

Lesson 3:
Separation from the World

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him; because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Since we had a change in our being and became a new man once we were saved, we ought to have a new start, a new beginning, to live a new life.

I. The Type of Israel's Exodus from Egypt

A. The Result of Redemption Being to Go Out

Exodus 12:51 And on that very day Jehovah brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

God saved the Israelites through the Passover lamb. When the messenger of God went forth to kill the firstborn in the land of Egypt, the angel of death passed over the doors which had the blood upon them. If there was no blood on the door, the firstborn of that house was killed. It had nothing to do with whether the door was good or bad, whether there was anything special about the lintel or the side posts, whether there was anything good about that family, or whether the firstborn child honored his parents. The issue was whether there was any blood. Whether or not you will perish does not depend on your family's status or your behavior; it depends on whether you have the blood. The basic factor for salvation is the blood; this has nothing to do with us.

The first result of redemption is separation, that is, departure, a going out. God never redeems a person and leaves

him in the old position to continue living in the world. There is absolutely no such thing. Once a person is born again, saved, he must take up his staff and set out. As soon as you are redeemed by the blood, you become a sojourner and a pilgrim on the earth; you have to go out of Egypt and be separated from the world immediately. You must not continue to live there.

Please remember that the blood's redemption saves you from the world. Once you are redeemed by the blood, you immediately become a sojourner, a pilgrim in this world. This does not mean that you no longer live on the earth. It means that you are immediately separated from the world. Wherever redemption is applied, this is the result. As soon as a man is redeemed, his course is changed, and he has to leave the world. The separation of the blood separates the living from the dead; it also separates the children of God from the people of the world. Once we are redeemed, we can no longer remain in the world.

B. The Many Frustrations from Pharaoh

Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The story of Israel's exodus from Egypt shows us how difficult it was for them to leave Egypt! Egypt tried to hold them back again and again. When the Israelites first wanted to leave Egypt, Pharaoh only allowed the strong men to go; the young and the old had to stay back. Pharaoh knew that if he could hold back the young and the old the strong men would not go far. After a while they would come back. Satan's strategy is to prevent us from having a thorough separation from Egypt. From the very beginning, Moses rejected Pharaoh's delays. If we leave one thing or one person behind, we cannot go too far; eventually we will turn back.

After a person is saved, he must go out to the wilderness. Moreover, he has to bring all the people and all his treasures with him. Otherwise, he will eventually go back to Egypt, and there will be no separation from Egypt. God's commandment is that those who serve Him must separate themselves from the world.

C. Sojourners and Pilgrims in this World

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I entreat you as strangers and sojourners to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

We have been separated from Egypt, and our faces are toward the promised land. The basis of that separation is the blood, the

John 17:14-16 I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world. I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of the hands of the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

blood that has bought us back. The Egyptians have not been bought by the blood; the worldly ones have not been redeemed. As redeemed ones, we have been transferred to another world. Therefore, we must leave this world.

Please remember that since the blood has bought us, we must be taken away from the world. Once a person is bought by the Lord's blood, he should leave for the promised land. As soon as one is bought, he should leave. Once a person is bought, he has no choice but to go with the Lord. If I have been bought by the Lord, I must leave the world and go with Him.

II. Areas that Require Separation from the World

John 15:19 If you were 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.

James 4:4b Therefore whoever determines to be a friend of the world is constituted an enemy of God.

A man must be separated completely from Egypt; he must be separated from the world. He should not be afraid that others will criticize him as being peculiar. In some areas we should be separated from the world, while in other areas we should maintain peace with it. We have no intention to be contentious. In school, in the family, in the workplace, and everywhere, we do not want to arouse controversy. Let us consider certain specific things that need to be dealt with:

A. Things Incompatible with the Lord

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

To follow Jesus of Nazareth, one must be ready to suffer humiliation; this is not a thing of glory. To follow Jesus of Nazareth means to bear the cross. When others first came to the Lord, the Lord told them that they had to bear the cross in order to follow Him. According to the Lord, this is the main entrance. The Lord has called us to bear the cross. This is the way we are taking, and we can only follow the Lord according to this way. We are those who follow the Lamb wherever

He may go (Rev. 14:4). We take the same stand as that of the Lord. Anything that is not on the same ground as the Lord or that stands against the Lord is the world, and we must depart from it.

B. Anything That Quenches Our Spiritual Life

Romans 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.

It is difficult for us to point out the world item by item; the list is endless. But we should grasp one basic principle: everything that quenches one's spiritual life in the Lord is the world. The world is anything that kills one's zeal for prayer to God. The world is anything that takes away one's interest in God's Word. The world is anything that frustrates one from testifying before men. The world is anything that hinders one from coming to the Lord, anything that results in confession. The world is an atmosphere that chokes and dries a person up. It is anything that discourages a man's heart from loving and yearning for the Lord. Here we see a broad principle—anything that quenches our spiritual condition before the Lord is the world. We must reject all of it.

C. Everything That Fails to Give Others the Impression That We Are Christians

Matt. 5:14-16 You are the light of the world. It is impossible for a city situated upon a mountain to be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp and place it under the bushel, but on the lampstand; and it shines to all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in the heavens.

2 Tim 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Any kind of social function, communication, or activity that causes us to hide our lamp under the bushel is the world. We are not trying purposely to be antisocial. But when we contact people, we must maintain our stand. No one should be able to insult our Christian stand. They should respect our stand. When I take a stand as a Christian, I must maintain my stand even if others criticize me.

If we stand on the path of sinners, we will end up in their place sooner or later. If we sit in the company of mockers, we will become mockers sooner or later. Sin and mocking are contagious. We must learn to flee these things (Psa. 1:1).

Romans 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the man Who does not walk In the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand on the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of mockers;

D. Things Disapproved of by Weak Believers

1 Corinthians 6:12 All things are lawful to me, but not all things are profitable; all things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of anything.

If an unbeliever thinks that we should not do a certain thing, we will lose our testimony if we do it. Similarly, we should avoid anything that a Christian disapproves of, even if the one who disapproves is the youngest and weakest of all Christians. Many things may not be directly related to the world, but we should still exercise care in touching them because others may consider them a form of the world. What they say may not be correct; what they consider forbidden may not be wrong. But we should not stumble them because their conscience is weak. They may think that we are on the wrong way. If we take such a way, we will stumble them. Paul said, "All things are lawful to me, but not all things are profitable" (1 Cor. 6:12). All things are lawful, but others may consider these things to be a form of the world. Therefore, we should not do them for their sake.

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to be separated from the world? (E.g. does it mean to become separated by becoming a hermit in a mountain somewhere?)
2. What does the experience of the children of Israel tell us about being separated from the world?
3. What is the the one basic principle we should grasp when it comes to discerning what items are the world to us?

Weekly Challenge

Spend some time this week to pray and ask the Lord to touch you with anything that might be quenching your spiritual life in the Lord.

Song

1

I've turned my back upon the world
With all its idle pleasures,
And set my heart on better things,
On higher, holier treasures;
No more its glitter and its glare,
And vanity shall blind me;
I've crossed the separating line,
And left the world behind me.

Far, far behind me!
Far, far behind me!
I've crossed the separating line,
And left the world behind me.

2

I've left the old sad life of sin,
Its follies all forsaken;
My standing place is now in Christ,
His holy vows I've taken;
Beneath the standard of the cross
The world henceforth shall find me;
I've passed in Christ from death to life,
And left the world behind me.

Far, far behind me!
Far, far behind me!
I've passed in Christ from death to life,
And left the world behind me.

3

My soul shall ne'er return again
Back to its former station
For here alone is perfect peace,
And rest from condemnation;
I've made exchange of masters now,
The vows of glory bind me,
And once for all I've left the world,
Yes, left the world behind me.

Far, far behind me!
Far, far behind me!
And once for all I've left the world,
Yes, left the world behind me.

4

My choice is made forevermore,
I want no other Savior;
I ask no purer happiness
Than His sweet love and favor;
My heart is fixed on Jesus Christ,
No more the world shall blind me;
I've crossed the Red Sea of His death,
And left the world behind me.

Far, far behind me!
Far, far behind me!
I've crossed the Red Sea of His death,
And left the world behind me.