

The Love God Hates

1 John 2:12-17

Pastor John Miller

Did you know that there is a hate or a love that God hates? God has a hatred for evil. And the Bible says in Psalm 97, verse 10, "You that love the Lord hate evil." Now, John has told us already in chapter four, verse eight that God is love, but he's also said in chapter one, verse five that God is light. And because God is light, God is holy, we too need to walk in holiness. We need to love holiness, but what exactly, especially pertaining to this text we're going to look at this morning, is the love that God hates. I want you to look at verse 15 of chapter two of 1 John. John says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For if any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him." That is the love that God hates.

Now in this text today, we have a brief parenthetical section, verses 12 to 17, our parenthetical. John breaks the flow of pointing out the test of obedience, verse three, the test of love, verse nine. And John does not want his readers to think that he doubts their salvation, but it's not his reader's faith that he questions, it's the faith of the false teachers. And so John does two things, he number one, declares his assurance of his reader's salvation, verses 12 to 14. The second thing he does is he appeals for their separation from the world. So two sections to these verses, the declaration of his assurance of their salvation, verses 12 to 14, and his appeal for their separation from the world. Let's look first of all at his assurance about the church. Follow with me beginning in verse 12.

John says, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his namesake. I write unto you fathers," verse 13, "Because you have known him, that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because you have known the Father." He says, "I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the wicked one." Now, I want you to notice in the verses that I just read that four times John uses a phrase, I write unto you. Look at it with me, verse 12, I write unto you. Then verse 13, I write unto you. Again, verse 13, I write unto you, and then in verse 14, I have written unto you, past tense. So, John is actually telling us why he is writing.

John is writing to express his assurance of the true believers. Why did he have to do that? Because he's been giving us the test, the test of obedience, the test of love, the test of doctrine, and he doesn't want them to begin to doubt their salvation or think that they're not saved. He's writing with an assurance that he's writing to true believers, but it's the professors of the false teachers, the Gnostics, the false apostles that he's worried about or he's writing about. You need to put them to the test and see whether or not they're true believers. So, he's writing to assure them. Now, to do this, he calls them three things. He calls them little children, he calls them fathers, and he calls them young men, and he mentions all three twice. And about any commentary you read on 1 John will admit that this is the hardest section to interpret in the

epistle.

For years as I've read it and studied it and preached on it, I thought, "I'm not sure what John is really doing here or what he's talking about," and I think it opens up and understandable to us when we realize that it's a parenthesis. He's broken away from the test and he's writing about assurance and he's writing to young men, he's writing to little children, and fathers. All three of these categories refer to Christians. Now, that is foundational, that I'm sure of. All three of the groups are Christians, and he uses these terms to describe, I believe, their different levels of spiritual maturity. Look at first of all the little children, they're mentioned in verse 12 and verse 13. The word children there, [foreign language 00:05:19], means born ones literally. So, it's a reference to all Christians. Fathers are born ones, young men are born ones. To be a Christian, you have to be born again. Sometimes I laugh, I hear people say, "I'm a Christian, but not a born again Christian."

The only kind of Christian that's a born again Christian. You might be a cultural Christian or a professing Christian, but not a real Christian, but to be a Christian, Jesus said to Nicodemus, John three, "You must..." Notice the word must, "Be born again," or literally born from above. The only Christians are the born again Christians. So, they are little ones or little children, born ones. Three things he says about them. Verse 12, "Your sins are forgiven." Remember when you first got saved? The first awareness that you had of being a Christian is my sins are what? Forgiven. Is that cool or what? All the darkness, all the sin, all the wickedness, all have been forgiven, and the idea of forgiveness means that God carries our sins away. They were placed on Jesus Christ and he carried them away. We are forgiven.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. That's an awesome blessing. My sins are forgiven. And I remember when I was saved the summer of 1971, August '71, I don't remember the actual date, but I remember the month and the year and I remember it feeling, "I'm forgiven, I'm clean." I felt a weight lift off me. I felt clean inside. So, he says to these little children, "You are forgiven." That's that first consciousness we have when we are born again, and by the way, it's a good thing never to lose that as a Christian. You've been walking with God for a long time, you're a spiritual father. Never forget what it was like when Jesus forgave all of your sins. Secondly, he says, "He's forgiven you," verse 12, "For his namesake." Not for your goodness, not for your righteousness, not for your works, not because you go to Revival Christian Fellowship, and you tithe there and you serve there, but for his namesake.

It's because of Jesus, not because of us. And then thirdly, he says, verse 13, "You have known the Father." Literally this would be translated, "I've come to know God as Father." I remember just that awareness, my sins are forgiven. And then I remember that I'm a child of God. God is my father. The Bible even says that he sends forth his spirit into our hearts whereby we cry in the Aramaic, Abba, Father. The word Abba was a word used for an infant talking to his father, Abba, Father. The equivalent today would be papa. You know as parents, when you have children, dad's coaching the little one, "Say papa, say papa, say dada. Say, I like dada."

And the mother's coaching the little one, "Say mama, mama," and they're kind of working to get, what's the baby going to say first? Well, when you get born again and you become a child of God, you know what the first thing you say is? Abba, Father, my sins have been forgiven and I am a child of God and he is my father in heaven. He will take care of me, he will provide for me, he will watch over me. So he says to them, "For his namesake, you've been forgiven and you have known the Father, come to know the Father." Then he addresses the fathers. Now, you would think it would be little children, young men, and fathers, but he reverses the order and he says to them fathers... They're mentioned in verse 13, and the fathers are mentioned in verse 14, and he says the same thing twice about them.

"You have known him that is from the beginning." Now, who is him that is from the beginning? I believe that this is a reference not to God the Father, but to God the son, Jesus Christ. Go with me to chapter one of 1 John verse one, chapter one, verse one, "That which was from the beginning," same phrase, "That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon with our hands have handled the word of life. This life was manifested and we have seen it and we bear witness and show it unto you, that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifest unto us." That which was from the beginning is a reference to Jesus Christ and you fathers, you know the Lord and you've walked with him for many years. So in the family of God, in the congregation here right now, in the second service, there are baby Christians, infants, and you're just excited.

My sins are forgiven and God is my father. You're not thinking about eschatology and pre-trip, post-trip, and all millennialism, and Arminianism versus Calvinism. You're just glad that you're saved and God is your father, amen. And then you mature and you walk with God and you become a spiritual father and you've known him,, that is Jesus, which is from the beginning, how we thank God for those in our congregation who are mature. You have the baby Christians and you have the mature Christians, and by the way, you mature saints of God, you need to help care for love, nurture, mentor, disciple, the baby Christian. You need to be an example to them and you need to share with them and mentor them, put your arm around them. Say, "Hey, you want to come Wednesday night with me? Hey, you want to get together and pray with me? Hey, you want to come over to our house and we're going to have Bible study?"

And you pour into them and you encourage them and you pray for them. It takes more than just the pastor to mature the congregation. It takes every member, a minister, so the spiritual fathers. Then thirdly, he speaks to the young men, verse 13 and 14, they are mentioned. John says three things about them. In verse 14, he says, "You are strong." Now, it's the natural virtue of young men to be strong, right? Now, I know there's rare cases, but generally speaking, young men are strong. I remember when I was young, and believe me, there was a time I was actually young. I liked that verse where David says, "I was young and now I'm old," and I can quote that now. When I was young, I wasn't old, so I couldn't quote the verse, but now I was young, now I'm old.

Remember when you're young, guys, you think you're invincible. You could fall off a 10-story building, you're just going to bounce and get up and go... Train hits you, you just knock it off the

tracks. Faster than a speeding bullet, you can run. Remember when you used to be able to run, guys? Now, you're lucky to get out of the chair. You get in the rocker, you can't even get it started. I'll never forget I just literally woke up one day and I go, "Whoa, I'm actually old." I went from a young guy to an old guy. It's like, "Man, this is weird." The things you used to do and the strength he used to have and the stamina you used to... I was watching a little NBA yesterday. Yes, the pastor watches basketball, and I saw those guys running up down the court, banging, falling, jumping, and everything. I just turned it off, I go, "I'm going to go take a nap right now." Whew, sweat pouring out. It's like, "Oh, I'm going to go take a nap. I'm tired." Got something to eat, then took a nap.

So, here's the strong Christians, the young men. They're strong in the Lord. Now, notice John doesn't say be strong. He says you are strong. So, this is his assurance of their vitality and strength, spiritually speaking. Then he says secondly, "The word of God abides in you." I love that, verse 14. You know why these young men are strong? Because the word of God abides in them. This, my beloved, is the secret of strength spiritually and I will never tire saying that. This is the secret of being strong spiritually.

Be a man or a woman of the word. You cannot grow spiritually apart from the word of God, and you're not going to grow just listening to sermons on Sunday either. You have to open up the book every day and feed your soul and study God's word and pray over the passage and ask God to make it real in your life. You have to be a student of the word. The psalm of Psalm 119, the psalm that is entirely devoted to the glories of God's word. In verse nine, the Psalm says, "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to thy word."

I believe that God has kept me all the years when I was young and now I'm old because of my commitment to his word and my studying in his word and my meditating in his word and my devotion to God's word. It's what helps the Christian to stay on track. How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking he into the word of God. And then again in Psalm 119, verse 11, "Thy word of I hid in my heart." That I might not what? Sin against you. So, hiding God's word in our heart makes us strong Christians. All strong Christians are Bible Christians, and then the third thing he said about them is in verse 14, "You have overcome the wicked one." So you are strong, the word of God abides in you, secret of their strength, and their victory, you have overcome the wicked one.

The Christian life is not just enjoying the forgiveness of our sins or the fellowship of the Father, it's also fighting the wicked one, Satan. We have to learn to resist Satan, and Satan cannot resist the power of God's word. Remember when Jesus was tempted by the devil, three times the devil came to him? And what did Jesus do to resist that temptation? And by the way, he resisted temptation in his humanity, as a man. He said three times, "It is written, it is written, it is written." The son of God used the word of God to resist the devil. If Jesus used the Bible to resist Satan, guess what? So should we, amen? And we should hide God's word in our heart, so that when a temptation comes and Satan comes, believe me, in his subtlety, we'll be able to have a verse or a scripture to come against the wiles of the wicked one.

Now, second section of this passage is now he appeals to the church for separation, and this is the crux of the message this morning, verse 15 to 17, follow with me as we read. "Love not the world..." Verse 15, "Neither the things that are in the world, if any man or person love the world, the love of the Father is not in him or her. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world and the world," Verse 17, "Is passing away and the lust thereof, but he that does the will of God abides..." For how long?

Forever.

Forever. I want you to notice that John issues a command, verse 15, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world." Now, I use that word, command, because that's what it is in the Greek. It's called an imperative. It's not an option, it's not a suggestion, it is a command. God in his word commands his children, do not love the world. And you say, "Well, what does he mean by world? Does that mean I can't love my cat or my dog or the tree? If I go out in the front yard, I'll see a tree. I go, that tree is of the world, I can't love that tree?"

Now, there are some cats in my neighborhood that I think are of the devil, but that's not what we're talking about, demon possessed cats. I bind you Satan. They don't give a darn. They just still be a cat. Does that mean I can't love flowers? "See that rose bush? That's all the devil, that devil rose bush. It's got thorns, a sign of sin. Tear ye down." I'll stop right there. Don't be stupid, a lot of stupid Christians. He's not talking about a monastic life, sell everything, put on a white robe, live up in a monastery and sit around going... All day long.

Love not the world, don't look at the world. No, I love the ocean. I don't have any problems... I love waves, I love the sound of waves, I love the beach, I love the ocean, I love everything about it. I can sit for hours and just look at waves. There's a love of a mountain or the love of streams and rivers. I love art, I love painting, I love cool cars. You can love the world. Christians aren't to be monastic. It's not telling us that in the Bible. So the question is, what does John mean when he says love not the world? Didn't the Bible say in John 3:16, for God so loved the world? How do you reconcile that? God so loved the world, but we're not to love the world? John used the word world 23 times in first epistle, six times in these verses, more than any other New Testament writer, the Greek word is kosmos, K-O-S-M-O-S, kosmos. It denotes order or arrangement. It's the opposite of chaos. We get our word cosmetic from in, which is interesting. You ladies, when you do your cosmetics, you don't want chaotic cosmetics.

When you put your makeup on, you don't want people to go, "Whoa, what's going on there?" You want it to be kosmos, order, right? I love that old J. Vernon McGee quote. Someone asked him, "Dr. McGee, is it okay for women to wear makeup?" He said, "If the barn needs paint, then paint it." I'm just quoting J. Vernon McGee, God rest his soul, but I'm kind of a minimalist. I think a woman, she doesn't need a lot of makeup to look beautiful to me. I'm going to save myself here. My wife doesn't need makeup, my daughters don't need makeup. It's like, "Oh, you're beautiful. You don't have to use that stuff." Did I redeem myself?

Cosmos, cosmetics, order, but the word is used three different ways. Same word, three different

meanings. It's used of the universe, we're aware of that, the cosmos. John's gospel, chapter one, verse 10, "He came into the world," the cosmos, and the second way it's used is for the love of mankind or the world of mankind. Look at chapter two of 1 John, verse two, "He that is Jesus is our propitiation for our sins, not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole..." What?

World.

What kind of world is that? The world of people, the world of mankind. That's why John 3:16 said, "God so loved the world..." Now I'm talking about the cosmos, he's talking about the people in the world, God loves the world. And then the third way it's used, and this is the usage in our text, it is used for the evil world's system. The evil world system, the world under Satan's domain and influence. Now, I want to show you a verse to support that. Turn with me to chapter five of 1 John, verse 19.

We'll get here in several weeks, but in 1 John 5:19, John says, "We know that we are of God and the whole world lies in wickedness." Now, a literal translation of that phrase, the whole world lies in wickedness, is actually the whole world, kosmos, lies in the lap of the wicked one, Satan. So, John is saying the whole cosmos lies in the lap of the wicked one, Satan. He's using the word... Go back with me to chapter two and verse 15, he's using the word to speak of the dominion and influence the philosophies and the attitudes of the world that are under Satan's control. We are not to court the world's favors, we're not to follow its customs, we're not to adopt its maxims, we're not to covet its prizes. What did Paul say in Romans chapter 12? "Be not conformed to this world," cosmos, "But be transformed by the renewing of your mind." In other words, don't let the world press you into its mold.

But sadly, many Christians allow that to happen. They allow the world to press them into its mold. You have worldly Christians. Now, worldliness isn't the way you dress. Worldliness isn't necessarily dancing or going to the picture show or playing cards, that's a worldly Christian. Worldliness starts in the heart. I know people that don't go to the show, don't smoke, don't chew, don't hang out with those that do, they don't dance, they're good Christians, but they're worldly because their heart is not right with God. Usually that worldliness will manifest itself, but there are people who are religious on the outside, but they're worldly on the inside. And we're going to see as we break down in the moment, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, all that is in the world, but he's talking about the philosophies of the world, the ways of the world, the manners of the world.

And sad to say that many churches have become worldly in their ministries by adapting worldly philosophies, their methods, their message, and the motive of ministry is worldly. I'll tell you, the last thing you want is a worldly church. That's an abomination to God. What you want is the church that is ministering and doing the work of the ministry, being influenced by the Bible. Our lives and our ministry, and our church needs to be Bible centered, Bible focused, Christ exalting. And that's my commitment as the pastor of this congregation, that we are a Bible church, that we're here to study God's word and to learn about the Lord and to draw closer to the Lord and see the spirit of God, use the word of God to transform the child of God into the

image of Jesus Christ, the son of God. And our methods and our message and our motive in ministry at this church need to be godly.

They need to be biblical and Christ-centered, and it's a tragedy when the church will use worldly methods and water down the message and their motive is for the glory and recognition of man, rather than pleasing God. Now, why should we not love the world? That's the question we need to ask and answer from our texts. Why should we not love the world, nor the things that are in the world? And if you're taking notes, I'm going to give you three reasons not to love the world. Three reasons that you and I as a Christian should not love the world, nor the things that are in the world. Reason number one, because love for God and love for the world are mutually exclusive. They are mutually exclusive. Notice verse 15, "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is..." What? Not in him. "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

So, love for God and love for the world are by their nature antagonistic and cannot coexist in the same human heart. Back in chapter one, verse five and six, "This is the message which we have heard of him and declaring to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all." If we say verse six, "That we have fellowship with him and we walk in darkness, we lie and we do not the truth." So, you can't be walking in darkness and in fellowship with God. You cannot be loving the world and loving God. There's no in-between, there's no middle ground. "I'm a Christian, but I'm a worldly one." Well, what kind of a Christian is that? There's no love of God in your heart? You cannot have the love for God and a love for the world at the same time. They cannot coexist.

James says in his epistle, chapter four, verse four, "You adulterers, don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God?" That's heavy. If you love the world, God's love is not in you. If you're a friend of the world, you are an enemy of God. Let me give you reason number two that we should not love the world, because of the things that are in the world. Verse 16, go back there and read the text with me, "For all that is in the world, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, the pride of life, they are not of the Father but are of the world."

Now, there are three things in the world that are not from God, the Father. The first is notice that verse 16, lust of the flesh. This is referring to your passions of your sinful, fallen nature. It's not saying that the hemostasis, the body drives, thirst drive, the hunger drive, the need for sleep, the need for sex, sex drive, air drive, gall and bladder drive, he's not saying that these are sinful and evil in and of themselves. He's talking about our lustful desires that come from our sinful Adamic nature. God created you with physical drives, but if the thirst drive becomes drunkenness, it is sin.

If the physical drive for sleep becomes laziness, it is sin. If the hunger drive becomes gluttony, it is sin. If the sex drive, God-given drive, becomes fornication, or adultery, or homosexuality, or bestiality, or pornography or any other form of illicit sex, it is sin. Is the drive sinful? No, it's God-given and it's to be enjoyed in the benefit of marriage, in the covenant relationship of marriage with one man and one woman. God has given us these drives. So, what does he mean by the lust of the flesh? He's talking about our sinful lustful desires. It could be rendered sensuality.

Some say these are the sins of youth. Remember when Eve was tempted in the garden of Eden and she saw the fruit? Guess what the fruit was? To be desired. She wanted that fruit, she wanted to eat that fruit. When Jesus was in the wilderness and he was tempted by the devil and he was 40 days without food and he was hungry, guess what the devil said to him?

Turn these stones into bread. You're hungry, you want to eat? Eat out of the will of God. And Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. I'll trust God to provide my needs. I won't step out of the will of God or disobey God to meet my needs." Then, there's a second characteristic of the world, it's the lust of the eyes. This is the possessions of things. The 10th commandment in the decalogue is thou shalt not what? Covet. Thou shall not covet.

Do you know that this covetousness, this lust for things can lead you to break all of the other nine commandments? You'll lie, you'll steal, you will commit sexual immorality, you'll dishonor your parents, you will not take a Sabbath day to seek God, you'll work to get more things because of covetousness. Achan saw the Babylonian garment and he took the garment and the gold and he hid it under his tent because he was committing the lust of the eyes. This is what the world uses, the media uses to captivate you. David was walking on the housetop of his palace and he looked over in the next courtyard and what happened? He saw his eyes. He saw a woman taking a bath.

Now, that was not David's wife, it was another man's wife. She was married to a Uriah and David should have immediately turned around and said, "Time to go inside and watch basketball. Time to play checkers." Time to get off the roof at least, dodo bird. Instead, David lusted. The Bible says he looked and then he inquired, "Who's that woman next door?" The servant made it clear, that's Bathsheba, the wife... Probably said it real loud, the wife of Uriah. Get it, David, wife of Uriah? But David sent for her and she came unto him. David committed adultery and then she became pregnant, and then what did David do? He lied to cover his sin, he murdered to cover his sin. See how one covetous heart can lead to other sins? I'll lie, I'll steal. I'll commit adultery, all because of my lust for things. Jesus said, "If your right eye offends you, pluck it out. It's better to go through life with only one eye than to be cast whole into hell."

Some see this as the sins of midlife. Sad and tragic that so many in the middle of their life, they hit that midlife stage and they have a fling, "I got to go find myself. I got to do this or do that," and then it's tragic, the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes. And then thirdly, the pride of life. This is our possession. So you go from lust of the flesh, your passions, lust of the eyes, your possessions, to the pride of life, your position. The NASB translates this, the boastful pride, proud love of life, the pride of life.

It's an arrogant self-sufficiency. It's a state of pride or arrogance or boastful haughtiness. It's the bragger. To give a modern translation, I would give, show-off, "Look at what I've done, look at what I've accomplished, look at my car, look at my house, look at my wife, look at my diamonds, look at my watch, look at all that I've done, look how wonderful I am." It's a show-off. Is not this what the world is into? They all get together and brag, show-off, "Look what I got, look what I've

done, look who I am," braggadocious, pride of life. Someone says you have the sins of youth, lust of the flesh, you have the sins of midlife possessions, buy, possess, make more money, buy more things. And then when it's all over, you have the pride of life. Look at all I've done.

You have nothing to be proud of in the sense of your own achievements, your very breath... We sang it in the song this morning, your very breath comes from God. God made your eyes, God made your feet, God made your hands, God gave you the job, God gave you the brains to make the money. God provides everything you have and you need to give him the glory and the credit. So, this show-off kind of attitude, it's allowing what we desire and what we see and the pride of our hearts to control our lives. Verse 15 makes it very clear, "It is not of the Father, but it is of the world." It's worldly. As Christians, we're not of this world. The moment you get saved, guess what happens to you? This world's no longer your home. You're not of this world, its lust, its desires, its possessions.

I'm not of this world. I remember when I was a young Christian back in the early '70s, we used to go hitchhike, witnessing, and we all kind of looked... My friends and I all kind of looked like Duck Dynasty dudes. We were Duck Dynasty before Duck Dynasty, we were gnarly looking. And we'd go hitchhiking, we'd go, "Okay, let's go hitchhike, and whoever picks us up, we'll share the gospel, captive audience." We used to do it. We spend the whole day just hitchhiking around, so we could tell people about Jesus, and I had a friend just gotten saved. He was a hippie and we got him saved. "Okay, follow me. This is how we do. We're going to go witnessing," and we stick out our thumbs, and this guy pulls over in this old pickup truck. It's got the bench seat in the front. So, we all three sit up in this truck and my friend sits in the middle right next to this guy and we clutch up the door, I'm shotgun. We take off, and the guy driving says, "So, where are you guys from?"

This is not a joke, my friend goes, "We are not of this world." I'm like, "Oh, man." I'm thinking, "Dude, that's not the way to start a witness." That guy driving goes, "I'm turning left right here, I'm going to let you out," just pushes us out of the truck. And it's like, "What are you thinking? We're not of this world. That's not going to get the gospel to... That's a family secret. You don't share that with unbelievers."

But it is true, the moment you are saved, you are translated out of this world and you live in the kingdom of God, but let me give you reason number three why you should not love the world, and we'll wrap this up, verse 17, because the world is passing away. Why shouldn't I love the world? Because if I love the world, God's love is not in my heart because the world is lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. And thirdly, verse 17, "The world passes away and the lust thereof, but whoever does the will of God, he abides forever and ever and ever and ever." The world is passing away. Why would you love the world?

The Bible tells us that, "The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night in which the heavens shall pass away with the great noise and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat. The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up, and seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what kind of people ought we to be in all holiness and godly living?"

Don't live for the world. You're in the world, but you're not of the world. This world is not your home. So, don't be controlled by your passions. Don't be controlled by your desire for possessions. Don't be controlled by the pride of life. Let God's word mold and shape your heart, your mind, your motive, your philosophy. Have a biblical worldview and you let your contact with the world be as light as possible because you're a sojourner, you're a pilgrim, you're a stranger, you're just passing through.

How my heart yearns to go to heaven, how my heart yearns to be home. Ever been on a long trip and been really homesick? Ever been on a long trip and you're so homesick, you just want to get home? Christians always have a little tinge of homesickness because heaven is our real home and in this world, they don't know us, they don't recognize us, the world doesn't see who we are. Jesus said, "Don't be surprised if the world hates you. It hated me." They don't understand that God is our father, that our sins have been forgiven, that we're children of God. They don't know us, they don't understand it. They don't know why we're not into the things that they're into, and the glamor and the glitz, but the world is passing away. Don't live for this transient, temporary world, but this is how John closes this section, "He that does the will of God abides forever."

I love the illustration of the 4th of July. We're soon going to celebrate July 4th, and millions of Americans will gather and watch fireworks and they'll go, "Ooh," and, "Ah," and, "Ooh, that's awesome. Wow." They watch these things explode and the colors and the beauty. And whenever they do that little grand finale at the end, I want it to just go off, boom. It's never loud enough and long enough for me. It's like, "Go for it. Blow up the Milky Way galaxy or something like that." Did you ever notice how the fireworks that you ooh and ah just kind of go... And they fizzle and they turn ashes and the little smoke and the silhouette is against the sky, and then it kind of whiffs away and dies away? It's like, "Wow, I waited all year for that. Let's go home and have more hot dogs or something."

You know where the real glory is? Waiting for all the 4th of July to pass, wait outside late, and when the fireworks are over, look at the stars. Look at the stars. They're still shining in heaven. This is what the Bible says. The Bible says, "The righteous are like the stars in the heaven that shine forever." What sky do you want to shine in? Do you want to be like the 4th of July and then fizzle out? Go, "Wow, awesome, ooh, whoa, look at me," and the world claps, and you get your picture on Time Magazine. Or do you want to shine in God's heaven forever and ever and ever and ever? Love not the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in them. Everything in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It is not of the Father, but it is of the world, and the world is passing away, but whoever does the will of God shall abide for how long?

Forever.

Forever. Let's pray.