

“Love That God Forbids”

September 18, 2011

Text: 1 John 2:15-17

This morning my sermon is entitled “*Love That God Forbids.*”

As we’ll see in our text, that love forbidden to Xns which John will be telling us about, is love of the world.

The Bible uses the word “*world*” in several different ways=>

* It can refer to this earth (Psa 18:15)=>

*“The foundations of the **world** were laid bare At Thy rebuke, O LORD.”*

* It can refer to the human race in its fallen condition, an object of God’s love/compassion (Jn 3:16)=>

*“For God so loved the **world**, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”*

But when John tells us not to love the world, he isn’t referring to either of these.

The “*world*” in our text is a system of evil established by Satan when he gained power on earth through Adam’s fall into sin.

Its central purpose is to oppose God w/ wickedness and rebellion against His will and His righteous nature.

This worldwide system includes values/perspectives/people over which Satan wields enormous control/power.

1 Jn 5:19=> *“The whole **world** lies in the **power** of the evil one.”*

Although the world is an evil *system*, it functions as an invisible spiritual kingdom/realm, ruled by Satan.

When Jesus entered this world at His Incarnation,

He/His-Kingdom were invading Satan's realm.

Jesus told Pilate=> "*My kingdom is not of this realm*" (Jn 18:36).

One King/Kingdom had invaded another.

That's why there was so much demonic activity why X was on earth.

Satan's minions were fighting back.

Satan's kingdom finally reacted by putting X to death.

Ultimately, during the Great Tribulation, Satan's kingdom will be defeated/vanquished/displaced by X/His-Kingdom=>

Rev 11:15=> "*There arose loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The **kingdom** of the **world** has become the **kingdom** of our **Lord**, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.'*"

Meanwhile, Satan rules as the prince of the power of the air on earth for now, and he prevents his subjects from transferring their allegiance to X's Kingdom, by blinding them spiritually.

2 Cor 4:4—"*The **god** of this **world** [Satan] has **blinded** the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.*"

Because of this blindness, I Jn 3:1 says the people of the world are ignorant of God, and of us—His people.

Those who are part of the world system don't realize how wicked they/their-world are, because their ignorance of God leaves them with no understanding of sin's nature.

They think sin is just what they do to other people. They don't understand that it is a violation of God, His holiness, and His Law.

Moreover, Satan sends false-prophets/antichrists trained in this world's evil/anti-God views/values/philosophies back into the world, to further blind/deceive his subjects.

1 Jn 4:5=> "***They*** [false prophets] *are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them*" (they say what the world wants/expects to hear).

As a result, the citizens of Satan's kingdom become thoroughly indoctrinated in his own wicked ways/lies.

I can tell you from experience, if you are a citizen of Satan's kingdom, nothing I say this morning will interest you, seem important, ring true, or even make sense to you. That's because Satan is very good at blinding/deafening people to the Truth.

1 Jn 4:6=> "*We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is **not** from God does **not** listen to us.*"

If you belong to this world's kingdom, rather than X's Kingdom, you may actually resent my saying what I'm going say.

And if you're really honest with yourself, you may realize that you actually hate what I've said, hate me for saying it, because hatred is the moral currency and the natural reaction of Satan's kingdom to those who don't share its anti-God values/beliefs/loyalties.

So Jesus said (Jn 15:18-19)=> *“If the **world** hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. / If you were of the **world**, the **world** would love its own; but because you are not of the **world**, but I chose you out of the **world**, therefore the **world** hates you.”*

So why would I teach you the truth about Satan's world and his kingdom, risking your hatred?

Heaven knows, I don't like being hated.

It's because I know the terrible price you will pay if you remain a citizen of Satan's kingdom (his world-system).

* Jn 16:11 says Satan himself has been judged.

* Jn 12:31 says God's judgment is also upon his world (which includes those who blindly follow Satan, surrendering to his indoctrination/dominion).

So unless you believe in X, to save you & transfer you to His kingdom, God's judgment is upon you too.

But if you believe in Him for the cleansing/forgiveness of your sins, Jn 3:18 promises you=> *“He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*

There's also another reason why this truth must be taught.

Worldly Xns are trying to serve 2 masters, seeking a compromise by loving both X/the-world.

Jesus said no one can really do that, but will secretly love one, and hate the other; or vice versa.

In II Tim 4:10, Paul said of his coworker Demas=>

“Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.”

Secretly loving the world instead of loving and faithfully serving X, is spiritual desertion.

That has very serious implications for the soul of anyone like Demas.

Additionally, worldliness deprives a true believer of the joy/assurance/answered-prayer that should be his, as a child of God.

I Jn 2:15-17 contains John’s command not to love the world, then 2 reasons why we must not do so...

*** The Command**

[1 John 2:15]=> *“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.”*

Either a person can love the world, or he can love God, but he cannot love both, because they are mutually-exclusive opposites.

Love for the world is completely incompatible with love for God.

Anyone who loves the world doesn't have a love for the Father in him, doesn't know God, doesn't have a relationship with Him, and isn't born again.

I Jn 4:8=> *"The one who does not love [God/Xns] does not know God, for God is love."*

To "love the world" is to give to Satan's evil system the same love that rightfully belongs to God.

The word John uses for "love" here is the same word (*agape*) he uses in 1 Jn 5:2 with regard to the Xn's love for God, and in 4:21 for the Xn's love for his fellow believers.

It's not merely an uncontrollable emotion of affection.

This is the love of devotion/commitment which sent Jesus to the cross to die for our sins.

It is love which cares about and assigns supreme value to its chosen objects.

It chooses its object, then loves it.

So we are to make a determined effort to turn away from worldly things, and to devote our hearts to God, giving Him our love.

To love the world is to give such *agape* love to a Satanic system, that hates/opposes God, crucified our beloved Lord, and oppresses His-people.

How can we love a system of evil thoughts/values that like?

Its customs/rules/principles, priorities/powers/methods are unrelentingly antagonistic to all that we believe in and should love.

Its chief principle is sin, the tragedy which has introduced murder/deception/hatred/death/misery into the world.

The answer to how a Xn could love such an evil system is that it is custom-designed by Satan to appeal to our flesh.

As a result, its temptations can be powerfully alluring.

Whatever our sinful desires may be, the world is right there to fulfill them, for a price—alienation from God.

The world is an enemy of the believer which will do nothing to help (& everything to hinder) him, from loving/obeying his Lord.

It is such a vile system, that in Jn 17:9, Jesus actually prayed, *“I do not ask on behalf of the **world**.”*

How could we love something X wouldn't even pray for?

Not only are we not to love the world, neither are we to love *“the things of the world”* (which share in its character).

This is everything that promises fulfillment apart from God=>

Every human institution/custom/philosophy/value-system by which man seeks to exclude God, run his own life, and position himself in God's rightful place of love/honor/worship, within his own heart.

These are the things of the world.

They make man's happiness/welfare the chief goal of human life, rather than the glory of man's Creator.

They exalt the finite/temporal things God created, over God Himself, who is eternal/infinite, & who created them.

They are acting out of Rom 1:25=> *"They [people of the world] exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."*

God has adopted the believer as His own son, so that believers have a right to call themselves God's children, enjoying the privilege of sonship.

Not only that, they're even welcomed to revel in the joy of that sonship relationship, calling God their *"Abba, Father"* (a term of endearment).

But John says that, if a believer loves the world, the love of the Father isn't in him.

Love of a world that is at war with God excludes love of the Father, in His children's hearts.

That love, which should be the animating power w/i their hearts for service to Him, has gone AWOL, having been given over to the Father's enemies instead.

Like Demas, such a believer has embraced the world with all its sin, human "wisdom," and Satanic deception, defaulting on his moral obligation to love God, as His son.

He treasures the world's priorities/amusements/lusts as if they were precious objects of worship, equal with God.

Jms 4:4 says to him=> *“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the **world** is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the **world** makes himself an enemy of God.”*

You/I need to remember these things if the way we dress or talk, or the places we go and the things we do, are influenced by our desire to be accepted by the unsaved people of Satan's world.

One might think that the answer is for believers to withdraw from the world altogether, escaping from it like monks, or like the Amish, in order to avoid its powerful influence/temptations.

But instead of telling us to escape from the world, Jesus has sent us into the world.

In Jn 17:18 He prayed to His Heavenly Father=> *“As Thou didst send Me into the **world**, I also have sent them into the **world**.”*

Instead of removing us from the spiritual hardships of living within a world system that's so totally foreign to our redeemed nature, & so totally contrary and antagonistic to our Xn faith, X has sent us to live unworldly lives within the world, bringing the gospel's light to its darkness.

The danger in this is that, if we (or our children) aren't truly born again, the world will inevitably pull us away from the Lord.

I Jn 5:4 says we will overcome the world by our faith, if we're genuine believers;

But Jms 1:27 commands us to remain "*unstained by the world.*"

Rom 12:2 tells us how to manage that=>

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Get the world's filth (readily available in all the media) out of your home/mind.

Then fill your mind w/ the pure truth of Scripture.

We renew our minds by filling them with God's Word.

Now John gives us the 1st of 2 reasons for not loving the world

*** Reason #1—The World Is Incompatible with Our Sonship**

[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 [ek—out of] the Father, but is from [ek] the world.*"

John's basic statement here is that all the things that are a part of the world, are from the evil world-system itself, not from God, who is our Heavenly Father, who has regenerated us, and who has adopted us as His sons/daughters.

The world is in rebellion against Him with its sin, but we have become partakers of our Father's divine nature (II Pet 1:4), born of God spiritually.

I Jn 3:4 says that sin is proud/lawless rebellion against God, which goes to the very root of man's sinful nature.

It seeks to dethrone God in order to take His place in our hearts.

Psa 10:4 puts it like this=> *"The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, 'There is no God.'"*

How could we, God's sons/daughters love a world that's in such hateful rebellion against our own Heavenly Father, that it even denies His existence?

Man, in his sinfulness, refuses to acknowledge God, and seeks to make himself equal with God.

He takes his cue from Lucifer, who said (Isa 14:14)=>

"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

This is exactly how Satan encouraged Eve to think when he told her, *"You surely shall not die!"* even though God had said that in the day she ate the fruit, she would die.

He was inviting her to join him, trusting in her own judgment, & rebelling against God's command.

Everything that's part of the world-system has its origin in that sort of rebellion against our God/Father.

Satan's world, because he has engineered it to perfectly match man's own sinful nature, and encourages him to yield to the desires of that nature, it creates temptations that stir up powerful desires w/i him.

John lists 3 avenues of temptation by which the world incites our flesh to sin.

If we understand these 3 avenues, we can better guard our hearts/thoughts against the intrusion of sin through their temptations.

1st, "the lust of the flesh"

"Lust" is *epithumia*—strong overwhelming desire.

"The lust of the flesh" refers to the powerful desires, cravings, and longings that belong to (& come from) man's flesh.

The "flesh" refers to the sinful tendencies of man which are associated with his unredeemed body.

Even in a man who has been regenerated thru the saving power of H.S., this aspect of his sin-nature remains unredeemed, and will do so until he is resurrected.

This is the sin-prone side of the Xn which caused Paul to say (Rom 7:25)=> "*On the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my **flesh**, the law of **sin**.*"

The flesh desires that which is (like itself)—tangible/temporal/sensual, not eternal/spiritual—and under the influence of sin, it turns such sensual experiences into rebellion against God.

Sensual experience itself is not wrong.

But when it leads to defiance of biblical principles, it becomes wrong.

Our flesh says=> “Forbidden fruit is all the more delicious because it is forbidden.”

Originally, man’s desire for tangible things was good, because they caused him to rejoice in his/their Creator.

They were received in the spirit of I Tim 6:17=>

“God... richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”

But sin has caused man to exult in things themselves, apart from God, the Creator, and the Father to whom His sons should look.

Desires of the flesh are especially associated w/ promiscuous sexual temptations that draw people into sinful acts of immorality.

2nd, “the lust of the eyes”

This refers to sins of self-indulgence through our eyesight.

It is fulfilled in contemplative enjoyment of physical things God has forbidden, or idolizing things which have no spiritual value.

It is another misuse of the creation that leads to sinful greed, and the covetous expectation that things will

give one true happiness, & his soul a true sense of satisfaction.

It was lust of the eyes that caused Eve to see “*the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes*”
(Gen 3:6).

That was a strong enough temptation to incite her to disobey God’s prohibition against eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good/evil. She trusted that fruit—not God—to best satisfy her soul.

Her eyes became the means of enticement/rebellion. Jesus said the same thing is true of men who indulge in pornography, who lust in their hearts for women—they are committing adultery with their eyes.

3rd, “*the boastful pride of life*”

“*Life*” here is *bios*—biological life on this earth.

So “*the boastful pride of life*” is placing confidence in one’s ability to accumulate enough stuff to insulate oneself from hardship/danger/discomfort/humiliation. It’s making one’s own way in the world, ignoring God, then boasting of one’s superiority in being able to do so.

Jms 4:15-16=> “*You ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that.’ / But as it is, you **boast** in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.*”

This is intentionally living apart from God, & being proud of it.

This, like the previous 2 lusts, is incompatible with the believer's sonship, but right in line w/ the world-system.

Because man is sinful, the evil world-system overpowers him with temptations that dominate his mind/will.

Its Satanic design appeals powerfully to the weaknesses of our flesh.

*** Reason #2—The World Is Incompatible with Our Destiny**

[Verse 17]=> *“And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.”*

It makes no sense for believers to love the world/its-lusts, because they are passing away & are doomed to eternal destruction; but Xns are destined for eternal life.

This statement might surprise you, because, as you look around, it seems like neither the world/its-lusts are passing away.

But they are, and they always have been, and X's

incarnation/crucifixion have sealed their doom.

They have w/i them the seeds of their own demise.

“Passing away” is a middle voice verb, which means the world is causing itself to pass away, consuming itself, with its own corruption.

Its pleasures are fleeting=> here today, gone tomorrow (the “passing pleasures of sin”).

Its lusts have a self-destructive quality about them.

E.g. * Chronic drunkenness results in sclerosis of the liver.

* Chronic promiscuity leads to bitterness, alienated-affections, and diminished feelings of worth, rendering a person incapable of intimacy/love.

* Chronic gluttony leads to obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, and death.

But worst of all, chronic lust/pride is self-condemnation to spiritual hardness, hopelessness, and death.

Rom 8:6=> *“The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, / because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God.”*

Rom 8:21 says that even creation suffers from a slavery to corruption, due to man’s sin.

Worst of all, chronic lust/pride spend man’s energies/hopes/life on himself, rather than the glory of God.

* God’s will is the final purpose/meaning of all creation;

* Man’s will/desires come/go w/ man’s life, & are then forgotten.

In the end, because we are temporal, & He is eternal, that turns out to be a waste of precious resources.

King Solomon had the wealth/power/opportunity to live according to the world’s values, and he did so to the

extreme, just to see what benefit he could get from it.

In the end his final assessment was=>

“Vanity of vanities! All is vanity” (Eccl 1:3).

Notice that in verse 17, John speaks of the *“the will of God,”* not

“the will of the Father,” because this time he is stressing

God’s sovereign/eternal purposes, not His love.

Ultimately, the world will pass away, under God’s judgment.

God will destroy the earth, purging it of Satan’s world-system.

2 Pet 3:7=> *“The present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.”*

Those who cling to their lust/pride, defying God and living in opposition to His will inevitably share the world’s fate.

2 Thes 1:9=> *“These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”*

But the destruction of Satan’s evil world-system has already begun.

We saw that last time in 1 Jn 2:8=> *“The darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.”*

The darkness is passing away in the hearts of God’s people, and this is a sign that the world and all its spiritual darkness will soon come to an end.

Jesus had seen the first flickering light of this hopeful prospect when the Apostles returned from proclaiming His Kingdom.

In Lk 10:18, He said=> *“I was watching Satan fall from*

heaven like lightning.”

Why? Because the coming of X’s Kingdom into men/women’s hearts, was being preached.

Men/women who live for the moment, and conform to the ways of the world often hope vainly there will be no judgment.

That there really is no God, or that He doesn’t care about their sinfulness.

But John warns them, they’re wrong on both counts.

In fact, the judgment has already begun;

But thankfully, they still have time/hope.

Jn 3:18=> *“He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*

Q: How can I believe in X if I’m spiritually blinded to Him?

A: Pray/ask Him to reveal Himself to you.

Jer 29:13=> *“You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”*

Regardless what happens to the world/its-people, those who believe in X, love the Lord, and do God’s will (rather than their own), will live forever.

They already have God’s eternal life w/i them, having believed in the name of God’s only-begotten Son—Jesus X.

Jesus promises (Jn 6:40)=> *“This is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day”* (that’s our destiny!).

**Meanwhile, it makes no sense for Xns to love the world,
because it is incompatible-with/inferior-to our own
destiny.**

Having eternal life w/i us, we will abide forever, the truth by
which we were saved will abide forever, our eternal
rewards in heaven for doing God's will, shall abide forever,
our Savior and our Father's love for us will abide forever,
and every spiritual blessing in our inheritance will abide
forever.

Praise God, we have a wonderful destiny ahead of us, that is the
very opposite of the world's destiny.

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Text: 1 John 2:15-17

1. The “world” in our text is a system of [10 evil] established by Satan when he gained power through Adam’s fall into sin.

Psa 18:15; Jn 3:16; I Jn 5:19; Jn 18:36; Rev 11:15; II Cor 4:4; I Jn 3:1

2. Those who are part of the world system don’t realize how wicked they and their world are because their ignorance of God leaves them no understanding of [12 sin’s] nature.

I Jn 4:5, 6; Jn 15:18:19; 16:11; 12:31; 3:18

3. Worldly Christians are trying to serve two masters; Jesus said no one can really do that but will secretly love one and [10 hate] the other.

II Tim 4:10

I John 2:15-17 contains John’s command not to love the world then two reasons why we must not do so...

*** The Command**

[1 John 2:15]

I Jn 4:8

4. To “love the world” is to give to Satan’s evil system the same love that rightfully belongs to [8 God].

I Jn 5:2; 4:21

5. The answer to how a Christian could love such an evil system is that it is custom designed by Satan to appeal to our [12 flesh].

Jn 17:9

6. Neither are we to love “the things of the world” (which share in its character)—everything that promises fulfillment [12 apart] from God.

Rom 1:25

7. Love of a world that is at war with God [20 excludes] love of the Father in His children’s hearts.

Jms 4:4; Jn 17:18

8. I John 5:4 says we will overcome the world by our faith; but James 1:27 commands us to remain “[20 unstained] by the world.”

Rom 12:2

*** Reason #1—The World Is Incompatible with Our Sonship**

[Verse 16]

II Pet 1:4; I Jn 3:4; Psa 10:4; Isa 14:14

9. Everything that is part of the world system has its origin in rebellion against our God and [14 Father].

“The lust of the flesh”

Rom 7:25

10. The flesh desires that which is tangible and sensual—not spiritual; and under the influence of sin, it turns such sensual experiences into [22 rebellion] against God.

I Tim 6:17

“The lust of the eyes”

11. This is another misuse of the creation that leads to sinful greed and the covetous expectation that [14 things] will give one true happiness.

Gen 3:6

“The boastful pride of life”

12. This is making one’s own way in the world, ignoring God, then [20 boasting] of one’s superiority in being able to do so.

Jms 4:15-16

*** Reason #2—The World Is Incompatible with Our Destiny**

[Verse 17]

13. It makes no sense for believers to love the world and its lusts, because they are passing away and are doomed to eternal destruction; but Christians are destined for [16 eternal] life.

Rom 8:6, 21

14. Ultimately, the world will pass away, under [12 God’s] judgment.

II Pet 3:7; II Thes 1:9; I Jn 2:8; Lk 10:18; Jn 3:18; 6:40

15. It is ridiculous for Christians to love the world because it is incompatible with, and [18 inferior] to, our own destiny.

