Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Love God Hates
Scripture: 1 John 2:15-17
Code: 62-15

First John for tonight is our study as we turn to the truth of God's Word, 1 John chapter 2 verses 15 through 17. And we've titled this particular study, "The love God hates," the love God hates.

Let me just read these three verses so that you have them in mind and then we'll address this wonderful and helpful portion of Scripture. First John 2:15, "Do not love the world, nor 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 lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts. But the one who does the will of God abides forever."

Here is the love God hates, the love of the world. Now the Bible is clear that God is a God of perfect love. If you look over to 1 John chapter 4, a number of times in this chapter the love of God is noted. Verse 7, "Let us love one another for love is from God." Verse 8, "The one who doesn't love, doesn't know God for God is love." Verse 11, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Down in verse 16, "We come to know and believe the love which God has for us, God is love and the one who abides in love, abides in God and God's abides in him." So there are several verses, four in that chapter alone, that tell us that God is a God of love. And the love of God, as you well know, is a theme throughout all of Scripture, particularly emphasized, of course, in the New Testament. God's love is manifest in common grace and it's manifest in redemptive grace. God is a God of perfect love.

But because God loves perfectly, He also hates perfectly. The two are actually inseparable, to love perfectly is to hate perfectly. That is to say if you love something, you hate whatever threatens that something. If you love someone, you hate whoever threatens that someone. And the greater your love, the greater your hatred. The more your affection for what is right, the more your disaffection for what is wrong. That's why Psalm 97:10 says, "Hate evil, you who love the Lord." And Psalm 119:104 says, "From your precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way." Pardon me if I hate error because I deserve to be pardoned, it's my love for the truth that causes me to hate that error. Pardon me if I hate sin, it's my love for righteousness that makes me hate sin.

It was God's love manifest in Jesus Christ for what was right that made Jesus make a whip and cleanse the temple, because He hated what He saw and what He found in that place that had been

turned into a den of thieves. The psalmist said, "I love Your Law, but I hate those that are double-minded. I love Your Law, but I hate those people who vacillate, sometimes showing affection for Your Law and sometimes not." Psalm 119 again, verse 128 says, "I esteem all Your precepts so I hate every false way." Psalm 119:163, toward the end of the chapter, "I hate and despise falsehood, I love Your Law." That's just the way it is. Whatever it is that you love most causes you to hate whatever is contrary to that. And the absolutely perfect love of God demands an absolutely perfect hatred of those things which are contrary to that love. God loves perfectly, and He hates perfectly.

We love imperfectly and hate imperfectly, but nonetheless it reflects a shadow of what we see in the perfection of God. Let me give you an illustration of this from the Old Testament. If you would turn back to the book of Proverbs perhaps a familiar portion of Scripture is found in the sixth chapter. Proverbs chapter 6 and verse 16, the verse says there are six things which the Lord hates, yes seven which are an abomination to Him. And the going from the six to the seven was just a Hebrew way of speaking to put emphasis. There are six things which the Lord hates, even seven which are an abomination to Him.

What are they? God hates, the old Authorized Version said, "A proud look," the NAS says, "Haughty eyes." The actual Hebrew is "lofty eyes." That is to say looking from above down with disdain on those who are beneath you in value and significance. It indicates a swelling kind of pride that fills the heart and shows disdain for others, as if they were of less significance. Pride is the first thing God hates and it's listed first because it really is at the fountain of all kinds of sin. All kinds of sin no matter what the sin is reflect pride, attitude of disobedience and rebellion against God's Law. Everything else is sort of built on the basic iniquity of pride, self-will. Psalm 18:27 says that God will abase those who have haughty eyes. Psalm 73:6 describes the wicked as having pride as their necklace and they are those whom God will cast down to destruction.

God says no one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure. Isaiah 2:11 says, "The proud look of man will be abased and the loftiness of man will be humbled and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day." God is going to bring about a judgment day to all who are proud.

Well in addition to haughty eyes or a proud look, go back to verse 16 again and you will see that God also hates in verse 17 a lying tongue. God is the God of truth. God hates lies. Then you will find in verse 17 God hates hands that shed innocent blood. He hates murderers. He hates those who have a cruel disposition. The person who will lust and who will wanting that lust so severely kill in order that he may obtain that lust, as James describes it, the kind of person who takes a life, the kind of person who reeks havoc on someone else is hated by God.

And then verse 18 says God hates a heart that devises wicked plans. God hates the fabrications that we talked about this morning, the machinations, the imaginations of that profoundly human fallenness that corrupts our rationality. God hates the devising scheming, planning, fabricating that turns the

heart into the workshop of wickedness.

God also hates feet that run rapidly to evil. That is to say not the person who witlessly stumbles into things, not the person who because he's not circumspect or wise or watching, trips and falls into some iniquity, but those who purposefully plot and scheme and run to evil. They are in a hurry to fulfill their devisings.

God hates a false witness, in verse 19, who utter lies. God hates perjurers. God hates false witnesses who lie and whose lies are destructive of other people and whose lies assault justice, as well as truth. And amazingly at the end of verse 19, God hates one who spreads strife among brothers. God hates troublemakers, people who are divisive.

You know, there's a certain kind of crescendoing here, it seems on the one hand that haughty eyes would be the starting point of sin because sin is really a reflection of one's pride and rebellion against God. It precedes through what we would assume to be the worst of things, lying tongue, murder, but before you know it, it starts to get into things that are more familiar to us, devising wicked plans, rushing into sin, lying about someone else bringing damage to them and that seemingly popular sin, making trouble by using your mouth to sow discord among brothers.

There are other things God hates. God hates divorce, Malachi 2:16, He says, "I hate divorce." Jeremiah 44:3 and 4 says God hates idolatry. Amos 5:21 says God hates hypocrisy. Revelation 2:6 and 2:15, God hates false religion. And the reason God hates all these things is because they are opposite all the things that God loves, all the things that are consistent with His holy nature.

There is another thing God hates and that takes us to our passage. God hates the world and He hates those who love the world. "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." So don't love the world. God sets Himself against those who love the world.

Now you remember, just backing up a little bit, that John is giving us a series of tests by which Christians can know they're Christians. The objective of his epistle, as we've said numerous times, is not to make true Christians doubt, but to make true Christians trust. Chapter 4 verse 13, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God in order that you may know that you have eternal life." The epistle is written so you can know, not so that you can doubt. All you have to do is read what it says and take a look at your life and do a little spiritual inventory and if you match up with the standard, both in terms of doctrinal tests and moral tests, then you can know that you have eternal life. So John's theme in the book is to help us to know.

At the same time it is to help us to recognize those who are not in the Kingdom, no matter what their claim might be, because that was what was plaguing the people to whom John was writing. They were being infiltrated by those who claimed to be Christians and yet they denied the true Christ, they denied their sinful condition. They had no manifest obedience, they had no love for the brothers, and here in this case they demonstrated a love for the world. John says, "When you look at your life, you know that those are not true of you. You pass the doctrinal test, you affirm the deity of Christ. You affirm your own sinfulness. You, by your life, manifest obedience to the truth of God and love toward others. You're different." So you have, and we've already seen them in this epistle, doctrinal tests and moral tests.

Now we're still sort of talking about the test here because in verse 15 it says, "If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you." So that constitutes a clear delineation. Somebody who loves the world is not a believer, doesn't possess the love of God. This is really an extension of that discussion of love that we were engaged in from verses 7 through 11. It's as if John wants to sort of add a footnote to the discussion of love...by the way, Christians are marked by love but it's the love of others and it's not the love of the world. Now this again sets them aside from those false Christians. Remember, we talked about the fact that false philosophies and false systems that existed in the time of John in the New Testament time, the various extant philosophies of the day, as philosophies today, have no moral implications. These were the sort of pre-Gnostic Gnostics, the people with the secret knowledge, and it had virtually no impact on how they lived their lives. It was an amoral kind of belief system. And so they continued to love the world. Those people then demonstrate the love of the Father is not in them.

In this case, John writes it in the form of a command. "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone does that, they're not Christians." We could say then that true Christians do not habitually love the world. And I think we have to say that. Look at 1 John chapter 4 for a moment, verse 5. "They...referring to those outside the Kingdom...they are from the world, therefore they speak as from the world and the world listens to them." The world recognizes its own language, it recognizes its own conversation. It identifies with them. Verse 6, "We are from God. He who knows God listens to us." You're either of the world or of God. You either speak the world's philosophy or the Word of God. If you're a Christian, you've been delivered from the world.

Turn to chapter 5 of 1 John verse 4. "Whatever, or whoever is born of God overcomes the world." Overcomes the world...well, what do you mean we've overcome the world? We literally overcome the world. How? "This is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith. And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God." When you come to faith in Jesus Christ, you have just overcome the world. Your faith in Christ has triumphed over the world. You have moved from loving the world to loving the Lord. They are mutually exclusive realities.

In John 15:19 Jesus said, "If you are of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." You've overcome the world. You've been chosen out of the world. You don't listen to the world. You don't identify with the world. You've literally been separated from the world. It's more than a separation.

Look at Galatians chapter 6 and verse 14. Paul says, "May it never be that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world." Boy, that is an absolute statement. What does it mean to be crucified? Death. The world is dead to me and I am dead to the world. Very, very strong language, very explicit language, very black and white. In Ephesians 2:2 Paul says, "You formerly walked according to the course of this world, you used to love the world, you used to be alive to the world, you used to walk according to the course of the world, formerly...no more. According to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that's now working in the sons of disobedience, among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath even as everybody else." We used to be like that. We used to be in the world, of the world, loved the world, listened to the world, the world identified with us, the world accepted us. No more. Galatians 6:14 says, "We're dead to the world and the world is dead to us."

And so, James writes any further interaction with the world is serious. James 4:4, "You adulteresses," that's a pretty strong word. "Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." You've got your choice, you're a friend of the world or you're a friend of God. You're not both. You're not both.

You could see then that this is another element of this test. We are known as true Christians because we have a right view of Christ, because we have a right view of our own sinfulness and a desperate need for forgiveness. We are Christians because we have a manifest pattern of obedience in our lives and a manifest love for others that reflects the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. We are also believers because we have no love for the world. This in a sense is sort of the final little note on the love test. And again I remind you, there were people in the assembly of the believers in the day of John who were saying that they were the true people of God, that they had ascended to the true and transcendent knowledge, that they had the secret insights, they were the Gnostics of their day, they were proud of their worldly wisdom, proud of their worldly philosophy. They were engulfed in a worldly system. They believed but it had no implications on how they lived or how they loved. And John says, "If that's your situation, the love of the Father is not in you." It's not in you at all.

Now when we talk about the world, what are we talking about? This is the compelling question here. If you say we don't love the world, what are you saying? How are we to understand that?

Well we're going to find that out before we get too far into this. But there's a very clear indication in the Bible of what Scripture means when it talks about the world. First of all, we could be talking about the created order. We could be looking around and saying, "Well, there is the physical world, is that what this is talking about? Well what about the human world? Is that what we're talking about?"

No, neither of those are in view here. There's something much more invisible in one sense than that. But let me give you a little outline and we'll work our way into this. As true Christians we cannot, we do not, we will not love the world, first of all, because of what it is...because of what it is. And the word "world," *kosmos*, opposite of chaos, the ordered system, helps us to get a grip on what Scripture is talking about. By the way, the word *kosmos*is used five times in those bree verses...brief verses, so it's clearly the theme here. We're not talking about the physical world. We're not talking about nature. We're not talking about the wonder of a sunset or flowers or mountains or streams and seas and the beauty of God's creation. God even looked on His creation and said it was good and even in its fallen condition, it still reflects His glory to the degree that it should lead us to give Him praise. In fact, we should love this created world for what it is, a reflection of the glory of God. The heavens, says Psalm 19, are telling of the glory of God, their expanse is declaring the work of His hands, day-to-day pours forth speech, night-to-night reveals knowledge. In other words, you just go in to the universe and the further you go, the more it speaks of the wonder and the glory of God. You have ever reason to love the creation, to love the *kosmos,*the order that God has made because it's a reflection of His majestic, sovereign, infinite mind. It talks about the orbit that the sun has. The sun, he says, is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, rejoices as a strong man to run his course, its rising is from one end of the heavens, its circuit to the other end, nothing hidden from its heat. We now know because of modern astronomy that not only is the earth orbiting in its little orbit, not only is the planetary system in which we live moving around the sun and its little solar system, but the sun itself has an orbit that goes from one end of the infinite heaven to the other and drags our solar system with it. And that's exactly what Psalm 19 says, and that is a staggering reflection of the mind of God. You go from there to the tiny little microcosm of cellular structure and understand the machinery that God has built into the cell system. It is absolutely staggering to understand the majesty and the glory and the wonder of God in the created order.

I told you when we were going through Genesis about the Von Neumann machine. Von Neumann machine basically fabricated in the mind of the German scientist, Von Neumann, was the machine that was self-generating, self-preparing and self-reproducing. And he conceived of that as the ultimate machine but said it could never be built because you couldn't build a self-propelling, self-generating machine that could repair itself and multiply and reproduce itself and yet every single cell in the universe, every living cell in the universe is exactly that kind of machine. The order that you see in the created world, both in its scientific microscopic form and in its macro form as well as

everything in between is reflective of the glory and the majesty of God. And we don't ever want to be dead to that. When we see the wonder of creation, we want to praise the God of creation.

Listen to Psalm 104, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, O, Lord, my God, Thou art very great. Thou art clothed with splendor and majesty, covering Thyself with light as with a cloak, stretching out heaven like a tent curtain. He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, He make the clouds His chariot. He walks on the wings of the wind. He makes the winds His messengers, flaming fire His ministers." Talking about lightning bolts. "He established the earth on its foundations so it will not totter forever and ever. Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment, the waters were standing above the mountains, at Thy rebuke they fled and at the sound of Thy thunder they hurried away, the mountains rose, the valleys sank to the place where Thou didst establish them. Thou didst set a boundary that they may not pass over, that they may not return to cover the earth." That is, God pulled the continents together and put great deeps into what the seas plunged to stay there permanently. "And then He sent forth springs in the valleys and they flow between the mountains, they give drink to every beast of the field, the wild donkey quenching their thirst besides them the birds of heaven dwell, they lift their voices among the branches. He waters the mountains from His upper chambers." That's the rain. "And the earth is satisfied with the fruit of His works."

Psalm 104 goes on from there. "He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, vegetation for the labor of man," and so forth and so forth. Talks about high mountains and the animals that live there. "O, Lord, how many are Your works. In wisdom You've made them all, the earth is full of Thy possessions. There is the sea great and broad in which are swarms without number, animals small and great," and so forth.

And what is the end of all this? "Let the glory of the Lord endure forever. Let the Lord be glad in His works. He looks at the earth and it trembles. He touches the mountains and they smoke. I will sing to the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being." What are you praising Him about? About this majesty in creation. We're not supposed to disdain the created world. While we are not environmentalists as such, we are worshipers of the Creator.

So when we talk about not loving the world, we're not talking about that. And secondly, we're not talking about people. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," what is that world that God so loved? It is not the inanimate world, it is the human world. God loved people. He was in the world and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. The world of people didn't know Him, but He loved them. That's why He became the propitiation for our sins, as we saw back in verse 2. Not for ours only, but the sins of the whole world. Verse 9 of chapter 4, "By this the love of God was manifested in us that He sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him." That is into the human world, to the world of men and women. Verse 14, He sent

His Son to be the Savior of the world.

Well then if it's not the created world, and it's not the human world, what is it? It's the invisible spiritual system of evil. That is the world that we are not to love. It is the invisible spiritual system of evil. It is that...that order that is run by Satan, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, the one who leads the course of this world. It is that system. Remember now, *kosmos*means a system, an order, as chaos means disorder. It is that evil order with all of its elements and all of its components that work against the things of God. It is the world that Jesus spoke of when He said, "The world hates you and it has hated Me." It wasn't that people just on their own hated Jesus, it wasn't that there was something about the created order that reacted against their Creator. Not at all. The world that hated Jesus was the world of wickedness, the world of wretchedness, the world of corruption, the system of evil. This is the system that's run by the enemy.

We use the word "world" in that way. We talk about the world of sports, Wide World of Sports. We talk about the world of politics. We talk about the world of science. What do we mean by that? The order, the system, the structure. They're not separate planets. They're not separate people. They're systems made up of ideas and made up of activities and made up of purposes. And the world in the language of Scripture, this definition of the world, is Satan's system that opposes Christ, Satan's system that opposes God. It's the very opposite of everything that comes from God. That's why verse 16 says it is not from the Father, it is from the world and it is part of a system that is passing away, verse 17 says. It's that evil system that is anti-God.

Go over to chapter 5 verse 19, God gives us a further definition of it when he says, "We know that we're of God," again this is the confidence because we've passed the tests, "We know that we are of God and the whole world...the whole evil order...lies in the evil one." The Greek literally says, "Lies in the evil one." It belongs to him. He holds it. He controls it.

Go back to chapter 4 and there's even further instruction about this, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, test the spirits to see whether they're from God for many false prophets have gone out into the world." The system of evil is just loaded with false prophets, the purveyors of anti-God teaching. "By this you know the Spirit of God." You can tell who the true teachers are and the false teachers. "Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God." When they get their Christology right, they're from God. "And every spirit that doesn't confess Jesus is not from God, this is the spirit of the Antichrist of which you have heard that it is coming and now it is already in the world." There is in the world a pervasive spirit that we can call Antichrist. So when you define the world, what you're saying is a system that is against Christ...anti-against. "You are, however," verse 4, "from God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is He who is in you," that is the Holy Spirit, "than he who is in the world," that is the evil one. The people, they're from the world.

These Gnostics who claimed the secret knowledge, they actually speak from the world because that's where they belong. Jesus then calls Satan the prince of the power of the air, He also calls him, John 12:31, the prince of this world. Ephesians 6:11 and 12 says that Satan has his demons, his evil spirits, principalities and powers working in this evil system. And Satan involves all the unregenerate as children of disobedience in the system.

We could say this, we're talking about all of the thinking processes of the unconverted. Jesus calls the unconverted, Luke 16:8, "Children of the world, offspring of the world." But that's not us. That is not us. Our citizenship, Philippians 3:20, is in heaven...is in heaven. We're not of this world.

Now let me tell you what this means. This does not mean that you don't get tempted some times by things in the world, material things, lustful things. It doesn't mean that you're not allured by your own pride and self-interest. That's why the command is here, "Do not love the world." While it is true that we have literally died to the world, it is also true that we can find it still alluring and find ourselves being tempted to draw back into it.

Now to further understand this, you have to understand that when you became a Christian, you made a choice. You became a Christian, this is what you affirmed. You affirmed the gospel of Jesus Christ was true, is that not right? You couldn't become a Christian if you didn't affirm that. The only way you can be saved is to affirm the gospel of Christ and when you affirmed that the gospel of Christ in its fullness was true and you believed it and you embraced it and you confessed Jesus as Lord, at that moment you were dead to the world because the world is a system that opposes that reality. That's why we can say as Christians that we do not love that system. We hate that system. It doesn't mean I hate the creation. It doesn't mean I hate people. It doesn't mean that my fallenness is not sometimes allured toward the things that make up the world, but down in the depths of my being, the truest and purest expression of my redeemed soul is that I hate what opposes my Lord. Is that not true? I hate it. And sometimes I want to make a whip and clean out the places, and so do you. And sometimes you want to take the books that deny the deity of Christ and throw them against the wall because they anger your soul, because you hate that which misrepresents God and misrepresents the Lord Jesus Christ. If you're a true Christian, that's how you feel. And if you don't feel that way, then you love the world and the love of the Father is not in you.

What is the dominant spirit of the world? I don't care what religious form it comes in or irreligious form it comes in, I don't care whether it's agnosticism, atheism, or whether it's the most sophisticated kind of religion, the common denominator in the entire system is anti-Christ. That's why in chapter 4 verse 3 the spirit of Anti-Christ is already operative in the system. This prevailing anti-Christ mentality, whether it's Islam or Buddhism, or Atheism, or whatever it is, cultism, schisms, whatever, eastern religions, any other kind of religion, aberrant forms of Christianity, you name it, whatever it is, the

common denominator is that it contains a misrepresentation of Jesus Christ and the glories of salvation and it is purveyed by an endless line of false prophets. And it hates us. The line was drawn when you became a believer. The world and the family of God are opposites.

I'm not saying that you should enjoy the creation. You have to remember, as I've said before, that God has given you all things richly to enjoy. I'm not saying that you shouldn't enjoy everything that God has provided for you in the wonders of the world. You should. We're not talking about that. I'm not saying that you should disdain the people of the world, you should love them the way God loves them. In fact, in Matthew the Lord Himself said, "You are to love your enemies, you are to do good to those who hate you and persecute you and thereby demonstrate that you are the children of your Father." For even God loves the world of people, but you don't love the system of anti-Christ, anti-God evil.

People say to me, "Well, can you be a Christian and stay in a false religious system?" Not very long. Why? Because you're going to hate everything about it. How much can you endure? How much of the reproach that falls on Christ can you endure if you love Christ? That's where, back to what I said when we began, if you really love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, then you hate anything that dishonors and discredits and brings reproach on His glorious name. If you love the Lord Jesus Christ, then you hate whatever it is that brings dishonor to Him. Pardon us if we're a little fired up about protecting the glories of our God and our Christ against the horrific anti-Christ spirit that operates in the entire world system. You know, these people who say you can go to heaven without the gospel, you can go to heaven if you're just a good person in whatever religion you're in, they don't understand it. In every false belief system on the planet there is operating the spirit of anti-Christ and God does not reward people for functioning in an anti-Christ system. That was settled when you became a believer.

Verse 13 of chapter 3, "So don't marvel, brethren, if the world hates you." Don't be surprised. Expect it. I remember, just a footnote, I may have told some of you. When I was on the Larry King show after 9-11, I got a letter within a little while after that, that our security people told me was one of the most horrible letters they had ever read. And it said some terrible things about me and said that the reason terrorists flew their planes into the towers was because they thought I was there. They wanted to do me in. And...it was pretty serious. And it went on with, you know, vile, filthy language vilifying me and even confessed in the letter because I preach the gospel, the hated, despised gospel. And when he signed the letter he said, "By the way, you baptized me at Grace Community Church." He loves the world and hates the truth. And he hates those who proclaim the truth. I mean, this is how it is. They hated Jesus, they're going to hate those who hold His name high. The world will not listen to us, it will listen to false prophets. They are of the world, so they speak of the world and the world hears them. There is an infinity, there is an identity. We, on the other hand, are of

God. The whole system is just damning people, the whole *kosmos*, the whole ideological system is damning people. Jesus said, "I'm going to send the Holy Spirit," John 14:17, "but the world can't receive Him." As I noted, He said, "I came to the...to the world and the world rejected Me." He said in John 17:9 to His Father, "I do not pray for the world." Jesus gave Himself that He might deliver us from this present evil world, Galatians 1:4. Second Peter 2:20 talks about the pollution of the world.

So what you're talking about is not just sin. Look, we could sin without a system. Understand that? You do understand that, don't you? You don't need Satan and you don't need an evil system to sin. Scripture doesn't say that. Scripture says this, "The deeds of the flesh are evident, immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, outburst of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these," Galatians 5. You don't need the system and you don't need Satan to sin.

So when we say we've been crucified to the world, and we're dead to the world, and we no longer love the world, that is not to say we don't sin. What it is to say is that we hate the anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Scripture systems that are infected with the lies of Satan. Love is a supreme affection and as a supreme affection, love allows no rivals. I mean, I think that's true in a human realm. You know, when you find the person that you quote/unquote fall in love with, there isn't anybody else. I mean, you don't go to somebody and say, "I love you with all my heart and soul and being, and him, and him, and him." No. It's one of those kinds of supreme affections that eliminates all rivals. That's just how it is. That's just how it is. That's just its nature. And when you determined by the wonderful working of God in your heart that you were going to love the Lord Jesus Christ, you therefore hate all anti-Christ spirits. You will still stumble, carnal ambition will get in your way, personal pride will get in your way, greed will get in your way. There will be self-pleasure. There will be a certain satisfaction with vengeful attitudes. There will be sins of all varying kinds that will occur in the lives of believers. You will be unkind and unloving and unfair and all of those things are part of flesh. But as a Christian, that's different than embracing the ordered system of anti-Christ evil. You don't love that. You hate that. And that is part of being a believer.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 10, I go to this passage so often, so often, but it is...it is an overlooked passage. I think I'm the only person who ever talks about it, but it's just...it's just one of those...it's one of those watermark things that just should show up on every page. Now we're engaged in a war, Paul says in the tenth chapter, doing a little play on words in verse 2 he says, "Some regard us as if we walked according to the flesh." Obviously he had critics who said that he was carnal, fleshly, sinful. Playing off of that he says, "Though we walk in the flesh, not in the sense of carnality but we are human, he says I'll agree to that, we are human. But we do not make war according to the flesh. We're engaged in a spiritual war, it's the Kingdom of God against the kingdom of darkness. It's Christ against Anti-Christ. It's the truth against the lie. We're engaged in this war and the weapons of our warfare are

not human. We know we can't fight this battle with human weapons. It's a battle between truth and error, it's a battle between Christ and Anti-Christ, it's a battle between the Word of God and the word of Satan. This is a massive battle. And the weapons to fight the battle are not human but divinely powerful, mighty unto God, in the Greek, divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses."

The Anti-Christ system, the world system is here pictured as fortresses. Many different fortresses because the world's system of thinking, the Anti-Christ, anti-God, Satanic system of thinking comes in different forms. There are different kinds of fortresses. And if we are to go against these fortresses and destroy them, we have to have some very powerful weapons.

What are these fortresses? Verse 5, verse 4 talks about destroying fortresses, verse 5 says, "We're destroying *logismos*is the Greek word, speculations, imaginations. It really means ideas...ideas, ideologies, systems of belief, belief systems, any kind of belief system, anything from a primitive animistic belief system to a complex kind of world religion like Hinduism with its millions of deities and everything in between, any kind of system, any kind of philosophy, psychology, any theories. We are destroying all these systems. Further defined in verse 5, the word "and," *kai*could mean even which is a further description of what was just said, these speculations, these *logismos*, these ideologies are then identified as every lofty thing. That is, every proud expression of thought raised up against the knowledge of God. Any anti-God idea constitutes the world, the system. And our task is to destroy those anti-God fortresses. And, at the end of verse 5, "Take every thought and bring it captive to the obedience of Christ."

So there is our mandate for battle. We go out into the world, we confront the lies, we confront the anti-God, anti-Christ speculations, theories, ideologies, systems and we smash them to the ground. Any idea raised up against the knowledge of God and we bring all thoughts captive to Christ, this is the great spiritual war. The world then is defined here for us as ideologies, lofty ideologies that are in opposition to God and when you became a Christian, all of that opposition ended, right? And you became a believer in the true God and in Christ. You became a child of God. And you are not in God's family, either as we learned in verses 12 to 14 as a spiritual child, as a spiritual young man, or having matured to becoming a spiritual father, and we'll say more about that next time. Any system that's against God and Christ is the world.

I want to close with a conversion story. Philippians 3...Philippians 3, this is the conversion story of the Apostle Paul. You talk about a man in the world, you talk about a man caught up in an anti-Christ system, if you were to read Acts 9, won't take the time to do it, you will read there that Paul was breathing out fury earlier in the book of Acts, he was breathing out fury against believers in Acts chapter 9. He's on his way to Damascus. He's got papers from the Jewish leadership to go there and persecute and imprison Christians. He's going to continue to do everything he can to stamp out

the work of Christ, to stamp out the church, to rid the world of the gospel. He is...he is an anti-Christ. He is one of those false prophets who purvey the system of the world, the satanic system which is against God and against Christ. But on the Damascus Road he is confronted by Christ and he is converted.

The history of that takes place in Acts 9. The internal working is described in Philippians 3. The story of what happened on the outside is in Acts 9. What happened on the inside is in Philippians 3. Listen to the system that he was in. He says he had confidence in his flesh, verse 4 of Philippians 3, he had confidence in his own human strength. He had his own achievements religiously. He was circumcised the eighth day. He was of the nation of Israel. He was of the tribe of Benjamin. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to the righteousness which is in the Law, he was found blameless. That was his system. That was his fortress. He was okay. He was secure. That was his anti-Christ posture and position. And from that position of being a devout, zealous Pharisaical law-abiding Jew, he was fighting Christ. And Christ smashed him into the dirt, confronted him. He was amazingly transformed. And in that moment he died to the world, his world, his system of ideology because in verse 7 he says, "Whatever things were gain to me," all those things were in the gain column, "those things I've counted as loss for the sake of Christ." That's when he died to the world. More than that, "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but *skubalon*, waste, garbage, filth, in order that I may gain Christ." Once I saw Christ, everything else was trash. That's when he stopped loving his world, his ideological world, his theological world, his philosophical world, his own personal world of religious accomplishment.

So if you still love that world, then the love of God is not in you. If you're holding on to any other ideology, any other religion, any anti-Christ ideas, the love of God is not in you. You can't love the world, you can't because of what it is by definition. It is anti-Christ and you confess Christ as Lord.

Well there are a couple of more reasons why you can't love the world, but we'll save those for next time. I don't know, as I get older time goes faster, even preaching time, it seems to me. Let's pray.

I know, Father, the idea is not go get through material as fast as we can, but cover the things that help us to understand the glories of our salvation. What can we say out of gratitude that you have taken us when we were dead in trespasses and sins and awakened us? What can we say by way of gratitude to You for taking our blind eyes and giving us sight? Our deaf ears and giving us hearing? Our hard heart and giving us a heart of flesh? What can we say to You for planting in us Your Spirit? Giving us a love for Jesus Christ and thereby we were crucified to the world? We thank You for our own Damascus Road, we thank You for that moment, that glorious event when the world was crucified to us and we were crucified to the world. That moment when we in faith reached out to

embrace Jesus Christ and from then on though we love the wonder of Your creation and we love the people around us, we hate the system, the ordered system of evil that is pervaded by a hatred of You, our Christ. And we accept the fact that they hated You, they'll hate us even though You loved them and we as well. Thank You for our death to the world and thank You that it is our faith, as John wrote, that overcame the world, saving faith which You granted us, did it and now we no longer love the world, we love You. We love our Lord Jesus Christ though imperfectly, yet passionately and continually and we hate what You hate and we hate what dishonors Christ. Keep us faithful, don't let us be lured back to any attractions in the system. May we continue to grow in our love for You to become spiritual fathers who know what it is to commune with the one who is from the beginning, You the eternal God. This is our prayer in Your Son's name. Amen.

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