

TITLE: DWELLING IN HIM – BY REJECTING WORLDLINESS

TEXT: 1 JOHN 2:12-28

INTRO: What does it mean to not be worldly? We can't desire anything the world has? We have to leave it (i.e., monasticism)? John will answer this clearly for us in our text this morning as he talks about avoiding physical *and* spiritual worldliness.

I. PHYSICAL WORLDLINESS (v. 12-17):

- A. (v. 12-14)** *"I write...children, fathers, young men...I have written..."* John begins by addressing all members as little children (**τεκνία** - v. 1), a term of endearment, either for all Christians or specifically for all those he had personally converted (probably the former). *"Your sins have been (perfect tense) forgiven you for his name's sake (according to his name/authority–v. 2; perfect tense –have been & still are)."* The simple fact that your sins have been forgiven is great motivation to live without worldliness! Next he divides them into 3 groups: fathers, young men, and little children (**παῖδια**-v.13; different word than in v. 12).
1. Fathers (spiritually mature members) – they have known (perfect tense –& still do know) Him that is from the beginning – maybe literally (they had personally known Jesus), but probably spiritually (they were mature in their obedience -v. 3).
 2. Young men (Greek– up to age 40) – spiritually strong & active. They *"have overcome the wicked one"* (v. 13); more detail in v. 14 –*"ye are strong, & the word of God abideth in you."* This is how they were strong & overcame Satan!
 3. Little children (new Christians) – not described the way fathers & young men are; but simply as having known the Father. This roughly covers the spiritual levels in the church: from newborn babes to the spiritually mature. Why the switch from present to perfect tense? The perfect tense may be a reference to what he already wrote in this letter (or in one previously).
- B. (v. 15-17)** Worldliness defined & discouraged:
- (v. 15) *Love not the world....* **Jam 4:4**–*"know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God... ?"* Explained in v. 16. (v. 16) *Lust of the flesh, eyes, pride of life – this* is what he's talking about, which is so prominent in the world! **Gen 3:6**– Eve *"saw that the tree was good for food (flesh)...pleasant to the eyes (eyes)... & a tree to be desired to make one wise (pride). Mt 4– Satan tempted Jesus with these same 3 things. These lusts/pride are how John defines loving the world, & they're **not** from God!*
- The problem is not in a simple desire for the good things of this world that God has blessed us with. The problem is in lusting after those things (whether they're good or evil). How does it look to God (and how does it make Him feel) when He gives us things we need for this *temporary* life, promises something much better & more valuable (Heaven), & then we spend all our time & effort here ignoring the permanent and focusing on amassing temporary wealth & pleasures?! It's similar to the child who plays with the box instead of the gift that came in the box – because he's too immature to know better. We should be spiritually mature enough to know better!

II. SPIRITUAL WORLDLINESS (v. 18-28):

A. Warning of antichrists (v. 18-23)

1. **Antichrists announced (v. 18-19):** *It is the last hour* –we are in the last days (cf. **Acts 2:16-17**); it simply refers to the final age or dispensation of time. *Ye have heard that the antichrist* (opposed to or in the place of Christ) *shall come* – Jesus had warned of *"false Christ's & false prophets"* (**Mt 24:24**). Today people believe there will be one *future* Antichrist, & his arrival will be the sign for the end of the world. But Jesus' warning in Mt 24:24 was a sign for the destruction of Jerusalem, & John isn't giving signs, he's warning about antichrists, and he says that there are many *antichrists* (plural) and that they were already here! They are those who oppose Christ (more info in v. 22-23). In v. 19 he says *"they went out from us...."* They came out of "us" (church, apostles; i.e., Christians), but they apostatized; otherwise they would've stayed with us.
2. **Antichrists resisted (v. 20-21):** *"You have an anointing... & know all things."* This is the miraculous ability given by the HS (e.g., discerning of spirits–**1 Cor 12:10**). John is encouraging them to continue to use this gift, & not listen to antichrists.
3. **Antichrists exposed (v. 22-23):** He who denies that Jesus is the Christ is a liar *and* an antichrist – he is denying the Father & the Son. In **4:3** John says that antichrists do not confess that Jesus came in the flesh. John was fighting Gnosticism. Today just because someone confesses that Jesus came in the flesh doesn't mean he's not an antichrist (cf. demons in **Jam 2:19**).

B. Encouragement to abide in Him (v. 24-28) – *listen to what you've received, in contrast to what antichrists teach*

1. **By the teaching they received (v. 24-26):** *Let that...abide in you.* He's speaking of Jesus & what they'd been taught about Him (His Deity; God in flesh). If this remains in you, you'll remain in Him *and* in the Father (they go together–v. 22-23). Don't give in to what the antichrists are teaching & depart from the truth like they did! Remain in the truth you were taught. (v. 25) And if we do this, He has promised us eternal life! (v. 26) Reminder that the antichrists were trying to deceive them, just as they are today. What are we to do? Remain in the same truth/doctrine that we have received in writing (the NT). *They had received it from the apostles (some maybe directly from Jesus while on earth; many through the Holy Spirit–v.27).*
2. **By the anointing they received (v. 27-28):**
He encourages them to remember that they have the Spirit ("anointing") abiding in them (by means of the miraculous gifts He had given them). And this anointing *"teaches them all things"* (so they don't need anyone to teach them – which refers to these Gnostic antichrists & their "new, special knowledge"), *is truth, & is no lie* (so they could believe it!) *"As it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."* Notice that we "abide in Him" by remaining in His doctrine (obeying it – v. 3)! According to this, the Spirit (the "anointing") was teaching them (by the gifts of prophecy, knowledge, etc.), and by this teaching they were abiding in Christ. But v. 28 makes it clear that it was still up to them to *remain* in Him. If "once saved, always saved" were true, this verse would be unnecessary (contradictory)! Yet it's here, and it warns them (& us) to abide in His doctrine – so *"we may have confidence & not be ashamed before Him at His coming!"* Therefore it's understood that if we depart from Him we *won't* have confidence, but rather fear & shame (& death) at His coming!
- Today so many professing Christians have listened to the antichrists & departed from God. They've thrown away the plan that God gave & have done whatever *they* wanted. This happens when we depart from His Word!

CONCLUSION: We know that the same anointing that taught them now teaches us through the completed Word. Are you in Jesus (in His doctrine)? Have you obeyed the gospel? If so, are you *remaining* in Him by continuing to read & study the Word?