

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**

**Love what matter. 1 John 2:15-29**

Throughout history and even today, Satan controls the world with his deception. The things of the world all promise to make us feel worthy, and to flood our minds with things that are temporary, but they all pass away. In the end, the voice we follow will be either Jesus or a false promise.



That is the essence of our Scripture reading. John was in his later years, and noticed that some who had begun with Christ, were drifting away – investing their time and energy into worldly things to love which will not stand the test of time.

**John tells us – do not love the world.**

John uses the word love 51 times in 1<sup>st</sup> John, and this is the only place he tells us what NOT to love.

**1. We must grasp the fact that there is an unavoidable choice (2:15):**

Coming to Jesus requires us to make a choice to change the direction from which we choose to draw our fulfillment.

Verse 15 says: *“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.”*

One who has encountered God, and the message of the Gospel must choose the direction to follow which will fill up our hearts and be satisfied with life. If we place the fulfillment of our needs impatiently in the “now,” we will surely be tempted to drift from the direction of God’s will at any time we don’t feel like God is meeting that need to our satisfaction.

John doesn’t say: “*don’t believe the world, or don’t think like the world or don’t do what the world does. He says – don’t love the world.*”

The issue isn’t whether we live in the world or even enjoy the world. God gave us taste buds so we can find delight in what we eat. God doesn’t expect us to move to a bare-roomed monastery, eat bread and drink water, and think only of the veil of tears in this life while we await heaven’s bliss. Although a week at a monastery wouldn’t hurt. But that is not the way God called us to live out our days. The point of “not loving the world” is whether we find our hope, our significance, and our peace in the world. It is about our primary LOVE, our primary place of desire and hope.

We will love God and His promises, or we will reject those promises for more immediate satisfactions – but we will not do both. One will pull us from the other. **Christians cannot have two loves.**

Don’t overlook the incredibly strong pull of the now. It creates a strong mirage of coming satisfaction that remains just over the horizon as we continue to approach it. If we become engrossed in

the outlooks and perspective of a world that rejected Jesus, then it is evident that we don't love the Father.

John describes the things in the world consist of the **desires of the flesh**. These come from our fallen and sinful nature, driven by the world's way of thinking.

**The lust of the eyes** – our eyes have been described as inch long openings on our face that cause so much trouble, because the temptations that assault us come through our eyes, captivated by the outward show of things. These desires are activated by what we see and can lead to covetousness and can hinder contentment in God. What we put in front of our eyes does something to our hearts.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:22–23 – the eye is the lamp of the body, so if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eyes is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

**Pride of life** better translated “pride of possessions.” This refers to our boasting in what we have and what we do. We often look to our possessions, position, appearance, or skills to establish our value. We end up believing these worldly lies and ignore the truth – God has rewritten the narrative of love. His love is unconditional. God decided to show us love, grace and mercy, even though we all have sinned.

The fact is: We simply must choose the Father first. Jesus told us to “**seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness**” –

that is to seek first God's purposes and live according to God's standards – and everything else we need would be added to us. Accommodation of sin and deliberate dabbling in evil is simply not an option for the mature man or woman of God who is serious about finding fulfillment. We cannot straddle the fence and expect to grow toward God's best for us. There is a choice required.

## **2. We must fully understand there are consequences that follow our choice (2:16-18):**

There are several problems with building our life around the things of **now** for lasting fulfillment. Life here isn't permanent, so fulfillment cannot be lasting. The satisfaction the things of this world promise is nothing more than a temporary quenching of a momentary thirst.

Beyond the temporary nature, there is a second problem we must remember. There is less time to choose than we may believe. Our choice is urgent! The battle for our heart must end so we can join the team of those who will reach others.

There is simply no way to avoid the fact that our choice for what fulfills us shows up in our daily choices – and we must remember the fact that the hour is late. We can neither delay, nor can we trust that choosing this world will somehow work out in the end.

The world's system is increasingly showing itself to be anti-God, anti-Bible. Our world is against the most basic definitions of

morality – but desperate for the fruits that come with it. They cannot define a family but cannot discern why children are angrily marching the streets, unable to define their own identity, sexuality or purpose. These youth are a sculpted product of modern social engineering. They are confused, conflicted, and constantly tossed about by one outrageous cause after another.

John spoke about those who had chosen Christ but then had fallen away. This could be the lure of the world; however, many people are not good listeners, what they think they heard from the Bible or from God bears little or no resemblance to what God said in His Word. They heard only parts of the message. They didn't connect the dots between what they heard and how they lived.

They may not truly understand: Jesus isn't one of the options for eternal life. He isn't one of the paths to true happiness. He is not a buffet menu placed beside other equal options. If the Bible is true, He created life at the behest of His Heavenly Father. He IS life. In Him is fulfillment.

Jesus offers life as the Author of life. Others will elegantly dress their offer for temporary satisfaction but cannot offer eternal life. They will draw us to moments of happiness but cannot deliver in the end.

Imagine you are on have been hiking along a mountain trail during summer, when the weather is hot. You have feeling very tired and incredibly thirsty. At the end of the trail, you notice a

huge refrigerator with a glass door (like in the convenience stores) filled with bottles of spring water, with a sign that says – free, help yourself. Thirsty you run to the fridge and help yourself to some cool refreshing water.

Aah, that was great. Then you notice another hiker who looks more tired and thirstier than you were. You are just about to take out a bottle of the spring water to give him, but he stops by the side of a small fishpond and starts to scoop up the water in his hands and drinks it. You are shocked as you had noticed the pond had fish swimming in it, some frogs and the water was green and stagnant. You ask him: “Why are you drinking out of the fishpond? Don’t you see that fridge with the spring water bottles? You will get sick drinking that polluted water. There is no telling what’s in that water.” He replied: “I saw the fridge, but this pond was closer and much more convenient. It was easier to get, and I was very thirsty.

Things of this world may seem closer and easier to get – on offer 24/7 and if you believe it will bring you satisfaction, then you are drinking out of the fishpond. And believe me, this water is not long-lasting and will not bring you peace and joy.

**Ask yourself – do the decisions I make align with God’s Word and do my actions reflect that I am a disciple of Christ?**

**Will you make the decision to choose the path of Christ?**