

Worldliness (video)

by Richard Siple

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Duration: 1:05:30

Description

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Transcript

Good morning. Can you hear me? I don't want to tell you how to run your church, but it would be good to have a little light right on the Bible. Is God speaking to you? Well, I left Akron in 1977 to go to Canada, so I've been gone a long time, come back for visits because I have a son that lives in the Akron area.

And every time I think about the revival we experienced in Akron, my heart gets full. I think about the wonder of God's presence, and God gave me a son, and I'm not going to speak on that this morning because God won't let me. He wants me to do something else.

And the last brother just gave the introduction to my sermon, so I have to do it. Oh, thank you. Perfect.

There you go. You see, you have not because you ask not. You ask.

But the Scripture God gave me in revival, Psalm 126, when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like then to dream. I tell you, when God comes, it's like a dream. You want to pinch yourself, say, is this really happening? Wow.

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like then to dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue was singing. And you've never heard singing until you hear it in revival.

Then said they among the heathen, the Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as streams in the south.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who goes forth weeping, bearing precious seeds, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. And that was the time of God's visitation, time of laughter.

I remember standing on the platform. I smiled and laughed until my face was stiff. And just letting God do what he wanted to do.

So I just want to encourage your hearts. That has happened right here in this part of Ohio. And it's been a long time ago.

But God wants to do it again. He wants to do it again. My son talked us into leaving one of the most beautiful places on earth, Vancouver Island.

And coming back here, he said, I've let you go all these years because you were serving God. And that was all right. But now you've retired for the third time.

And, of course, being retired is just being tired all over again. That's all. He said, you're not going to pastor a church anymore, so it's time to come back here and give the rest of your time to us.

So I said, well, I'll pray about it and went to pray. And the first scripture that came to my mind is, what does the Lord require of thee but to do justice? And my son had said, that's just just and right, that you should do that. So I said, all right, that's it.

And we sold our home and furniture and everything and came back. But once we got back and got settled, then God began to work powerfully in my heart. And he said, you didn't just come back here to be with your children in your last years.

You came back here to do more than that. And I tell you, for the last couple of weeks, I've been running. And God is moving and God is at work.

Isn't it wonderful how he's touching hearts here? God wants, longs, longs, yearns with a heart of love to bring revival to his church and to save people by the millions. He longs to do that. But God is not morally free to do everything he wants to do.

Do you know that? God cannot lie. Amen? There's some things God cannot do. He cannot be untrue to himself.

He is God. He can never change. And God longs to do things for us, but sometimes he's not morally free to do them for us.

And it's because there are things we need to do. And so I believe that with all my heart. And I believe God wants to do some new, fresh, wonderful things in this part of Ohio.

Amen? All right, let's believe it. Now, I want to begin this morning with my secondary text, and then I'll get to my main one shortly. But my secondary text, of course, is that great passage, 2 Chronicles 7.14. He's talking about God's people, which are called by my name.

Are you a Christian? Let's see your hand if you're a Christian. Are you a Christian? Yeah, you're a Christ one, right? A Christ one, you're called by his name. My people, said God.

My people, not the world's people. My people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves. Don't wait until God humbles us, right? Because that's rough.

Don't do that. They humble themselves and pray and seek my face. And we could preach on all those things for weeks.

And turn from their wicked ways. Then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin. Not the world's sin, their sin, the sin of God's people.

And I will heal their land. Oh, our land needs healing. You cannot understand what a shock it is to come back into the United States after not living here for a while.

I mean it. We lived in Canada for almost 30 years and we moved back here. We visited here, of course, but we moved back here.

It is a tremendous shock. Our country is on its way to hell as fast as it can go. And there isn't anything in this world that can save it except God.

And he can, amen? He can do it and he can heal our land. And we want to believe him for that. And so, of course, I have to ask the question.

You already heard it in the message before. Powerful, wonderful message. Never heard anyone preach on that passage that way before.

Have you? That was a message to our hearts. Is it true that the terrible wickedness of unbelievers in our world is what is causing the downward trend of our society? And, of course, the answer that we've heard this morning, and you know it's true, no, it is not. It is not the world.

Our text tells us clearly it's God's people. So do God's people have wicked ways? Well, they must. Or God wouldn't say for them to turn from them, right? God says turn from our wicked ways.

So we must have, God's people must have wicked ways. Now, I've been licensed in the Christian Missionary Alliance for over 60 years preaching. And I've been in revival ministry for many years now.

And I have had a chance to see what is wrong with God's people. You say, well, it's sin. Yes, it's sin.

But I want to define it a little more closely this morning. There are three wicked ways of God's people. And I can only give you one, okay? You'll have to get the other two some other time.

But the one I think is the most pressing and probably the most important one is the wicked way of worldliness. The wicked way of worldliness. Now, my primary text for my message this morning is one that you could guess, 1 John 2, the first epistle of John, chapter 2, verses 15 to 17.

And it says, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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 passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he who does the will of God abides forever. So, my subject is very simple. It's four words.

Oh, brother and sister, get them this morning. It's four words. Love not the world.

Love not the world. The Church of Jesus Christ today needs to hear this message, penetrate their hearts and their lives and their homes and their churches, and transform them. Love not the world.

Now, I grew up in a church setting in western Pennsylvania where we were constantly exhorted not to be worldly. There was preached, taught, exhorted, almost harassed not to be worldly. Don't be worldly.

Don't be worldly. What was meant by that? Well, in that group, those who were considered worldly were. Are you ready? Don't fall out of your seat now.

Here they were, those who wore lipstick and possibly earrings. They were worldly. Now, that was worldly.

That was out. My wife, when she was a teenager, can still remember how their Sunday school teachers Sunday after Sunday got after them because they didn't dare to wear lipstick to church. But if she thought any of them maybe did to school, she got after them, Bob, because that was worldly.

It's getting really quiet in here. Did I say something wrong now? Really hilarious. If you attended the theater, of course you were worldly.

If you danced, you really were worldly. If you played cards, you were really on the way down now. If possibly you professed Christ in smoke, that was really questionable whether you were saved.

And if you drank at all, obviously you were not a Christian. Now, don't get me wrong about any of these things, one way or the other. Hurry up and tell us which ones are wrong.

No, I want to get out alive. No, no. No.

I refrain from all those things. I didn't smoke. I didn't chew.

I didn't go with girls that do. I thought because I refrained from all those things that I was not worldly. I found out that that didn't have anything directly to do with being worldly.

I mean, it might be a manifestation of something one way or another, but it really didn't deal with the issue of being worldly. Now, listen carefully. Jesus never used the word worldly or worldliness ever.

At least he did. It's nowhere in the Scriptures. You got that? He didn't use the word worldly or worldliness.

But he had a great deal to say about the world. In fact, as soon as you decide to make a study of it, you are overwhelmed. You go through the four Gospels and you say, I can't believe it.

I had no idea he talked about this this much. It just becomes a pile of Scripture. We couldn't possibly do an exposition on all those this morning.

And we won't even try. I'll give you some. But Jesus had a lot to say about the world.

For instance, Jesus said, I came into the world. What does that mean? Well, it simply means that he came down from heaven's glory out of eternity and focused himself in a woman's womb and took on himself a human nature and flesh and body and was born into our world. That's what he meant when he said, I came into the world.

Right? It isn't polite to sit and stare when someone asks you a question. I never ask trick questions. I hate trick questions.

So, Jesus said, I came into the world. He said, I am going out of the world. What did he mean? He meant that he was going to leave this ball, this earth, and go back to heaven's glory.

Right? Hey, you're right now. I thought you knew all this stuff. He said, I am not of the world.

Oh. He said, I came down from heaven. I am not of this world.

Then he said, you are not of this world the same as I am not of this world. Oh. Whoa.

He said, the world hates me. Is that true? The world hated him. Right? They gave him a mock trial and nailed him on a cross and put him in the tomb.

They thought they were rid of him. They hated him. The scribes and Pharisees would grind their teeth in rage and go out and plot how to kill him.

They hated him. Boy, the world certainly doesn't hate some parts of the church today. Right? No, that's how you can get a big audience.

Just get one of the big preachers. Again, he said in John 15 verses 18 and 19, if the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belong to the world, it would love you as its own.

As it is, you do not belong to the world. But I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

You try to read some of these passages and about every two or three words you have the word world. I'm telling you, Jesus had a lot to say about this. Again in John 17, he said, Holy Father, I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world.

See, I'm doing all this because you've got to get straight this morning what the world is. He says, I'm still here, but I won't be, so that they may have full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world. He doesn't want us to go off and be a bunch of monks or nuns somewhere. Right? God doesn't want Christians to be in isolation.

He wants them to be in separation. And there's a huge difference between separation and isolation. And when I was a young Christian, I thought the two were synonymous.

And I'm so glad that God got through to me that he didn't want me isolated from the world. He wanted me right out in the middle of the world, standing for Christ and witnessing for Jesus and winning lost people out of the world. Then he says, my prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil.

They are not of the world as I am not of it, to be a bright and a shining light in the world. You see, the three wicked ways of his people today are worldliness, powerlessness, and passiveness. And I can't preach on the other two, but we need to be filled with the Spirit, and then we need to be intentional witnesses for Christ bringing people to Jesus.

And we went out on Vancouver Island and God came down, and for five years we had two conversions a week. For five years! I'm just saying God wants to get us to wake up. But anyway, I'm not talking about

that, so you get away with it for this time.

Now I want to answer three questions. Number one, what is the world? Now listen carefully. What is the world? The world is simply this world with all that is in it.

Somebody says, oh no, no, no, no, you don't have your theology straight. This world means in the Bible this world system, this ungodly system. No, you can't find that in the Bible anywhere.

That's not in the Scriptures. All that Jesus had to say about it, if I could give you all those Scriptures this morning, you'd go home and study it. Everything Jesus had to say about the world was about this world.

I mean the whole great big thing. This globe, this earth, with everything that's on it and in it. That's what the world is.

And now Father, glorify me, said in John 17, 5, in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. Before you and I, Father, created the world, I had glory with you. He's talking about this world.

He was, if you go to John 1, he was in the world and the world was made through him and the world did not recognize him. What world is that? The whole thing. That's what he's talking about.

He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him, yet to them who received him he gave eternal life. He's talking about the world. John 13, 1, listen to this carefully.

It was just before the Passover feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having left his own who were in the world, he now showed them full extent of his love.

And so here the scriptures say he's about to leave this world and go back to the heavenly world. Are we beginning to get it straight? See, if we don't get this part straight, I might as well not preach the rest of it. We have to get this straight in our minds instead of some of the stuff we've been told or we won't get it straight in our lives.

In John 17, Christ prays for his followers. I'm not going to read it all. What I'm going to do is snatch sentences all the way through it about the world.

Before the world began, those who gave me out of the world, I am not praying for the world. I will remain no longer in the world while I am still in the world. The world has hated them because they're not of the world.

I do not pray for you to take them out of the world but to keep them from the evil. They are not of the world even as I am not of it. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world so that the world may believe.

Complete unity to let the world know. You loved me before the creation of the world. The world does not know you.

Jesus was an alien. He was a being from another world, and I'm closer to it than most of you. He came and created this world, and then he came into it.

So the world that Jesus is talking about and that the Scriptures are talking about is simply this world and everything that's in it. Now, what is worldliness? Get this definition carefully. Worldliness is to give priority to the things and matters of this world rather than the things of God.

Now, we have to get this because right here is the crux of it. Right here is the heart of it. Worldliness is to give priority to the things and matters of this world rather than the things of God.

And that is what the church is full of. The people of God are absolutely caught up in it. Jesus said, Seek first.

Seek first. That's priority. Seek first the King of God and his righteousness and all these things that you need of this world will be added unto you.

Is God able to do that? Certainly he is. But he says don't make it your priority. Don't make it the number one issue in any situation.

Let me give you a test this morning. It's a little different kind of a one. I don't care much about tests myself, but I'm going to impose one on you.

Which disturbs me most? That's the title of my test. Which disturbs me most? My neighbor dying without Christ or a scratch on my new car? Well, you say, why do you ask that question? Because I need to stop and confess my own sins because I want to help you. We were still living out in Vancouver Island.

I traded my little Plymouth Sundance, which my wife loves and she's still mad at me about it. I traded it for a brand-new Plymouth Acclaim. They don't make them anymore.

Every time they make a good car, they quit making it. I traded for a new Plymouth Acclaim. It was, you know, off-white, beautiful, brand-new.

It wasn't very expensive, but it was new and it was mine. It looked so nice. We drove out here to visit our son in Tallmadge.

In Tallmadge, there's a place they call the Six Corners. It's where six roads come together. There's a traffic light and you wait your turn.

As you come up to it, there are a couple of places where you really kind of come up a steep incline. I was going somewhere and I came up this incline. There was a car ahead of me, you could call it that.

It was more like an accident looking for a place to happen. It was an old rattletrap, really. He pulled up and stopped at the traffic light.

Now, this is my first mistake. I thought, I'm not going to get too close to that thing. So, I stopped way back and we're on a hill.

We just get stopped and his car stalls. Then, it starts to roll backwards. Because not only is the motor not any good, the brakes aren't any good either.

So, here the thing starts coming slowly and picking up speed, rolling back toward my brand new car. So, my first mistake was to stop way back there. If I'd stopped up close, I'd have been better off, right? Less impact.

So, the second thing I did that's peculiar was I honked my horn. I honked my horn. Now, you'd have more presence of mind than that.

And then, I don't know how he did it so fast, but this frozen looking kid jumped out of the front of the car and ran out of the front door and ran around front and grabbed the bumper. I would have thought it was funny if it weren't my car. And his feet are skidding on the pavement.

The car's picking up speed. And, of course, it did what you know it would do, it hit the front of my car. And he was, poor kid, he was so mad.

And he stood by the car and started kicking it and swearing at it, which really helped it. And so, you've got to understand, I'm still living in Canada. And so, I get out and say, well, do you have a driver's license? Yeah, he had a driver's license.

Do you have insurance? No. Just then, my son came home from work and he saw his dad over there with his new car and he stopped, got on his cell phone and called the police. So, the police came over and the policeman is looking at the whole situation.

And I said, this young man just bought this car and just got the license plates put on it and he's on his way home and he has no insurance. Then I made my third terrible mistake. I said, if we were in Canada, that wouldn't happen.

Oh, don't ever do anything like that. He was very unhappy about that. He said, that's the law here, too.

And I said, why doesn't he have insurance? Well, that didn't make him happier. Anyway, there wasn't anything much you could do about it. So, some of us got the car off my front bumper and we went on home to my son's place because we hadn't moved here yet.

And so, we go in the kitchen and my son says, well, he may not have had insurance, but our company does business with his company. I know who he works for and I'll get the money out of him. And all at once, God spoke to me.

You ever have God speak to you all at once? And he said, what are you doing? What are you doing? That stupid piece of metal and rubber and junk, I'm going to burn it all up someday. What is the matter with you? There was that young man. Yeah, he looked frowsy, probably doesn't know the Lord.

You blew it. And I said to my son, whoa, wait a minute, son, wait a minute, wait a minute. I'm all wrong.

My attitude is wrong. How could I love that car like that? That's worldliness. And I said, because I wanted my son to hear it, I said, son, what I should have done was put my arm around that kid and set up a date with him to take him to breakfast and share Christ with him.

Amen? Yeah. That's how worldly I can get. Which disturbs me most, missing a Sunday church service or my favorite TV program? Which disturbs me most, a sermon 10 minutes too long or lunch 30 minutes late? You may get a chance to test that.

No, no. What disturbs me most, my Bible unopened or the newspaper unread? What disturbs me most, my children late for Sunday school or late for public school? Which disturbs me most? When I was here and when God was moving in power, there's a wonderful friend that came to the Lord, a Greek man that came to the Lord. And he's been living for God the whole 30 years we've been gone.

And God has made him a powerful preacher and witness in the Orthodox Church. And people are coming to Christ. And as soon as I got back, our friendship blossomed again.

And we would meet and talk. And one day he said to me, you know, God has really spoken to me about something in my life that was worldly. Oh, I said, what was that? He said, well, whenever the football season came on, I was a fan of the Cleveland Browns.

Browns, is that right? Yeah, okay. And he said, my family and everybody knew that I work hard and that's my time for myself. And so he said, nothing disturbs me.

Nothing interrupts me when I watch the football games. Nobody speaks to me. That's my time.

And he said, God has really convicted me and I have confessed my sin and repented and I've given it up. And I'm not even going to bother with it. He said, my goodness, do you think it's wrong to watch a football game? Not necessarily.

But it's wrong for it to have priority in your life over anything that God wants in your life. And when I lived in Canada and I used to say to people, you know, the God of Canada is hockey and the arenas are the places where they worship. And sometimes they frowned at me for saying that, but I'm still alive.

And I want to say some things. Our brother before said that American Christians are totally caught up in the things of the world. All kinds of things, not just sports things, but you name it.

They're running their legs off and destroying their health and their home and everything, taking their kids to all of the junk and making sure that their little junior is good. Greedy can hardly stand up and he's already got, he wouldn't be here, but he can't, he's already got ice skates on. So, worldliness, priorities, putting things of the world ahead of the things of God.

What is the solution? Well, there's only two ways to get from the world, this world, to the next one. Translation or death, right? Is that right? You're not asleep. Okay, that's right.

In Galatians 6.14 we read, God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. My friend, when someone was led outside of the gates of the city of Jerusalem and up on the hill called the Place of the Skull, when the soldiers led them up there and stripped their clothes and threw them down on that cross and nailed them to that cross, they were through with the world. Right? Whatever they had done in the world, whatever they owned in the world, whatever their pleasures were in the world, it didn't matter.

Anything and everything about the world was finished. They went up that hill to die, and they were crucified unto the world. They were dead to the world.

They no longer had any priority of any kind in their lives. And that's why the one thief had the good sense to make sure that he could get into the next world where he wanted to be, in paradise with Christ. You know, right at the heart of the Canadian Revival was this truth.

I have been crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. Not faith in the Son of God. Check the Greek.

I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. My friend, God wants us to give up our life so that we can have his love. And you can't love the world.

You cannot love the world and give up your life. But when you come to the cross, Jesus said, if you want to follow me, you must disown yourself. You no longer belong to yourself.

You must disown yourself and take up the cross and follow me. There has to be a recognition of the truth that in the mind and heart of God, when Jesus was nailed to that cross and died, I was nailed there in him and died in him. That's how I can be forgiven of my sins.

Because God sees me in the person of Christ dying for my sin. It's all punished and taken care of. But God also sees me dying to this world and to the sins of this world and whatever's involved in it.

And somewhere, at some point, we have to come to the place where we are willing to be through with this world. There are so many scriptures on this. Let me give you just a couple.

2 Corinthians 6, 14. Let me read it. Listen carefully.

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Did you hear it? Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with the devil? For what part has a believer with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.

God has said, I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God and they shall be my people. Therefore, come out from among them.

Come out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and I will be a father to you and you will be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. He is our Father. We are born from heaven and we are on our way to heaven and we are aliens in this world.

We are strangers in this world. You know, if God could get this across to just the people that are here, it would start a revolution. Some of you might get shot and go to heaven quick.

Hebrews 2, beginning with verse 8, By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place, he would later receive his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country. He lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise.

For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. And all these people were still living by faith. When they died, they did not receive the things promised.

They only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, and they admitted that they were aliens, strangers on earth. How does that fit all your space stories? Christians are aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.

If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God.

He has prepared for them a city. Abraham and those followers, they all were like aliens. We are in the world, but not of it.

In the world without the world being in us. All the water in the world, however hard it tried, could never sink a ship unless it got inside. All the evil in the world, the wickedness and sin, could never sink the Christian's life unless it gets within.

1 Corinthians 7, 31, we are to be as those who use this world without abusing it. So let's look at my text for just a minute. Let's think about it.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. God says don't love it. Say, I just love my new Ford pickup.

Uh-uh, uh-uh, uh-uh. If you like it, use it. Use it for God if you can, but don't love it.

Huh? I love my new home. No, no, uh-uh, uh-uh. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

Your new house, your new Ford pickup, your new washing machine, whatever it is, it's in this world. Love not the world, neither the things in this world. God says don't love it.

For all that is in the world, and then he names those three things, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. And boy, does that picture our culture. The lust of the flesh, living for the passions and desires of the flesh.

Totally given over to the passions and desires of the flesh. And God's people have been persuaded somehow that that's all right. That it's okay.

It's not okay. I got a kick out of this, sounds funny, Christian comedian, but I got a kick out of his sermon. He was doing a takeoff on a psychological book, I'm Okay, You're Okay.

That was the name of the book. He says, I'm not okay, and you're not okay, but that's okay because God loves you in a way. The lust of the flesh.

I'd just like to let that sit there for a minute. Just living for our fleshly pleasures. That has priority.

And we don't have time to serve God. We don't have time for prayer meetings. We don't have time to go out and witness.

My goodness, the average evangelical church, if the pastor said, let's all meet on Tuesday night, we have a bunch of cards and people have visited our church and we're just going to go visit with them and share the gospel with them. How many in your church do you think he'd get out? No, we're totally caught up in the world. I can't do that.

I have to go do this. And if you ask what it is, you find out it's something of the world. It's not important.

Really, I don't think it's not the guys making a living. It's pleasure. Pleasure, pleasure, pleasure.

We're pleasure mad, right? And God says, don't love it. You've got to bring it to the cross. And then the lust of the eyes.

That's covetousness. That's possessions. That's things.

Materialism, material possessions. And it's more important for many, many, and I mean many, thousands of God's people, it's more important for them to have that extra job or work those extra hours and make that extra money so that they can buy all the things than it is to spend time with their children, their family, and serving God in the church. Is any of this true? I'm not trying to be condemning.

I'm not trying to accuse. I'm just, I've been there all these years, and I'm just saying what is there. And when revival comes, God does some remarkable things with all that.

In the Canadian Revival, families would go home after meeting God in a deep way, and they would take their deed for their house and their car keys and their bank book and everything and put it in the middle of the kitchen table and sit around with the kids and everybody and give it all to God. Well, that was like the New Testament church, wasn't it? Those that had property sold it and brought the money, made sure everybody was taken care of. The lust of the eyes.

And then the desires, you know, of life, the pride of life. I don't know if you ever heard of Bud Robinson. He was a great holiness preacher of the past generation.

He was taken by some friends to New York City and shown around the city. And that night in his prayers he said, Lord, I thank you for letting me see all the sights of New York, and I thank you most of all that I didn't see a thing that I wanted. Not a thing.

Isn't that wonderful? I didn't see anything I wanted. The pride of life, self-fulfillment, self-exaltation, preoccupation with myself. And that has taken over our society.

And the thing that hurts me so much is I see so many of God's people, and they're truly born again, they're Christians, and they love the Lord, but I see their lives just being destroyed by all this psychological junk. I'm sorry, but no, I'm not either. It's just junk.

But I tell you what, in revival we have seen people get their marriage totally straightened out in 30 minutes, and it would have taken years to get it straightened out in counseling, and even then it wouldn't be straightened out. In fact, with most of the counselors we have today, they advise them to get a divorce anyway. Self-fulfillment, finding myself.

I don't really want to find myself. What I have already found out about myself upsets me. I never did really love sinners until God pulled back the lid and let me see myself.

And I got so sick to my stomach looking at myself, and I thought, if I'm that wicked, I ought to love other people who are wicked, who need Jesus. No, I don't want anybody to help me know more about myself. Whatever God shows me will be all I can handle.

Paris Reedhead, preacher of a number of years ago, I was a young pastor when I heard him. He said he had a dream one night, and he dreamed that he had died and gone to heaven. Then he realized that Christ had come, and all the Christians were there.

Now, this was a great moment. And he watched the Christians as they came one by one before Christ. And in front of Christ, there was a brazier full of fire.

And as each Christian would come before Christ, there would be an angel who would come with a bag, and they would put it in the hands of the Christian. And he suddenly knew this was their lifetime of service for Christ. And then he would point to the brazier, and they would set it on the brazier before Christ in the fire.

And the flames would go up, and in some cases, a big, huge bag. There'd be nothing left but some ashes. And the Christian would stand there weeping uncontrollably in the presence of Christ.

And then there'd be some who maybe wasn't even a big bag, and they'd put it in there, and the bag would go up in flames, and there are glittering jewels in gold and silver. And he said it was finally his turn. And he had been a pastor for years and pastored some large churches and had all kinds of human success.

And he was given a big, heavy bag, and he put it in the flames. And when the flames died down, there was almost nothing left. And he said he woke up, and his pillow was wet with his tears.

And he realized that a great deal of what he was doing was for self and not for Christ. And you know, we're all going to stay in there someday, right? Now, as I come closer to the end of this message, I have to deal with something in it that puzzled me for a long time. It says, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

Now watch. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Now, I don't know how many times, must be thousands, that I had read or quoted that scripture and never noticed what it said.

What I thought it said, or what it seemed to me like it said, was if any man loved the world, he doesn't love the Father. That isn't what it says. It's very interesting.

And so when that's on to me, you know, I went to my Greek and everything, studied it. Nope, it's just like it is. Nope, you can't change it.

That's what it says. If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him. What can motivate me, what can motivate me to be willing to give up the world and to be dead to it and to be done with it and to give my heart totally to my bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ? What can do it? Only the love of God the Father.

Only the love of God the Father. I really puzzled over that, and I prayed about it and studied about it and said, What are you saying? And the Lord said, What I'm saying is that God's people need to ask God to show them the worldliness and sin and selfishness in their hearts to the point where they will appreciate the shed blood of Jesus and his cleansing and his salvation and the love of God the Father and fall in love with him all over again. He loves you.

He loves you. God the Father loves you. Jesus said the Father himself loves you.

He loves you. What a powerful motivation. You know, there are two prodigal sons you know.

Not one. There were two sons of the Father. And you see, what's fascinating about that story is that in Luke 15, beginning with verse 1, it says, Now the tax collectors and sinners, that's the bad guys, right? Did you go back to sleep again? That's the bad guys, right? They know they're sinners.

All right? They were all gathering around to hear him. Now there's another group. And the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered.

So that's a different group. They don't think they're sinners. They think they deserve God's love.

These other people, tax collectors and sinners, they know they don't deserve the Father's love, right? They know that. They're wicked, sinful, selfish. They know it.

And they know they don't deserve it. And they're gathering around Jesus. This other group, they're very religious and they belong to the church of that day and are even leaders in it.

And they think that they do deserve the love of God and they do deserve his praise and acceptance. You understand that? Do you understand that? All right, because you've got to stay with me on this one. They said, this man welcomes sinners and eats with them.

Then Jesus told them this parable. At that point, Jesus told them that parable. Why? He told that parable to address these two groups of people.

Now, both of these sons had the same bad theology. Exactly the same theology, both of them. The son who went and blew it in riotous living he thought that he wasn't going to be accepted by the father as a son because of how bad he had lived.

Got it? Like he said, I'm starving to death so I better go home. I can never be a son again. Well, I'll just ask him to make me one of his hired servants.

Right? He said, I'm going to say, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight and I am no more worthy to be called your son. Was he ever worthy? No. See, he's all mixed up.

He was never worthy. Now he's saying, I am no more worthy because of what I've done. But that isn't the way the father saw it.

And he said, get the robe, get the ring of sonship, let's party because he's come home. The other brother, he thought that he deserved his father's love because he'd been a good boy and he'd stayed home and he'd worked hard and he'd never done anything wrong and he said, I've always done everything you told me to do. I've obeyed all your commands and yet you never gave me a party.

And he says, the whole thing belongs to you. What are you griping about? Come in. Why? Because he isn't worthy either.

Brother, if God doesn't save me by his grace, I'm done. I deserve hell. And these two boys both had the same bad theology, looked different, but it was the same.

Because they thought that they would be loved and accepted by the father on the basis of their good works. And they were wrong. They could only be accepted by the grace of God.

And we can only be accepted because Jesus died for our sins and poured out his life's blood on the cross. And he says, come and join me on the cross and give up your life and be accepted because God the father loves you. He loves you.

He loves you. So if you're far away, come home. And if you're close, come in.

Come home and come in. He loves you. You see, I don't see how he could.

I don't either. I mean you. No, no.

Oh, my. Many years ago in England there was a man who was brilliant, gifted, handsome, came from a great family, but he had become an alcoholic. He was in love with a beautiful girl from a family of renown and prestige.

And he kept drinking more and more. And finally she had to, she loved him, but she had to break off her association with him because he was dragging her down and she couldn't continue to spend time with him or plan to marry him. One day he had really gotten drunk and he was so drunk he couldn't stand up and he'd fallen in a ditch and went to sleep in the ditch.

And he was laying on his back with his face exposed to the sun. And she came along and she saw him laying there with his sun blistering his face and she took her handkerchief and laid it over his face and went on. After a while he woke up and he could feel something on his face and he took it off and it had her embroidered name in the corner.

And he leaped to his feet and waved the handkerchief and shouted, She loves me still. She loves me still. And that love got to his heart and he reformed his entire life and became a member of the House of Lords of England and married that girl.

I want to say to you, he loves you still. He loves you. I was preaching on this recently at a camp meeting grounds in Alberta in Canada and I got so excited I could hardly stand it.

Because some of the people have been telling me how beat down they felt and how destroyed they felt. One man especially, what a failure he was. And I found myself looking at him and saying, He loves you.

He loves you. And you know, God totally changed his whole outlook on life. So I want to say to you that God is ready to help you turn away from the world and give it up and take it to the cross and make Jesus Christ the priority in your life over everything.

And what will help you to do that? A deeper revelation of the Father's love for you. Study it. I've got a little book I've put out titled Love Not the World and I listed a whole bunch of scriptures in the back of it so people could read them and learn how much He loves you.

We love Him, what? Because He first loved us. For while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. That's the love of God.

And I want to tell you this morning that He loves you. Love not the world. If the Lord could get His church today to give up the world, take it to the cross and make God and the things of God an absolute priority in their life, we would see a revival almost overnight.

I tell you, it would shake up sinners in every direction. Absolutely. And may God help us to do it.

Let's bow in prayer. Dear Father, You wanted me to bring this message so You must have reasons. And I know You love Your dear children who are sitting here.

So I just ask earnestly that You will help every one of them that needs to face this issue. To face it and to give the world up at the cross and put Christ in the place of priority in all things in their life. I pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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