

The Greatness of His Love

1 John 2:24 - 3:3

Last week we saw in verse 15 where John focused in on a concern he had for the Church of the First Century and it remains as a concern in the Church of 2019 –

1 John 2

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. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

As I shared last week, what John is telling us in 1 John 2:15, as he speaks of “the world”, is that we should not be **overly or overtly attached** to the things of this **fallen culture surrounding us**.

*If you have this kind of an attachment for the things of this world; that system of values and goals where God is excluded, then the fullness of the attachment you should have for the things of God and His Kingdom can't be in you. **The two cannot co-exist.***

All of the things offered by the world and our culture -- the things we crave for in the flesh, lust for with the eyes, and try to maintain with our pride... the fact is, **all of these things are going to burn. They are by the very nature of what they are... temporary!**

We understand that these issues, these desires all deal with something that is worldly and temporary.

That's why John reminds us –

¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

I gave you **three thoughts or ideas** about combating those *lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life* issues. You may or may not remember them, so let me give them to you again:

- **a) Actively curbing your appetite for the things of this world. Choosing to walk away;**
- **b) Agreeing with Job to set blinders on your eyes – not just in areas of sexual sin, but in all areas contrary to the will and plan of God in your life;**
- **c) Recognizing that all that we have is from our Father in heaven. The Lord truly does give and take away. We should never carry with us any amount of sinful pride.**

Along with these words from **John**, we also looked at the warning of **James** –

James 1

¹⁴ *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.* ¹⁵ *Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and **sin**, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*

Then the question came up after the study, “What does **James** mean when he says, “...and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth **death**?” What kind of **death**?”

Does that mean the loss of physical life? The loss of salvation? What **death** is he referring to?

If we look at it through the context of **all the scriptures**, we have to say that he is speaking of a death that hits us in the realm of our spiritual walk – not necessarily a loss of physical life (although some sins can very well lead to that), but neither is it a loss of our salvation – otherwise – “every time we sin, do we lose our salvation?”

That just can't be.

All we need to do is reference back to what **John** declared back at the end of chapter 1 and the beginning of chapter 2 –

1 John 1

⁸ *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us... ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

1 John 2

¹ *My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*

It can only mean a “**type**” of **death**, a loss of fellowship, an emptiness, a darkness, a loss of being spiritually alive in Him; it's what happens when we are walking in sin, or “*walking in the flesh*” as the Apostle Paul tells us.

But, that begs the question: *Can we walk in the flesh if we are born again in the Spirit of God?*

Absolutely.

That is what walking in sin actually is. When we choose *the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eyes or the pride of life*, that means we are choosing against the leading and direction of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is a dangerous journey to be on.

It can lead to **all kinds of issues and destruction in our lives**. Not only in our fellowship with the Lord, but also in our fellowship with people – our spouses, our brothers and sisters in Christ. It brings damage to our spirit and our emotions, perhaps even to our flesh.

Walking in the flesh, brings to us **the stench of the flesh, rather than the sweetness of Christ**. We will definitely look and smell **spiritually dead**.

In verse 17 John said *the world is passing away*. He picks back up on that in verse 18 –

¹⁸ Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

These were *false converts, false disciples, and false teachers*.

Individuals rising up in local Churches who were naturally gifted, but not spiritually directed or empowered. These were ones who were **never Born Again**. They had that **look and feel of religion**, but there was **never a true experience with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**.

There was never a conversion in their lives.

Never a heartfelt confession of sin and a cry for forgiveness.

Never bringing into their lives the very Spirit of Jesus.

But John had a **much greater hope and encouragement for those he was writing to, and I believe we can receive that today**.

Look beginning at verse 20 –

²⁰ But you, you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. ²¹ I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

²² Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

John understood that his intended audience had *heard the fullness of the Gospel message*. And, by and large, these weren't new converts, they were familiar with the fullness of the Gospel message. He knew **they understood what he was saying** and that they **knew it was true**.

So then he **brings another test**. This time he focuses on the test of those who were **liars**; and the primary test is that of denying Jesus as the Messiah of Israel. Once an individual:

- Denies that Jesus is the Messiah,
- Denies the very hope of Israel,
- Denies the Savior of the world;

and as John wrote in his Gospel record,

- Denies that He was with God in the beginning or
- That He is God, and came in human flesh;

...for those who deny these things, they are truly denying God – they are denying:

- *The person of God,*
- *The plan of God and*
- *The purposes of God,*

*...throughout all of His creation, and in particular their own life. **And in that condition, there can be no salvation.***

If you deny the fullness of who Jesus Christ is according to the Word of God, then you are denying the reality and the truth of the Father and the hope of a Savior.

You cannot have one without the other.

²³ *Whoever denies the Son **does not have** the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

And John wants the Church to **hold on to that truth with all they have**, because the enemy is trying to steal it.

²⁴ *Therefore let **that abide in you which you heard from the beginning**. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.*

²⁵ *And this is the promise that He has promised us--**eternal life**.*

You want to have eternal life? You must come and fully surrender to the Son. You want to have a relationship with the Father, the Word of God tells us, *“there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).”*

Jesus Himself declared –

John 14:6-7, 11

⁶ "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷ If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him... ¹¹ Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me,

John understood that the Church, by and large **knew that truth**. They had relationship with God as their Father, because Jesus was their Savior. Here he's encouraging them that as long as they lived and walked in that truth, they would continue on in Fellowship with the Son and the Father.

You can't read these words in 1 John 2 without remembering the words of Jesus' teaching in John 15

John 15

¹ "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser... ⁴ "**Abide** in Me, and I in you. As **the branch cannot bear fruit of itself**, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, **bears much fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing.

⁶ "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned."

The word John used in both 1 John 2:24 and in John 15:4, translated as "abide" in the NKJV is the Greek word *menō*. It has the meaning of **to live, to remain, to be at home**.

The truth they had heard and the truth they knew, needed to *abide in them...*, *remain in them...*, and *be lived out in them!*

It is through our "abiding in Him" that we hear His voice..., we have His covering..., and we bear fruit for His Kingdom's purposes!

The pastor's heart of the Apostle John **cared for the welfare of the sheep** in the midst of all these false teachers and anti-Christ.

²⁶ *These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. ²⁷ But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.*

John wanted the Believers to walk in the great assurance of not only: 1) **who Jesus Christ was, is, and remains**, but also 2) **in faith in His promises towards us** – Particularly those promises which speak of:

1) Christ's faithfulness to those who are His own:

a. (2 Tim. 2:13) *Even if we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*

2) The fact that He would never leave or forsake:

a. (Heb. 13:5-6) *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you. So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"*

3) The fact that we are in Him and He is in the Father and no one can pluck us out of the Father's hand:

a. (John 10:28-30) *"And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."*

And on and on throughout the Word of God, we could look and see **the faithfulness and longsuffering of the Father.**

Yet, please understand, **we are never to take your sin lightly**, John will talk more about that as we get into chapter 3, but for now, he is wanting to give assurance to those who had been deceived by the false teachers. He wants the Church to know the faithfulness of God over and above our sin.

The Church had heard these things. They had trusted in these truths. Yet these false teachers, these anti-Christ's were coming in: trying to undermine the very truth they had received; declaring the Truth to be a lie, and trying to bring in another *gospel* – **which was no Gospel at all.**

Remember Church, the assurance you and I have as Believers isn't in our ability to hold onto Christ, it is based **solely upon the promise of the Father.**

This is the same assurance given by the Psalmist who shared in Psalm 103 (turn there and highlight it for yourself –

Psalms 103:10-14

¹⁰ He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. ¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. ¹³ As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. ¹⁴ For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

Man, what a praise that is!!

Have you had a hard week?

Has the enemy of your soul pounced upon you and tried to wound your spirit?

Does your guilt overwhelm you?

Remember the Father's love in the midst of your failures and continue to march forward... march forward to victory... His victory in you!

²⁸ *And now, little children, abide in Him (live your life in Him, to remain in Him, to be at home in Him), that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.* ²⁹ *If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.*

That whole idea of *abide* is so powerful. John uses the Greek word *menō* 28 times in the book of 1 John, with 11 different times in verses 6-28 alone, where sometimes it's also translated as *remaining* or *continuing*. We even see the concept within the passages in the first chapter dealing with the *Koinonia*, the fellowship of Believers with God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son, as well as with brothers and sisters in the faith.

There is a connectedness that prevails throughout John's teaching that we cannot miss. It speaks of the **connectedness, a unifying, a bond that is the Church.**

The bond of each individual members of the Church in vertical *Koinonia* or fellowship with and in Christ, through abiding in Him – *menō (living our life in Him, remaining in Him, and finding ourselves at home in Him)*. But then there is that horizontal *Koinonia* we have with each other, demonstrating the reality of our vertical relationship. Not to gain or earn, that relationship, but because we already have it -- *everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.*

It is because these things are true and verifiable in our lives that we can now, *have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.* What a great assurance is ours, when we understand the outcome of these spiritual tests of our life and walk in Christ. That's when we are **able to have full assurance or confidence at His coming...**, that's when we can **stand before Him and not be ashamed** – knowing that **our perfection is in Christ**, and so we continue to **live our lives with the focused desire of pleasing Him** in every aspect of our lives.

Some religions have rules and requirements that are set by man in order that you can, in their words "gain or earn God's good favor".

As a matter of fact, the very concept of *religion* can be defined as "*the efforts of man to reach God*".

But, with religion there is very seldom, if ever the opportunity to have the **comforting assurance that God is pleased** with you and will allow you into His presence and Kingdom for all eternity. And so, the adherents to religion work **in stress at best**, but also **many times out of fear** that they will **never**

measure up... that they will never know the fullness of God's love, because they know they can never be good enough.

Yet, we look at this next verse, the beginning of chapter 3. It seems to be a closing word of praise based on what John has been sharing with us over the last several verses. It is a praise of assurance

1 John 3

¹ Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Because of the greatness of His love towards us, we

- **a) Actively curb our appetite for the things of this world. Choosing to walk away from the world and according to His desires and plans for our lives;**
- **b) Agree with Job to set blinders on our eyes – blinders to all things and areas which are contrary to the will and plan of God in our life;**
- **c) Continually recognize and affirm that all that we have AND all that we are is from our Father in heaven. Trusting Him fully even as we recognize that the Lord truly does give and take away. There is no room for pride in the Believer's life – it is all of Him, by Him, and for Him.**

I want to close tonight with us revisiting Psalm 103. What an awesome Psalm, praising the goodness and mercy of God, even in the midst of our frailness and failures.

¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

² Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:

³ Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases,

⁴ Who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

⁵ Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

This isn't just poetry, this is the reality of our God

⁶ The LORD executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. ⁷ He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.

⁸ *The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. ⁹ He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. ¹⁰ He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities.*

¹¹ *For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; ¹² As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*

¹³ *As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. ¹⁴ For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.*

¹⁵ *As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. ¹⁶ For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.*

¹⁷ *But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, ¹⁸ to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them.*

¹⁹ *The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all. ²⁰ Bless the LORD, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word.*

²¹ *Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure. ²² Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!*