

THE SERMON NOTEBOOK

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SUBJECT: THE WILL OF GOD

TITLE: THY WILL BE DONE

TEXT: JOHN 2:16-17

INTRODUCTION. If you love God you will desire His will for your life. You either love God or you love the world. There is nothing in between. No lost person can love God, but a Christian who is not walking in the light (1:5-7) may love the world. His old sinful nature loves the world. In the power of the Holy Spirit the old sin nature is being crucified daily. That is Sanctification, a process through which the Holy Spirit nurtures us from spiritual infancy to maturity in Christ. No one can develop spiritual maturity on his own, but if he is obedient to the Holy Spirit, He will so focus his mind on Christ that the individual will be conformed to the image of God's precious Son (Rom. 8:29). Sanctification then is a process by which we grow in the Lord from the time of Justification until our Glorification. Our love for God and for one another is one of the most compelling proofs that we belong to Him. In verse 15, John wrote: "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" (NKJV).

I. THE WORLD IS PASSING AWAY, 2:16-17a.

"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 is passing away, and the lust of it..."

A. Lust of the Flesh Is of the World.

1. Lust denotes a strong, passionate desire.
 - a. Lost people can only love the world.
 - b. Christians can love the world
 - c. Christians who are walking in the light will love God instead of the world (1:5ff).
2. The "world" speaks of our sinful nature.
 - a. When you were saved you were given new life from above.
 - b. Until you are glorified you will struggle with your old sin nature.
 - c. Victory over the sinful nature comes only through the Holy Spirit.
 - d. Those who love God and walk in the light are spiritual.
 - e. Those who love the world and walk in darkness are carnal.

3. The Bible teaches that “*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,*” Rom. 3:23
 - a. “*The soul who sins shall die,*” Ezekiel 18:4.
 - b. “*The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked,*” Jer. 17:9.
 - c. “*...The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord,*” Rom 6:23.

4. Those who are saved should love the Lord, not the world.

“...Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God,” Heb. 12:1b-2.

5. The world holds a strong attraction, even for the believer.
6. Love for the world is understandable, but foolish.
7. It is foolish to love what God has condemned.

B. The Lust of the Eyes Is of the World.

1. This points to a passionate desire excited by what the eye sees.
2. The lust of the eyes is seeing things from Satan’s point of view.
3. The lust of the eyes leads to greed and covetousness.
4. The vision is the chief means of communication between external things and the flesh.
 - a. The flesh desires physical gratification.
 - b. The eyes excite the flesh.
 - c. The more the flesh is excited the more it seeks gratification.

I have talked with people who have confessed to a life of immorality before they were saved who told me that they still had to struggle with lust. Their eyes are constantly transmitting messages that will excite the flesh. They are the first to observe the dress that is a little too short - what message is she sending? They are the first to notice how tight the skirt is - is she trying to be sexy? They are the first to pick up on a “look” - is she coming on to me?

Does not a person who did not live an immoral life before he was saved have a problem with lust? Of course. But here is a difference; when you sin memory is stored in memory cells. Each memory can become the source of a fresh temptation. A friend once confessed that after his wife became terminally ill with cancer, he would lie awake at night and grieve over his infidelity. He could see faces - and worse. One night he counted thirty-nine women with whom he had committed adultery. He knew God had forgiven him, but he was having a lot of trouble forgiving himself when he thought of the faithfulness of his beloved wife who was literally dying beside him.

While driving, I frequently listen to BBN and AFR, the radio program of the American Family Association. I love to hear Adrian Rodgers, Woodrow Kroll, and other preachers, as well as the talk show hosted by Tim Wildmon and Marvin Sanders. AFR frequently plays an ad for the AFR Internet filter, with the warning that no matter how strong the man is, he is not strong enough to watch pornography on the Internet without being affected by it. What is shocking is the fact that James Dopson's American Family Association reports an alarming number of church leaders who are addicted to pornography. Families are crushed when a family member is arrested for sending child pornography by the Internet. For the life of me, I cannot understand what kind of mind is excited by a picture of a child! Again, that is seeing from Satan's point of view.

There is one other thing that must be addressed here. Everywhere you go today you see young women walking around before the world dressed - or should we say undressed - in a manner that would surely have shocked the temple prostitutes at Corinth. Years ago, preachers condemned the strapless bathing suit; today it is the suitless bathing strap. It is bad enough when lost women dress like that, but it is a shame when Christian women dress in a manner that would have shocked their grandparents. Make no mistake about this, human nature has not changed. The lust of the eyes is the same today as it was generations ago.

The world encourages young girls to dress like that. Even many Christian girls and young women - and some not so young - want to be sexy! Have we lost words like "cheap" and "trashy" today? My wife has taught school for many years and we have a lot of friends who are teachers. If they could talk (and what if they started writing books?), they could tell some disturbing stories about the mothers who teach their daughters to violate the dress code because she thinks "it's cute."

Let me stress one more thing. If mothers do not see what is wrong with sending their daughters out into the world in clothes that will excite the lust of the eyes, it is time for some spineless fathers to stand up like a man and lay the law down. Why do they not do it? Are they afraid their family might think they are susceptible to temptation?

My sister once told me an interesting story. It was interesting because anything like that was so much more amusing when our father was embarrassed. He owned a farm in the Mississippi Delta and on this particular day he had come in from the field, seated himself in his favorite chair and picked up the Commercial Appeal to catch up on the news while he waited for Mother to call him for dinner. As he sat reading the paper he heard steps that could only be Linda or Mike, since Mother was in the Kitchen and James and I were no longer at home. As the individual walked by he caught a glimpse of bare legs around the corner of his paper. He exclaimed, "Girl, you get back in your room and put some clothes on!" When Daddy spoke like that, I can assure you it was not a suggestion! I don't know who was more shocked, Daddy or the young lady who had come out to visit Linda.

Christians should ask God to deliver them from the lusts of the eye. Furthermore, Christians should be careful not to encourage others to sin through the lusts of the eyes. Remember this; you cannot love both the world and the Lord. You cannot worship Jesus Christ on Sunday morning and expose yourself to the lust of the eyes at a movie that afternoon - not that a Christian would go to a movie on Sunday!

Movies, television, and music videos must be carefully monitored to avoid lust. However, lest someone think we are being negative, let me assure you that I abstain from a lot of things for very positive reasons. I do not put sugar in my gas tank. Does that make me a negative person? I do not put sand in my crankcase. Does that make me a negative person? My body, mind, and spirit are far more valuable than my automobile.

C. The Pride of Life Is of the World.

1. The NASB renders it "the boastful pride of life."

The word for life used here speaks of the pattern of life. There are people whose life is filled with pride and they don't even know it. Satan cooperates with the flesh and the world in such a way as to confuse pride and humility.

2. The word denotes an arrogant pride.

3. This points to arrogant boasting about one's possessions or position.

4. It also denotes self-centeredness and self-conceit.

5. The lust of the flesh produces the pride of life.

6. The lust of the eyes can produce the pride of life.

7. Some boast, "I have my pride!", rather than repenting of it.
8. The pride of life is a mental attitude sin.
9. The pride of life never stands alone.
 - a. Bitterness testifies to a frustrated pride.
 - b. Vindictiveness speaks of an antagonistic pride.
 - c. Condescension proves one puts self above others.

Years ago, I heard my younger brother, Mike, refer to someone as "genuinely superficial." He added, "she has been a fake so long it's natural." I grew up in the Mississippi Delta at a time when my parent's generation was still talking about moving from the hills and clearing farm land in the Delta. Many of the people who were successful were simply genuine hard working people, but there were some who were still unaccustomed to their new found affluence and their position in some small town or village. I have often referred to them as pseudo-sophisticates. They knew all the rules of etiquette and applied them to some degree to everyone, but more strictly when among those they considered their peers.

You could hear the arrogance in their greeting. I worked for the U. S. Department of Agriculture to help pay for my education, and in that capacity I often talked with small farmers, and some "planters" - we called them turn-row farmers. They farmed from the cab of their pickup truck, some very naturally because of the size of their operations, others with an attitude that testified to the pride of life. Two brothers operated large farms in the same community. I spoke in the local church one Sunday and surprised one of them. The other one was not there. The one who was not there was the pleasant one. The one who was there was obnoxiously arrogant. He also directed the music that Sunday!

The pride of life can manifest itself in the church. How many times has someone looked at visitors in a service and proclaimed, "Those are not our kind of people!" One lady, who always seemed very gracious when she was among her own "kind of people," stared at another lady who had picked up several children for Sunday School. She whispered to a friend, "I wish you would look at her - sitting up there with those children!"

The pastor of a large church once told my seminary class about an experience he had had when he started out in the ministry. He was called as youth minister at a church I would later get to know. The young minister got out in town and started visiting young people and before long he had a lot of young people from all over town in Sunday School. One Sunday, when he was asked to attend the deacons meeting he thought he would be commended and maybe given a raise. Instead, he was told,

“Those are not our kind of people. We don’t want those people in our church.”
Later, in another city, he helped build a large church by reaching out to those kind of people.

D. The World is Passing Away.

1. Jesus warns us against setting our affections on the things of the world, Matt. 6:19-21.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

2. This physical world will be destroyed by fire, 1 Peter 3:10-12.

*“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and **the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.** Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!”*

II. THE ONE WHO DOES THE WILL OF GOD LIVES FOREVER, 2:17b.

A. Love for God Proves That We Belong to Him.

1. Lost people cannot love God.

- a. A theist who is not a Christian may love the idea of a god.
- b. A pagan may have some kind of love for a god that does not exist.

2. Christians should not love the world.

- a. We must not place more value on the physical world than we do on God.
- b. We must not love the things of the world more than God.
- c. This does not keep up from caring for our environment.
- d. It does demand a biblical world-view.

B. Doing the Will of God Proves We Have Eternal Life.

1. This is the opposite of loving the world.

2. To do the will of God is to walk in the light as Jesus is in the light (1:6-7).

3. God will enable His children to do His will.

- a. He has given us His Spirit (John 14 and 16).
- b. He has given us His Word (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16).
- c. He has given us His promise (John 15:7).

CONCLUSION. What are we to do? Paul has an answer:

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:1-2)

INVITATION.