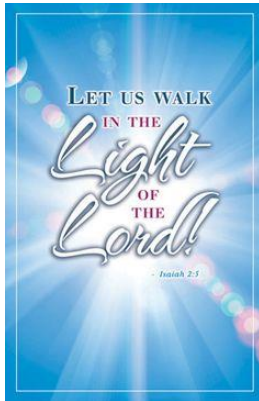


July 7, 2019

Walking in the Light



"...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."

I John 1:7

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."

I John 2:15-17

In our context for today John makes it clear that our love for the world cannot co-exist with our love for Jesus. We either love God and demonstrate that in the way we treat others, or we love the things of the world, but we cannot love both.

The Apostle categorizes what things in the world we are most prone to struggle with. He says these include *"...the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does..."* All of us struggle with our cravings, but they are not all the same. Some of us struggle with food or drink or prestige or... A part of taking stock of our own existence before God requires that we own our particular cravings. What does the world offer you that traps you into out-of-control cravings.

The second category of our struggle with the world is with the lust of our eyes. Our senses are a wonderful gift from God. We can see so much, hear so much, taste so much and feel so much and all of these avenues can and should bring us joy. The problem of course, is that Satan can use these senses to entice us to want something so badly we would do almost anything to get it.

Lust is a powerful driving force and just as our cravings differ so do the things that create lust in us. Some of us lust after possessions. Some of us lust after prestige or self-importance. Some of us lust after... Personally owning the things that drive us to lust is just as important as owning those cravings that drive us toward self-gratification.

The final category of our struggle with the world is bound up in our arrogant attitude about our own importance. We like to believe, and Satan encourages us to believe, that we are very, very important. We believe our opinions are right, our attitudes are correct, and anyone who does not agree with us is not only wrong, but inherently evil or insane. We base our boasts on what we have and what we have done.

All of these things are the product of our love for the world and the things of the world. If we choose to pursue a personal relationship with the world then we are also choosing not to have a relationship with God. We cannot choose both. Our struggle with the things of the world is the lie that Satan constantly entices us to accept; that happiness can be found in the things of the world.

The trap that Satan set for Eve and Adam was based on this very lie. He told Eve, *"You will surely not die...for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some..." (Genesis 3:1-6)

Satan convinced Eve and Adam that the forbidden fruit would bring them happiness and that they could break God's command without consequence. His lies have not changed. He is still working to convince us that gratifying our cravings, our lusts, and our overwhelming thirst for self-importance will bring us happiness. They won't. They can't. None of these things will bring us happiness because we cannot hold on to any of them. None of the things of this world will last.

The secret then of living a life in love with God is found in a single word; contentment. The Apostle Paul told the Philippian believers, ***"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances...I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation...I can do everything though him who strengthens me."*** (4:11-13)

I can do ALL THINGS
through *Christ*
who STRENGTHENS *me.*
-Philippians 4:13

