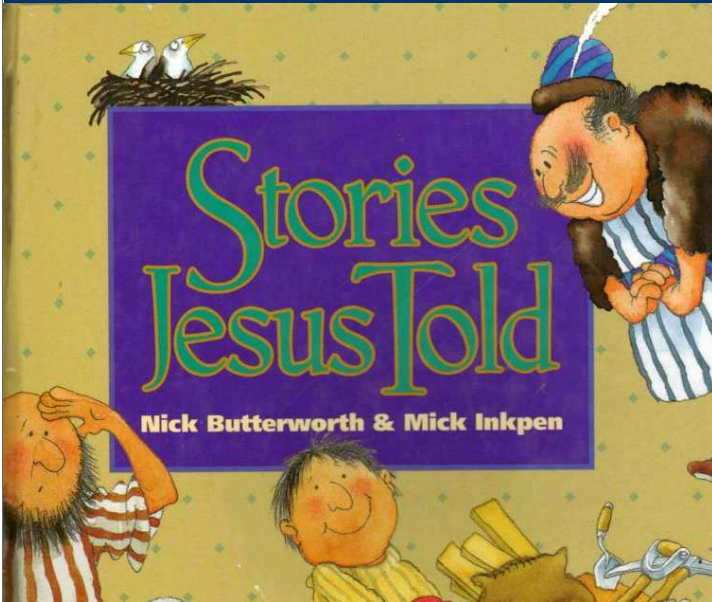




Sermon: 1 John 2:12-17

The Love of God vs. The Love of the World

Introduction:



"The Precious Pearl"
Based on Matt. 13:45ff

Three Categorical Truths



1 John 2:12-13 (Past tense)

1. Dear Children [τεκνία]: Your sins have been dismissed on account of His name.
2. Fathers: You have known God.
3. Young Men: You have conquered Satan.

1 John 2:14 (Present tense)

1. Little Children [παιδεα]: You have known [God] the Father.
2. Fathers: You know God.
3. Young Men: You are strong; you have God's word; you have conquered Satan.

APPLICATION:

- Different according to Physical age?
- All of us at levels of Spiritual maturity?

- Until now, John has given reasons for writing his epistle based on hoped-for outcomes ("so that our joy *may* be completed," "that you *may* have fellowship," "that you *may* not sin"). Now John gives reasons based upon the actual qualities of his audience.
- Scholars debate on the different categories of children, fathers, and young men, whether they are different age groups in the church with different distinctives or whether they are really all addressed to the church as a whole, or some combination of the two.
- Both past and present: You **have known** God and you still **are knowing** God. You **have conquered** the Evil One and you still **are strong** in the Word.

Augustine on the 3 Truths (vs. 12-14)



“[L]ittle children’ because in forgiveness of sins you have your birth... Why first sons? ‘Because your sins are forgiven you through His name,’ and **you are regenerated into a new life, therefore sons**. Why fathers? ‘Because you have known Him that is from the beginning:’ for the beginning has relation to fatherhood. Christ new in flesh, but ancient in Godhead.... ‘Before the day-star have I begotten Thee.’ (Ps. 110:3) ... ‘all things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made’ (John 1:3). By this you recognize the ‘fathers:’ for they become fathers by acknowledging ‘He who is from the beginning.’ ...sons, because begotten; fathers, because they acknowledge the Beginning... **Remember that you are fathers! If you forget “Him that is from the beginning,” you have lost your father-hood.** In the sons, birth: in the fathers, antiquity: in the young men, strength. If the wicked one is ‘overcome’ by the young men, that means he fights with us. Fights, but not conquers... **Again and again consider that you are young men: fight, that you may overcome: overcome, that you may be crowned.”**

About 1,700 years ago, an African pastor named Augustine preached a sermon series on First John, and I really like how he put it: “little children’ because in forgiveness of sins you have your birth... Why first sons? ‘Because your sins are forgiven you through His name,’ and **you are regenerated into a new life, therefore sons**. Why fathers? ‘Because you have known Him that is from the beginning:’ for the beginning has relation to fatherhood. Christ new in flesh, but ancient in Godhead.... From the eternal Father begotten, from eternity begotten, in eternity begotten: with no beginning, no bound, no space of breadth; because He is what is, because Himself is ‘He that Is.’ This His name He told to Moses: ‘Thou shalt say unto them, He that Is hath sent me unto you.’ (Ex. 3:14) Why speak then of ‘before Abraham’? why, before Noe? why, before Adam? Hear the Scripture: ‘Before the day-star have I begotten Thee.’ (Ps. 110:3) In fine, before heaven and earth. Wherefore? Because ‘all things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made’ (John 1:3). By this you recognize the ‘fathers:’ for they become fathers by acknowledging ‘He who is from the beginning.’ ...sons, because begotten; fathers, because they acknowledge the Beginning... **Remember that you are fathers! If you forget “Him that is from the beginning,” you have lost your father-hood.** In the sons, birth: in the fathers, antiquity: in the young men, strength. If the wicked one is ‘overcome’ by the young men, that means he fights with us. Fights, but not conquers... **Again and again consider that you are young men: fight, that you may overcome: overcome, that you may be crowned.”**

All three apply to all Christians! We must remember that these three things are true of ourselves!

Three Categorical Truths



1 John 2:12-13 (Past tense)

1. Dear Children [teknia]: Your sins have been dismissed on account of His name.
2. Fathers: You have known God.
3. Young Men: You have conquered Satan.

1 John 2:14 (Present tense)

1. Little Children [paidea]: You have known [God] the Father.
2. Fathers: You know God.
3. Young Men: You are strong; you have God's word; you have conquered Satan.

YOU CAN BE SURE:

1. Your sins are forgiven indeed through Jesus!
2. You really do know God.
3. Through faith and love you conquer evil.

1. The basis for forgiveness of sins in v.12 is “on account of His name.” Not your works, not your goodness, not God’s dismissiveness, but the substitution of another’s person and account record: the perfect moral record of Jesus transferred to us and our record of broken laws transferred to Jesus and Him punished for it on the cross. On that basis, our sins really are forgiven and dismissed from God’s memory.
 2. You can know God! “The from-the-beginning one” (same as Jesus from 1:1) and God the “Father.” John emphatically rejects agnosticism. He is also fighting the Gnostic belief that only the spiritual elite can know God. Our knowledge of the Father strengthens our faith and our ability to conquer sin.
 3. John is not talking so much about physical warfare and strength as spiritual. When your *faith* is strong, you fill your mind with God’s word. There is a direct link between knowing God's word and overcoming Satan. In the Gospel account of the temptation of Jesus, Jesus defeated Satan by quoting scripture and obeying that scripture. Perhaps the fact that it is "the evil one" and not indefinite "evil" which the young men have conquered, points to our transfer from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God, meaning that Satan is defeated and is no longer our master, although we still do what is evil sometimes.
- When God repeats Himself, you’d better listen up! You’d better believe this is true of you!
 1. Your sins are forgiven indeed.
 2. You really do know God.
 3. Through faith and love you conquer evil.

It is not coincidence that these are the themes of the whole Epistle of 1 John. They are repeated throughout the whole book. This is what God wants you to be certain of!

The Command (v.15)



John 2:15 Stop loving the world and the things in the world! If someone loves the world, the Father's love is not in him.

- First imperative in 1 John (Μη ἀγαπάτε) Present tense prohibitive indicates ongoing action that must be stopped. If love of the world has been characterizing you, then, by God's power, you can stop.
- "Love" here means devotion and ultimate commitment.
 - "while not temperately but lustfully they use the things created, the Creator is despised." ~St. Augustine
 - "They worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever." (Rom. 1:25)



•This is for those whose sins are forgiven and know Jesus and conquered the devil. Stop loving the world: Present tense prohibitive.

•Not creation vs. Creator, but rather love of the world vs. the FATHER's love, indicating the sense of the relationship God is getting at. Our love, relationship, provision, nurture, admonition, and fruit of our life should be by our heavenly Father rather than the world.

•Also, this does not mean that you can't enjoy God's created world. Here 'love' means devotion and ultimate commitment. Augustine made an analogy with wedding rings: "[M]en drink themselves drunken, and perish, and forget their own Creator: while not temperately but lustfully they use the things created, the Creator is despised. Of such say the apostle: 'They worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever' (Rom. 1:25). God does not forbid you to love these things, howbeit, not to set your affections upon them for blessedness, but to approve and praise them to this end, that you may love your Creator. In the same manner, my brothers, as if a bridegroom should make a ring for his bride, and she having received the ring, should love it more than she loves the bridegroom who made the ring for her: would not her soul be found guilty of adultery in the very gift of the bridegroom, albeit she did but love what the bridegroom gave her? By all means let her love what the bridegroom gave: yet should she say, 'This ring is enough for me, I do not wish to see his face now:' what sort of woman would she be? Who would not detest such folly? who not pronounce her guilty of an adulterous mind? ... Well then, God gave you all these things: love Him that made them. There is more that He would love to give you, that is, His very Self that made these things. But if you love these—what though God made them—and neglect the Creator and love the world; shall not your love be accounted adulterous? when it is said, 'Love not these things,' does it mean that you are not to eat, or not to drink, or not to beget children? This is not the thing said. Only, let there be measure, because of the Creator, that these things may not bind you by your loving of them: lest you love that for enjoyment, which you ought to have for use."

1) You Can't Handle Two Masters (v.15)



2:15 Stop loving the world and the things in the world. [Because #1] If someone loves the world, the Father's love is not in him

- The love of the world and the love of God are mutually exclusive.
- Wean yourself from love of the world to make room for the love of God!



John give us 3 reasons to Stop loving the world #1 because if someone loves the world, the Father's love is not in him!

- Your heart is like a glass. [Object lesson with green apple labeled “world” and red apple labeled “Father” in glass.] There is not room in your heart for both the love of the world and the love of God. In fact, they are mutually exclusive
- Back when I lived in a trendy neighborhood in CO, I went to a block party, hoping to get to know some of my neighbors. I entered into conversation with a neighbor who gushed enthusiastically about lawn care for an hour straight. I couldn't get a word in edgewise about spiritual things I cared about; we parted ways w/ no progress.
- We must wean ourselves from love of the world (that is, our lawns or our hobbies or entertainment or politics, or anything we pursue apart from the Lordship of Christ) so that we have room and ability to love God. And when we love God, it follows that we will love one another.
- My father is a pastor in Birmingham, Alabama, and one of his parishioners had a business that provided him with a brand-new Corvette as his company car. But one day he got to thinking about his love for the world and how much driving that Corvette was an idolatrous thing in his life. So he did some research and discovered that he could trade that Corvette in for two more modest cars and his company would still pay for both of them! So that's what he did: he traded his current-year red Corvette for two current-year Cadillac sedans and left one of them in my parents' driveway. As a result of denying his love of the world, a stumbling block was removed from his life that released resources for him to be generous to my family, and we enjoyed the blessing of driving a car with air conditioning that worked!
- Augustine wrote: “God comes upon the hearts of men as a field that He would occupy: but in what state does He find it? If He finds a wildwood, He roots it up; if He finds the field cleared, He plants it. He wants to plant a tree called “love” there. And what is the wildwood He would root up? Love of the world... But in what way are you rooted so that you be not rooted up? By holding love, as the Apostle Paul said, ‘rooted and grounded in love’ (Eph. 3:17). How shall love be rooted there, amid the overgrown wilderness of the love of the world? Make clear riddance of the woods. A mighty seed you are about to put in: let there not be that in the field anything which shall choke the seed.”

2) Bad sources yield bad results (v.16)



- **2:15 Stop loving the world and the things in the world. [Because #1] If someone loves the world, the Father's love is not in him,**
- **2:16 Because [#2] everything in the world--- the desire [lust/craving] of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the [boastful/pride] showy lifestyle--is not from the Father but is from the world,**



What is most interesting about this reason is John's enumeration of "everything in the world,"

1. "the desire of the flesh" - the things which the body craves, like food, drink, physical touch, etc.,
2. "the desire of the eyes" – uncontrolled curiosity, mental cravings, coveting, wishing you had more, lust for a relationship with another person, even pursuit of art as an end in itself
3. "the boastful pride of life/showy lifestyle"
 - "vainglory... we desire wrongly and we glory wrongly in what we have... an empty, ostentatious assertion of advantages... lay[ing] claim to blessings which are not truly [ours] for the sake of renown." ~Westcott.
 - "seeking our own carnal excellency, conceit, boasting, high attitude..." ~Cotton

2) Bad sources yield bad results (v.16)



- "If God has given the power, do the miracle, for He has put it in your way to do it: for think not that those who have not done miracles shall not pertain to the kingdom of God. When the apostles were rejoicing that the demons were subject to them, what said the Lord to them? 'Rejoice not in this, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' (Luke 10:20)" ~Augustine
- "flee youthful lusts" (II Tim. 2:22)
- "make no provision for lusts" (Rom. 13:14).
- "If you are weaned from your profit or pleasure in meat or drink or pastime, and, if you are weaned from credit in regard to others, you shall bereave Satan of the weapons he fights you with" ~John Cotton
- Jesus overcame the three temptations of the Devil to the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the showy lifestyle. (Matthew 4)
- Do bodily appetites, mental yearnings, and the desire to show off control me?

- Augustine adds, "Sometimes it tempts even the servants of God, so that they wish as it were to work a miracle, to tempt God whether He will hear their prayers in working of miracles... If God hath given the power, do the miracle, for He hath put it in thy way to do it: for think not that those who have not done miracles shall not pertain to the kingdom of God. When the apostles were rejoicing that the demons were subject to them, what said the Lord to them? 'Rejoice not in this, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven' (Luke 10:20)... mark what He answered; and when a similar temptation happens to you, say the same thing: 'Get behind me, Satan; for it is written, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God:' that is, if I do this I shall tempt God. ... When the enemy suggests to you, 'What sort of ... Christian, are you? As yet have you done one miracle, or by your prayers have the dead been raised, or have you healed the fevered? if you were truly of any importance, you would do some miracle:' answer and say: 'It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God:' therefore I will not tempt God, as if I should belong to God if I do a miracle, and not belong if I do none... [remember] His words, 'Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven'"
- ""flee youthful lusts" (II Tim. 2:22); "make no provision for lusts" (Rom. 13:14).
- "If you are weaned from your profit or pleasure in meat or drink or pastime, and, if you are weaned from credit in regard to others, you shall bereave Satan of the weapons he fights you with" ~John Cotton
- Jesus withstood the tempter on all 3 points in the wilderness Himself: He was tempted to eat bread during a fast, lust after owning the nations, and show off at the temple by jumping off the roof, but He loved God rather than the world, and did not succumb.
- Do any of these things characterize MY life? Do I let my bodily appetites control me? Does my mind become consumed with wanting certain worldly things? Do I like to show off my possessions or skills for other people to admire? Father, please sanctify us be consumed with loving YOU instead of the world!

3) The world won't last like God will (v.17)



- **2:15 Stop loving the world and the things in the world. [Because #1] If someone loves the world, the Father's love is not in him,**
- **2:16 Because [#2] everything in the world--the desire [lust/craving] of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the [boastful/pride] showy lifestyle-- is not from the Father but is from the world,**
- **2:17 And [Because #3] the world and its desires are being phased out [passing away], but the one who does the will of God remains [abides/lives] forever.**



3rd reason: The world is passing away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever!

- It's like you're faced with the choice of either taking one Krispy Kreme donut or taking a whole restaurant with the machine that makes those donuts so you can have one when-ever you want one. Faced with the choice, it would be insane to choose only one donut and no more for the rest of your life. Give me the whole donut store!
- With the one who loves the world; it's 70 years or so, and when that's over, that's it!
- The word translated "passing away" in most versions signifies transition, and it is not an active verb, to that's why I translated it passively "being phased out."
- It is the same verb used in v.8. The *darkness* had better be phasing out in us so that we don't love a *world* which is being phased out!
- In this verse, we see that "doing the will of God" is the opposite to loving and desiring the world and its things
- "But the one who does the will of God remains forever." The word for "abides/ remains," carries more of a sense of "sticking with" than merely "lives," as the NIV translates it. This is, in fact, another justification for the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. This doesn't mean you never stray, but that you will always get back on track.
- Following the world will only lead to disappointment, but doing the will of God is something that will be everlastingly good. Let us therefore not love the world and all its things, but rather, love God and His people!
- Furthermore, you become like the thing you love. Augustine wrote: "Lovest thou earth? thou shalt be earth. Lovest thou God, what shall I say? thou shalt be a god? I dare not say it of myself, let us hear the Scriptures: "I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High." (Ps 82:6) If then ye would be gods and sons of the Most High, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

Summary



- Your sins are forgiven indeed through Jesus!
- You really do know God.
- Through faith and love you conquer evil.

Therefore, do not love the world

1. Because it will displace the Father's love
2. Because it is not of the character of the Father
3. Because it doesn't last like the love of the Father does.

1 John 2:10-17



<p>12 Γράφω ὑμῖν, τεκνία, ὅτι ἀφέωνται ὑμῖν αἱ ἀμαρτίαι διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.</p>	<p>2:12 I am writing to you, dear [little] children, because the sins have been dismissed from you [forgiven] on account of His name [sake].</p>
<p>13 γράφω ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. ἔγραψα [γραφοῦ^{Byz, TR}] ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρὸν.</p>	<p>2:13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you have known the From-The-Beginning One. I am writing to you, young men, because you have conquered [overcome] the Evil One.</p>
<p>14 ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, παιδιά, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα. ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι ἰσχυροὶ ἐστε καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρὸν.</p>	<p>2:14 I write to you, little children [<i>paidea</i> here but <i>teknia</i> in v.12], because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have known the From-The-Beginning One. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God is staying [abides/lives] in you and you have conquered the Evil One.</p>
<p>15 Μὴ ἀγαπάτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. εἴαν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς [Θεοῦ^{A,C,33}] ἐν αὐτῷ.</p>	<p>2:15 Stop loving the world and the things in the world. If someone loves the world, the Father's love is not in him,</p>
<p>16 ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἡ ἐπι-θυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεῖα τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστὶ.</p>	<p>2:16 For everything in the world---the desire [lust/craving] of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the [boastful/pride] showy lifestyle--is not from the Father but is from the world,</p>
<p>17 καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται καὶ ἡ ἐπι-θυμία αὐτοῦ^{A,33}. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα^{L1}.</p>	<p>2:17 And the world and its desires are being phased out [passing away], but the one who does the will of God remains [abide] forever.</p>

^{L1} Augustine quoted a phrase following this verse which is in a few Latin manuscripts: "even as God also abides for ever."