

“The Love God Hates”

(1 John 2:15-17)

Introduction

➤ The hatred of God can be a difficult doctrine for us to grasp. By this, I am not referring to the fact that sinners/unbelievers hate God – this is readily apparent and painfully obvious in Scripture (Rom.1:30; 8:7; Jn.15:23). I am rather referring to that which (or those whom) God hates.

There is a helpful, but also troublesome, Christian adage: “Love the sinner, hate the sin.” It is helpful insofar as it encourages us to be gracious toward sinners and intolerant of sin. It is troublesome in that it attempts to indelibly/completely to separate the sinner from his/her sin. People, especially unbelievers, sin because they are sinners. It is not just something they do, something merely external or detached, it is who they are.

Matt 12:34-35 ~ “You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.”

Mark 7:20-23 ~ “And [Jesus] said, ‘What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.’”

When we sin, we cannot rightly say/think: “The devil made me do that!” or “I don’t know where that came from, that’s not me!” (see Rom.7:23-25; Jms.1:13-15). We sin because we are sinners, and we are sinners because we sin (the believer, thankfully, is a sinner saved by grace!).

➤ The more troubling/difficult question may be, “Does God ‘love the sinner but hate the sin’?” At first glance, many would quickly answer “Yes, God does not hate anyone.” But Scripture conveys something quite different:

Ps 5:4-6 ~ “For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you. ⁵The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers. ⁶You destroy those who speak lies; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.” (cf. Lev.20:23; Ps.7:11; Prov.6:16-19; Eccl.3:8; Hos.9:15; Jn.3:36)

Ps 11:5 ~ “The Lord tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.”

Ps 139:21-22 ~ “Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? ²²I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies.”

Rom 9:13 ~ “As it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’” (Mal.1:3).

➤ One reason why we so often struggle with the concepts of “love” and “hatred” is because we live in a culture that has so many variant and conflicting definitions of both love and hatred. Love is defined in terms of being unconditional, emotional, and permissive. Hatred is often characterized as unreasonable, emotional, and malicious. What is also problematic is that our English words for “love” and “hate” are hyper-elastic, in that they can be used to describe deeply spiritual things (e.g., “I love God, and I hate sin”) or comparatively trivial things (e.g., “I love pizza and I hate broccoli”).

Perhaps a more significant problem is that we often project our “brand” of love and hatred onto God – portraying God’s love and hatred to be like our own – conflating our loving and hating with God’s loving and hating. Our love and hate are often capricious, selfish, impure, and unrighteous. Conversely, God’s love and hate are always constant, godly, pure, and righteous. When we conflate the two, God’s love is maligned, and His hatred is misunderstood.

The truth is, in His absolutely holiness and infinite wisdom, God’s love can coexist with His hatred (just like His grace and justice, His patience and anger, His mercy and wrath). In other words, where as we – as sinful creatures – cannot hate with love or love with hate (for they are mutually exclusive), God can simultaneously and perfectly love and hate the sinner (without contradiction).

As Christians we are commanded to love:

Matt 5:43-44 ~ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (see Matt.22:37-39)

Titus 3:3 ~ “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.”

As Christians we are commanded to hate:

Luke 14:26 ~ “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”

Rom 12:9 ~ “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.”

➤ As Christians, we are to have a godly love toward all people and a holy hatred toward all sin. We are to love what God loves and hate what God hates, and we are to express both of these – in motive and expression – in the way that honors and glorifies God.

➤ There is a love that God hates. It is any “love” that defiles the things of God, opposes the will of God, and damages what God loves.

1 John 2:15-17 ~ “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. ¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

➤ This passage of Scripture can be divided into two major headings.

A. The Commands (vs.15a)

➤ There are essentially two commands in the first part of verse 15, both drawing from the single imperative verb “*Do not love*” (*mē agapaō*; lit. “love not”). Again, a clear indication that there are things that the Christian must not love.

1. Do not love the world

➤ The first command is to “*not love the world*” (vs.15). The word “world” (*kosmos*) here, in verse 15, does not mean the physical globe, or planet earth, or even the people in the world (Jn.3:16), as much as it refers to satanic powers and evil system which rebels against God and His will [note: same word (*kosmos*) used six times in this passage (vs.15^{3x}, 16^{2x}, 17^{1x})]. In this verse, we see that “*the world*” refers to the devil’s rule in and over all unbelievers – i.e., ungodly ideologies, secular psychologies, humanistic/satanic religions, unbiblical political views, immoral worldviews.

✓ Illust: “The idea here is of the world of men in rebellion against God and therefore characterized by all that is in opposition to God. This is what we might call ‘the world system.’ It involves the world’s values, pleasures, pastimes, and aspirations. John says of this world that the world lies in the grip of the evil one (1Jn.5:19), that it rejected Jesus when he came (Jn.1:10), that it does not know him (1Jn.3:1), and consequently that it does not know and therefore also hates his followers (Jn.15:18-21; 17:14). It is in this sense that John speaks of the world in the passage before us” (James Montgomery Boice, *The*

Epistles of John; 1Jn.2:15-17).

John 15:19 ~ “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

Rom 12:2 ~ “Do not be conformed to this world [*aiōn*; “age”], but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Eph 2:1-3 ~ “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

Gal 6:14 ~ “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

1 John 4:4-6 ~ “Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We are from God. ...”

1 John 5:4-5 ~ “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. ⁵Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

1 John 5:19 ~ “We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”

- We are not to love the sinful culture of this fallen world. We are not to be devoted to the evil system of society that opposes God. We must not set our affections on the domain of Satan’s rule. We must not find our ultimate security and satisfaction in that which is (ultimately) godless. We must not prefer to revel in worldliness than to grow in godliness. We must not pursue that which is hostile to, at enmity with, God. We must not desire that which is contrary to the will of God (as we will see in vs.15).
✓ **Illust:** “Worldliness is whatever makes sin look normal and righteousness look strange” (Kevin DeYoung).

2. Do not love the things in the world

- The next command is to “*not love ... the things in the world*” (vs.15). This clearly refers to that which comes from the sin and evil in the world. As we, in verse sixteen, this does not merely refer to material things; but spiritual things also. Anything that is ungodly, unrighteous, or unholy – anything and every that stems from our carnal and sinful nature – “corruptions of every kind, and the abyss of all evils” (John Calvin; *Calvin’s Commentaries*; 1Jn.2:15).

B. The Reasons (vs.15b-17)

- The apostle John, in verses 15b-17, graciously gives three reasons why Christians ought to obey the command to not love the world or the things in the world.

1. The one who loves the world cannot love God (vs.15b)

- The first reason is given at the end of verse fifteen: “*If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him*” (vs.15b). In John’s typical epistolary writing style, he leaves no middle ground – a person either loves the world or loves God – you cannot love the world and God at the same time. This is not hyperbole, nor is it foreign to Scripture.

Matt 6:19-21, 24 ~ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart

will be also. ... ²⁴No 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 [*mamōnas*; possessions or wealth].”

James 4:4 ~ “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

Gal 1:10 ~ “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

➤ Like Demas – who was “*in love with this present world*” (2Tim.4:10) – many professing believers will be exposed as false believers because they love the world more than they love God.

Matt 13:20-22 ~ “As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.”

1 John 2:19 ~ “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.”

➤ From a human perspective, we cannot always tell true Christians from false Christians (see Matt.7:15-20), but we can know that a person cannot truly love the world and God at the same time. In time, through trials and temptations, false Christians succumb to worldliness and their true love for the world will be exposed. True believers, on the other hand, by the grace and power of God, will ultimately persevere over such worldly temptations because they love God supremely.

2. The one who loves the world lives contrary to God and His will (vs.16)

➤ A second reason is stated in verse sixteen: “*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*” (vs.16). This can actually serve as a reason for the first reason. That is, the reason why a person cannot love the world and God is because the world is at enmity with God, and those who love the world live contrary to God and God’s will.

➤ The short list of that which is “*in*” and “*from the world*” (vs.16), has been aptly called “the unholy trinity of evil”: “*the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life*” (vs.16). Each of these descriptions serve as categories of temptation/sin, and all temptation/sin fall into (at least) one of these three categories.

a) “*desires of the flesh*”

➤ The “*desires of the flesh*” (vs.16) refers to any and every ungodly/unrighteous physical pleasure. That is, the “desires” (*epithumia*; lusts or cravings) of our fallen/sinful nature – e.g., sexual immorality, adultery, impurity, sensuality, revenge, fits of anger, dissension, gluttony, division, etc. These are temptations, it could be argued, that come from within – i.e., within our internal sinful/carnal appetites and cravings – a temptation that arises from within, without any external temptation.

Gal 5:19-21 ~ “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (see Rom.1:24-32; 1Cor.6:9-10)

➤ We see an illustration of this temptation – in fact, of all temptations – when the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness.

Luke 4:1-4 ~ “And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ²for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. ³The devil said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.’ ⁴And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, *‘Man shall not live by bread alone’* [Deut.8:3].” (see Matt.4:1-4)

- This first temptation may not appear to be that tempting, until we remember that it occurred after Jesus had fasted for forty days – and we that, indeed, “*he was hungry*” (Lk.4:2)! However, even with knowing that Jesus was hungry, this first temptation can seem rather insignificant – after all, eating bread is not sinful. Jesus clearly had the power to turn stones into bread. This was easily doable for Christ. He could have satisfied His hunger very quickly and very effortlessly.

However, what we need to realize is that Jesus was fasting. He was intensely and intimately communing and depending on God. Satan’s temptation was not simply to get Jesus to eat, but to cause Him to forsake or neglect – even just a little bit – His dependence on, and trust in, God. The bread was just the pry-bar that Satan was using to steer Jesus’ heart away from God’s will for His life.

Jesus answered with Scripture, in its right context, by saying, “*Man shall not live by bread alone*” (Lk.4:4; Deut.8:3).

- The temptation of “*the desires of the flesh*” was the first temptation for Eve in the garden:

Gen 3:6 ~ “*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food ...*”

- This is the temptation of giving into our fleshly (sinful) desires, seeking to fulfill our internal desires in that which is worldly (ungodly) and sinful (unrighteous), rather in that which is godly and righteous. Eve sought to satisfy her hunger with that which was forbidden (Gen.2:15-17; 3:1-5).

Eph 5:3 ~ “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.”

b) “*desires of the eyes*”

- Whereas “*the desires of the flesh*” may be specifically referring to temptations that arise from within our own sinful nature, “*the desires of the eyes*” (vs.16) may be specifically referring to temptations that come from without. To be sure, these temptations still stem from our sinful nature, but they are aroused by that which we can see – e.g., greed, envy, jealousy, lust (pornography), sensuality, etc. This is not just referring to that which is sexually explicit, but materialistic as well. It doesn't take much for our eyes to drawn to want what others have, and consequently it doesn't take long for us to become extremely dissatisfied with what we have, giving way to all kinds and degrees of jealousy and discontent.

- The devil also tempted Jesus with this category of sin:

Luke 4:5-8 ~ “And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶and said to him, ‘To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.’ ⁸And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, *‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve’* [Deut.6:13].” (see Matt.4:8-10)

- Failing to move Jesus with the temptation of pleasure, Satan reloads and seeks to lure Jesus away from God’s will through the temptation of power. Satan takes Jesus to a high place in order for Jesus’ “eyes” to behold the full sights that this temptation would offer. Once upon this “high place” Satan offers Jesus everything He sees with “*all this authority and their glory*” (Lk.4:6). At this point, some people may see this as a bluff from Satan (“After all, they may ask, doesn’t Jesus truly own everything already?”). But this is no bluff, for Satan (although only temporary) is “*the ruler of this world*” (Jn.12:31). At this moment, all of this world is owned by Satan under the sovereign control and power

of God. For those who are power-hungry this temptation would be almost unbearable, and even for those who are not power-hungry to have all power and splendor over all the kingdoms of the world is extremely enticing.

Jesus again answered with Scripture: “*You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve*” (Lk.4:8; Deut.6:13).

➤ Again, we see that this was part of the devil’s temptation of Eve:

Gen 3:6 ~ “... and that it was a delight to the eyes ...”

➤ Since we live in such a materialistic and affluent society, this temptation is a true pandemic. Whether it is called “keeping up the Joneses” or simply “wanting a better life”, the “*desires of the eyes*” are ever-lurking, ever-wanting.

James 4:1-2 ~ “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.”

Eph 5:5 ~ “For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

Ps 119:37 ~ “Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.”

c) “[the] pride of life”

➤ The third category of temptation and sin is the “*pride of life*” (vs.16). This refers to the sin of selfishness, narcissism, and conceit. The word “*life*” (*bios*) can refer to the life of a living thing, but can also refer to the material possessions one has accumulated in life [note: same word is translated “*the world’s goods*” in 1Jn.3:17]. The basic understanding here is that “*the pride of life*” is being arrogant about who you are, what you have, and what you have accomplished. This is the opposite of humbly being grateful to God for everything.

Luke 12:15 ~ “And he said to them, ‘Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’”

1 Tim 6:6-10 ~ “But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”

➤ Again, we see that the devil used this category of temptation against Jesus:

Luke 4:9-13 ~ “And [the devil] took [Jesus] to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰for it is written, *‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you’* [Ps.91:11], ¹¹and *‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone’* [Ps.91:12]. ¹²And Jesus answered him, ‘It is said, *‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test’* [Deut.6:16].’ ¹³And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.” (see Matt.4:5-7, 11)

➤ Since Satan could not tempt Jesus with pleasure or power, he now goes after Jesus’ pride. It is as if Satan was saying to Jesus, “Since you trust in God, and God alone, prove your trust by throwing yourself down from this temple – for even God’s Word declares that you will not be hurt.” This is a clever and cunning temptation indeed, pride of self, masked to look like trust in God!

Notice that the devil misused Scripture by taking it out of context – misapplying the words of Scripture – hoping to incite Jesus’ pride. The devil used the poetic and devotional words of the Psalms (Ps.91:11, 12) as imperative commands to be followed. Jesus, of course, knew exactly what the devil was trying to do, and rightly rebuked him for trying to entice Jesus to test God.

Jesus again quoted Scripture, applying it correctly, when He said: “*You shall not put the Lord your God to the test*” (Lk.4:12; Deut.6:16).

✓ Illust: “This book [the Bible] will keep you from sin, and sin will keep you from this book.”

➤ This third category of sin is also seen in the fall of Adam and Eve:

Gen 3:6 ~ “... and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.”

➤ Pride is the opposite of humility. At its core, pride is self-worship. It seeks to dethrone God in your life and receive the glory that belongs to Him.

Rom 12:3 ~ “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.”

Eph 4:1-2 ~ “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love”

Phil 2:3 ~ “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

Col 3:12 ~ “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience” (see Jms.4:10; 1Pet.5:6)

➤ Adam and Eve fell into sin and all mankind has struggled with sin ever since. During and after those 40 days, the devil tempted Jesus with every temptation known to mankind – from pleasure (“*the desires of the flesh*”), to power (“*the desires of the eyes*”), to pride (“*[the] pride of life*”), but Jesus withstood all – all categories of – temptation perfectly. Jesus’ temptations were real and so was His victory over temptation and sin.

Heb 4:15 ~ “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

3. The one who loves the world will be destroyed with the world (vs.17)

➤ The apostle John gives a third reason why we are not to love the world or anything in the world [1. The one who loves the world cannot love God (vs.15b), 2. The one who loves the world lives contrary to God and His will (vs.16)]: 3. The one who loves the world will be destroyed with the world (vs.17).

➤ In verse seventeen we read: “*And the world is passing away along with its desires*” (vs.17). Everything about this sinful world – its very existence and “*its desires*” – is “*passing away*” (vs.17; *paragō*). It is being destroyed and will one day be completely destroyed. The world, and all of its godlessness, is rapidly “going to hell in a handbasket.”

1 John 2:8 ~ “At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away [*paragō*] and the true light is already shining.”

2 Peter 3:10-13 ~ “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. ¹¹Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people

ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”

2 Thess 1:6-10 ~ “since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, ¹⁰when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.”

- In verse seventeen there is this tremendous promise to those who belong to God: *“but whoever does the will of God abides forever”* (vs.17). Whereas everything that is godless and opposed to God will one day be destroyed, all that is godly and those who do *“the will of God”* will exist eternally. This is a powerful encouragement to every true believer. We must not love – long for or envy – the world or the things in the world because they are not only ungodly, but also temporal. All that belongs to this world will be destroyed eternally in God’s just wrath and condemnation.
- To the true believer – the one who *“does the will of God”* (vs.17) – God has promised eternal life in His eternal kingdom.

Rom 8:18 ~ “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

2 Cor 4:16-18 ~ “So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

Heb 12:28 ~ “Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe”

1 Peter 1:3-5 ~ “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

- How foolish it is to set your security and affections on this world!

Conclusion

- There is an interesting paradox with the Christian and the world. On one hand, we know that this world has been created by God and as such we are to delight in, and glorify Him in, all His creation. On the other hand, we know this world – by God’s sovereign design and purpose – *“lies in the power of the evil one”* (1Jn.5:19). To put it another way, Christians are to love the world as God loves the world (Jn.3:16), and yet at the same time we are commanded to not love the world or anything in the world (1Jn.2:15). This reality puts the Christian into a dilemma.
- This conflict/tension is illustrated in two specific songs that many of us grew up singing in church. The first is “This World Is Not My Home”:

“This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through,
my treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.
The angels beckon me from heavens open door,
and I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.”

That song has biblical merit, and is a good reminder that we are not to love this world. The other song, however, is “This is My Father’s World”:

“This is my Father’s world, and to my listening ears
all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
This is my Father’s world: I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas; His hand the wonders wrought.”

This song also has biblical merit and glorifies God as the sovereign Creator of all things.

➤ So, which is it? Is this world not our home, or is it our Father’s world? The answer, of course, is both. As Christians, we are called to be in the world but not of the world. That is, we are to be living in this world without the world living in us – as a boat is to be in the water, without having water in the boat. We are to be in this world, but not influenced by this world.

✓ Illust: “We have reason to pray continually for an increase of that faith of which John says, ‘*that it gives us the victory over the world*’ (1Jn.5:4). Happy, indeed, is that Christian who can be in the world and yet not of the world, who can do his duty in it, and yet not be conformed to it, who can pass through it unmoved by its smiles or its frowns, its flattery or its enmity, its open opposition or its playful ridicule, its sweets or its bitters, its gold or its sword! When I think what the world is, and see what harm it has done and is doing to souls, I do not wonder that Paul says, ‘Hold Fast.’ ‘*Let us hold fast our profession*’ [Heb.4:14]” (J.C. Ryle; *Our Profession*; Heb.4:14).