

## Remain in the Light

### 1. Seeking Eternity

- Ecclesiastes 3:11 says God has set eternity in the hearts of men
- And your average person would probably say they don't think about eternity much ... if you look closely at our culture it's obvious they do
  
- You think about the ways as a human race we tend to express deep thoughts and desires of the heart
  - More often than not is in creative arts isn't it?
  - Music, poetry, films
  - That's where
    - we reflect on love
    - we dream about what the future will look like
    - critique the dark side of humanity
    - tell stories of happy times
- And one of the recurring motifs that we see time and time again in the arts our desire for eternity
  - The band Queen sings – who wants to live forever
  - We create movie book characters like Deadpool, Dr Who, Peter Pan, Thor and Wolverine who are immortal
  - Shakespeare wrote in Hamlet - *Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die, passing through nature to eternity.*
  
- In addition you only have to look at our societies obsession to try and overcome the aging process
  - Anti-aging creams, face-lifts, tummy tucks and botox injections
- Even our desire to try and beat death itself
  - Scientist Dr Stephen Coles who upon his death in 2014 was cryo-preserved at Alcor Life Extension Foundation ... one of over 130 people cryo-preserved by the company!
- When our loved ones finally do die ... we often hear people refer to them up in the sky smiling down on us
  
- Deep down ... we have this desire for eternity
  - Intrinsically we know death is not meant to be the end
  - In our hearts we know that there must be more to life than the 70, 80 or 90 years we get to live
  - And yet, despite humanities endeavours to do so ... it hasn't been unable to achieve the eternity it desires

- However, in the passage we read this morning, the apostle John says in v24 that God promises eternity
  - That somehow the desire he sets in our hearts for eternity that we are unable to achieve ourselves ... God promises that he can provide
  - God gives assurance that the eternity our hearts crave for ... can become a reality
- And while that promise is available to all, there are many for whom it won't be a reality
- And here in 1 John 2 ... John addresses this issue
- He shows us when it comes to eternity
  - How we surrender it
- But he also shows us
  - How we secure it

## 2. Surrendering Eternity

### (i) Do not be deceived by false loves (Do not love the world) v15-17

- There were issues facing John's readers that meant they were at risk of surrendering eternity
- And so John writes to warn them of these things
- And the first thing he says is – don't be deceived by false loves
  - v15 - *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him*
  - That is ... if you love the world ... you don't love the Father
  - They're mutually exclusive
- When John refers to 'the world' ... he could be talking about the created world that God made and loves
  - But in this context, he means the attitudes and values of the world that are opposed to God
  - This is made clearer in v16 where defines worldliness in three ways
    - *the cravings of sinful man*
    - *the lust of his eyes and*
    - *the boasting of what he has and does*
- What does John mean here?
- He's talking about the desires of the heart that seeks to find satisfaction, joy and fulfilment in the things of this world

- What might that be?
  - Things that we see in the world around us that we lust after
  - John doesn't mean just sexual lust ... although it could be
  - The word lust is literally means 'desires'
  - He's talking about us desiring / lusting after the things of this world
- He's talking about the heart's desperation to latch onto something
  - To 'over-desire' something (whether sex or something else),
  - And when that thing is anything other than God ... what results is a worshipping and serving of the created thing rather than the creator himself
- So when John is saying not to love the world ... he's saying
  - Don't get caught up in worldliness ...
  - Don't let your heart fix itself on the things of this world ...
  - Because when you love the things of this world ... then you're not loving God
- The second way John describes worldliness is the boasting of what a person has or does
  - It's a pride in your possessions and achievements
  - It's a self-righteousness that comes from one's wealth, rank or stature
    - And it reveals an overconfidence in ourselves that causes us to forget our dependence on God
- What type of things are we likely to love in this world instead of God
  - Possessions > cars, clothes, bikes, house, technology
  - Experiences > parties, holidays, food, wine
  - Relationships > sex, spouse, girlfriend
  - Achievements > work, parenting
- These all good things that God has given us ...
- But what John is talking about here is when we make things ultimate things
  - When we lust after them
  - When have this over desire for them
  - When we are only satisfied and fulfilled if we have that thing
- There's nothing wrong with
  - Sex ... but when you live to have sex or watch porn it's worldliness
  - Money ... but when you're constantly thinking about how to accumulate wealth it's worldliness
  - Looking good ... but when you find fulfilment in your looks it's worldliness

- Food and wine ... but if can't get through a day without a drink it's worldliness
- Career success ... but if your self-worth fluctuates depending on how your work is going its worldliness ... its loving the world
- Now John says ... there are two problems with worldliness and loving the world
- The first is ... the love the Father is not in you
  - That is ... you don't love God
  - Jesus said you can't serve two masters
  - And if you love the world ... then you can't and don't love God
- The second reason ... is there in v17
  - *The world and its desires pass away*
  - They won't last
    - They will rust and fade and break and get lost
    - They will let us down, hurt us and fail us
    - They're not eternal
  - And therefore, chasing after them is like chasing after a mist > it's like trying to hold water in your hands
  - There is no future says John in worldliness or chasing after it
- And because of that ... they're false loves
- And John says ... when it comes to eternity don't be deceived by false loves
  - They will never satisfy, never fulfil, never last
  - If you chase after them ... you will surrender the eternity you so deeply desire
  - Because when you love the world it shows you don't love the Father

### **(ii) Do not be deceived by false teachers v18-23**

- The second warning John gives his readers so that they won't surrender eternity is in v18-23
  - He says ... don't be deceived by false teachers
- In v18 John refers to them as anti-Christ's
  - What he means is ... they are people who oppose Jesus and the message of the gospel
  - Surprisingly, we see in v19 these anti-Christ's were once members of the Christian community
    - These were people who were in the church
    - These were people who claimed to be Christians
    - They were people looked like Christians ....

- but they were false, they were counterfeits
- And now they've gone out ... they've left the church
  
- These false teachers have created doubt and anxiety amongst believers as to who to believe and what are the things that mark a true believer from one of the anti-Christ's
  - v26 – we see they've tried to lead John's readers astray
- And so John wants to warn his readers about these people and arm his readers against them and their teaching
  
- What is this false teaching they were espousing?
- John tells us in v22
  - *Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist-- he denies the Father and the Son.*
- They were
  - denying that Jesus is the Christ; and
  - denying that Jesus is the Son of God
  
- That Jesus is the Christ and Jesus is the Son of God are central to Christianity ... and without them not only is Christianity fundamentally changed ... our hope of eternity is lost completely
  
- At its heart ... the false teachers were denying that Jesus was both God and Man
  - They were denying what Christians call the incarnation
  - That God came down to earth ... took on human flesh and became man
  - Not 50% God, 50% man ... but 100% God, 100% man
  
- These false teachers didn't buy into that
  - They said it's not possible for God to become human ... therefore Jesus is not the Christ
  - They said God couldn't suffer, God couldn't have pain ... therefore Jesus is not the Son of God
- But when you deny these things about Jesus ... you have no means of forgiveness and salvation ... you surrender eternity
  - You see Jesus had to be fully human in order to represent us on the cross
    - If Jesus was going to die as our substitute on the cross ... he had to be one of us
  - And he also had to be fully God in order to atone for our sin

- That is ... only God can forgive us ... therefore it had to be God himself who took on and absorbed the wrath for our sin
  - Anything less than Jesus being full God and fully man and we kiss our hope for eternity good bye
  - Because without it ... there can be no forgiveness, no salvation, and therefore no eternity
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- John's point is ... if you deny the reality of the incarnation, you miss whole idea of Christianity
  - Because Jesus incarnation tells us ... that we are so sinful that nothing less than this drastic measure of God the Father sending God the Son into the world was necessary for Him to save us
  - Because the gospel teaches us that no matter how hard we try in our moral efforts, we're so sinful we're never able to get up to God ... therefore he had to come all the way down to us
  - And therefore, anybody who denies that Jesus Christ is actually God, the son of God come in the flesh ... has changed the gospel
  - If you do this you have another religion
    - Because what you're saying is being a good person is enough
    - What you are saying is you can reach it ... God didn't have to come all the way down so we can be born again
    - You don't need all that ... anyone that is leading a good life is okay
    - But that's not Christianity
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- **Application**
  - Now many people will say that God is a God of love ... and therefore what matters most is that you love one another
    - You know ... follow the golden rule
    - As long as you love ... then that's the main thing
    - And don't tell me I have to believe or obey or change my life ... because I'm loving others
  - And John doesn't deny the importance of love
    - In fact he's going to hammer home time and time again ... if you don't love one another ... then you're not Christian
  - But what John is making clear in these verses is that doctrine matters
    - Truth matters
    - You cannot just make up what you want about Jesus
    - You can't just pick and choose the bits about Christianity you like and reject other bits

- John is saying in these verses ... there are a set of core beliefs that are fundamental to the truth of Christianity
  - And key to that is the work and person of Jesus who is the Christ - full God and fully man
  
- Sometimes there will be things that Christians disagree on
  - But when it comes to the truth of the gospel ... when people disagree with the core truths of the gospel ... there can be no compromise
  - When person teaches truth contrary to core of gospel ... that person is in the grip of a lie
  - In this there cannot be compromise
  
- ***Exclusive Truth Claim***
- Now to some people this might seem arrogant ... because this is an exclusive truth claim
  - John is saying ... Jesus is the Christ, he is the Son of God and you have to come through him to get to the Father
  - Therefore he's the only way you can find forgiveness and salvation and have the hope of eternity your heart craves for
- You might say ...
  - That's so exclusive!
  - It leaves out people who have other beliefs
- Yes it does ... but what's the alternative?
- You say ...
  - all good people can get to heaven ...
  - you don't need to believe in Jesus, that he's the Christ and that he's the only way to the Father
  - All good people can find God
- But that's really exclusive too ...
- Why?
- I say ... are you a Christian?
- No
- So my worldview left you out?
- Yes
- But your worldview left me out!
- How?
- Because you say all good people can get to heaven
- Yes!
- But what about me? That leaves me out

- Because if there is one thing I know from reading the Bible is that I as hard as I try ... I fall way short of being a good person
- Your worldview that says Jesus isn't the Christ and that you don't need Jesus to get to heaven is every bit as exclusive as mine
- If Jesus is the truth ... and he is the way to the Father ...
  - then no matter how bad you've been
  - no matter what your record is
  - no matter how messy your life has been
  - You can come to the Father and have eternal life
- And friends ... that's why John urges us not to be deceived by false teachers ... those who try and say Jesus is not the Christ, the Son of God therefore the only way to the Father
  - Because ... all that leaves you with is a man-made religion that seeks to get to heaven by being good ... and that is doomed to fail
  - And if you buy the lie and deny Jesus ... all you will end up doing is surrendering eternity
- Two things that will cause you to surrender eternity
  - Being deceived by false loves – loving the things of this world that are perishing
  - Being deceived by false teachers – who deny Christ and leave you failing in self salvation

### 3. Securing Eternity (v24-27) Exhortation to remain in him

- Now John doesn't leave it there ... he tells his readers how they can **secure** eternity
  - He makes it clear what they need to do in order to guarantee their eternal future
  - And in v24-27 ... John tells them to remain in Jesus / stay connected to him
- v24 - *See that **what you have heard** from the beginning **remains in you**. If it does, you also will **remain in the Son** and in the Father. <sup>25</sup> And this is what he promised us-- even eternal life*
  - The way to guard yourself against the things that will cause you to surrender eternity is to remain in the Son
  - And John says the person who does this shares in the promise of eternal life
- You see the only way we can have eternal life is



- if you are in Jesus
- if you are connected to Jesus
- if you remain in Jesus
- For there's no other way
  - You can't get to God ... that's why Jesus had to come down to us and atone for our sin at the cross
  
- But notice the way we remain in Jesus is to hold fast to the gospel
- John says in v24 ...
  - See that **what you have heard** from the beginning **remains in you**.
- What they heard from the beginning was the gospel message that John taught them
- We know for 1:1-3 John is an eye witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
  - John says he heard, he saw, he touched Jesus and he's a person who can testify to the truth of gospel
- John tells them ... hold onto the truth of the gospel that I taught you
- Don't be led astray by false loves and false teachers
- Remain in the truth of the gospel ... and that will ensure you remain in Christ
  - When you remain in Christ ... when hold fast to him ... then you have the security of eternal life
  
- **Application**
- What is it about the gospel that will keep us from being led astray?
- Well the gospel says two things
  - You are more sinful and flawed than you'll admit
- Yet at the very same time
  - You are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than you'll ever know
  
- **Illustration – Emergency Vehicles**
- Yesterday riding up through Jannali 6am ... police on the side of the road looking at a white sheet or white shirt that had blood on it
  - Thought maybe there had been an assault over night
  - Came back 1hr later and the police had the road blocked off and were not letting traffic through
  - As soon as we saw all the extra police and vans and cars ... we immediately realised ... this as serious
  - Turns out there had been a hit and run over night ... the victim had died and the police were doing forensics to help with the case

- You know how serious something is by the number of police vehicles that are at an emergency or crime
  - When Man Monis took hostages at the Lindt Café 18 mths ago, there was police everywhere – cars, vans, wagons, tactical operations unit, snipers, police command centre ... it was massive
- The hit and run in Jannali was serious, but the Lindt Café siege was another level
  - You know how serious something is by the response it gets
  
- You know how serious our sin is ... and how desperate we are in need of a saviour ... when God sends his one and only son into the world to die on a cross
  - We're more sinful and flawed that we're willing to admit
  - And Jesus coming in the flesh as the Christ ... ought to make that clear to us
- But the gospel also tells us we're more loved and accepted than we'll ever know
  - Because not only did we NEED God to send Jesus to die for us
  - God was also WILLING to send Jesus to die for us
  
- We need to hold these two truths tightly
- If you're not convicted of the seriousness of your sin
  - Then you will think way too optimistically about yourself
  - You will down play, minimise and justify the worldliness in your life
  - You won't be on your guard against the desires your heart that will lead you to a love things of this world rather than a love of the Father
- And if you down play what the gospel says about your sin then you won't see your great need for a saviour
  - And if you don't think you need a saviour ... then it's much easier for you to abandon Jesus as the only way to the Father
  - Because then you will think you can save yourself
- So you see ... if we're to remain in Jesus and secure eternity ... we must remain in the gospel
  - This is the will of God – remain in Jesus and remain in the gospel
  - And John says the one who does the will of God lives forever

#### **4. Conclusion**

- As Jesus was about to face the cross for you and I ... he said to his Father ... "not my will but your will be done"
  - Jesus followed the Father's will and he lasted forever ... and so will you

- If you set your heart affections on anything other than the will of God ... you won't last
- The world will pass away and if you love the things of this world more than you love God ... you will pass away with it
  - But the one who does the will of God remains forever
  
- Jesus says not my will but your will ... and what he did lasts forever
- And if you say the same thing ...
  - not the worlds ...
  - not the things in the world ...
  - not the lusts of the world ...
  - not the fashions or trends of the world
- If you set your heart on the will of God ...
  - and remain in Christ
  - and remain the gospel
    - you will last forever too

**PRAY**