

The World and Its Lust Pass Away

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the transient nature of worldly desires and the importance of holiness and sanctification in the life of a believer.

Duration: 1:14:53

Scripture: Mark 7:14, Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, 1 John 2:17

Topics: "Sanctification", "Marriage Honor"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the issue of young girls in church who are focused on finding a boyfriend rather than listening to the word of God. He emphasizes that this behavior stems from the impurity and sinful desires within their hearts. The preacher also highlights the importance of sanctification and honor in marriage, urging husbands to treat their wives with respect and holiness. He warns that engaging in sexual perversion with one's spouse will lead to damnation. The sermon concludes with a story about a frustrated organist who is amazed by the beautiful music played by Felix Mendelssohn, the composer himself.

Transcript

Shall we pray? We thank you, Lord, for your keeping us, protecting us until this time. We ask you to be with us. We thank you, Lord, to have observed and experienced your working and we pray that it would never come to an end but continue always.

Amen. In Switzerland, they had asked us to speak about the verses, 1 John chapter 2 from verse 7. 17. To discipline myself, to keep the theme and to stay on the point, there is so much, so much wealth in it.

Today I'd like to speak about the world. What is the world? Where is the world? If it says the world is passing away, what is this world passing away? Even this very question has got many branches to it. Now let's start from verse 5 so that we would understand verse 17 properly.

Sorry, verse 15. 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, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the Son. Do you hear that? Here three things are mentioned. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

The pride of this life. It is amazing that when Satan, the old serpent, when he tempted Eve, he tempted her with these things. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh being the body, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

When Satan tempted Jesus, he tempted him with these very same things. Firstly, lust of the flesh. Remember the body.

Many people, when they hear about the flesh, they automatically think it means sexual promiscuity. No. The flesh encompasses all that is in rebellion against God.

And the lust of the eyes. And the pride of life. These are important and very real dangers, so when Satan tempted Eve and the Lord Jesus, these were the things he used.

In the same way, we ought to be especially careful of these very three things. Remember, in tempting the Lord Jesus, he stood and resisted him, did not fall, but Eve fell. When Jesus prayed, he said, Father, I do not ask that you should remove them from the world, but keep them in the world.

Now that is another thread, another branch. So Jesus did not ask the Father that we should be removed out of this world, but rather that we should be kept in this world. So if it says, the world, the lust of the flesh.

Satan took Eve to the tree and showed her these very nice things. That were appealing and to be desired. Then, with the lust of the eyes, he showed her the beauty and the attraction of this.

Thirdly, pride. And then regarding pride, Satan promised her that she would become like God, as wise as God is. Remember with Jesus, in similar fashion, Jesus was in the wilderness, he was hungry.

He had not eaten for forty days. Well, there are many religious people who do forty day fasts, some even succeed in getting through forty days. Even here at Kwasi Zabantu, I once had a man who came and he asked to put up his caravan on my yard.

And he said, I want to fast forty days, just as Jesus did. I went to his caravan. I observed that it had very luxurious mattresses.

I said, well if you really want to fast as Jesus did, shouldn't you be like him as Jesus was in the wilderness where there were no mattresses? In the wilderness, there were only hard, difficult conditions. There were thorns and there were stones. He was exposed to the elements, to the sun, the wild beasts.

He was exposed to the elements, to the sun, to the wild beasts. He was exposed to the elements, to the sun, to the wild beasts. And there in his caravan, he had lovely cold water ready to be poured.

And I just thought, well, we are just bluffing ourselves if we think that we're fasting like Jesus did and we try and make it seem as if it's the same thing. He was in a wilderness that was so difficult and the conditions so hard on him, far more difficult than down in the Msinga area. His exposure to the sun and all the elements that were in opposition to him.

And so when Satan tempted him, he got him at his weakest spot regarding hunger. He really was hungry. His body craved for food.

And so Satan suggested, he said, well, how about turning this stone into a loaf of bread? And he was tempting him with the lust of the flesh, but it's not speaking here of sexual desire, but rather of the lust of

the body, the craving of the body. Jesus here, the Lord is speaking here about the world and all that is in it is passing away. So where is the world? Do you know where the world is? In you.

It's deep down inside you, entrenched in the inner you. You don't have to go to Egypt to find a desert, a wilderness, the world, it's inside you. In Mark 7, the Lord Jesus spoke.

In verse 14. Verse 14. Mark 7, 14.

And when he had called all the multitude to him, he said to them, hear me, everyone, and understand, there's no time for sleep here, that will send you to hell. Here, he says, everyone, you listen now. There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him, but the things which come out of him, do you hear that? Listen carefully, the things that come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.

Then verse 17. And when he had entered a house away from the crowd, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. So he said to them, are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from without, or from outside, cannot defile him? Because it does not enter his heart, but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods.

Now you know that there are different groups that stress or denominations that stress that this type of food and that type of food you ought not to have because it's bad for you, it defiles you. Jesus said no food defiles you because it only enters into the stomach. That is why when we eat, we pray that the food would be sanctified, food is sanctified through prayer.

What comes out of a person is what defiles him, not what enters into him. For what comes out of a man, that defiles a man, for from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts. Adulteries, fornications and murders and thefts, murders.

Covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a person. You are not defiled by what comes from without into you, but what comes from out of you and that is the very thing that defiles you.

What comes out of a man, that defiles a man, for from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts. Adulteries, fornications and murders and thefts, murders. What comes out of a man, that defiles a man, for from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts.

Nothing will disturb me. And he said, I found such a place and after two or three hours, I had the sudden realisation, that the things that were troubling me, were inside me. Jesus said, what is within a person, is what defiles him.

Excuse me reading too many verses today, I'm not used to reading from so many texts. Look at Galatians 5 from verse 19. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness.

Adultery, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies. Envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries and the like, of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things, will not inherit the kingdom of God. The one who does these things, will never inherit God's kingdom.

And what Jesus said, when he said, hear me, it's not what comes from without, but what comes out from inside, that defiles a man. Jesus said, hear me, it's not what comes from without, but what comes out from inside, that defiles a man. Consider some of the people who come here to the mission.

There are no cigarettes here at the mission. The Lord's people are here, but that person, you'll find them smoking, they will get angry, they have these different sins. And where do they come from? It comes from within the person.

Here are school children, boys and girls, sent by their parents, sent by their parents to learn what is good, so that they would be here and study and learn about things that are right, good laws. But you'll find a school child can be promiscuous, they can get angry, stubborn, rebellious. Where does it come from? Inside them.

The children of Israel. The children of Israel were delivered out of the land of Egypt, and out of all that suffering, and here they were in the wilderness, and they began to be rebellious and murmur. Where did that come from? The problem was that Egypt hadn't come out of them.

They had come out of Egypt. They were no longer in. They were no longer in Egypt, but the problem was Egypt was still entrenched inside them.

Complain to Moses. And they complained and fought against Moses and against God, saying, why did you bring us out of Egypt? At least we had onions and garlic and things and free fish, but here we are in this place. You see, Egypt was still inside them.

They were still in the wilderness. They were still, still, still, still in the wilderness. They were still in the wilderness.

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You can take a pig and you can do a thorough job of scrubbing it, washing it, bathing it, and you can powder, puff and perfume it, but when it's released, where will it go? Back to the mud. Back to the mud where it will wallow. Why? Because it's a pig.

Your problem is your heart, because you have the heart of the world. You can take a duck and the eggs of the duck or eggs of a chicken and put it under the duck. And these eggs may be hatched, these chicken eggs, these little chicks are hatched under the duck.

You can take a pig and you can do a thorough job of scrubbing it, washing it, bathing it, and you can powder, puff and perfume it, but when it's released, where will it go? Back to the mud. You can take a pig and you can do a thorough job of scrubbing it, washing it, bathing it, and you can powder, puff and perfume it, but when it's released, where will it go? Back to the mud. You'll find that the chicken will wander off looking for food, but the little ducklings will go into the water.

The chicken doesn't want to, it's got no instinct to do it, but these ducklings automatically want to. The same is true vice versa. Had it been little chickens or if they were little ducks under a hen, then you'd find the same would be true.

One is drawn to the water, one is not. God could just simply open the doors of heaven and allow you to come in. The problem is that you'll do the things that you've prayed for, those desires of the heart.

The boy will want to flirt with girls and the girl with boys, or you'll crave for your tobacco, and that heaven will turn into hell for you. That's why in 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 3 it says, For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you should abstain from sexual immorality, that each one of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor. Here is the will of God, your sanctification, that this world is taken out of you, and that you should abstain from sexual immorality.

We cannot deny that this is a very powerful desire, this promiscuity. The lust of the flesh is put very clearly here. It gives different angles to it, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness.

You hear that it mentions adultery. That means a person who is married and is not faithful to their marriage, to their spouse. It is a terrible sin because you've made a vow before the altar that I take this person as my spouse.

And then later on it turns around and they divorce each other. Out of all the foul stench that there are, there is one that is worse than them all, the one who has been unfaithful to his spouse. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 19 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 19 It is heart-wrenching as one travels through the world to see how commonplace divorce has become.

Whether it's men or women, from both sides, it's just become a common thing, a norm. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 19 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 19 And then fornication, all sorts of sexual immorality, whether it's a prostitute, whatever manner of sexual sin it is. And uncleanness.

You do pervert it. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 19 It can happen just with yourself, a person who uses their hand or whatever things that they manufacture or use for the lusts of the flesh, this uncleanness. It's amazing that it doesn't start with anger or with hatred, it starts with these sexual sins.

1 Thessalonians 4 verse 19 This is an awful thing, because you have sworn an oath of faithfulness to your spouse when you got married. But after some weeks, or after some days, or some months, or some years, you are then unfaithful to that promise. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 19 You might be blessed of God in many other things, so many wonderful things God has given you, but you trample your marriage underfoot, it becomes unclean.

1 Thessalonians 4 verse 20 Some ignore God's truth completely, and so they get divorced, they go and remarry themselves. Why do they do that? Because they are of the world, they are in the world, that's how the world behaves. And like that woman who came to me and said, I am a child of Satan, help me, how can I become a child of God? 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 21 You complain that your children don't honour and respect you, but you have been promiscuous and you have injected them with this poison.

1 Thessalonians 4 verse 22 And through that you bring down the wrath of God upon you. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 23 Bringing a curse upon your own children and your children's children. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 24 Shouldn't we rather heed what Jesus said, where he said rather gouge out your eye than that it should offend you, rather go into heaven without one eye than with both eyes in hell, or cut off your foot than that you should walk in the ways of darkness and sin and adulteries and enter into heaven with one foot? You have heard 1 Thessalonians, where it says Where it says in chapter 4 verse 3, for this is the will of God, your sanctification, it means holy.

1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 And then in verse 4, that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel or live with his wife in sanctification and honour. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 Do you hear you

married people? 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 You men? 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 Treat your wives well. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 In holiness and respect.

1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 Instead you find husbands who live in their homes with their wives where it's warfare and they show no honour, no respect, he shows no respect towards his own wife. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 Flee adultery. Live with her.

1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 In sanctification and respect, in honour, do you hear men? You see, being perverted with your own wives is not something that takes you to heaven, you'll be cast into hell. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 Do you hear? 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 That is why the Lord says better to gouge out your eye, in other words take absolute, drastic, radical action. You need to treat your wife in honour.

That's why the world must be removed out of you. In honour and in holiness. In German you say not a bull amongst the cattle but amongst the donkeys.

That's what you are. Next. Better that we should say with Joseph who was in Egypt.

How can I do this dishonourable thing? How can I, when this immoral woman tried to grab hold of him, how can I sin before God and before man? 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 For if you are sexually immoral, whether you're married or still maybe just a child or unmarried, this applies to you as well. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 Job who was a child of God made this statement. He said I have made a covenant with my eyes not to look upon a woman.

In other words he took a drastic action. He said no to this, it was a radical thing, no to looking upon a woman. Don't read it now, back at home you can look up Job 31 verse 1. He said I have made a covenant with my eyes.

1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 We like the idea of revival and seeing the Lord at work but if you cannot live in holiness regarding your own body then you're just playing around with God. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 These things I've spoken about, that is the world which is in you, it's inside you, it comes out of you, it arises. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 4 It arises from within you, that is why you gaze upon pornography, pictures of nude women, that is why you read filthy things.

Where does it come from? It comes from inside you, rather that you bring it to be burnt but instead that's the thing that you keep in your heart, it's inside you. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 5 Just observe young people, the music and the songs that they sing and listen to, what pours forth from their lips, that's the world. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 6 It doesn't just come out of the lips, it comes out of the heart and it causes the body to desire, it causes arousal, that is the world.

1 Thessalonians 4 verse 7 These things that are inside you, where you might do this in secret, you're not observed by anybody, nevertheless whether you live or die you're on the way to hell. This filth comes out of the heart, you speak things, you speak wrong things, you say terrible things. Where does it come from? It comes from deep down inside the heart of man, even in a holy place.

1 Thessalonians 4 verse 8 That you'll find girls sitting in a service, I've been told this often, that will be nudging their friends and whispering to them, you see that boy, the one with glasses on, or that one, he's mine. And where does it come from? It's not the filth and the dung of the world, it's the dung in the heart. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 9 They, without shame, without embarrassment they talk about it.

Sadly, their parents will condone this filth and what their children are doing. 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 10 Now be extra careful because the beginning of this list starts with the sins, the desires of the flesh. Although there are 17 or 18 and much more, but the desires of the flesh in particular, these sexual sins, that's what you need to watch out for.

That's how it starts in this list. Jesus was tempted also bodily, but not of this type of sexual desire, but because the body has other desires, he was tempted with hunger. He was tempted with thirst, he was tempted with thirst.

The Bible says, do not give your strength to women. You see, people who are in the sin of licentiousness, they will lose their power and the energy to think correctly and logically. With work, they'll flit around from one job to the next.

They have a type of insanity. They are unstable. Then there are some who will advise young people and say, look, if you don't get involved sexually, it'll drive you mad.

There are even some doctors who will say such silly things. Being sanctified and self-disciplined will bring you life and strength, even strength of mind. It will bring health to your body and your mind.

There are varieties of the flesh troubling a person. With some it's gluttony. They are stuffing in food from morning till night, the whole time.

That is sinful when you eat beyond the limits, beyond the boundaries. The same might be that a person smokes or does things like that because of that craving. Where is the matter? Where is the heart of the matter? Get the dirt out of the heart.

But a person says, I cannot. I've tried for years, again and again. I've made decisions and in public, but this thing doesn't come out of my heart.

But Paul says in Galatians 2 verse 20, Paul says, I no longer live, but Christ Jesus lives within me. Verse 20. It's not me that lives any longer.

I no longer live, for Christ lives in me. He's the one who deals with these things in the heart. There are some people who are very brilliant with music and are creative and can even compose.

Classicals like the era of Bach and Beethoven and them who could compose music. One of the composers of music now, not this style of rock and pop, but of proper music, Mendelssohn. His surname was Felix Mendelssohn.

In a certain church there was a beautiful organ. And in that church they used to hire an organist. And you'd find that that organist, during the week, they would spend their time practising, trying to learn these classical compositions.

In this particular instance, the man was trying to learn how to play Mendelssohn. He tried and he tried and tried harder again. Eventually he said, I just cannot seem to get it right.

He was so frustrated that eventually he put his hands up in the air and said, I give up, I'm going. He collected all his notes and all the music, notes and books. And as he was about to go out of the church, he didn't see him.

He hadn't noticed as he was then leaving the church that right at the back, while this organist had been trying to practise and failing to play Mendelssohn, there was a man who had come in at the back and sat on the back bench. Had heard him struggling and had been struggling and trying to play the notes and how he had audibly said, I'm giving up, I just can't. Then as he was walking out, the man at the back on the back bench then rushed after him and said to the organist who had just given up, would you allow me to please play on that organ? The organist was so bad tempered by then that he said, look, it's useless, it doesn't help, you'll never succeed playing on that organ.

He begged him and he tried and he said, please won't you allow him? And eventually he said, all right, you just go in and play it. He said, I won't allow you. Then the third time after begging him, go and start.

So the third time he said, all right, go then and try and play. Then the man sat down on the organist's chair and he began his notes. And this upset organist noticed how the whole cathedral just filled with a beautiful sound when he played this music of Mendelssohn.

It was like earth was filled with heaven. The organist who was so frustrated, as he listened, he was fascinated. He marveled.

And then he, as he walked out, he said to him, you played so beautifully, who are you? And he said, I am Felix Mendelssohn. He had composed that music. He was the owner of it.

He was the originator. The organist really regretted. He regretted that he had made those statements and that he felt terrible, felt like he was just the worst piece of dirt on earth.

And then he who made you, he who originated you will show the world and they will marvel as they see the Lord living his life in you. Is that understandable? If you understand a bit, I'd say, well, you're almost in heaven already. If you don't hear this, you don't understand it, well, it's, it would, Satan must have hardened your heart, concreted your heart.

Let the son of God take charge of your life. Let him in and take full control of your life. Shall we bow our heads? We thank you Lord Jesus for receiving your word.

Lord, your word is like a lamp for us. It's brighter than a lamp on a train as it shines in the darkness. Lord, as you came down in that bright light and entered into Saul's life, who became poor and lived with that light for the rest of his life.

And until today we receive help through him. Amen.

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