missionary, Jim Elliott, once said, “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep, to gain that which he cannot lose.”

C. Your soul abides forever

- Verse 17 – *This world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.*
- What is the will of God? To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love your neighbor as yourself.
- Then in verse 18 John gives a sense of urgency to getting your soul right with God; to not loving the world nor the things in the

world, but loving God your Father with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

- Verse 18 – *Just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour.*
- This world is getting more dangerous by the hour and history is unfolding before our very eyes. We need a sense of urgency, we need revival, we need to return to our first love...

Revelation 2:4, 7, “I have this against you, that you have left your first love... He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.”