

SERMON THOUGHTS ABRIDGED

I John 2:15-19a**MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY (FOR CHIEF OF THE HEART): ONE**

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love 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 passes[-eth] away, and the lust thereof; but he that does[-eth] the will of God abides[-eth] forever. Little children, it is the last time. [KJV]

Have you ever noticed one of those Maximum Occupancy signs? Maybe in a restaurant—"By order of the fire department, maximum occupancy 132." The one that always surprises me is the one in an elevator. Maximum occupancy 28—and it looks like there's space for 12. Today we're talking about occupancy of the human heart. How much room is there for love in the human heart? There must be quite a bit. "Love one another as I have loved you. Love your neighbor as yourself. Love your enemies."—all words from Jesus. But this text narrows it down. How much room is there for one who is the "chief" in the human heart? How many "loves" can you have in that room? Occupancy--ONE. Think of other passages from the Bible: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. --- Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also. --- You cannot serve both God and mammon/money." Only room for God in the number one spot, not the world.

That's what our text is talking about, the world. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* To love the world is to put the world on top, to give it first place in the heart. These verses are not saying that it's wrong to care for the things of this earth given by God for you to use, that you should not take care of your house, or car, or possessions; or that you should be careless about the fields and cattle and flocks—as if just use them and abuse them. The text is talking about the **sinful** attachment to the sinful ways of this world. As John says, *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.* Indeed, God made the world and expects us to be responsible with it, but this verse is talking about the sinful world, corrupted by Satan. The Bible refers to Satan as "the prince of this world." He's the prince that parades around as if he owns the joint. He wants you to follow him. He uses the sinful world to entice you, to draw you away from your God and Father, from your God and Savior, and from your God and Heart-Coach the Holy Spirit.

The "lust" of the flesh, and the "lust" of the eyes—the things for which one yearns and has a desire and a passion for—are like a river that keeps pushing ahead, rushing along, raging forward, with one goal in mind to get downstream. There are many things in this world which Satan leads us to yearn, to lust, to push ahead for. Usually we think of "lust" in terms of inappropriate sexual desire, but the word applies to anything for which one has forceful, overriding desire, that pushes anything in its way out of the path—like that rushing, raging river. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes—"I want, I crave, I need, I will not be satisfied until I get"—be it physical things, or position, or power. And the "pride" of life. The boasting, the bragging, the self-satisfaction about who or what one is and has accomplished. Like a stranger who comes to town or to your house and enthusiastically fills you full of everything he is—using proud bragging and proud lies to win your heart. The pride of life.

Examples abound for each of us. To what is your heart apt to be attached? What or whom does Satan try to get into that #1 position in your life, so that you're not trusting your Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier? Money, a big savings account, the (fragile) security of insurance policies, retirement policies and arrangements so that you can eat, drink, and be merry—no worries or concerns. Entertainment, vacations, fun—forget about working for daily bread. Alcohol, drugs, sex. Being #1, the highest achiever, with all the bragging rights and self-satisfaction that goes along with it, being the one who is RIGHT and letting everyone else know that that is so. Luxury, luxury cars, luxury homes, luxury looks—after all, you deserve it, as the advertisers say. A wardrobe of finest and most stylish clothes. No "shack" to live in or "rust bucket" to drive for me—I want more—whether what you already have is a rust bucket or not! Your hutch full of precious things, your family heirlooms and antiques, your photos and pictures. Your shed full of valuable machinery, your shop full of tools, your garage full of stuff. Your pride and honor—no one dare besmirch the family name. Your way of life—if you have to give it up, you may as well die. Your family and children—but whoever loves father or mother, or son or daughter, more than Me is not worthy of Me, Jesus says. All these things are gifts from God, but when they become #1 in your heart, then there's a problem.

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There are many expressions in life that mirror the wrong world view. “Might makes right”—if you’ve got the clout to do it, who says it’s wrong. “The end justifies the means”—if you accomplish what seems to be a good thing, whether God says so or not, then it doesn’t matter, what you do, or how you get there. “My way or the highway”—life revolves around what suits me. “He who has the most toys wins”—it’s all about stuff. And the striking words from a song summarizing the mystery of life according to an old cowboy, “Faster horses, younger women, older whiskey, more money.” *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.*

This one-way sinful world, in rebellion against God, is on the one-way to destruction! *And the world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides forever.* All that the world has to offer, all the things you are so tempted to yearn for and lust for, are fleeting. They pass by. They don’t endure. You better get used to the idea. They lead to destruction.

How are you doing in these matters? In Chapter 1, John writes: “If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us, . . . and we make Him a liar.” Do you dare to say, “This text is not talking to me, is not talking about me?” Don’t be a liar, and don’t call God a liar. As Paul writes, *I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing . . . The good that I would, that I do not. And the evil that I would not, that I do. . . O wretched man that I am, who shall free me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 7:18-25).* You are tied to this world more than you think, more than you want to admit. You, racing after this world, will face only doom. The world will pass away and you will suffer the pangs of God’s wrath in hell. Frightening!

BUT, as John also says, *If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.. And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world (I John 2:1-2).* We, who face a future of being cast away because of our misplaced desires and loyalties, have a friend. We have an advocate—a spokesman, one who pleads our case for us—before Almighty God in heaven. He doesn’t plead our merits, as if they outweigh our bad. There’s nothing there. He gives up His own ease for us. He Himself is the “propitiation” for our sins. He is the peace-offering, the sacrifice-of-atonement, the one who at His own expense reconciles us to the Father, He is Jesus Christ the Righteous, the Savior for the whole world. Your Savior. He loves you.

And so our text says, *The world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides forever.* What does it mean to do the will of God? To try to live better? to discipline yourself more? Yes, but why? To convince Him you’re good? It won’t work. *All our righteousnesses are as filthy rages (Isaiah 64:6).* But Jesus Himself tells us what it means to “do the will of God,” *This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes on Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:40)* It’s all about trusting Christ, your crucified and risen Savior. Indeed, He who “does the will of the Father” abides forever! “Abides,” stays, remains, endures. “Forever,” for the ages to come. What better future could there be?

Little children, it is the last time. This world is coming to a close. We live in the last days. Whether the world stands one more day or another thousand years, the Bible is very clear, this is the last section of time for the world. Don’t be caught by surprise. In your helplessness and unworthiness, each day cling to Jesus for your help and forgiveness. Cling to Him, not to the world. Maximum Occupancy (for Chief of the Heart)—ONE.

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So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach