

The World and a Warning

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Date: 28 May 2023

Preacher: Andy Pynch

[0 : 00] If you don't have a Bible, you can turn in your bulletin. It's printed there for you.

So we've been kind of making, or I've been making my way through 1 John with you guys in little breaks and chunks from Mark. But we're coming to the next section, which has some spicy stuff in it.

So let's give our attention to the reading of God's Word. 1 John 2, verses 15 through 27.

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, all the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life 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. Children, it is the last hour.

[1 : 04] And as you have heard, that Antichrist is coming. So now many Antichrists have come. Therefore, we know that this is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us.

For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they are not of us. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you have all knowledge.

I write to you not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it. And because no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?

This is the Antichrist. He who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

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. And this is the promise that he made to us, eternal life.

[2 : 09] I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you, but the anointing that you have received from him abides in you. And you have no need that anyone should teach you, but as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him.

Let's pray. Lord, we're thankful this morning for your word. We pray that you might bless it, especially the preaching of your word, and that it would take root in our souls, and that we might see Christ as more glorious.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. The anticipation of a big championship fight, a highly touted contender who comes in with all the brashness and arrogance of a champion, dressed maybe like Uncle Sam.

He looks at his opponent, and he mocks him. Back-to-back titles, dressed to the hilt, everyone shouting his name, music blasting.

His opponent does not stand a chance at all. Skinny, scrawny, unproven. Why is there even a fight after all? He's going to win.

[3 : 27] It's a foregone conclusion. And then comes the underdog, and he knocks the champion to the floor. Never been done before. Never happened. Completely taken off guard because he had underestimated his opponent because he thought that there was no chance that he would win.

That's the opening, or really the culmination of Rocky. It's not opening. It opens the series, and it continues on. You know Rocky, the story of Rocky Balboa from the south side of Philadelphia.

You know, he works in a meatpacking plant, and he trains for this big fight by punching big slabs of meat. And here is Apollo Creed, the champion who lets down his guard and then is taken off his pedestal.

Not by any decision, because he actually wins the fight, but his name, his recognition, all of that comes with a champion, is taken away from him.

All the support of all the on-watchers and adoring fans are now Rocky fans. That's a similar story that plays over and over, no matter if it's history, politics, and upset victories.

[4 : 41] The war in Ukraine. Whoever thought Ukraine would last this long? Or, in literature, think of Cinderella. Cinderella. No one would have thought anyone would fall for Cinderella, unless they would have surely sent her to the ball.

Her stepmother and all those mean, nasty sisters would have supported her. But that's even where we get that term, the Cinderella story. It's because it's an unlikely outcome.

But whether it's politics, or history, or literature, the underdog, the Cinderella story, is something that resonates with us. But oftentimes, what happens is the champion, or the supposed victor, who is certainly going to win, lets down their guard.

That's what's going on in this text this morning. John is reminding Christians that they can't let down their guard, but they're going to end up, like Apollo Creed, knocked to the mat.

John is saying, don't let down your guard, because there's something out there. The world. Don't let down your guard, because I'm warning you about the enemies of Christ.

[5 : 52] Those are two kind of things that influence Christians. And John is reminding these people, and us, that those two things remain even for us today.

So those are the headings that we're going to look at this morning. This idea of the world, and this warning against the enemies of Christ. So, if you turn your attention back to God's word, let's look at verse 15.

Do not love the world, or the things in this world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. John's really clear here. Don't love the world, or the things that are in the world.

That's a trickier statement, than at first glance. Remember, these instructions are coming on heels of John repeating, over and over, that there's these things, there's this group of people, that these Christians are going to have to endure, that they're influenced by, and they have to remember what God has done for them.

They have to recall to mind, and live out of that, that is the gospel, what Jesus has done for them. They have to rest in that alone, because all these things are going to assault them, and challenge them.

[7 : 06] But John reminds them, that they're loved, they're called to abide in him, they're kept by Jesus. And on the heels of that, he's saying, if you're doing all these things, you don't love the world, or the things in it.

In typical John fashion, he's going to restate this idea. He says, those that do love the world, do not love the Father. They do not love the things, that he loves.

In fact, his love is not in them. But there's a couple of ways, in which scripture uses the word, world. This is my Father's world, we sing that song here.

Is that what he's talking about? What about the famous, scripture that you hear, or you see, at all those sporting events? For God so loved the world.

Right? Is it that sense of world? That he gave his only begotten son. Remember, that's the same author, that's right here, that penned these words, telling us not to love the world.

[8 : 13] So how can he tell us, that God loves the world, that he gave his only son, but he's telling us, as Christians, not to love the world? Those two don't seem, to fit together. It's this.

When John uses the term, world here, he means not the created order, and all the things in it, including us, that were created by him, and that he's called good. Think about Genesis 1.

He means, it is this. Look at verse 16. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not from the Father, but it's from the world.

The desires of the flesh, the temptations that we all face, the desires of the eyes, the things that we want, that we see, and we must have.

The pride that we have in possessions, that's what he's talking about. Those are all euphemisms.

That's sin. He's saying, those things that are in the world, that are sinful, whether they're good, distorted to be evil, because we place them on the pedestal of the most important thing in the world, or whether they're actually bad.

[9 : 27] Those things are the world. It's the same sense in which we often echo Paul when we say we're called out from this world, that we're in this world, but not of it, or the words of Christ when he

reminds us that he is not of this world.

Yes, he's physically there, but he is not of this world. John defines it here for us in verse 16. And scripture affirms that the world and the way of godliness are two separate ideas.

And he's calling us to the way of godliness. The world and all that's in it is at odds with the Father. The irony here is that all of this, the allure of the world, is something we struggle with because we're in the here and now. And we struggle with it even though we know that it's fleeting, even though we know that it's passing.

But why do we do that? Why do we continuously struggle when we know that the will of God abides forever? That that is made by a God that is infinite and eternal.

[10:41] Who doesn't want those things? And yet we settle for that, which is far less. The British writer C.S. Lewis reminds us when he describes his own struggle in the weight of glory.

He says, You and I have a need of the strongest spell that can be found to wake us from the evil enchantment of worldliness, which has been laid upon us for nearly a hundred years.

Almost our whole education has been directed to silencing this shy, persistent inner voice. Almost all our modern philosophies have been devised to convince us that the good of man is to be found on this earth.

This idea that we have to wake ourselves up from this, this slumber, and this idea that we have to fight against finding all of our good on this earth.

God is infinite, eternal. That is the thing of lasting worth and value. It's not these things that tempt us in this world. There are many things in this life that are fleeting.

[11:52] They're alluring, promising that they'll never, never actually deliver on. I have a friend like this that's always tempted. He's tempted by something in his normal day-to-day appeal that this thing, this action will actually lead to his ruin.

He knows that it's not for his good, but he does it anyway. He knows that it's not for his good because I remind him of this. I remind him of this when I discipline him and give him a cold bath outside in the front yard.

My friend is man's best friend. His name's Otter. It's not my pet. I don't have a pet Otter. That's really confusing. I have a dog, German short hair pointer named Otter.

And the thing that he struggles with more than anything in this world, the thing that he's tempted by are these fluffy black and white things. See, Otter is from South Alabama where they don't really exist that often.

He's not had that many experiences with them until he came here. But those tempting, fun, black and white things have this nasty smell.

[13:10] And even though he knows at this point through various interactions that this will not turn out for his good, that playing with that fluffy black and white animal is not going to be fun in the end, he still does it.

He's done it on normal days. He's done it on Christmas Eve. He's done it by himself. He's done it with his friends, his litter mates. He's done it with my older dog who knows now to avoid those skunks.

But Otter does it every single time. He's mesmerized by it. Even when they warn him. Even when they warn him with their teeth.

He's still tempted. He doesn't learn from experience. He doesn't learn from the wisdom of his elders. He doesn't learn from correction from me. He doesn't learn from the effects of it.

Having to get that cold bath of peroxide and water. Tomato juice doesn't work. He doesn't learn. He keeps going back again and again.

[14:20] It's because they're cute. Yeah. Yes, they are. He goes back and he pays the price every time. But we are kind of like Otter the dog.

We play with the skunk. We play with the stench of our own sin. And we know that it will not be for our own good. We know it from experience. We know it from the words that we hear on Sunday. We know it from God's word. We know it from others. But yet, we return again and again to something that's empty, vain, and fleeting.

But why? Why do we do that? It's because we're made of flesh and bone. We live in this created world that we're finite creatures. We're part of this world.

But we are called to something more than now. We're called to resist those impulses of our flesh. We can't be deceived by this world, by our eyes, by what we can see, by our pride, by our sin, by

our own apathy to that which is lovely, to God himself.

[15:37] There is an Anglican pastor who wrote this about this passage. And it's so fitting. He said, the world is the great rock on which thousands of young people are continually making shipwreck.

Now, I think the qualification that we would make is not just young people. It's all people. We don't object to any article of the Christian faith. They do not deliberately choose evil and openly rebel against God.

They hope somehow to get to heaven at last. And they think it proper to have some religion. But they cannot give up their idol. They must have the world. And so running after well and bidding fair for heaven while boys and girls turn aside when they become men and women go down the broad way which leads to destruction.

We love the world. We are marked by worldliness. But we are called to seek after things that are eternal and to abide with the Lord forever.

We are called to delight in who God is and what He has done. That we have to reorder our priorities and not see these good gifts as ultimate things and worship them.

[16:55] But worship Christ. That's what we are called to. That's what John is calling these people to. And that's a struggle and we will fail. But we must remind one another to return again and again to Christ and not to the things in this world.

John reminds us to stand against the world but he also reminds us through this section that there's this other thing going on. He warns us to be on our guard not just against the world but against the enemies of Christ.

Let's turn our attention there. Remember that John is writing to a people that he loves. So in verse 18 when he says children it's not like they're their little child but children I love you.

I want the best for you. I'm going to warn you of the impending danger. It's not demeaning at all. He's reminding them because he actually cares for them.

He's reminding them because something is looming. It's not simply a battle of ideas. It's ideas that influence their lives and train wreck or shipwreck their faith against the rock.

[18:14] It's a battle of theological ideas and he's reminding them these real people that he loves them. Now I know in this first verse there's something looming that we want to jump to and it's that antichrist.

But before we do we have to remember we have to look at all what's going on. There's also this term last hours. What does he mean by that? If John's writing in the last hours and we're still here was he wrong?

Were those the last hours? Are these the last hours? John's talking about a quality of time not a quantity of time. So quickly we move to quantity but not quality.

Think about the use of the term all in scripture. all men. It's really all types of men that it's often used. We should be concerned though because this can often be an attack against scripture. It's not the last hours he's talking about in terms of time but the quality of time. These hours are different or these last days are different. How are they different from before?

[19:27] Think on the timeline of scripture. At one time God spoke through prophets and through signs and types and shadows and now he speaks by his son.

That's what the writer of Hebrews reminds us. In these final days and these last days that are different because we have Christ. That's how they're the last.

So they're different days by which Christ now speaks. It points to something though that will have challenges. In verse 18 he reminds us that we've heard that the Antichrist is coming so now many Antichrists have come.

I have to admit when looking at this passage I was tempted to just be like hey I can just preach another passage right? Because this word comes with all kinds of baggage and immediately in context we see we know that term Antichrist but then we're reoriented because then it uses it in the plural and we have to think what's going on?

But it gets our attention and most often we think of that term we think of Paul or Revelation this idea of this man of lawlessness a singular figure who opposes Christ and his kingdom but here it's plural.

[20:49] It's very different. simply put it's these people that are against the cause of Christ against him against his kingdom it's not a singular individual in this context it's all those people that are against Jesus.

Now remember 1 John is a letter written to a church written to Christians to assure them to remind them to comfort them as they faced all these challenges and the challenges were those that were swirling around the community of Christ whether they have been part of them and then had gone out from them as we'll see or they were still within them promoting their ideas all about confusion over who Jesus was and what he had done those are those antichrists that he's talking about. Look with me at verse 19 they went out from us but they were not of us for they have been of us they would have continued with us but they went out that it might become plain that they are not all of us.

They were part of the covenant community they were part of the church and then they left. John's saying this is not simply a clash of ideas that happen in the classroom this happens in real life and these ideas have real big effects ramifications for real people.

These aren't just minor theological fights you know the nerds have that really don't affect us. These are important in its life and death it's a real struggle over error over truth and lies but what are they struggling over?

[22 : 34] If it's that big of a deal what are they struggling over? Look with me at verse 20 he reminds them they've been anointed by the Holy One that they have all the knowledge 21 that I write to you because you do know the truth.

It's not as if you don't know it there is no lie in the truth. He's writing them reminding them they have everything they need they don't need to be swayed by these new ideas they need to return again and again to the gospel and that what is contained in the message of their sin being paid for by Christ who's both God and man that is true that is lasting and there is no lie in them if they believe in that there's no lie in that but there is one that lies.

John tells us that these enemies of Christ are those that deny Jesus they deny some aspect of who he is or what he's done we don't know exactly what it is but it's probably about him being God and man at the same time or him paying the punishment for sin they're confused but these Christians are called to love him if you remember this isn't the first time we've seen this clash of theology these people who are denying who Jesus is and what he's done are the same people back in chapter 1 that said what?

that they had fellowship with God these are the same people that said they have no sin not now not ever these are the same people that said they're walking in the light and John says more he says you can't walk in the light and then have fellowship with the darkness or he goes on in chapter 2 and says these are the same people that said they walked in that light they've tasted and seen yet they did not know who Christ truly was was it his divinity?

was it the fact he was God and man as we just confessed this morning? was it the fact that his death had impact for them even though they couldn't see the effects of his death on the cross?

[24 : 58] that he reigns now in heaven even though it doesn't look like it we don't know what it is but we'll see in a couple chapters what it is we don't know at this point we don't know exactly what it is but we know they have the wrong view of Christ and that is essential for any person that is saying they're walking with Jesus and I'm putting their trust in this God man to not know who he truly is one theologian has written that when we think like this we're taking the cross and we're rounding off the edges whether making it more palatable or easier to handle we're reducing the sharp lines that bring about the effects in this world that's what they're trying to do they're trying to reconcile this they're trying to shape the message and by doing so they're losing the cross in all of it

John's correcting this he's saying it matters what you think about Jesus and little children I'm going to remind you of all these things so that you aren't led astray because Jesus matters remember he's calling them to remember now tomorrow is a day of remembering it's memorial day it's not something that we struggle with in modern America remembering Israel struggle with that and God did miraculous things and brought them out of the land and they were told to build memorials they were told to remember through days they were told to remember through celebrations and what do they do they forget now memorial day is a national day that we're called to remind ourselves of the sacrifices of people for freedom in this country the ability that we have to have liberty to have life to have the pursuit of happiness and we're called to be thankful for those sacrifices but more often than not it's a day that we just cease working that we celebrate the start of summer we dust off the pool noodles we fire up the barbecue and we celebrate because summer is here around the corner it's a little tricky in

Colorado the pool is not so warm right now we might see snow right but in this day we have this clash of ideas maybe even clash in our own hearts because for some memorial day is this day that's the start of summer but for some it's kind of haunting it's a struggle it's marked by sadness marked by loss marked by guilt and maybe decisions that you've made or others have made that have been led to the loss of Americans that's hard that doesn't look like the pool and barbecue right but as a nation we're called to remember this day but some of us were marked by more introspection and lament and that's okay and that's a good thing as a kid I was part of a family that was never really patriotic on memorial day which we'd always spend it at the lake we'd go like catfishing and swimming and enjoy the day and it always struck me like why did we do those things if it was a day for remembering are we remembering and as I grew as an adult

I started to challenge that I said hey we have multiple generations of people who've given their lives to this country who've given all of them we have cousins that I don't even know because we live all around the world and I asked I can't remember if it was my dad or granddad I asked them why don't we do the things that other people do on memorial day why don't we go to parades why don't we do you know go to cemeteries which are all good things and I remember the response being every day is memorial day that our whole lives as multiple generations of people that have served in the military are marked by these memorials and that each day we were to live as honoring those who paid the ultimate price whether they're friends family members and that shaped each and every day I think that's what we're called to in memorial day is to remember those things and John in this section is calling them not just to remember and set it aside but to live each day moment by moment remembering what Christ has done that's what he's calling them to remember not just one day of the year and then go on about your business but remember second by second what Christ has done and even more than that

I'm going to send you one that you might delight and abide in me so that it's going to help you live that moment by moment in light of what Christ has done look at with me at 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 and this is the promise he made to us eternal life this is coming on the heels of understanding what they're fighting about they claimed that they had the father but they didn't have the son and John's reminding them that they're called to abide in God and abide in him because they're sending them the Holy Spirit he's sending them someone to help them it's not a disassociated remembering it's living moment by moment even when he feels far and distant living by his help living by what he has done

[31 : 20] God doesn't say just think real hard and then you can fight against the schemes of the devil this world these theological ideas he says no abide in him live out of him it's not simple remembering of what Christ has done in the past and going on about our day but living each day in light of what he has done it's not facts trapped in our brains but he's given his spirit to remain in us to live with us so we might abide in the son and the father it moves past memorial and it moves towards transformation that each day has a component of remembering but each day is being renewed then we can see the beauty of this world and we're not captive to it we can see our highest good not as the things that we can attain or the things that we want or the things that we don't have but the ultimate good is

Christ we see that when we live moment by moment abiding in him we see that most clearly we're not captive to our eyes we're not captive to the desires of our flesh or even big grand theological arguments we see Jesus as he truly is and we're freed we're freed not just from in the sense of having liberty but we're freed from the power of sin and death we're freed by Jesus himself and his actions on the cross we're freed to serve him we're freed to stand on our guard by abiding in him John reminds us that it's no new knowledge that we need it's this old old story and these ideas they're going to assault us even the world's going to assault us but we have him and we live in him so

Christian be on your guard be on your guard against the world be on your guard against these things that the enemies of Christ espouse these new ideas that seek to destroy what is true and right and beautiful that seek to destroy what we see from scripture of God himself stand on guard that we might remember that each day our lives have been changed by the glory of the gospel the glory of Christ let's pray about those who want anything to