

The Appeal of the World

1 John 2:15

First John chapter two John said, love, not the world. Neither of the things which are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life is not of the father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. But he that doing the will of the father abideth forever. John here is not telling us that we're not to love the world that we live in. That is the earth. God's handiwork. But rather, what he's saying is that we're not to love that cosmos of iniquity. That sphere that is dominated by the devil.

You recall in Second Corinthians chapter four, verse four. Paul identified the devil as the God of this age. That's an important point to remember. And so to understand that the devil uses the world to appeal to those of us who belong to the human family. The devil has a lot of tools in his toolbox. The lust of the flesh.

The lust of the eyes. The pride of life. And so what he does is he seeks to ensnare, entrap, to lead us astray, to circumvent our faith in the Lord. Now you have to understand that we're involved in what I would call spiritual warfare. I think that there are a lot of folks in the world today we don't understand.

They don't understand. We don't understand that we're in a battle for our soul. You remember what Paul said in First Timothy chapter six, fight the good fight of faith. I hear Paul saying, endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. I can also hear Paul saying that we are to wage a good warfare. So I understand that I'm involved in spiritual warfare on a daily basis.

Paul said, be strong in the Lord in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God. Why, Paul, that you might stand against the wiles, the schemes, the schematics of the devil against this idea that the devil has various tools that he uses to entrap, to ensnare, to bait us. If you please. Now, that being the case, let's just talk for a moment or two about the appeal of the world.

Now, I want to begin our study by looking again at First John chapter two. And I want to note verse 15. Here's what John said. Love not the world, neither the things which are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. So what John is saying is precise, clear.

It is about as succinct as you can get. And John is saying to those of us who are Christians, those of us who are disciples of the Lord, he is saying that we are not to love the world. Well, why is that? Because there's danger associated with the world. Again, John said, if any man loves the world, the love of the father is not in him.

Let's go back and look for a moment or two at Romans chapter 12. Paul is writing to saints in Rome, and Paul is encouraging them to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to the Lord. He said, which is your spiritual, your logical service. In verse two he said, be not conformed to this world. Now the idea is, do not allow the world to pour you into its mold.

You see what the devil wants you to do is to align yourself with the world. Well, what's so

dangerous about that? Because John said, if any man loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. So Paul here is saying that as a child of God, rather than being conformed, I've got to be transformed by what means, by the renewing of my mind.

The spiritual battle that we're involved in takes place between our ears. It's about a six inch battlefield, and we are literally fighting for our lives. Don't you think that's what Paul would say in Ephesians chapter four? Neither give place to the devil. In other words, do not give the devil any more real estate than he already has. The devil has done his very best to destroy the human family.

You go back to Genesis chapter two. When God placed man in that utopian environment, met his every need, set forth to probation, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said, the day you eat thereof, you will surely die. And then the devil comes on the scene. What do you say? How you will not surely die.

That was a lie, wasn't it? And since that time, the devil has done his best to destroy those of us who are God's crown in terms of his creation. Now, that being said, Paul tells us we're not to be conformed to the world. We're not to think like the world. We're not to act like the world. We're not to dress like the world.

We're not to be. We're not to be imitating the world in any way. Well, how then, do we overcome the world? Well, Paul said, we are transformed people. That means I've got to spend my time trying to know something about the Word of God. I've got to try to transform my thinking now. I want you to think about something for a moment or two.

When you obeyed the gospel. You remember what Paul said in Colossians chapter one. Paul said that we have been delivered out of the power of darkness, translated into the kingdom of God's dear son. So we were in one realm of existence, but now we've been translated into a whole different sphere. We've gone from the world into the body of Christ.

And he said, it's in that realm that we enjoy redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. So as a child of God, as a baby in Christ, we might say, what's the exhortation? Well, Peter said, as a newborn babe desired the sincere mark of the word Peter, that you might grow thereby. In Second Peter chapter three, verse 18.

Peter said, grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Paul would write to the church at Ephesus and talk about being renewed in the spirit of your mind. When Jesus was confronted by the devil, as recorded by Matthew in chapter four. You remember the devil made three overtures at Jesus. One of the things he did, he took him up to an exceeding high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.

And he said, all these I'll give you, if you'll fall down and worship me. How did Jesus respond? In every temptation the Lord Jesus said, it is written, how do you combat the world through the Word of God? To take the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God. Don't you think that's why the psalmist would say, your word?

Have I laid up my laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against you in Psalm one 1911? It was the psalmist who said, your word is a lamp to my feet, a light under my pathway. Now we're talking about the danger of the world. John said in first John chapter five at verse 19, the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

All the world is lying in spiritual darkness. That's why Paul said, you were once darkness, but now you're light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. Darkness signifying evil. Signifying sin, signifying the world. Well, as a child of God, we've been delivered out of

the world. We've been placed in the body of Christ. So what I've got to do is exercise my spiritual life under godliness.

I've got to try to take this book, absorb its contents, internalize it, and make it a part of my everyday life. Paul writes in Colossians chapter three, let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. You know what Paul is saying there. Paul is telling the saints in Colossae. You allow the Word of God to find a home in your heart, in your life.

Why is that? Because the Word of God is going to keep you on a safe pathway. The world that we live in filled with darkness. And you know, Jesus said on one occasion, middle of darkness rather than light. So we live in a darkened world of sin. And yet, the only way that we can clearly see how to get about in this world is through the teaching of Scripture, is through the word of the living God.

Again, I go back to Matthew chapter four, when Jesus was combating the devil. He quoted the Bible. So if that's what the Lord did and the Bible says, we're to follow in his footsteps, then by all means we ought to do the same. Now, I mentioned just a moment ago something about the danger of the world. Did you know that the world has heard Prince in John 12, verse 31.

Jesus identified the devil as the prince or ruler of this world. He's called the prince of the power of the air in Ephesians two. Jesus identified him as the enemy in Matthew 13. In that same context, the devil is identified as the wicked one. Matthew chapter four. He's called the tempter. There's a reason for that, because the devil, again, is doing everything within his power to destroy us.

So the world as we know it has a prince. Did you know the world also has our people? I mentioned that when we obey the gospel, we come out of the world. The word church is the ecclesia, the called out. We have been called out of darkness into the light of Christ. In first Peter chapter two and verse nine, Peter said, you're an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession.

Now listen to him whom he has called forth out of darkness into his marvelous light. So we are the called out. We've been called out of the world. We belong to the Lord. To remember who we are and who we are. We're children of God. Isn't that what John said? First John chapter three. Behold what manner of love the father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God.

We're not just called the children of God. We are the children of God. So the world has heard Prince. The world has heard people. Jesus said on one occasion, the world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify of it. That's deeds are evil. We live in a world that's been darkened by sin. And those of us who belong to the body of Christ, in many ways we have become public enemy number one.

We live in a day in time when, sadly, many have abdicated the law. They no longer want to think about spiritual things, not interested in God, not interested in the Word of God. How might ask this question? How's that working out? All you got to do is look around in the world today, and you can see evidence that because we have abdicated the will and the word of God, we're paying a heavy price.

You remember what Hosea said back in chapter four? Hosea indicted the children of Israel because he said, there's no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God, the land. I ask the question, how? How could that have been the case? We're talking about covenant people here. You say God had commanded the nation of Israel to teach their children diligently.

When people are not taught, instructed in the Word of God, mayhem always follows. And so on. Hosea chapter four or chapter four. Hosea said, there's no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. And because of that, here's what you have. Swearing, lying. Killing. Stealing. Committing adultery. He said with bloodshed after bloodshed, they break all restraint.

Is that not what we see in our country today? In Atlanta, Memphis, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles? I mean, you can go from city to city to city and we bear evidence of people that have forsaken the teaching of the Bible. And whenever that happens, I can promise you this. We're going to reap the consequences of that kind of behavior.

Hosea said to covenant people, they've sown to the wind. He said, they'll reap the whirlwind. We are reaping the whirlwind today. A people that have turned their backs on God and His divine word. I want you to listen to what Paul said. Second Timothy chapter three Paul said, all Scripture is inspired of God, and I want you to listen to what he said.

And he is profitable. People in our world today, they think somehow that the Word of God is intended to hold them back from living a good life. That somehow the Word of God is intended to hurt them. Let me tell you what God's Word is not intended to hurt you or to hinder you. Not intended to hold you back from enjoying life at its fullest, but rather the Word of God is intended to help you, to bless you, to benefit you.

That's why Paul said all scripture is given by inspiration of God is profitable. He's saying that if you'll take the Word of God and you'll live accordingly, I promise you this, you'll be blessed. That's true. It's true. It was true in the first century. True. True in the 21st century. So when we talk about the world, to understand the world has heard.

Prince. The world has heard people. Let me tell you a third thing. The world has her philosophy, the teaching of the Bible I mentioned just a moment ago. A lot of folks in our world today, they frown upon the Word of God. They look at look at it as if it is old fashioned, archaic, out of touch with the human family.

Let me tell you what. This is the most relevant book that I know of. You can look at magazines from days gone by. Those magazines, in many ways, are irrelevant to where we are in society today. But not this book. No, this book is relevant to where you are and what is going on in your life right now.

In first Corinthians chapter 15, Paul is making a case for the resurrected Christ. And Paul is pointing out that there were people that were eyewitnesses of the risen Savior. And he goes on to say that just as Jesus died and rose again, he was the first fruits. There's a greater harvest coming. It's called the last day. On that last day.

All that are in the graves will come forward. That's what Jesus said in John chapter five. And we will have an incorruptible, immortal body. But to those who were denying the resurrection, you remember Paul said, look, if there's not been a resurrection, he said, our preaching is vain. Our faith is vain. We're still in sin. We're of all men, most pitiable.

And then down on about verse 32, Paul is talking about the sentiments of those in that era. And the idea was, if the dead don't rise, let us eat and drink. Why, Paul? Tomorrow we die. You better get it while you can. Enjoy life to the fullest. Because once you're dead, you're dead. I don't believe that for a minute.

No. Peter said we have a living hope based upon the resurrection of Jesus and based upon the resurrection of Jesus. We have an inheritance. It is incorruptible, undefiled. It fades not

away. And Peter said, it's reserved in heaven for you. So what, then, is the philosophy of the world? The philosophy of the world. Eat and drink for the morrow we die.

Better get it while you can. Remember in Luke chapter 12, the rich farmer barns were bulging. Business was good. And he said, you know, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to pull down my barns and build greater, and then I'm going to bestow all my crops and goods, and I'm going to sit back and enjoy the fruit of my work, my labor.

Eat, drink and be merry. What Jesus say? He said, you're foolish. Why? Because tonight your soul is required. And all these things that you've accumulated in this world, whose will they belong to. Let me tell you what the philosophy of this world is wrong. There's something beyond this veil of tears. Now we're talking about the danger of the world.

The world has our prints. The world has our people. The world has our philosophy. But then there's a second thing I want to call your attention to. Number one, the danger of the world. But number two. Note, if you would, the deceitfulness of the world. Now, John said, love, not the world, neither the things which are in the world.

If any man loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that's in the world the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life. It's not of the father, but it's of the world. And the world passes away. Did you know that the devil uses the world to deceive you, to deceive me, to deceive the human family?

By and large. Well, how does he do that? Lust of the flesh. The lust of the eyes and the pride of life. Go back again and look at Matthew. Matthew chapter four. When the devil took Jesus to that exceeding high mountain. And showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. You think that's enticing? Are there not people today that become enticed?

They want more of this world's goods. They love money. Love material. Good. Look, there's nothing wrong with money. Nothing wrong with material goods. If I understand scripture, right? Abraham was a wealthy man. Joe was a wealthy man. It's not about what you have. It's about what you do with what you have. The things that you have. Do they control you or do you control them?

You know, Paul said in first Corinthians chapter four, verse two, that that which is required of a steward is that a man be found faithful. We want to be faithful with the things God's entrusted us with. But here's what Paul said. Those who are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and snare, and many foolish hurts and lust which drown men, and destruction and perdition.

The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, which some men, having reached after, have pierced themselves through with many sorrows and been led astray from the faith. Money, materialism has it destroy people in this world? Yes. Are there people today that are hurting because they've accentuated the secular over the spiritual? Do you think there are people in our world today that it's all about power?

It's all about popularity. It's all about prominence. It's all about their material goods, their possessions and their pleasures in this life. You know, Paul talks about those who are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. You mean to tell me that I can fall in love with this world? Yes. That's what John saying. John saying love, not the world.

Look at James four, verse four. James is writing to Christians and he said, you adulterous, know you not. That friendship with the world is enmity with God. What he's saying is that when we fall in love with the world, and the world begins to web and to weave its way into

our lives, that we automatically set ourselves at variance with our creator, we don't want to do that.

We don't. We don't want to commit spiritual adultery. We don't want to be living a life that would ultimately lead to eternal destruction. So the devil is using the things of this world to tantalize us, to entice us, to entrap us. Second Timothy chapter two Paul talks about those who are taken captive by the devil to do his will.

I saw just the other day some videos of some people that are living on the street, and the video itself of the videos that I watched were absolutely heart wrenching and heartbreaking to see people that are living on the street. One lady said, I just love drugs, and when you look at her physical appearance and you look at how she's living and you're allowing drugs to literally destroy your life, and I hear people say, you know what?

I want to be free to do what I want to do. Well, let me tell you what. If that's freedom, I don't want it. There are people today. They are shackled by sin. Sin will blind you and sin will bind you. That's why Paul said the devil takes people captive. Why? To do his will. Jesus is the only one that can liberate you.

Jesus said, you shall know the truth. The truth shall make you free. The Lord Jesus said that those who commit sin, that the bond servants of sin. John eight verse 34. In verse 36 he said, If the Son makes you free, you're free indeed. You know that. Now go back to our text again very quickly. John said, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes of life.

Listen to James and James, chapter one. James said, let no man say when he's tempted, not tempted by God. God cannot be tempted with evil. He said, if any man is tempted, he's drawn away by his own lust. Lust once can see, brings for sin. Sin when it's full grown, James said, brings forth death. That's what the devil is after.

The devil want you out on that island of destruction, specifically eternal destruction. There's a third thought here that is the duration of the world. John said, and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. Let's just pause there for a moment or two. What do you mean? What do you mean, John? The world passeth away. And the lust thereof.

You know what he's saying is, if you hook your wagon to the world, if you're hooking your wagon to the world, you are hooking your wagon to a system that will end in death. I want you to think about a statement made by Jesus back in Matthew 16. You think about all the things that this world has to offer.

The appeal of the world. The lust of the flesh. The lust of the eyes. The pride of life. You think about the power, the popularity, the possessions, the prominence, the pleasures that this world has to offer. And then listen to Jesus. Jesus asked this question what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world? Now wait a minute.

What if you could gain everything this world has to offer? Lock, stock and barrel. You got all the land, the gold, the silver. You got every resource this world has to offer. You've got it all. Jesus said if he ask this question. What shall I profit a man of peace? You gain the whole world and lose his own soul.

You know what Jesus is saying? If you gain the world and you lose your soul, my friend, you have made a terrible transaction in life. The Lord Jesus is saying, you're going to be a loser. You're going to be on the losing end. Why? Because this world is going to end whether we like it or not. The world passeth away and the lust thereof.

Here's what Paul said. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry

nothing out. Not about what you have here is about what you have on the other side. Jesus said, I want you to lay up treasures in heaven, not on earth, but in heaven. Where you treasure is there your heart will be also.

So I want to ask you a question. Are you in love with the world? Have you been conformed to the world? Are you living in such a way that your life is out of harmony with the will of God? It might be that you're not a Christian. I want to encourage you if you've allowed the world to suck you in.

I want to encourage you to put your faith in Jesus, the Son of God, who can make you free. I want to encourage you to repent. That's what the Bible says. God commands all men everywhere to repent. Acts ten, verse 30. And then to confess with your mouth the name of Jesus. Make that good confession, and then to be baptized into Christ, to be immersed in water.

For what reason? So that all your sins can be forgiven. Acts 238 so that your sins can be washed away. Acts 2216. To sum it up, Jesus said to be saved. Mark 1616 and then you live a faithful life in Christ. If you're a Christian and the world has you in its clutches, clutches, as Paul said, come you out from among them and be you separate.

Could I encourage you to put the world behind you and live for the Lord? Thank you for being with us today. Hope to see you back here next week. Until then. May the Lord bless and keep you.