

The Life: Wanting or Having? (I John 2:12-14)

John said it suddenly and abruptly in his letter, so will I, "DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD!" "But wait," you say, "Doesn't God love the world?" Yes, He does - He created it in love and loves what He created. The earth and its flora and fauna - He loves it all. The people He made in His image (like you and me) to live on it are uniquely and particularly loved. But that's not what John means. The world John is referring to is the world system in separation from God that operates under the illusion of self-determination, self-acquisition, and self-exaltation. It is the world of transient things that are here today and gone tomorrow. It is the world under the influence of a godless devil. It is the world of forever "wanting".

John states there are three things in that world you do not want to pursue. The first is the "lust of the flesh" (v16) - the "flesh" wants one thing... it wants its own way! It wants to do "life" without reference to God - as if I am my own God and I can decide for myself what is right and wrong, what is true or false, what is good for me and what isn't. The second is the "lust of the eyes" (v16) -wanting what I see, what looks attractive, satisfying, fulfilling. It is to live as though appearances determine reality. It is the life of self-acquisition. The third is the "boastful pride of life" (v16) -the life of self-exaltation. This pursuit believes that I can make myself affirmable, loveable, valuable by creating a life that garners confirmation, approval, and applause from my fellow man - it wants to appear important.

None of these three pursuits come from the Father. The results of all three are passing away (v17). To anchor yourself, your identity, your life in these is to build your house of life on sinking sand (Matt 7:26-27). That life can appear to be on a solid foundation, but is actually just one financial, medical, geo-political storm - one death - away from personal bankruptcy or, worse, eternal insolvency. There is a much better option - that is the world of forever "having." When God Himself is our Source, our Supply, our Solid foundation - not ourselves, not the created, not the temporary - we have our home and our identity and our lives in what lives forever. The world of what God says, of what God sees, of what God supplies never fades, never fails. Believe what He says, trust what He sees, live in His promised supply and you will HAVE everything pertaining to life and godliness.

So here's the question: Which will you love? It's interesting to me that John's word for love is "agape" -ultimate love, utmost love, God's love... the love of full pursuit. It is the love of total investment, isn't it? Do you want to be totally invested in anything that death can take from you? The love of personal sacrifice, right? It is amazing what people will sacrifice to love (agape) the world... integrity, sobriety, security, family, health... ETERNITY! We cannot pursue, be totally invested in - ultimately love - both God and the world at the same time (see v15! also Matt 6:24). We say we can, God says we can't. Someone is lying!



- **Tax-deductible contributions** -
may be made to *One In Christ, Inc.*
13820 NW 172nd Ave, Alachua, FL 32615
- **Messages and sermons by Steve** -
www.stevepettitmessages.com
- **Conferences and events led by Steve** -
can be arranged by calling Steve at 352-672-1275
- **To receive this newsletter electronically** -
email your request to OICnewsletter@gmail.com

Praise Reports & Prayer Requests



Please inform us of any changes to your address



Thank you for riding out 2020 with us in all of its oddnesses, changes, and unpredictablenesses (plural because they were multiple for us all!) With no conferences, retreats, or church meetings since March, it sure has been peculiar for us. We certainly did not get to pursue our own ideas of what was good or bad for us, what looked to be profitable or productive, or what we might be able to boast about at year's end - and I doubt you did either!

However, with our "anchor" fastened to the things "above" and not "below", we are riding out this pandemic storm with the same assurance as you - that our anchor is held by Him and will not fail. The "storm" may create difficulties, last a long time, effect all kinds of damage, darken the horizon, and test our courage (see Acts 27!). It may affect our plans, our resources, and our emotions... but can never take our Life from us. Nothing "below" can thwart the purposes of God "above"!

Peace on earth - perfect peace in your personal being in a stormy world - will never come from who sits in the oval office, from a vaccine approved by the CDC, or from us getting to do what we want socially. It's not found in full calendars, full bank accounts, or full church houses. God's perfect peace came to earth in a Person - Jesus Christ the Lord. When God's peace is on earth in your person, you will have Perfect Peace. For God's peace is not really about the absence of conflict, it's about the presence of a Person!

So, we wish you the merriest of Christmases. We wish you the happiest of New Years. We wish you the gladdest of tidings... because WE WISH YOU JESUS! As the Life of your life, may this coming year be so full of Him - God's Perfect Peace - that fear, anxiety, despair (and the like) have an extremely difficult time finding any "room" in you to take up residence. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth... Peace within you... one in whom He is pleased to dwell!

Steve

P.S. Again - no calendar! That's because we have no confirmed dates for 2021. But, we do have "plans" - we have conference and retreat and church meetings on the calendar from February through October of next year. All will be evaluated 4 - 6 weeks out and final decisions will be made appropriately. So if you are interested in a 2021 meeting, contact us soon. No one will be held responsible for changed plans (which has always been true for us anyway), so call and let's discuss options before things (hopefully!) fill up.

NONPROFIT
US POSTAGE PAID
ALACHUA, FL
PERMIT NO. 11

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

One In Christ, Inc.
13820 NW 172nd Avenue
Alachua, FL 32615