

# 1 John 2

by Robert F. Adcock

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*The sermon emphasizes the dangers of worldliness and the importance of obedience to God's Word for believers navigating spiritual conflict.*

**Duration:** 40:52

**Scripture:** John 13:35, Romans 12:2, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 6:10-11, James 4:4, James 4:7-8

**Topics:** "Worldliness", "Obedience"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not falling in love with the world and instead submitting to God. He quotes James 4:4, which states that anyone who is a friend of the world is an enemy of God. The preacher also highlights the need to resist the devil and draw near to God, relying on His power for victory in our lives. The sermon emphasizes the commandment to love one another as Jesus loved us, as a testimony to the world. The preacher concludes by emphasizing the importance of obeying the Word of God and warns against the frustration that comes from violating truth.

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## Transcript

Beautiful, beautiful. I'd like for us to look in 1 John chapter 2. Perhaps what I have to say sounds seems so appropriate. It's a wonderful thing to be saved, to know that your sins are forgiven and you're on your way to heaven.

The assurance that we have for making that statement is found in the Word of God. And God gives us that assurance that having received Christ, we receive that wonderful divine gift of eternal life that's found in the person of Christ. But so often I think that when individuals present the gospel to an audience, the impression is given that if you receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, it will solve all of your problems.

You'll be free from all those things that have distressed you in this world up to that point, that it'll be just a primrose path all the way to heaven from that day on. Well, that's absolutely not true. That's not true.

Sometimes the problems just start when you enter into this new life in Christ. When the Spirit of God imparts divine life to something that was dead, and you enter into a whole new dimension of living, believe me, they are problems. In fact, you'll start having problems in areas that you never knew problems existed before, because there's a conflict going on.

I thought this morning we would just look at perhaps three passages of scripture that remind us of at least three areas in which there are dangers, and yet the Word of God gives us clear instructions on how to avoid the pitfalls that are along the way, and he also gives us promises that are clear and concise, and he gives us power to be overcomers. So, it is indeed with a sense of victory and encouragement that as I read the Word of God, I know that I'm in this world. Praise God, I'm not supposed to be of this world in the sense that this world means anything to me beyond that which God intended it to mean for me, a place for me to dwell, and to serve Him, and to glorify His name until He calls me into His presence.

And indeed, if this world is a place that you feel so comfortable in, and you say, I'd like to live here forever, then you're not looking upon this world in the way that God would have you to look upon it. So, let us read from 1 John, chapter 2, and verse 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love 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 world. The world passeth away in the lust of it, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

I'd like for us to think in terms of what it means to love the world. There's so many commitments that we have to make in this life. I think they're absolutely necessary for us to be happy Christians.

We must make some sort of commitment. We may think in terms of degrees of loyalty, allegiance to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I'm sure that there is some element of truth in that, that there are some that are just more committed, if you want to use that word. A little more devoted.

The apostle Paul said for me to live as Christ. How many of us can say that? The whole thrust of my life is bound up in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. To do his bidding is my total reason for even existing and staying here upon the earth.

How many can say for me to live as Christ? The whole thrust of my being is bound up in that divine will, and that being conformed more perfectly to his image, and his likeness, and his person every day, is the main thrust of my life. Perhaps some would have to say, I believe I've made that commitment. Well, praise God for that.

I'm quite sure that at the other end of that spectrum, there are many that have never even come close to making that sort of commitment. And so, when we think in terms of much of the frustration that comes out of our Christian experience knowing the Lord Jesus Christ, most often I think it stems from the violation of truth. And the three passages that I'd like for us to look at this morning will remind us that there are warnings that are issued with each of the promises in which God gives to us in his word.

I'm reminded of how important it is to obey the word of God. There are absolutely no excuses that are acceptable for disobeying the word of God. I think about that man Saul that we read about in 1 Samuel 15, in which he made such grievous errors in his judgment concerning obeying the word of God.

What a horrible price he paid. Rejected of God and set aside because he didn't take seriously obedience to the word of God. No, service is not more important than obeying God, and worship always stems from obedience to the word of God.

Obedience is better than sacrifice. God can serve himself. He can't worship himself, but he can serve himself, and so he gives us the opportunity to respond to divine instruction that will enrich our lives.

The gospel as it is proclaimed today is an invitation from a God who loves us. God would have us be responsive to that message, believe that message. It is the power of God and the salvation to everyone that believes it, but I thought this morning will concern itself with problems that sometimes develop because there's not true growth in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus, and frustration because, think of it in these terms, before you were saved, before God divinely touched your life and imparted divine life, you were dead spiritually, very much alive as one that is in this world and enjoying all of the pleasures of this world which are fleeting and but for a moment.

Sin is pleasurable, but those pleasurable moments are only for a fleeting moment and then eternity, but we have the capacity to enjoy this world, and after you are saved by that wonderful grace of God, you still have a capacity to find this world ever so pleasant. The word of God says to be a friend of this world, to be friendly and amiable toward this world is to be the enemy of God. So, men in this world without Christ, they have rebelled against the authority of God.

They're living with a whole crust of their life dominated by an old nature. They can have no place before God other than judgment, condemnation. One day God does that wonderful work of saving our soul, and we become new creatures in Christ Jesus, and you can think of it in terms of a wild man.

Every one of us has that wild man within us. That wild man is the one that loves this world. This world appeals to that old nature that we receive from our parents.

They received it from their parents, and we can trace it all the way back to Adam. It's Adam's nature. When God saves us, here we have all of this capacity for this world that we live in.

Perhaps it's necessary that I define what I mean by this world. I'm not talking about the physical universe that we live in. I'm talking about a well-defined system, an orderly system in which Satan controls and rules over that system.

Just one element that makes this whole system so wrong for that person that knows Jesus Christ, it leaves God out. That's what this world does. It leaves God out.

Secular humanism today is indeed a sweeping, mounting movement that has infiltrated almost every aspect of human life, starting in the education system in which generations now have been, indeed, indoctrinated with the idea that man can solve all of his own problems independent of God. We don't need God. This is the kind of world that we're living in, and so often we hear a beautiful song.

Think of Lehman Strauss and that little book that he wrote, all of the humbug in hymn books in which he says, you know, that song that says he has the whole wide world in his hands, speaking of this world and this world's systems in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, according to the word of God, this whole world lies in the hands of the wicked one. You see, this world system in which we are so much a part of because we live here is under the control of Satan.

He's ruling, lies in the hands of wickedness, for sovereignly all of this is under God's control. But, you see, everything that is in this world that is opposed to God is in tune with that world system, and the Christian has to be warned. Don't let yourself become entangled in that world to the point that you become a part of it, because when you do, all of that frustration that's within the man that has received Christ, that man that has had introduced into his life a new man, a new man in Christ.

But remember, the old man was there, that wild man is there. There's a battle raging there. The apostle Paul in Romans 7 tells us, O wretched man that I am, all of the frustration that emanates from the heart and the soul and the being of a man that recognizes that that struggle that goes on there is so real.

You never had one of those battles, but in your soul, like Paul, you could say what I would really like to do. You know, sometimes it just seems I can't do it. There's a struggle there.

There's something there that says, no, you can't do that, and something else is urging me on in that direction because it's so appealing. Yes, do it, do it. You think of it in those terms, raging within the heart and the soul of every believer is that battle, and you know the world itself is the arena.

This world in which we live in is that which appeals so much to each one of us. An integral part of us identifies with this world very appealing to us, but I'll remind you of what the Word of God says we just read. It says, Love not this world, neither the things that are in this world.

It was this world that crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. It was this world that rejected the Son of God. It is this world that is opposing the plans and the purposes of God, and how as a believer in Jesus Christ could I possibly become friendly with this world, become aimably inclined to say this world is a place in which I can truly enjoy myself? Well, this world is not my home.

I have a heavenly home. I have a place that my Savior has gone before to prepare for me, and all that know him as personal saints. I see this world as a temporary abiding place.

I see this world as a place in which the child of God is thrust into situations where there is testing and trial. We need to be encouraged to know that our Lord Jesus Christ said that, in this world you shall have tribulation. Be of good courage.

Be cheered by this thought. I have overcome this world. Satan and all of the forces of evil that were arrayed against God and against all that God stands for, they were defeated so decisively, Calvary, that the Christian knows where true victory can be found.

It's found in the person of the Lord Jesus. We need to do some divine reckoning. Remember that I am dead to this world, but alive unto God.

God has divinely reckoned that I died upon Calvary's cross with the Son of God. Apostle Paul says, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I, Christ lives within me.

The life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Everything that there is in this world, and not everything in this world is base and immoral. There's so many things that they seem so right on the surface, but if it's contrary to the will and the way and the will of God, it's worldliness.

You hear that word used quite a bit, don't you? He is a worldly individual. What does that mean? It means he's been engulfed, in a sense, by this world and its system. You don't have to look far every day before you're aware that there are some people that are living in this world, and they're living as if this is it, and they're going to live forever here upon this earth.

You know, God has a way of changing our mind about that, even for those that just live for this world. You let adversity, you let sickness, you let something very unpleasant come into your life, and you can even

tire of being in this world, and you might cry, Oh God, be merciful and take me out of this world. For the Christian, to leave this world is to be in the presence of the Lord Jesus.

When we shall see him, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And where I'm going, as a child of God, there are no tears in heaven, no sadness there, no sorrow, no weeping. There's no death there, there's no sickness there.

This is the promise that God makes to us. But all of these things go to make up this world in which we live, which there's so much confusion, there's so much frustration, there's so much that is opposed to righteousness. And indeed, within the bosom of the child of God, sometimes we're incensed at what we see in this world.

The Apostle Paul could well say, Be angry, but sin not. Don't let the sun go down upon your anger, but listen, what I see in the world today, indeed, is sadness. But I'll have to tell you, some of it makes me very angry.

It is so opposed to what God intended and what God planned for mankind. There can be happiness, there can be joy in the soul that will respond to the will and the ways of God. And so often Christians, those that have received Christ because of ignorance, they find themselves attracted to this world.

The old nature, the old man is crying out for attention. He wants to have his part. Remember, he died upon the cross of Calvary, and for the Christian, he should let that new man, that new nature, that new life dominate his very being.

I think of a passage in the Old Testament in which it certainly reminds me of what a threat this world is to us. It's found in the book of Joshua, and I hope you well remember the story of when the children of Israel crossed Jordan, and they went over and they marched around the city of Jericho and how the walls fell down. Everything done to the very most minute detail is to just how God had asked them to do it.

There was victory, but just a little later on they approached this rather insignificant little city Ai, and they had been given instruction, look, do not claim for yourself any of the possessions in those cities. The accursed thing, you must not put your hand upon it. All of it is an abomination in the sight of God.

Anything that is taken, it must be according to God's instruction. The same pitfall I'll remind you that poor Saul fell into when he let that wicked king Agag live, when he took at the instructions of the people all of the finest animals when he destroyed the Amalekites. But, this one little city and one man indicates, I think, and portrays for us just what a strong attraction the things of this world, the things that are perishing, the things that have not eternal value placed upon them, how it is so attractive to the heart of men and women.

Achan, you remember, took some of the things out of that city, and when they approached Ai, you know what happened? They were beaten. They were driven back, and the Lord instructed Joshua, we've got to find out who it is that has brought this curse upon us. There's one man that he looked upon something that was very attractive to the old man, and I'll prove to you in just a moment how costly this was.

He took this thing that God had forbidden that he take. Not only did he inflict hurt upon those armies that went there to take that little city for the loss of life and all of this, but when he is found out, and he owns up to the fact, yes I did take certain articles for appealing to the old man, do you know what the penalty for what he did was? It cost him his life, the life of his wife, his children, and everything that he possessed.

The children of Israel so strongly condemned under the instructions of God with the stoning of this man and his family.

You see, it is indeed a tremendous cost to be placed upon love for this world. It's very costly. It will cost you as a Christian if you fall in love with this world.

You'll find that there's a price you have to pay for loving this world, and it shouldn't be any mystery about it because the Word of God says love not the world, neither the things that are in this world, because this whole system, everything that is in this world that is so appealing to the lusts of the flesh. You see, it's under the dominion and control of Satan himself, and he's offering these little bits of things that satisfy and appeal to the old nature, the old man, in order to spoil us for God. I think of the story of the little girl that had the beautiful red apple, and her father had picked this apple up, and it was the one she wanted, but he examined it fairly closely, and said, you don't want that one.

He knew something about that. He had inspected that piece of fruit, but she wanted that one. It was the reddest.

It seemed to be the most delightful piece of fruit in that whole basket, and father said, no, you don't want that one. She insisted, and finally when she bit into it, it was full of worms. It was a rotten apple.

It had all of the appearances of being something delightful and pleasurable. That's what this world is like. The outward exterior looks beautiful and appealing, but brother and sister, if you bite into it, you've bitten into a rotten apple, and it's going to leave the taste of bitterness in your mouth and in your life.

So many of God's dear children today are paying a terrible price for that friendship with this world in which we live, and I know the God of this world. He blinds the minds of those that would believe the blessed message of the gospel, tries to keep men enslaved, but he's not supposed to do that for the believer. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

Listen, the one that you have entrusted the eternal destiny of your souls into his hands and his care, he defeated Satan upon Calvary's cross. He's greater than Satan. We can be more than conquerors through him that loved us and gave himself for us.

The world's a real threat, no question about it. A lot of your frustration as a Christian may stem from the fact that you haven't heeded this warning. You fell in love with the world.

There's another passage. Let us turn to James, chapter 4. James 4, just a few verses that remind us of this threat. I quoted the latter part of that fourth verse that says, "...whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." The seventh verse says, "...submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." Resist the devil. I understand that one of the things that probably caused so much error to be a part of that false religious system that calls itself Jehovah's Witness is because of the dreadful fear and terror that Mr. Russell had of hell itself and of the devil.

He wouldn't accept God's words, and so he concocts a whole system of theology and doctrine that, in a sense, does away with any idea of hell and Satan as a threat to us. The Word of God says, "...resist the devil." I think one of the dreadful mistakes that are made by many Christians is that they underestimate the

power of Satan, and I personally do not think that many of us are ever approached directly by this archenemy of men's souls, Satan himself. I'm reminded he has many emissaries.

You know, Satan is not omniscient, and he's not omnipresent, and he's not omnipotent either, praise God. But he has those that serve him. I think of that multitude of angelic hosts that fell with him when he fell because he would exalt his throne above the stars of the heaven above, I will, I will, seeking for himself that exalted place.

And our God said, No you won't, and they cast him down from heaven, and ever since he's tried to spoil everything that God created that was beautiful. God doesn't do anything that is not perfect. He created this world and everything about this universe perfect in its order.

You see, the only problem is sin has entered the scene. This whole world is under the curse of God because of sin, and the only thing that can solve that problem is a provision that God has made through the death of his dear, beloved son. The only way we can be loosed from our sins is through the shed blood of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made upon Calvary's cross.

The cleansing effect and power of the blood of Jesus Christ to make us sit for God's presence is, indeed, something that humbles us in the presence of God. And as he so wonderfully and he so sovereignly has planned and purposed that he would have the victory even over Satan and all of these forces of evil, it's wonderful to be enlightened to the will of God and the plans and the purposes of God. Feel a deep sense of sorrow for those that live in spiritual darkness, because those of us that recognize that one day we were in that place, and we were under the dominion and control of Satan, and he abused us and he exploited us just as he does people today, yet we have one indeed who loved us and gave himself for us that we recognize as, indeed, the one that deserves all of our devotion and love, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We're told in the word of God, you resist the devil. You resist him with all of your might. You stand up against him.

You oppose him and his way. This world that he offers to you, and all of the alluring things in this world, you resist him. You stand up against that.

Not in my own strength. I'm no match for Satan. In my own strength, I wouldn't stand a chance with Satan.

But, you see, God doesn't ask us to fight these battles in our own strength. Be strong in the Lord, says the Apostle Paul. The six of Ephesians tell us, put on the whole armor of God that we'll be able to stand.

We can quench all of the fiery darts of Satan. We can arm ourselves. We can take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

How beautifully in the Gospels, and especially as we read those accounts, Matthew 4, I think about that hour of temptation and testing of our Lord when Satan did all of those things to make the world and everything about it so attractive. For the Lord Jesus, I'll tell you one thing it proves to me. Satan's not nearly as smart.

He's not nearly as clever as I thought he was when I see him in the presence of the Lord Jesus, because I realize that he realizes that he's a defeated foe, because the Lord Jesus Christ could handle him so skillfully, because he did it in the power of God. It is written, and Satan makes this suggestion, turn that

stone into a loaf of bread. Satisfy your hunger.

Man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God and every attempt to trip the Lord Jesus. It must have been very frustrating for Satan, because I could have told him from the very outset, Satan, you're doomed. But sometimes when we read these accounts, and if you like to read stories in which you realize, I know who's going to be the victor, that's an exciting story, and Satan is decisively defeated.

It is written. It is written. How do I resist Satan for the power of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ? And he is written in the word of God.

God tells me not to love this world. Satan says, you know, you can have a little of this and a little of that. It won't really matter.

I'd be disobeying the word of God. The word of God says that I'm not to love this world, that I'm to stay aloof from this world in that sense. This world is not my home.

I'm just passing through. I'm in God's school. He's training me.

He's testing me. He's giving me the opportunity to obey his word and to be conformed more and more every day to the likeness of his Son. And the word of God says, be not conformed to the ways of this world.

Clear instructions from the word of God. Resist him. Oppose him.

Not in your own strength, but in the power of the Spirit of God that indwells and fills a believer. For we have that old nature, but the new nature. Let the Spirit of God himself let us yield.

Let us walk as he would have us to walk. Finally, I'd like for us just to look at Galatians, chapter 5. This one is quoted so much. I'll just read this one, verse 16.

This I say then, walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Lust, of course, is that tendency, that nature that we have toward things that are evil, and we all got it. Whether we like to recognize it or not, deep within your soul there's a capacity, there's a tendency there to look upon some things that you know are absolutely rotten, but you find that it's so few.

We have that, and the only possible way that we can gain any victory over that tendency is to walk in the Spirit of God. Let our manner of life, let our being be controlled by the Spirit of God. Apostle Paul says, be not drunk with wine wherein it is excess, but be filled with the Spirit of God.

A man that is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, you can tell it by the way he acts. His body is under the control of that element that he has introduced into his body. It exercises power and control over his actions and his thoughts.

How wonderful to think that I can let the Spirit of God that indwells me, fill me, and control me, always in a way that indeed brings glory to God. Then, when I look upon those things that appear to be so, so pleasurable, those things that are so appealing that this lust of the flesh just reaches out to, the Spirit of God gives me power over those things. You can't get that by relying upon the arm of the flesh, which is so weak.

Some person might be so foolish as to think as they're flying along in an airplane, oh, you know, this thing of flying is just a snap. Look, we're just breezing along, I could probably do this on my own. You go to the door and step out and suddenly discover he's put himself under another law that has taken control, that law of gravity, and he takes a plunge.

You see, he did something very foolish. He didn't reckon with that other law. You see, any time that we think we can take control of our own lives and we can handle our own affairs and our own strength, we've made a grave misjudgment.

Let the life that we have in Christ, let it be under the control of the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let that power that God would give us for victory, that we could live our lives for the glory and honor of God. Let's yield to that power and let Him give us the victory that, indeed, would be a good testimony for the world in which we live.

There's no greater gift than love, and our Lord Jesus Christ could say to us, a new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another even as I have loved you. Other men will know that you are my disciples because you love each other. You see, for a testimony to be real, to be vibrant, to have its impact upon this world in which we live today, it must be a testimony that God has sovereignly taken control over by His Spirit, by the power that He provides.

Then, the frustration that we sometimes experience, this love for the world, doing battle with our enemy Satan, this battle that we have with the lust of the flesh, that can be victory. The solution is very simple. Do you think it's important to obey the Word of God? If not, you're going to be a loser.

And you're going to go on frustrated, defeated. Make a commitment today to obey the Word of God, and in so doing it will be a giant step toward victory in this life for God. Shall we pray? Our Father in Heaven, we bow in Thy presence and we thank Thee for Thy holy Word.

We thank Thee for what You provide in the way of instruction for us. Having received Your blessed, wonderful Son as Savior, indeed we know that You give us strength every day to work out our own salvation, and we do it in the power that You provide. For those that may be present that have been disappointed and discouraged because of all of the things that have represented failure to them in their life as a Christian, grant to them, we pray Thee, this understanding of Your will and Your way.

Help them to confess and forsake all of that that is wrong. Help them, we pray Thee, to see that this perfect victory found in obedience to Thy holy Word. We ask all of this to the end that we might better serve Him that served us so well, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Amen. The service is over.

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