

Our Sinful Society

1 Jn 2:15-17

INTRODUCTION

- A. We live in an increasingly wicked society.
 - 1. Teenage girls can have an abortion & never tell their parents.
 - 2. TV glamorizes extra marital sex so much that "virgin" has become a dirty word; TV glamorizes homosexuality, and we are told to accept that "alternate" lifestyle.
 - 3. Game shows tell us that being a millionaire will bring us happiness & thus they promote greed.
- B. How should we Christians deal with such a society?
 - 1. We could build a monastery somewhere so that we wouldn't need to have any contact with this society.
 - 2. We could just go along with this society & do what it does.
 - 3. Yet, Scripture calls us to do something in the middle--we can neither escape from this society nor can we give into it.
- C. Let's examine what the Bible says about our society.

THE WARNING AGAINST THESE WORLDLY SYSTEMS, v 15

- A. We cannot love the world or the things in the world.
 - 1. What is meant by "world"?
 - a. It cannot mean this physical universe in which we live.
 - 1) God created this physical world.
 - a) Gn 1:1.
 - b) Acts 17:24.
 - b. It cannot mean the inhabitants of the earth, for God cares deeply for this world's inhabitants (Jn 3:16).
 - c. "World" basically refers to society here; John is telling us not to love our society.
 - 2. John tells us not to love the world.
 - a. "Love" here means to value or to place our affections on; we cannot value this evil society.
 - b. Some might have said, "Love not the world too much," but John says, "Love it not at all."
- B. The one who loves the world does not have the love of the Father in him.
 - 1. God does not condone this society, and he can, therefore, have no association with it.
 - a. Js 4:4.
 - b. Someone has rightly said, "You cannot run with the world while you walk with God." We cannot live as this world lives & have fellowship with God.
 - 2. Just as one cannot love money & have a relationship with the God (Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13), one cannot love the world & serve God.
- C. John is here calling on us to be different than the rest of the world.
 - 1. The rest of Scripture calls on us Christians to be different.
 - a. Rom 12:2.
 - b. Gal 5:14.
 - 2. Illustration about the governor's daughters' wanting bobbed hair, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #11427. Are we following the styles, or are we setting the styles?

THE WICKEDNESS COMING FROM THESE WORLDLY SYSTEMS, v 16

- A. There is the lust of the flesh.
 - 1. Many people think of "lust" as a sexual word meaning sexual desire.
 - a. yet, the word has a much broader meaning than that.
 - b. The word simply means "desire, longing, craving."
 - 1) It can mean a positive desire--Paul had a desire to depart & be with Christ (Phil 1:23).
 - 2) However, it is more often used in a negative sense to mean a desire for something that one

cannot have. Even when it carries a pejorative meaning, it doesn't always carry a sexual connotation.

- 3) Someone has rightly said, "Lust is the craving for salt of a man who is dying of thirst."
 2. John does not mean here that our physical bodies are evil or that our human desires arising from our bodies are evil.
 - a. "Flesh" here refers to our earthly nature that often wars against the spiritual nature.
 - b. Paul gives a good description of what these lusts of the flesh are (Gal 5:19-21).
 3. The desires of the flesh are not wrong in and of themselves; there are two times when these desires are wrong:
 - a. When the flesh desires something directly forbidden by God (e.g., sex in marriage isn't wrong, but sex outside of marriage is).
 - b. When the flesh desires & desires and consumes & consumes, then it becomes indulgence and license.
 4. John wrote this epistle from Ephesus, and the pagan society in Ephesus involved an idolatrous religion with temple rites that involved all sorts of fleshly desires; John is warning his readers against such activities.
 5. We must reject the desires of our flesh.
 - a. The grace of God has taught us that we should deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" (Tit 2:12).
 - b. Are we denying ungodliness & worldly lusts?
- B. There is the lust of the eyes.
1. The lusts of the eyes involves those sins that are the result of yielding to temptations that come from sight.
 - a. There is the lust of the eyes for sex.
 - 1) Mt 5:28.
 - 2) Job 31:1.
 - b. There is the lust of the eyes for the things of others.
 - 1) Ex 20:17.
 - 2) Lk 12:15.
 - c. There is the lust of the eyes for the pleasures & possessions of the world: Lk 12:15.
 2. Are we giving in to the lusts of our eyes?
- C. There is the pride of life.
1. "Pride of life" probably does not mean what we often think it means; this phrase likely means "arrogance over material gain."
 - a. "Pride" occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only at Js 4:16, where the plural is translated "boastings."
 - b. "Life" could also mean "life in general," but it probably is best translated "means of life," i.e., common "goods" or "possessions."
 - 1) This is its meaning in 1 Jn 3:17--"Whoever has this world's goods."
 - 2) This is its meaning in many other passages of Scripture, e.g., Lk 8:43--the woman with the flow of blood had spent all her livelihood on physicians.
 2. What John is telling us is that we should not boast in our possessions.
 - a. People do this all the time.
 - 1) They wear name brand clothes so that everyone around them will notice how nice their clothing is.
 - 2) They buy a new car & leave the sticker on for a couple months so that everyone can see how much they paid for the car.
 - b. We are to place no confidence in money.
 - 1) Lk 12:15.
 - 2) Mt 6:19-20.
 3. Abraham Lincoln once said, "Financial success is purely metallic. The man who gains it has four metallic attributes: gold in his palm, silver on his tongue, brass in his face, and iron in his heart!"
 - a. Do you have iron in your heart?
 - b. Are you boasting about your possessions?

THE WORTHLESSNESS OF THESE WORLDLY SYSTEMS, v 17

- A. The world and its lusts are passing away.

1. This literal world will pass away--2 Pt 3:10.
 2. But, John isn't talking about the literal universe passing away; he's talking about this sinful society passing away.
 - a. Rev 17:14.
 - b. Jesus Christ shall be victorious and put an end to this wicked society--"Jesus shall be satisfied."
 3. Not only is the world passing away, the world's lusts are also passing away.
 - a. Moses decided not to "enjoy the passing pleasures of sin" (Heb 11:25).
 - b. The pleasures of sin are temporary--all the lusts & sin in this world will end when Jesus returns.
 4. Illustration about an Eastern monarch giving his counselors an assignment to discover a truth that was the same in all times and situations, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, p 434.
- B. By contrast, the one who does God's will abides forever.
1. Above all us in life, we need to do God's will.
 - a. Mt 26:42. Even though God's will was uncomfortable for Jesus, he pledged himself to do God's will.
 - b. We are to do the will of God "from the heart" (Eph 6:6).
 2. If we do God's will, we will have eternal life.
 - a. Rom 6:22.
 - b. 1 Jn 2:25.
 3. Are you doing God's will? Do you have the promise of eternal life?

CONCLUSION

- A. This evil society is not going away until Jesus returns & destroys it.
- B. What we must do is to resist this society and live for God.
 1. 2 Cor 6:17.
 2. Have you come out from the world? Are you resisting this evil society?