

Do Not Love the World

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[0:01] Well, what a privilege it is to be together, hey? I don't lose sight that this truly is a privilege to be able to join together, to have people we love in the same room, getting to know each other, growing in our relationship with God, and growing in our relationship with each other.

We can't do this everywhere around the world. And so I don't want it to be lost on us that this truly is a privilege to be together. However squished we are, it truly is a privilege.

And so today, well, let me just give a bit of a recap. If you're joining us for the first time today, over the last month, we've been in the book of 1 John. And so we've been walking through 1 John, and we'll continue to do that in the weeks ahead.

But as we look at 1 John, he's really giving us an idea of what relationship is. He's talking about our relationship with God, with the Heavenly Father. And then he's also talking about what relationship is for us with each other and with the world.

And so the series started out with really looking at the foundation of what a relationship with God is. And so first, John dives into that. And as he talks about what a relationship with God is, he then goes on, as we know, if we go back, way back to Genesis, our relationship with God was broken with Adam and Eve.

[1:25] And so John goes into talking about how do we fix that relationship with God? And it really comes down to just confessing our sins. Confess our sins. He's faithful and just.

He forgives us our sins. And then walking in the light. And really, that is only made possible with and through Jesus. Jesus is the one who makes the relationship with God possible for us.

And so he dives into that. And then as he sort of finishes talking about this and our relationship with God and how we can be in a relationship with him, he goes into talking about a new command that was given.

And the new command that was given was love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And then love your neighbor as yourself. And we dove into that and really how difficult it is to love your neighbor as yourself.

Because a lot of us, if you're anything like me, you really love yourself. You really love yourself. And I think kids help to highlight that. Like, I really love my time and doing what I like to do.

[2:29] And so learning to love your neighbor, not only your neighbor, but loving your enemy as yourself, really is a stretch if we challenge ourselves with that. And so that's what we've walked through over the last few weeks.

And so today we're diving into 1 John 2, verse 15 to 17. And I sort of joked with James because I was like, wow, of course you would give me this verse. You would disappear on this week and you'd give me this verse in probably, well, for me, if I'm honest, the most materialistic city I've ever lived in in the world.

And I'm like, of course you'd leave and give me this. But as I read it over and over and over again, it's such a common verse. As I read it so many times this week, again, convicted and convicted and convicted of how am I living my life and serving Jesus?

And so this is the verse that we're looking at today. And so really the purpose in 1 John is talking about let's grow our relationship with God and let's grow our relationship with others.

Now, every week we start our service with looking through the mission statements and we talk about the me, the we, and the they. Sort of how is my relationship with God?

[3:42] Because my relationship with God will impact my relationship with others. But how are we also growing in our relationship with God in the midst of community and with each other?

Believing that as we grow together in our relationships with God, it leads to overflow and impact, impacting the city and those around us and God calling us to that.

And so with that heart, if we're looking at the we today, we're going to do things a little bit differently. The gathering, if you haven't noticed, we do things a little bit differently as it is.

And so we like to push people out of their comfort zone sometimes. And so as talking and preparing and working through this with James, we thought what a great opportunity to encourage the we, to grow in our relationships with God with each other.

Because if we're completely honest, we don't want to make the gathering about James' preaching. He's a good speaker, but that is not why we come to Sunday mornings. We don't come to hear James speak.

[4:48] We come to hear from God and then to grow with each other. And so today we're going to grow with each other. And so let me introduce or sort of brief you on what it's going to look like this morning.

We're all sitting together. So you're going to find a group of two or three people that are right around you. And we're going to read this verse. And I have questions we're going to work through in our small groups together.

If you've ever heard of a thing called Discovery Bible Study, it's essentially this. It's saying, hey, as a group, yeah, maybe we haven't studied this verse for weeks or months, but as a group, we believe that the Bible is alive, that it speaks to us.

And so if the Bible is alive, it doesn't only speak to me or to James or the person speaking on Sunday morning. It speaks to each and every one of us. And so that's what we're going to do. We're going to look at it. We're going to read it. And then we're going to share with each other what we think it's speaking to us. Don't worry. We're not going to call everyone up to share with everyone. So you'll talk in your groups and say what God is speaking to you.

[5:52] But we're going to practice. Practice that in the hopes of using this, you can say, wow, you know what? That actually wasn't that difficult. And this is something I could actually use with my friends.

I could use it in my midweek. I could use it with my friends who are asking about faith. And so equipping you to then go out to the day. And so that's the hope and goal of what we're going to do today.

But let's stand for the reading of the word together, okay? 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. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires. But whoever does the will of God abides forever. This is the word of the Lord.

[7:01] So, Father, we pray as we look at your word today. We know that you are alive and you are active. I pray that you would speak to us. Speak to us through each other.

Encourage us through each other. Open our eyes to different ways of seeing things. And we pray that in the midst of conversation, that our relationship with you would be grown.

Our understanding of you would be deepened. And that we would fall further in love with you. In your name we pray. Amen. Feel free to take a seat.

Okay, so this is what we'll do. We're going to start with one question. We'll break it down one question at a time. We'll put one question up there. And then we'll give you about five minutes. It's not a long time.

Five minutes. Talk it through. What does God say? So for the first question, what does this passage teach us about God? So as you read it, what is it teaching you about God? Share that with one another.

[8:05] And then after the five minutes I'll come up, I'll share a few thoughts in terms of what I think it's teaching us about God. And then we'll move to the next question. We just have three questions, okay?

But that's what it's going to look like today. Any questions? What does the passage teach us about God? What does the passage teach us about God? Besides this question, anything else?

Perfect. So get to know someone new. If you don't know the person beside you, introduce yourselves. And then open your Bible or look up here. And what does this teach you about God? Go for it. Okay. As we round out question one.

Okay. Let's come back for just a couple minutes as we round out question one. In your conversations, as you talked with each other, anyone who is like, whoa, that's a good point, or anything that you're like, wow, I never thought of that before, as you think about what this teaches you about God.

[9:15] Anyone want to share anything? Anything? No pressure, but I'm just curious. No? Kelly, I saw you whispering something.

So you were whispering something. I take a brave person. You are the brave person, then. Alan shares a really good point about how God's love is above this world, and his ways are above this world.

So, yeah, that's a really good point. I think it's very soft. Yeah. God's love is above this world, and his ways are above the ways of the world.

That's good. Anyone else? Yeah. I was talking with Matthew and Ryan here, and Ryan stole my point.

He said it first. I hate it when that happens, eh? It's like the last verse. The world is passing away, but whoever does the world, God is there forever. And whoever is making the point now. The things of this world don't last, but God does.

[10:25] That's what we learned about. Yeah. This world will eventually be gone, but God is there forever. That's good. So, as I was reading it and sort of reflecting on it, again, I think this is my perspective, but I'm sure there were a lot of different perspectives around this room.

But as I was looking at it, it was the reflection of what God's love is, because it talks a lot about what the world is and what loving the world does. And so, I think of the opposite of what does God's love mean for us.

And it really is truly different than anything we can find here, you know? It's a spiritual and lasting kind of love. Like you guys were saying, God is around forever. His love is forever.

God's love is about humility. It's about putting others first, which goes against this world so much. His love is about servanthood, you know? The first will be last, and the last will be first.

It can be so difficult to put others before ourselves, especially in, if we want to call it the rat race of life. We're always pushing it further and further ahead. And so, putting others before ourselves is so against human nature, but that's the kind of love that God has for us.

[11:41] I read a quote that I liked. It says, God's love is wide enough to include every human being, long enough to last through all eternity, deep enough to reach the most guilty sinner, and high enough to take us to heaven.

And so, that's the kind of love we think of. It is not the kind of love that the world has. It is a love that is so much greater, so much bigger, so much wider than we could ever imagine. And that's what we're being invited into as believers and followers of Christ.

And so, that's what I took from it, is God's love and what it means for us. We're going to move into the second question. This one might be a little bit easier to answer because I think there's some pretty clear points in there for us to look at, but what does this passage teach us about humanity? So, really, what does this passage teach us about ourselves? So, as you read it, how does that hit home for you? Okay, so take another four to five minutes, talk through this, and then we'll come back and brief on it.

Okay, let's hear a few thoughts here. As we look at this verse, what does it teach us about humanity?

[13:06] Or what does it teach us about our world? Any thoughts? I think it's bad. Bad. Expand. Tell me more. What do you mean? Humanity seeks the desire of the world, but then we're supposed to go in the opposite way.

So, we're supposed to live opposite of how the world is living. Yes. Yeah. Rebecca? Rebecca? That humanity, when they're not in relationship with God, that they're passing away with their desires.

So, when humans pass away, not in relationship with God, they still have their desires there because they're not passing away with Him. You're with Him. Is that peace?

Mm-hmm. Your desires have been met. Good. Anyone else? I think there's a few key points that we could hit on here.

Like you guys have said, John is really telling us or warning us of what it looks like when we live our lives in opposition of the way God has called us to live. So, he uses a few concrete examples.

[14:23] You know, he says, cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has done. And so, these things can so easily become the focus of our lives.

Now, as we talk about these things, it's not that they are inherently bad or evil in themselves. If we talk about the cravings of sinful man, we all need food, we all need drink, we all need this stuff. It's not bad, but it's when it becomes the only focus. It becomes our God or our idol, and we're doing everything for that. Lust of the eyes. You know, we like to say, whether, I don't know if this is the most common right now, but the Instagrammable life or this picture of everything is so great and what we are attaining for.

We want the perfect life that everyone is jealous of us or we are jealous of them because everything, they have it all together. And that becomes our sole focus. That is our driving motive of why we do everything.

Or arrogance, boasting of what we have done. Whether it's building our CVs or, oh, I have this, I have this, I have this, it's so easy to boast about who we are and what we have done personally that it becomes all about ourselves.

[15:35] And this is what John is warning against. Again, he's not saying these things are bad. Nowhere in here does it say it's bad. It's when these things are the focus of our love, of our desire, and it's not God being the focus of our love and our desire.

In Matthew it says, no one can serve two masters for either he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money or God and food or whatever it is.

And so there is a desire within each and every one of us. That's how God has created us. And our world has just said, oh, you can fill it with this and this and this and this and this. But all of us realize in the end that doesn't satisfy us.

It leaves us looking for more. And that's where only God and the love of God can fill that desire. I was trying to think of an analogy to try and, I don't know, sometimes it can be difficult to understand. So I was trying to think of something that could maybe help. Maybe this will help you. I like to eat French fries. In Canada, there's a number of restaurants now in Canada that offer like bottomless French fries.

[16:52] And so when you go, you know that when you order your meal, you obviously will not leave hungry, but you can get as many French fries as you want.

Like they just keep coming and coming and coming if you want them. Going to a restaurant like that, I'm like, okay, I am taken care of. I'm not worried.

Going to a restaurant now where you only have a limited portion of French fries, you're like, oh, like you're slightly worried because is it going to be enough? Is it going to satisfy me?

Now I am comparing God's love to French fries. I don't know if that's theologically sound or not. But when we think of the love of God, when we walk into his love, his love is like those unending French fries.

You know, walking in and sitting down and being in relationship with him, he will take care of you. The desires of your heart will be filled over and over, over too much.

[17:53] That the prayer is, it's so full that it then goes out to others. That is the God that we serve. That it just keeps coming and coming and coming, even when we're full.

As opposed to the world, which is, ah, this will satisfy me for a little bit. Maybe it will. Probably not. And then, oh, that wasn't good.

That wasn't great. And then we look for more and more and more. And so the God, or the love of God is, don't quote me on this, but the love of God is like the unending basket of French fries.

It just keeps coming and coming and coming. And it's so good. So good. And so John is telling us what, how we don't want to live our lives.

Okay. He's warning us against, uh, the world. And again, it's not inherently evil having stuff or doing well or, or exceed or doing really well in our jobs.

[18:55] None of this is inherently evil. It's when it becomes the God of our life and the focus of our life. The last question. We want to reflect on his application.

And so I want you to talk with your group. If we believe this passage is from God, how must we change? I think this is where it hits a little bit more home and maybe it's like, Oh, it's easy to talk about these things, but what does this actually mean for me in my everyday life?

And so talk with your group, ask each other, what does this mean for you in your life? Based on what we've learned today. So take about five minutes. Okay. Okay.

Let's finish up here with this last question. So as you reflect on this, as you ask yourself, if we believe this passage is from God, how must we change anything that came up for you?

I think this is probably different for individuals, different personally, anything anyone wants to share? No pressure. Oh, Paul.

[20:21] Yeah. I think personally, just like being self-aware, like being self-aware of actually where you choose the world. Yeah. Asking ourselves, being self-aware of where we do focus on the world and then accountability.

That's good. As I was preparing for this, I thought, you know, if I was to ask a good friend or a close friend, Hey, do you, would you say I love God or I love the world? And they were to answer honestly.

If it was honestly, they would either say, if it was truly honest, either you try to love both or you love the world, because I don't think I'll ever fully only truly love God.

And then if I would say, okay, so in what areas of my life does that reflect? And so if we have those friends that we can have that accountability and ask those questions with, I think it actually helps to shine a light on where we are and how we can grow in that.

Thanks, Paul. But I think a couple of pieces highlighted in here that I would ask you and leave questions. How do we spend our time? How are we spending our time? What are our eyes focused on?

[21:47] Our eyes focused on the things of this world, or are they focused on what is to come, the future, where we are, where we are living our lives towards? What are we spending our money on?

Charles Spurgeon, when talking about this verse and the will of God and how we live, he said, it's not the, not the one who does some great things to be seen by men, not the one who builds a row of poor houses or leaves a great mass of money to charity when he dies because he could not possibly carry it away with him.

It's not the one who sounds a trumpet before him to let everybody know what a good man he is. It's not the one who needs to out distance everybody else, but it's the one who does the will of God remains forever.

Obedience to the will of God is the pathway to perpetual honor and everlasting joy. So in the midst of where we are with whatever resources or lack of resources or jobs or lack of jobs, wherever God has us in this moment in our life, how are we being obedient to the will and the call of God on our lives and using what he has given us to show that to others, not making that our focus and our goal, but making God our focus and God our goal.

And so that's what I leave you with today. That's what I challenged you with today. I hope you had some good discussion with your friends. I hope you met someone new. I hope you learned a new perspective maybe, but it's something like this that, that is actually so easy to do with unbelieving friends, believing friends to just open the word and say, what can God teach us about himself through this?

[23:40] And how can we apply it to our lives? And so I hope you stretched. I hope you grew and I hope you learned something new about God today, but I think we'll, we'll finish with one song.

We have the worship team to come up.