

THEME: WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Encouragement and Warning: 1 JOHN 2:12-17

March 4, 2018: BCC

12. *I am writing to you, little children,  
because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake.*

13. *I am writing to you, fathers,  
because you know Him who is from the beginning.*

*I am writing to you, young men,  
because you have overcome the evil one.*

*I write to you, children,  
because you know the Father.*

14. *I write to you, fathers,  
because you know Him who is from the beginning.*

*I write to you, young men,  
because you are strong,  
and the word of God abides in you,  
and you have overcome the evil one.*

15. *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.*

16. *For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.*

17. *And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

A. Encouragement: Evidence of Walking in the Light – I John 2:12-14

Are there some things that you often do that because of their familiarity brings you comfort?

How many of you have heard of The Apostles Creed?

In some churches they will repeat a Creed or Confession on a regular basis.

With those familiar phrases, the congregation is again reminded of what they believe – the fundamentals of the faith.

Maybe you have a familiar hymn or song that reminds you of what you believe.

*How Great Thou Art; Amazing Grace; Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine.*

*Tell me the old old story; Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of Life.*

**As a church we can be reminded of God's faithfulness and His dependability when we recite creeds or sing certain songs.**

If your Bibles are open, look to see if verses 12-14 look different on the page than the other verses?

Because the elder is possibly quoting familiar, creed-like statements, many translators set these lines off to look like a quotation.

John writes this section to take his readers back to the beginning of their faith and with that to remind them of what they have always believed. He refers to the message that they have had from the beginning and now summarizes. Remember who you are and what you have been given.

In these verses he reminds them of three fundamentals of the faith and encourages them by telling them that they are doing well in these areas. These are also 3 evidences of Walking in the Light:

He gives 6 reasons for writing:

**Because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake.**

Because you know Him who is from the beginning.

Because you have overcome the evil one.

Because you know the Father.

Because you know Him who is from the beginning.

Because you are strong and the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one.

**Take the word "because" out of** each phrase and note the very strong affirmation that he is giving them. What an affirmation of their faith. You are walking in the Light!  
CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Note that exactly half of these statements have to do with knowing – knowing the Father and the Son.

Some of the false teachers claimed to have special knowledge, that only a special few had access to.

As we already know, John talks a lot about knowing and about knowledge. He does that on purpose.

1 John 2:3: And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

The most NB knowing is a relationship with the Triune God. That knowing flows into obedience – loving God and loving your brother and sister.

If we claim to know God yet despise or hate a brother or sister we are lying.

Little children, fathers and young men - chronological age or spiritual maturity?

Do these refer to chronological age categories or do they refer to the spiritual maturity of the saints?

It is possible he has both spiritual maturity and actual age categories in Mind. He is referring to all the believers as well as grouping them into young and old.

He speaks of little children and dear children throughout the letter so this refers to all of his hearers, However he never refers to young men and fathers elsewhere in the letter.

I think he is referring to spiritual maturity but also general age categories.

By fathers he is probably referring to those who have wisdom and maturity that comes with experience

Example: 1 Timothy 5:1; 1 Peter 5:5 and Titus 2: 1-8

1 Timothy 5:1-2: Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

1 Peter 5:5-6: Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Titus 2:1-2: *But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.*

1. Forgiveness through Jesus – you have been forgiven

12. *I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake.*

This summarizes much of what he has already written. **He has mentioned the word “sin” or “sins” about 10 times already.** He has told them clearly that no one is sinless but that all who come by way of the Person of Christ receive forgiveness – *your sins have been forgiven on account of His name.* This is fundamental to their faith. The cross must be central to what we believe.

2. Knowledge of Jesus - you know Jesus (Relationship)

13. *I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning.* He will write the exact same thing in verse 14.

This is a clear reference to Jesus: *that which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes; which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life.*

3. Victory in Jesus – you have overcome the evil one.

Now he writes to those who are younger and he writes the same statement: *you have overcome the evil one.*

Why would he say that? This is the first time he refers to the evil one in this letter.

Youth and strength are often linked together, so it is fitting that the apostle would speak of overcoming.

**I don't think that he is referring to physical strength** as much as he is their perseverance in the life of faith and commitment.

Isaiah 40:31: *but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

Much as Paul does, so John views the struggles that Christians are engaged in as being against **“principalities and powers.”**

Even as John writes this sermon to address false teaching and false teachers he acknowledges where all of this falsehood and lies come from – the evil one.

He is a deceiver and a liar.

John 8:44: *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

The evil one is in the world and all are under his grip except for those who have been rescued from his kingdom and brought into the kingdom of God through the blood of Jesus Christ.

It is those who have been forgiven on account of His Name who have overcome the evil one.

Having been forgiven and having a relationship with (knowing) our Saviour and Forgiver is the key to overcoming the evil one.

Note that John does not write that it is possible to overcome the evil one, or that they will overcome him or that they can **overcome him**. He says emphatically you “have” overcome him.

They have been transferred from darkness to light; from death to life. It was nothing that they could have done in their own strength.

This victory over the power of the evil one happened at the cross and the empty tomb.

1 John 3:8: *The reason the Son of God appeared was to **destroy the devil’s work**.*

1 John 5:4-5: *for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

1 John 5:18: *We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.*

John repeats that they have overcome the evil one, but now he adds 2 phrases to explain why that is so:

*Because you are strong*

*And the word of God lives (abides) in you.*

#### B. Warning: Be Careful to Continue to Walk in the Light - 1 John 2:15-17

John has ended on a strong note of encouragement.

Their sins are forgiven; they have a relationship with Jesus and they are victorious – they have overcome the evil one.

So, why go on to the next section – verses of warning.

Reminding them twice that they have overcome the evil one prepares us for this next section. What is the evil one in charge of – the world.

There are many calls in Scripture to persevere and to remain faithful.

We all face temptations and sometime we yield to those temptations.

We must remain humble and dependent on God. The opposite is pride.

As soon as we think we can make it on our own we are beginning to believe a lie.

**“Without Him we can do nothing.”**

We need to be reminded that the battle continues.

SONG: **it’s battlefield brother not a recreation room, it’s a fight and not a game; run if you want to, run if you will, but I came here to stay.**

We are not yet in heaven. Yes, this world is passing away, but not yet.

15. *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.*

16. *For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.*

17. *And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

He only has one command and one reminder:

Command: Do not love the world or the things in the world.

Reminder: whoever does the will of God abides forever.

#### 1. The “World” Defined

**Some use the word “worldliness”** – living like people in the world who are still part of the kingdom of the evil one.

I used to hear the word “worldliness” far more often when I was growing up than now. The definition of worldliness has changed many times over the years, depending on where you live. If you live in Amish circles you are worldly if you drive a horse drawn buggy with a windshield. Cards, movies – legalism.

John reminds them that they are still living in the world – a world dominated by the evil one; a world influenced by his lies and deception.

This is good for us to remember as well.

“World” – 6 times

**What does John mean by “world?”**

**Is he talking about God’s creation** – this physical world?

No – he has absolutely nothing good to say about the world. Verse 16 helps to define this word:

2. The Terrible Three

This is what is in the world: the desires of the flesh;

the desires of the eyes;

the pride of life – these things are not from the Father.

It is very obvious that this is something that is not of God; God wants no part of it and He does not want us to have any part of it either.

This world is passing way along with its desires. It is temporary.

This world is fleeting but whoever does the will of the Father abides forever.

These three were also at the core of the evil one’s temptation of Eve in the garden, and the evil one’s temptation of Christ in the wilderness:

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food – the desire of the flesh

And pleasing to the eye, - the desire of the eyes

And also desirable for gaining wisdom – the pride of life.

**These three were also at the core of the evil one’s temptation of Christ in the wilderness.**

Definition: a picture of life without God. It is with me on the throne – gratifying the cravings of my sinful nature and following all of the desires that come with it. If it feels good do it. Eat and drink for tomorrow you die. is a picture of those living in and following the ways of this world and the ruler of this kingdom. Instead of walking in the light this is a picture of people walking in the darkness.

“World” could also be referred to as the spirit of the age.

Ephesians 2:1-3: As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.

We do need strong words of warning because we live in the world bombarded by a lot of evil and deception.

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

### 3. The Final Word

Note he uses the word “love” here as he does many times throughout this sermon. Most of the time he is talking about love for God and love for those in the family of God. Here John is referring to competing loves; rival loves. He distinguishes between loving the world and loving the Father.

I wonder if John was hearing the words of His Master when He said in Matthew 5:24: No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. Where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

Note how John ends this section: *but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

**Let's link that to the end of his words of encouragement in the previous section:**

*I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.* And that also means the you have overcome the world.

Last week Ryley reminded us that knowing God really means to walk in obedience. And here at the end of this section John comes back to that: *but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

SO WHAT!

We too need to be affirmed in our walking in the Light. We need that encouragement. We too need to know the fundamentals of our faith and live them out. We too need the warning of not loving the world as we live in this world.

Illustration: Billy Graham

As we saw the funeral service and also listened to the interment service, time and time again it was clear that here was a man who walked what he talked. He lived his faith; he walked his faith. The same man in public and in private.

Several of his children said that the man people saw on TV or at the Crusades was the same man in their home. He was a humble man and he was authentic. He was characterized by humility.

PRAYER:

SONG: I know whom I have believed

**1. I know not why God's wondrous** grace to me He hath made known,  
For why, unworthy, Christ in love redeemed me for His own:

Chorus: But I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able  
**To keep that which I've committed unto Him** against that day.

2. I know not how this saving faith to me He did impart,  
Nor how believing in His Word, wrought peace within my heart.

Chorus:

3. I know not how the Spirit moves convincing men of sin,  
Revealing Jesus through the Word, creating faith in Him.

Chorus:

4. I know not when my Lord may come, at night or noon-day fair,  
**Nor if I'll** walk the vale with Him or meet Him in the air.

Chorus: