

Love Not the World

by Walter Chantry

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing love for God over love for the world, warning against the dangers of spiritual adultery and the consequences of loving the world.

Duration: 34:32

Scripture: Genesis 20:5, Matthew 11:28-30, 1 Corinthians 7:39, James 4:4, 1 John 2:12-17

Topics: "Worldliness", "Stewardship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of riches and deceit. He emphasizes that while it is not evil to have wealth, it becomes deceitful when it becomes the focus of one's love and devotion, overshadowing one's love for God. The preacher uses the example of Moses, who chose the fleeting joys of the world over the eternal rewards of following God's commandments. He also highlights the importance of not loving the world and its sinful ways, but instead seeking to be delivered from them and living in a way that pleases God. The sermon concludes with a reminder that one cannot serve both God and the world, and that choosing to love and serve God will require sacrifice.

Transcript

...bibles to 1st John chapter 2. The first epistle of John chapter 2. We follow as I read beginning at verse 12 in 1st John chapter 2. We began meditating on this passage of scriptures two weeks ago. Today we'll continue with the thought of John the Apostle in this place. 1st John 2 beginning at verse 12.

I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven for His namesake. I write unto you fathers, because you have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you young men, because you have overcome the wicked one.

I write unto you little children, because you have known the Father. I have written unto you fathers, because you have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and you've overcome the wicked one.

Now this is the reason that he is writing as we begin in verse 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away in the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God

abideth forever. This life in which you and I are living presents us with many alternatives which exclude other alternatives.

There are from time to time choices placed before you, which if you choose them, will exclude other possibilities from your grasp, or from your life. There are exclusive choices put before your eyes. Some people hate to make choices, even about little things.

They don't want to choose one thing, because they don't want to exclude another. But because of sin, there are sinful options, and because God has commanded us to fight against sin, and the world, and the flesh, and the devil, there are times in your life, frequent times in your life, in which you must choose between the broad road which leads to destruction, and the narrow pathway that leads to eternal life. When Moses rode out from his Egyptian palace one day, and came across an Egyptian who was beating a Jewish slave, Moses was faced with a choice between two options, and there was no compromise between the two.

As Moses looked and saw this Jewish brother of his being beaten by a slave driver, Moses had before him the choice. Was he indeed a child of the promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Or had Moses become the child of Pharaoh's daughter? As Moses looked at the scene, the decision that he had to make was not a small one, because Moses was in a place of great influence. He could have commanded most any position in the kingdom of Egypt that he desired.

He had influence already, because he was the child of Pharaoh's daughter. He had in his possession great riches. He had been participating in the pleasures of the court of Egypt.

They were all at his disposal, but all must be put aside if he would choose to protect the Jewish slave. I wonder if Moses looked on that scene if the devil didn't come and whisper some things to his mind, like the things that he whispers to yours and mine, when we're faced with the temptation to seize on to things of the world. I wonder if Satan didn't come to Moses and said, now Moses, after all, pass up this one Jewish slave being beaten, and you can continue in the position of influence.

Just think what you can do for the slaves of Egypt by your influence at the court of Pharaoh. Close your eyes just this one time, Moses, and all of the kingdom of the greatest world on the face of the earth will be at your disposal, and think how you can help the Jews if you're careful to guard your position of influence with the Pharaoh. I wonder if Satan didn't come and say, now Moses, you know that these Jewish slaves are poor.

Close your mind, close your eyes, and turn away from this beating of a poor slave. Remember when you get back to the palace, you have so much money and so much wealth, you can channel this secretly to the people of the Jews. They're hungry, Moses.

Don't you see that they need clothes for their back. Think how your money, the money of Egypt, can help them, and you're in a position to steer that money to them. I wonder if Satan didn't come and suggest to Moses that if he were to protect this Jewish slave, he would lose his opportunity for pleasures.

And if Satan didn't suggest, after all, a little recreation is good for you, and there's no harm to be done in remaining at the court of Pharaoh. But Moses, when he saw the scene, clearly resisted such temptations and such way of thinking. For Moses knew very clearly that to befriend the Pharaoh of Egypt, who was oppressing the people of God, and to join himself with the ungodly force of Egypt, was to be the enemy of

Jehovah.

And he was at a path where he had to take one path or the other. Was he going to be the friend of Pharaoh, or was he going to be the friend of the people of God? Moses chose to identify himself with the people of God, and he lost all of his influence in the government of the greatest kingdom in the world in those days. He realized that to continue as a friend of Pharaoh was to continue without any clear identification with the God of the Jews.

And the man who's afraid to confess the God of the Jews surely is not worthy of him. Jesus said one day that the man who is unwilling to confess him before men will not be confessed before the Father by himself. If you will not confess Christ before men, he will not confess you before his Heavenly Father.

Moses also, as he began to look about and to see if anyone was watching, must have thought in his mind about the riches that were his in Egypt. But he realized that the Jews didn't need the riches of the world. The problem was not the need of clothes on their back, and the problem was not the need of food for their mouths.

They needed deliverance from the bondage of the world, and that could come only by the power of God. Moses realized if he would choose the riches of this kingdom of the world in which he lived, he would have to forgo the right to belong to the people of God who were being reproached. And so Moses began to approach the hard task master.

And if Satan was afflicting his mind and causing Moses to ask, wouldn't it be better to continue in the court of the Pharaoh where you would have pleasures? Moses had concern for the recompense of the reward that would be given in the day of judgment, and he desired the eternal joys that were with the people of God rather than the temporal pleasures of this world. And so he raised his hand and he slew the taskmaster. And with the blow of Moses' hand went all of the kingdom that belonged to him.

With the blow of Moses' hand went all of his riches and pleasures and all of his influence in the world. But with the blow of his hand, Moses became a mighty man of God, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. John is trying to urge you who have believed on the name of... Even as Moses did not love the world, and as saints down through the ages did not love the world, there is no compromise with the world for those who love God with sincerity of heart.

Martin Luther said one time, to be in the world, to see the world, to feel the world, is a different thing from loving the world. Just as to have sin and to feel sin is a different thing from loving sin. We were all born into this present evil world.

And there is no one here in our presence who has not felt the effects of the temptations of this world. There are none of us who are not drawn in one way or another after the... But to feel the influence of the world and to love the world are two different things. The love of God, however, will cost you a love of the world.

Jesus said, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Well, notice what the double exhortation of John is in verse 15. He says, love not the world.

But that's not all that he says. He says, neither love the things that are in the world. Some foolish men say, well, I don't really want money.

I don't want a big bank account. But they love the things that are in the world. Though they don't want the money, they want the things that money will buy.

Satisfied only so long as every desire for pleasure and every desire for comfort is met. They don't desire the riches themselves in a bank account. So the Apostle makes it very plain.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. Do not set your affection upon the order of things as they are under the control of Satan. Do not set your affections upon the fashions of this world, the rules of this world, the society of this world, the pleasures of this world, the way of life of those who are under the control and dominion of Satan.

Love not the world, neither the things in particular which are in the world. We hear our teenagers speaking about people having a hang-up on one thing or another. Satan is very clever in coming with various wars to people to keep them in the world and to keep them loving the world.

And each one of us has a particular temptation which another may not have to tempt us to love the world. For a few years your particular hang-up or temptation may be a love of the theater. Following that there may be a love of sports and you just give yourself to the entertainment that the world provides, not evil in themselves, but you love them and give yourself to them.

Following that there may be just a love of comfort and ease, of vacations and traveling. The question ought to, in your mind, be asked, what's your hang-up? As the teenagers might ask it, what is the particular lure that Satan uses to keep you loving the world, to keep your heart joined to the things of this particular order over which Satan rules? Love not the world or the things that are in the world, and the reason given in verse 15 is very plain. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

It is impossible to love this present order of things and to love God and the eternal blessings which He holds out to you in the Gospel. God and Satan, who is the God of this world, will not dwell in the same house of a man's heart. There will always be fighting between God.

They are sworn enemies and there is never a moment of peace between them. You cannot befriend God and befriend the world. You cannot give yourself to the service of God and the service of Mammon, for you will love one of your masters and hate the other, or you will serve one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and Mammon. You cannot have the things of this world and the things of eternity as the object of your affection and of your love. Remember in the Old Testament how men tried to have even sisters who loved one another to be the wives of the same husband in their house.

Remember how Jacob sought to have Rachel and Leah both in the house and to love them both, but they could not be at peace one with another. And Jacob had a miserable time because of it. And when you try to hold the world and to hold God in your heart, you cannot have the peace of His salvation, for there is a battle between them.

Have you ever tried to make friends with two different enemies in the midst of a battle that they were having? Did you ever find two men who were at each other's throats and try in the presence of both to befriend both? It usually works out that you become the enemies of both. It usually works out when a man tries that the world hates him because he is not the friend of God because he loves the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father will not be in him.

Esau once told an interesting fable concerning the bat. You know the bat is really a mammal and yet it has wings. It's halfway in between the bird family and the animal family.

And Esau tells the story of one day when the birds and the beasts were going to go to battle with one another in the forest. And the birds came to the bats and they said, come and join us and fight against the beasts. And the bats said, well we're not really birds, we're beasts.

So the beasts came to them and said, join our side of the battle and fight against the birds. And they said, well we're not really beasts. But there was, before the battle came to pass, a reconciliation between the birds and the beasts.

And there was great rejoicing in both camps and a party held that night. And so the bats went to the camp of the birds and tried to join them and the birds said, get out of here, you're not a bird, you're a beast. And then the bats went to the camp of the beasts to try to join their frolicking and fun and the beasts said, get out of here, you're not a beast, you're a bird.

And the bats who tried to straddle the fence and take neither side ended up the enemy of both. And so it is with the man who is double-minded, the man who seeks to follow the world and to follow God. You will not be able to enjoy the sins of the world which last but for a moment.

And you will not be befriended by the world and neither will you be the friend of God and have the joys that pass understanding as they're found in Jesus Christ. You cannot befriend God and Satan for they're at battle and to be the friend of God is to battle. If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

The human heart was made to love God exclusively. The first and the great commandment is, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind. And when you try to divide up that love to another, you're being unfaithful to God.

The love of God is not in you. In Genesis 20 and verse 5, in the midst of the Ten Commandments, the Lord warned the Jews against idolatry and he said, for the Lord thy God is a jealous God. The Lord thy God is a jealous God.

If any of you women have jealous husbands, you'd better watch out in flirting with other men. God is a jealous God and you had better beware of flirting with the world and the pleasures of the world and the riches that are in the world. For to give your affection to them is spiritual adultery.

James said clearly in chapter 4 of his epistle in verse 4, ye adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? We are meant as creatures to have a holy marriage between God and our soul. For better or for worse, in sickness and in health, whether poor or rich, we are meant to cleave unto God fully and holy and keep only to him so long as we live. Remember your marriage vow between husband and wife? Keep only to him.

When a man claims to be a Christian, he claims to love God and to cleave to him alone. He claims a divine marriage between his soul and between Jesus Christ, the bridegroom of the church. Now as a Christian then you cannot give yourself to the service of this world or to mammoth.

We read in the New Testament of men who sought to do so and they were declared not to be Christians at all. Demas was a man who started out as a good servant of the church of Jesus Christ, but one day Paul

said, Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present evil world. If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

By loving the world, he proves that he has not kept the first and the great commandment. Remember when Jesus was on the shore of the Gadarenes? He healed a demoniac and he healed him by sending the demons into a herd of swine and the swine rushed over a precipice and were destroyed in the sea. The Gadarenes came to Jesus and asked him to depart.

They loved their pigs more than they loved Christ. They loved their herds of cattle more than they loved the Son of the Living God. They were more concerned with their possessions in this world than they were with the eternal possessions that Christ could give to them.

And oh how many there are who begin to seek the things that are in the world at the cost of having the salvation that is in Jesus Christ. He cannot be absorbed in the world and be assured of love to God. If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

We read in the parables of Jesus Christ that when the Word of God is preached from the pulpit, the scriptures land upon your heart as seed lands in a fertile field. And Jesus says that in the hearts of many people that Word springs up. It springs up by way of a profession of faith and people rejoice to hear about Jesus who died for sinners, who invited sinners to come to themselves and to have eternal life.

And people rejoice to hear the message and receive it and say, I want to follow Jesus. But alas, the soil of your heart is not virgin soil, it was the soil of Adam's heart, for you were born in trespasses and sins. When you hear the Word of God and that begins to spring up with good thoughts toward Jesus Christ, you'll find that briars and thorns will also spring up in the soil of your heart.

And these briars will begin to wrap themselves around your love of Christ and your profession of Christ. If you nourish everything that's growing in the field, there's no question as to which will prevail. The thorns will choke out the Word of God.

If you say within your heart, I'm going to pursue the pleasures of this life, but I also want to read the Word in hopes that God will bring salvation to my soul as many foolish youths do, saying I'm going to keep the Word of God, I'm going to hear all I can, but I'm also going to pursue the pleasures of this life, pursue the dreams of this world, and maybe at some later date then I can turn to this God of whom I've learned. No, the world has the effect of choking out the seed of the Word, of making that Word unfruitful in the heart. You nourish your affection for the world and the Word of God will be choked out and you will be proven in the end to have no love for God.

The man of God is one who does have briars of the world sticking in his flesh, who is tempted by riches and pleasure and fame. He is a man who does fall and is pricked by the thorns that are in the field, but the man of God is one who carefully roots out the briar bushes, who carefully disciplines himself to turn away from the world, and though he's ensnared by the wicked one in the ways of the world, he does it in the ways of those who are under the power, and his faith is steadfastly set with prayer and repentance toward God, that he might be holy and walk according to the commandments of the living God. The man who in the end will endure and bring forth the fruits besetting repentance and faith and prove himself to be a man of God is the man who nourishes that profession of Christ that springs up and nourishes his love for God, but chokes out the briars and the thorns as they spring up.

John is trying to warn you against the world. Christian, I wonder if you really do beware of the world and its effects upon you. The care of this world, the worry about how the worldly aspect of family affairs, the college education, and how much money is going to be in the bank, the care of this world can just choke out the Word of God.

It's a great threat to you and to me. The deceitfulness of riches, Jesus says, threatens to choke out the effects of the Word of God. All the briars grow up very slowly and they're sneaky in the way that they get hold of the branches of the good tree that's sprung up.

The deceitfulness of riches that slowly curl around you and choke out the Word of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, after he had met the rich young ruler, how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God. And his disciples were amazed.

Christian, have you thought about that statement of Jesus? How difficult is it for those that have riches to enter into the kingdom of God? Have you thought about it living in the midst of affluent America? How hard is it for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God? Riches are deceitful and incline themselves about the heart and choke out the love. Jesus said it's easier for a camel, a huge clumsy animal, to go through the eye of the needle, the little eye of the needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Now some rich men did enter into the kingdom of God.

Abraham was rich and wealthy and he entered in. It's not evil to have riches, but it's evil to love riches. And the reason Jesus warns against the riches of this world in the pursuit of them is this, that riches are deceitful and incline themselves about the heart.

And that's why it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Love not the world. How hard is it for a man who has riches not to love the world? When all that the world offers you for the satisfaction of the flesh is asked within your reach because you have riches.

Oh, it's hard not to love them and give yourself to them. But you were made to love God and give yourself to God. A man who truly loves God loves the world only so far as it assists him in loving his Father.

He loves the world and the things that he has only so far as they assist him in giving praise and honoring glory to the Father. It's necessary to provide for the physical needs of your family, but not to love the riches that feed their bodies. It's necessary to seek out recreation for the health of your whole being, but it's sin to love that recreation and give yourself to it as you were meant to give yourself only to God.

It's necessary to seek out influence among the men of the world seeking to bring them to Jesus Christ, but when you begin to love the pat on the back more than you love God, then the deceitfulness of the world has been choking out the word in your love for God. If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him. You were made to love God, and the world smothers the love of God.

Paul said in Colossians 3 and chapter 1, if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of affection on things above, not on things of the earth. That's what Moses did one day when he saw the Egyptians slaying a Hebrew. He set his affection on things above, not on the things that were of the earth.

The Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels invited men to follow him. He freely invited men to follow him. One man said, let me first go and bury my father, in which he was saying in effect, I love my father so much,

Lord, that your service is going to have to wait.

Jesus said, let the dead bury the dead. If any man loves father or mother more than me, he is not worthy of me. The Bible commands children to love parents, but when the love of parents gets in the way of love of God, it's sin.

God commands parents to love children, but when the love of children causes a man to break the commandments of God, it's sin. The Lord Jesus Christ invited many to come to his feast of the Gospel, and one said, wait for a season, Lord, I've just married a wife and I can't come. Surely you wouldn't deny me of the fellowship of my wife and of my family since I'm newly married.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was saying in effect, there's a priority that's higher than that of love of husband for wife. That's the love of a man or a woman for his or her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus said, come to the feast, and other men said, but Lord, I have just bought some oxen and I have to go and prove the oxen.

Oh, the foolish responses of men who are invited to come into fellowship with Jesus Christ and worship him, and to know the sweetness of the fellowship of the saints, and they say, excuse me, Lord, business is just too much right now, and the love of business chokes out the love of Christ. They have no time for the things of the Lord and of his kingdom. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father, the love of the Father clearly is not in him.

Are not some of you who sit before me this morning in a very unclear position? At one time you seem to be seeking after God and to love God, at another time you seem to be loving the world and the things that are in the world. How can you have the assurance of which John is seeking to give you so long as you pursue the world, as you were meant only to pursue God? His exhortation is, love not the world. Little children, love not the world.

If you're but a babe in Christ, begin now to snuff out those briars of the world that will choke out a love for God. Young men, you're strong and you've overcome the wicked one, but he like a good fisherman has many wars, and if you will not bite on the one that's before you now, on the same pole of the world, he'll put another lure until he catches you. So beware and love not the world, though you be strong in the faith.

And fathers in the faith, love not the world. Oh how easy it is to become old and to feel, well I've done my part now for Christ and it's time for me to relax and take my knees in the world, to retire to the pleasures of life. John says to those who are fathers in the faith and who have walked with Christ for years, love not the world.

He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. Not he who begins to follow Christ and then leaves that narrow pathway which leads to life, to jump over later in years to the broad path that leads to destruction. If any man loved the world, regardless of the period of time in his Christian profession, if any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Flirting with the world is a very dangerous thing and so John exhorts you not to love the world. But remember he is exhorting Christians, he is exhorting those who know the Father, he's exhorting those who have known some degree of victory over sin and Satan, in sacrifice and belief of the truth. He's speaking to those who have repented and believed on his name.

But perhaps there's some of you here who were born with a love for the world and have never had anyone challenge that love for the world. You've never seen any conflict between the evil system of this world and God. You've been taught to believe that you can have Christ in the world too.

You've been brought to believe that if you just nod your head to God that's all he's looking for. You can go ahead in the ways of the world. John's warning has a message for you as well.

If you've never seen before the conflict between the present order of things, if there is not some strain within your own heart as to how you can serve God and yet live in the midst of this present evil age, then your eyes have not even been open to see the first things of the teachings of Christ. For the call of Jesus Christ to follow him is a call to forsake the world. And only those who will forsake all that they have can be his disciples and have the salvation which he offers.

But in Jesus Christ there is power to deliver you from the attractions that the world has. To give you strength to walk in the love of God rather than in the love of this present evil world. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke of service upon you and learn of me. For I am meek and lowly of heart and you will find rest unto your soul. The rest that comes from loving God and the encouragement that comes from knowing that you, though you are at times entangled, though you are at times tempted by the world, though it is a grief to your heart to be constantly wrestling with the world, you're satisfied in your heart that you do not love the world but that you love the Father.

And when you do not love the world it's an encouragement to know that the love of the Father is in you. Let us pray. Our Lord and our God, in those very texts that prick our hearts, in those very texts that condemn us of sin for having sought to give the affection that we owe to thee to the world, we who have sincerely been following after thee also find comfort.

For we see within our hearts that we do not love this world and we long to be delivered from the snares of it and we hate the ways of sin whereby we are identified to it. As thou hast begun this work of grace in our hearts, O Lord, leave us not alone but help us to prove by our every way of living that we hate the world and that we love thee. Help us, O Lord, we pray, to give to thee the love that we owe for thou art our maker.

And in Jesus Christ there is a Redeemer who deserves all the love that we can muster. Be pleased by your spirit to quicken a holy and an enduring persevering love for thee and each who has professed your name this day. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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