

Holy Cross, Daggett and St. Mark, Wallace Lutheran Churches, Michigan
The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
July 16, 2017
1 John 2:15-17

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. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, boasting about material possessions—is not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever.

Have you seen any ads which warn against texting while driving? I've seen TV commercials and billboards which warn against the dangers of texting while driving. The ads' message is simple: put the phone down, pay attention to what you are doing on the road and do your best to make sure you safely get where you want to go. I'm sure you've seen them and you understand the basic premise of their message. You can't do two things at once and it doesn't matter how hard you try.

Trying to pay attention to two things at once illustrates a key lesson which the Apostle John wants us to understand this morning. John applies this lesson to Christians who are living in this world. **"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. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, boasting about material possessions—is not from the Father but from the world."**

"The world and its desires pass away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever." John's point is simple. Christians cannot love both God and the world at the same time. He wants Christians to be fully committed to following God and doing his will while they are in the world. This means there is an obvious difference between your Christian life and the life of a non-Christian in this world.

What are some practical examples of this? Speech is one easy thing to examine. How does your speech compare to a non-Christian's speech? God calls on Christians to respect his name. He wants them to use his name to pray to him, praise him and share his name with others. Non-Christians don't care about God's name. They use it carelessly in phrases like, "Oh my god, it is so hot out" or "Oh god, look at what we have to eat again."

How do you use God's name? Do you respect his name or do you find yourself using the phrase, "Oh my god" or some variation with God's name quite often? God's name isn't a toy. He wants it to be respected and his children's speech to love it. Does your speech love God's name? Or another aspect of speech is the way we talk about others. God wants his children to respect other people's name and reputation. How well do you do this when talking about people who are in authority over you?

How do you speak about our presidents? Current and past presidents? God wants Christians to honor them with their speech. He wants them to speak well of them and pray for them. The unbelieving world knows nothing about such speech. Look at the way many people speak about our president and other elected officials. Would a non-Christian be able to tell the difference between the way you talk about a certain president (past or present) and the way a non-Christian talks about one?

Take it a little bit closer to home. Is your speech laced with profanities? Or coarse talk? Is it no different than your non-Christian neighbor? **"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. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, boasting about material possessions—is not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever."**

John urges us not to love the world or the things of this world more than we love God. How does this tie in with the way we speak? We can go back to my opening example. Picture your life like you are driving on a highway to heaven. God has told you the way to go. He has given you the car to get there. He filled

up your gas tank for you. He has promised to be with you on the entire journey. It sounds like a rather straightforward plan which is easy to follow. The only catch is you need to stay focused on the road.

Yet, Satan is kind of like your cell phone. He's constantly trying to distract you and take your eyes off the road because he doesn't want you to stay on the road. How come? He doesn't want you on the highway to heaven. He wants you to wander as far away from it as you possibly can because he doesn't want to see you spend an eternity with God. He wants you to spend an eternity with him away from God.

Sadly, Christians don't always view Satan's temptations as a threat. We can often treat them like we do a cell phone while driving. We can keep focused on the road just fine while texting someone. It'll be ok. Nothing bad will happen. I don't think people who text while driving expect to or mean to get into an accident, but what can happen when you are trying to drive and text at the same time? You put yourself in harms' way because you are no longer solely focused on the road.

The same truth applies to the way God wants you to live in this world. It might seem innocent to use God's name casually in a phrase like, "Oh my god!", but think about what you are doing with his name. Doesn't God want his name to be special? Do you treat something special so carelessly? Or what about the way you speak about others? Will someone believe you are speaking the truth about God when you talk to them if you only run others down?

"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. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, boasting about material possessions—is not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever." God doesn't want us to love the world and serve it. He wants us to love and serve him. How can we do this?

The only way for us to be fully committed to God is because God has been fully committed to us. We wouldn't be on the highway to salvation without God's commitment to us because God's commitment to us literally is the pathway to salvation. Jesus was so committed to our salvation he became one of us. He walked like one of us. He ate like one of us and he also talked like one of us. This is important for us to remember because the way he talked won forgiveness for our careless talk.

Jesus perfectly honored his father's name while on earth. He gave his father proper praise for all the times we used his name casually. He shared his father's name in a meaningful way to forgive all the times we carelessly shared God's name in vain. He protected and respected other people's name and reputation for all the times when you and I would not. He did all of this to be able to pave the highway to heaven for us with his blood.

Jesus commitment to you and me was so great that he was willing to die for us. Satan tried to distract him from his goal, but Jesus' commitment would not be deterred. He pressed on to win our salvation. This commitment to you and me is what inspires us to stay committed to God. It is what helps us use God's name to his glory and respect others. May God bless our efforts and keep our love dedicated to him. Amen.