

## Sunday Morning Message

April 11, 2021

*1 John 2:15 – 29 – Preparing For His Appearing*

*Part One – Leaving this World While Still Living in the World*

Series – 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> John

Text – 1 John 2:15 - 29

Congregational Reading – 1 John 2:15 - 17

### Introduction

In the first fourteen verses of this chapter, John asked the questions: “Are you Living Proof of a Genuine Faith, or Are You Merely a Professor of Faith?” Is your faith real?

The chapter began (in vs. 1 – 2) with a discussion of Christ as **the Propitiation for Our Sins**: We saw Him as our **Advocate** (meaning our representative or intercessor with the Father) as well as our **Atonement**.

Beginning in verse three, however, we examined **the Practices of a Genuine Faith**, and we realized that those who are truly saved have **a desire to please the Lord**, as well as a **delight in their brothers and sisters in Christ**.

In the remainder of this chapter, John is going to emphasize the need for our separation from things that are inconsistent with who we are in Christ and where we are heading in eternity. John tells us that we are going to have to break off the love affair that we are having with this world system, and then we will need to silence, to cut off the many voices of the Devil and devils, along with those human voices that are speaking their lies. Ultimately, we need to embrace the truth of life in another world: one that is eternal; one that is without the lies of Satan; one that is devoid of the wicked and sinful pleasures that this world is constantly trying to push on us.

Look at verse 28:

*“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.” (1 John 2:28)*

We who are saved are going to meet the Lord – face to face – someday, perhaps very soon. It may be through death, but it is also extremely possible that the Lord will be returning to this earth within our lifetime to take away His Bride, the Church. When we get to Heaven, it will be nothing like where we are living right now. What John is telling us

in this second half of chapter two, is that we need to start moving away now from what we know from this world, and start getting used to what lies ahead for us in Heaven.

**Illustration** – Melissa – when she was moving to Alaska, she researched everything that she could about the area where she was moving.

Jesus said in the model prayer: "... *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*" (Luke 11:2)

Our life here on earth should be more like Heaven than it is like earth. We need to detach ourselves from the mindset of earth, and saturate ourselves in the things that are eternal.

**Step One in Preparing for His Appearing is Leaving This World While We are Still Living in it.**

### I. A Love That Is Not Healthy (vs. 15 – 17)

*"Love (ἀγαπάτε - Pres. Imp. Act. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Per. Pl) not the world (κόσμον – Acc. Sing. Masc.), neither the things that are in the world. If any man love (ἀγαπή = 3<sup>rd</sup>. Per. Sing. Pres. Act. Subj.) the world, the love (ἀγάπη - Nom Sing. Fem.) of the Father is not in him."* (1 John 2:15)

### What Does John Mean by "the World?"

It is important to know as we examine these verses what God is talking about when he refers to "the world." He is not speaking of the physical world of nature – the ocean, the mountains, the forests, the animals, the birds, etc. Neither is he talking about the people in the world:

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16)

He is referring to a world system, which is controlled by Satan who the Bible refers to as the "prince of this world" (John 16:11) and the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

According to Wiersbe, "'The world,' in the Bible, is Satan's system for opposing the work of Christ on earth. It is the very opposite of what is godly (1 John 2:16) and holy and spiritual."<sup>1</sup> He goes on to say that "anything in a Christian's life that causes him to lose his enjoyment of the Father's love or his desire to do the Father's will is worldly and must

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 492.

be avoided.<sup>2</sup> Anything about this world that pulls you away from your love for God or the will of God is to be shunned.

Peter wrote about *the pollutions* of the world:

*"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."* (2 Peter 2:20)

Peter wasn't talking about air pollution or litter; he was referring to all of the sinful things that are part of the world that we live in.

### **What Kind of Love is John Talking About?**

It is interesting to me that the words for "love" used three times in this verse are all forms of the word, "ἀγάπη." This love is deeper and more active than "φιλέω," which is more of an attraction. So when the Bible is talking about loving the world, it is talking about a deep connection with it, not just a mere infatuation. Who among us is not attracted to certain aspects of this world? I love the foods of this world, and I must confess that some of the entertainments that are part of this world are enjoyable for me. But, there are many things about this world system that are in contradiction with that eternal world that Christ made us a citizen of when we became Christians.

*"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:"* (Philippians 3:20)

Jesus said that we are "in the world" but not "of the world":

*"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."* (John 17:14-19)

Spurgeon said:

Where the love of the father is, there cannot be the love of the world. There is no room in us for two loves. The love of the world is essentially idolatry, and God will not be

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, 492.

worshiped side by side with idols. You cannot send your heart at the same time in two opposite ways—toward evil and toward good. You must make a choice between the two.<sup>3</sup>

Notice that verse 15 clearly indicates that the this loving or not loving the world is a clear indicator of whether or not you are truly saved. Remember, when we started this study of 1 John, we said that he will give us many clear indicators of real faith. In this case, he is telling us that if we have a deep attachment with this world, including all of the anti-God elements within it, we cannot be saved.

The difference between loving the world and loving God is really in the direction our love is headed.

One commentator put it like this:

When an individual believer fulfills the love command by showing compassion to a brother or sister (2:10), this love is properly motivated and properly directed. When people love the world, they are misapplying this human emotion in a way that will lead to their demise. In a sense love is neutral. The object of one's love or affection is decisive. One must be careful that this love is going in the right direction and that it acts in a manner consistent with Christian confession. John charges us to love neither the world in general nor the things of the world in particular. The command is comprehensive. Our allegiance must not be divided. Our affection must be focused and specific.

The correct application of love springs from the fact that the believer has a singular loyalty and commitment to the Father. This verse states clearly that one cannot love the world and love God at the same time. The absolute nature of this statement is striking and compels careful and serious reflection. The stakes are high. Because the Father's kingdom is at war with the kingdom of this world, the two will never coexist peacefully. To pledge allegiance to one side is to declare opposition to the other.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 John*, ed. Elliot Ritzema, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 1 Jn 2:15.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel L. Akin, 1, 2, 3 John, vol. 38, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 108–109.

*"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." (1 John 2:16)*

In verse sixteen, John further defines, more specifically, what it is about the world that is particularly harmful to the believer: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. All three of these were factors in the original sin:

*"And when the woman saw that the tree **was good for food**, and that **it was pleasant to the eyes**, and a tree to be **desired to make one wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (Genesis 3:6)*

### A. The Lusts of the Flesh

The word, "lust," means desire. The word, "flesh," refers to man's fallen, Adamic nature. It is not referring to your desire to eat or sleep, which are needful to the body; but it is talking about the things that your mind and body like to do, which are not God's will for you. Physical intimacy within the bounds of marriage is perfectly good, but sexual activity outside of the marriage covenant is a lust of the flesh. Again, quoting from Wiersbe: "God has given man certain desires, and these desires are good. Hunger, thirst, weariness, and sex are not at all evil in themselves. There is nothing wrong about eating, drinking, sleeping, or begetting children. But when the flesh nature controls them, they become sinful 'lusts.'"<sup>5</sup>

You were born with a flesh, but when you were born-again, God's Spirit moved in and quickened your spirit. Your spirit is at war with the sinful desires of your flesh.

*"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is*

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<sup>5</sup> Wiersbe, 493.

*no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Galatians 5:16-25)*

Jesus said that our "flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). He meant that it is weak when it comes to resisting sinful things and doing the will of God. Satan's world is constantly bombarding the believer with allurements, temptations that are designed to pull you out of the will of God.

Jesus said:

*"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63)*

Paul said:

*"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." (Romans 7:18)*

*"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Philippians 3:3)*

*"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." (Romans 13:14)*

## **B. The Lusts of the Eyes**

The eyes are usually the means by which the lusts of the flesh first enter into our thinking. Remember, Eve first looked at the fruit before she ate it. In the Old Testament Battle of Jericho, Achan first saw the goodly Babylonish garment and then he took it. David first saw Bathsheba bathing, and then he took her. Our entertainment is based primarily upon looking. The commercials get you to see something first, and then convince you to purchase it. Again, not everything we look at in this world that we live in is wrong, but when we choose to expose our eyes to things that are forbidden, we are taking a first step toward satisfying a lust of the flesh.

Pornography would be a prime example of a lust of the eyes. Many people would say that there is nothing wrong with looking as long as you do not touch. Jesus said:

*"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matthew 5:28)*

Solomon said:

*"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids." (Proverbs 6:23-25)*

The children sing a little hymn that has good advice for adults:

O be careful little eyes what you see  
O be careful little eyes what you see  
For the Father up above  
Is looking down in love  
So, be careful little eyes what you see

### C. The Pride of Life

The word "pride" (ἀλαζονεία – Nom. Sing. Fem.) here has the idea of "boasting." It carries the idea of bragging about your accomplishments or boasting about your possessions. James wrote about this type of boasting:

*"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil." (James 4:13-16)*

We need to be very careful about pride. Pride seems to be the root of all other sin.

Phillips said: "Pride is the ultimate sin, the original sin, the sin that transformed brilliant Lucifer into the very Devil himself (Isa. 14:9–14; Ezek. 28:12–19)."<sup>6</sup>

Eve wanted to be "wise" and "like God."

Satan's fall was caused by his pride:

*"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the*

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<sup>6</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring the Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), 1 Jn 2:16c.

*clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." (Isaiah 14:12-15)*

You and I have nothing to boast about. We were given everything that we have. We were born with the gifts and abilities that we have. We were taught how to work, and how to prosper in this world. If we have some things that others do not have, we need to recognize that they are gifts from the Lord.

## II. A Love That Cannot Last (v. 17)

*"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:17)*

This world and everything in it will someday pass away. Satan will first be bound in a bottomless pit, and ultimately, he will be cast into a Lake of Fire. Someday God will create a new Heaven and a new Earth, and though there may be some similarities, it will certainly not contain any of the sinful things that we have discussed in this message. He is also right now working on a New Jerusalem, which is a vast and beautiful city that may be like a moon that hovers around the new earth. We need to start weaning ourselves away from the things that we think are so wonderful here on this dying planet, and start setting our affections on the things above:

*"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*

(Colossians 3:1-2)

If you are saved, you are going to live forever with the Lord in the place that He is preparing for you:

*"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" (John 14:1-5)*

Illustrate – Cary Schmidt – Dimples verses Disneyland

*"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)*



### 1 John 2:15

"Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον, μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

Not / ye love / the world, / neither / the / in / the world

ἀγαπᾶτε – Pres. Imperative Act. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Per. Pl.; τὰ = Def. Art. Neut. Pl.

Exegetical Comments – the plural neuter definite article, τὰ, has no noun attached

Do not love the world, neither the \_\_\_\_\_ in the world. (Fill in the blank – any “thing” in the world.

ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον,

if / one, someone, anyone / loves the world,

ἀγαπᾷ = 3<sup>rd</sup>. Per. Sing. Pres. Act. Subj. (conditional “if” clause - forms same as indicative)

οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ." (1 John 2:15 TR)

not / is / the love / of the father / in / in him

ἀγάπη = Nom Sing. Fem.; = Pres. Ind. 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing.

**Do not (stop loving) the world, neither the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

**Exegetical Comments** – We are commanded in the present tense to stop loving the world and the things that are in it. If a person continues loving the world, there is evidence that the love of God is not in him. If love of God is “in” a person, it will draw him away from the world.

### 1 John 2:16

"ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ,

That or because /each, every, all , whole / in the world

Because (or for) everything in the world

Exegetical Comments - No verb; Def. Art. – “τὸ” has no connecting noun; this was translated “the things” in verse 15.

ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς, καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν,

the lust (Nom. Sin.) / of the flesh (Gen), and lust of the eyes (Gen. Pl),

καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς,

and / boast, pride / of life, not / is / from /the father

ἔστιν = Pres. Ind. 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing

ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν." (1 John 2:16 TR)

but is from the world.

ἔστιν = Pres. Ind. 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sing

**Because all things (or every thing) in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the boasting of life is not from the father, but is from the world.**

### 1 John 2:17

"καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται, καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ:

And / the world / it is passing away, / and the desire, lust (1 John 2:16) / of it (antec. – world)

Παράγεται = 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Sin. Pres. Ind. Mid. Dep. – Rogers)

And the world is passing away, and its lust.

Exegetical Comments – continuous action – the world is dying; the lust of the world is dying also.

**ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.**" (1 John 2:17 TR)

which, whatever, whoever / but / is doing / the will / of God / abides, remains / in, for / ever, for eternity

ποιῶν = Nom. Sing. 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Part.; μένει = 3<sup>rd</sup> Per. Pl. Pres. Act. Ind.; εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα = according to Thayers - univ.: in the phrases εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, *דְּלִיּוֹלָה* (Gen. 6:3), *for ever*,<sup>7</sup>

**And the world is passing away, and its lust, but whoever is doing the will of God lives forever.**

Exegetical Comments – “lives forever” – as αἰῶνα carries the idea of eternity, so does the live (abide, remain); it goes beyond earthly life.

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 19.