

# Worldliness

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In looking out upon the congregation, I see again tonight visitors from some of our sister churches. And it is a special delight to have you with us, especially some of you who were members at one time of this assembly, and have now become what we like to affectingly call our holy transplants, whom the Lord has providentially transplanted into fellowships where the truths we hold dear are loved and are lived out by the people of God. And particularly for your sake and any others who may not be fully aware of the theme that has run through the conference this year, and that by design, let me say just a word about that theme and how the subject we shall examine tonight relates to it.

The general theme of this year's conference is "The Christian and the World". And for four of our morning sessions, Pastor Waldron has been addressing the matter of how a Christian is to relate to the structure of worldly authority, particularly the civil government. God willing, tomorrow for our two sessions, Pastor Nichols will speak on the subject of common grace. And we could describe it as God's goodness to a fallen world, that though it does not result in the eternal salvation of the those to whom it comes, is a marvelous benefit in restraining evil and conferring many good things upon men who, though they lie under the wrath of God, yet are the recipients of His gracious gifts. And then the two final messages on Thursday morning will deal with the Christians witness to the world, as Pastor McDearman speaks to us. And then the concluding address by Pastor Pazino, "God's Overtures of Mercy to the World", as he speaks on Christ's gracious invitation to worldlings laboring under the horrible weight of their sin: "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And as we were prayerfully planning the theme of the conference and the various aspects of that theme that should be addressed, my brethren felt that I should address in one of these evening sessions the subject of worldliness.

The moment one mentions the word "worldliness", one can only imagine the various images that come before the minds of his hearers. For some, the word "worldliness" immediately conjures up the image of a modern Jezebel, a woman who must have very strong posterior neck muscles to hold up a face laden with paint and with all forms of attempts to somehow recapture her lost youth. For it seems that often worldly women in the direct proportion to the loss of their youthfulness try to somehow hold back the encroachments of time, as it makes its marks with ever increasing tracks of crows feet and lines upon the face, and so there are forms of makeup to fill up the holes and obliterate the cracks, and draw away the attention from the sagging face tissue. And so for some, worldliness immediately conjures up the image of a painted Jezebel, perhaps wearing a dress two sizes too small, and seeking to give de facto lessons in female anatomy with every step that she takes. For others, the word "worldliness" immediately brings into focus certain forms of entertainment, what some would call moving picture shows. And for others, matters of external patterns of behavior immediately come to mind with the word

"worldliness". And as I wrestled before God with this subject, I thought that one of the most difficult things was going to be to make an attempt to somehow clear the deck of our minds of all those images which may or may not have anything whatsoever to do with worldliness when contemplated from a Biblical perspective. And so what I must attempt to do tonight is first of all set before you from the Word of God a definition of worldliness. And then having done that I will attempt to address the subject under these headings: "Our native Attachment to the World", "Our Gracious Deliverance from the World", and "Our Present Danger in the Midst of the World".

First of all, then, a definition of worldliness. And coming up with any Biblical definition of worldliness is impossible unless we understand that when the term "the world", which is the Biblical term that is used, not "worldliness", but "the world". When it appears before us in the Scriptures in the sense I am to address it tonight, we must understand that two basic words are used in the original when making reference to that which we mean when we speak of worldliness as the characteristic of those who are living according to the standards of the world. And those two words are "cosmos" and "aion". Now the word "cosmos" is a word that has many legitimate broad usages in the New Testament. But when we find it in a passages such as 1 John 2, verses 15 and following, perhaps one of the most well known texts on the subject of worldliness, it is being used in the orbit of our concern tonight. 1 John 2:15: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Now obviously, though it is the same Greek word ("For God so loved the world..."), when we are commanded not to love the world, it has an entirely different significance. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." And when the word "cosmos" is used in this sense, it is referring to the whole present order of man and things and everything belonging to that order as that which is at enmity with God, that which is lost in sin, wholly at odds with anything divine, anything that is pleasing to God. It is referring to the whole present order of men and things in a state of alienation from God. As such, the world, the cosmos is ruled by the prince of the world, the devil himself.

Turn, please, to John 12 and verse 31. Speaking of His soon coming death, our Lord Jesus says, "Now is the judgment of this world [i.e., the whole order of things in alienation from and in opposition to God]." You see, the same act, which was the world's salvation, was the world's judgment, speaking obviously of two different worlds. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." Well, what world has a prince who is cast out in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus? It is that whole order of men and things in opposition to and in alienation from God. It is that world over which the prince of darkness rules, the devil himself.

You find a similar reference in John 16 and in verse 11 where our Lord is speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit and His influence in coming. He says He will reprove the world of judgment because the prince of this world has been judged. As such, this cosmos, this world, this whole present order of men and things in alienation from and in hostility to God, not only is ruled by the prince of this world, but John uses more graphic image when he says in 1 John 5:19, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one." It speaks of this whole cosmos, this whole order of men and things in alienation from and in opposition to God as lying in the lap of the evil one. And because this is so, it can be described as the world, the cosmos marked by utter stygian spiritual darkness.

Ephesians 6:12. In this passage in which we are apprised of the reality and nature of our spiritual warfare, we read, "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places." And so our wrestling, our opposition has to do with a cosmos that is marked by darkness. So we may say in summary that where the word "world" is used in the kinds of warnings we find in 1 John 2:15; where it is used to express where we read in John 17, that out of which all of the true people of God have been delivered, it is referring to that whole present order of men and things which is alienated from God and in a state of enmity to God.

But then there is a second word, the word "aion". And the Ephesians 6:12 passage-- I'm sorry--should not have used. The word "aion" is there. My eye dropped down to my notes under "aion". Now the word "aion" literally means a segment of time or an age. We find the phrase in the Bible again and again "this age" and "the age to come". That's "this aion" and "the aion to come". But when it is used in conjunction with our subject, worldliness, it refers to this present age in contrast to the age to come, this present age in its present characteristics with reference to sin, evil, and the devil. This is why we are told in Romans 12:2 that believers are not to be conformed to this age, but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. The characteristic of "this aion", "this age", is that it is an evil age.

Galatians 1:4, a passage we shall have occasion to come to again later on in our exposition tonight. Referring to our Lord Jesus, the Apostle writes, "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil [age]." This present age (and there are only two ages: this age and that which is to come) is one that is one that is characterized by evil, so much so that it ["age"] can be use as a dominant, descriptive adjective. As we say, "It was a sunny day", we mean that the primary characteristic of the day was the brightness of the sun that shown, so when this age is called the evil age, the word "evil" is used as a dominant, descriptive adjective. Evil is that which predominates in this aion, this age.

Furthermore, it is an age ruled by the devil under the rule of God. Hence in 2 Corinthians 4:4. The great Apostle who affirms again and again the absolute, all-persuasive sovereignty of God: "Of Him, through Him, unto Him are all things, to whom be glory forever and ever" (Romans 11:36). "The God who works all things after the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:11). Yet that same Apostle is not ashamed to set forth this stark realism of 2 Corinthians 4, verses 3 and 4: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world [this aion, this age] hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them." He is called the god of this present age. And because it is an evil age, and because the devil is its god, it is in a state of spiritual darkness. And the word "aion" is used there in Ephesians 6:12.

Now in summary, then, we may say that when the word "world" is used in warnings; when it is used with reference to that out of which the people of God have been delivered; when it is spoken of that which comes under the judgment of God, it is referring, whether the word "cosmos" or "aion" are used to man and his institutions, his surroundings, his standards, his goals, his principles of thought and action as penetrated and controlled by malignant, devilish moral forces. That's the world; that's the cosmos we are not to love. That's the aion over which Satan stands as god; man

and his institutions, surroundings, standings, goals, and principles of thought and action, as penetrated and controlled by malignant, devilish moral forces.

It's very interesting that there is one place in the New Testament where there is a conjunction of the two words, "cosmos" and "aion". And I want you to turn to that passage as we conclude this aspect of seeking to get some kind of Biblical and yet working definition and concept of what the Bible means when it speaks of the world in this way. In Ephesians 2, we read in verse one: "And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked [now here is the phrase--and if you have the 1901, you'll see in the margin] according to the course [or the age] of this world." What you have is "kata aion tou cosomo toutou" ("according to the age of this world"). And the two words are brought together. And then notice what follows right on the heels: "according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit who now worketh [and this Greek verb is exactly the same verb as we have in Philippians 2--"God worketh in you"] in the sons of disobedience.

And how does our walking by nature according to the aion of this cosmos, according to the prince of the power of the air, that spirit who energetically and actively and eminently works in the sons of disobedience--how does that manifest itself? Verse 3: "among whom also we once lived [life with its standards; life with its motives, with its goals; life with its perspectives and value systems] in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest." And here those various lines of thought are brought together. And though I would claim no inspiration for this working definition, I believe in substance it fits. And you could substitute it in the language of this text. What is, then, the world, that world which we are not to love, that world out of which we are delivered by redemptive grace? It is that world of man and his institutions, surroundings, standards, goals, and principles of thought and action. Notice: lust of the mind and of the flesh (thought and action as penetrated and controlled by malignant, devilish moral forces). "The spirit who works in the sons of disobedience.

Now that I set before you as a definition or a working description of the world. Now having done that, and that was essential (as Albert Barnes said, "He who expounds the Word must do so, not under the impulse of a vivid imagination, but under the discipline of mind prepared to give a reason for the meaning one attaches to Biblical words and to convince the judgment of his hearers that those reasons are correct, and that those judgments are correct"), let us consider first of all, then, with this definition as our working tool, our native attachment to the world. There is one thing I can say of every person in this building, including this preacher. Every single one of us was born and lived by nature as a worldling. We lived in perfect rapport with the institutions, surroundings, standards, goals, principles of thought and action as penetrated and controlled by malignant, devilish moral forces. We were all of us by nature worldlings. For in the passages already read in your hearing, we are told the whole world lies in the evil one, among whom Paul says in the text we looked at in Ephesians 2, "All once lived." And when Jesus is praying for His own, He says that there are those whom He has taken out of the world, but they were once in it up to their ears. The world was their native environment. The world was their native habitat. The world was their native atmosphere. They ate it, they breathed it, they thought it, they lived with it, they slept with it. The world was their orbit of existence. And in that condition, according to 2 Corinthians 4, there was an acting, blinding power of the devil upon our minds. According to Ephesians 2, there was an active energizing of our baser lusts and passions by the devil. We were the disinherited

sons of God who had cast in our allegiance with the prince of this world, with the god of this world. We were of our father, the devil.

Now that's not very flattering. According to Dr. Schuller, that is the worst way to make a convert to Christianity. To tell a man that he is a worldling by nature, and that to be a worldling means that, regardless of how innocent he or she may appear in his or her outward demeanor, and regardless of how much common grace operating through an awakened conscience through Godly parental restraints and a host of other factors may make that person very upright and respectable and honored in his or her community, to tell such people that they are enmeshed in this cosmos of this present age that is an evil age, and that they themselves are evil, that it is an age which lies in the wicked one, and they indeed lie in the lap of the wicked one. No, humanly speaking, that is not a way to make converts to Christianity if your Christianity is simply a self-help scheme, a psychological manipulation of men. But if your Christianity is Biblical Christianity that announces, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins", then the kindest thing you can do to any man is tell him honestly how bad he is by nature, and what a mighty and glorious Savior Christ is, and what he can become by grace. And so all of us by nature are worldlings. We are natively attached to the world. As much as we after conception were nourished in our mother's womb by that umbilical cord that attached us to that internal life support system within her body, so we were born with an umbilical cord that tied us to the world system. It was the womb of our existence.

But now let me address secondly (and this is where the heart of our meditation will lie tonight), our gracious deliverance from the world. And I want to break down this heading into the initial deliverance, the continual deliverance, and the perfected or the consummate deliverance.

Now hear me very carefully as I take up the first subheading: our gracious deliverance from the world initially. In every true work of grace in the heart of a sinner, there is without exception a radical, a fundamental, and a real deliverance from attachment to the world and a pattern of worldliness. In other words, the umbilical cord that tied us to the womb of our native worldliness is cut when we are born into the kingdom of God. And if your whole life support system is still one in which that which flows from the womb of the world determines who and what you are, I care not about how much you know about Christ, how much you can speak about Christ, how often you are found among the people of Christ, you are a worldling; you are in a state of wrath and condemnation. For in every true work of grace in the heart of a sinner, there is a radical, a fundamental, a real deliverance from attachment to the world and a pattern of worldliness.

Now as the men in the academy hear me often say, "He who asserts must prove. And he who asserts most loudly and boldly must prove most convincingly." Now why is this so? Why am I so bold to be so dogmatic on the issue? Well, let me give you two very simple reasons. Number one: because Christ died with the intention of cutting the umbilical cord between the saved sinner and the world. Turn to Galatians 1. Christ died with this very intention in view. Galatians 1:3-4: "Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins [the whole doctrine of substitutionary, penal satisfaction--and then a penal clause of purpose], that He might deliver us [from hell in the day of judgment], according to the will of our God and Father."

Now if Paul had written that, that would be good, sound theology. It would be true because in another place (1 Thessalonians 1), Paul says that you turn to God from your idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. It is not wrong to contemplate the Lord Jesus who in dying for our sins has delivered us from the coming wrath. Don't ever talk as though that is a little part of our salvation. Were we to meditate more upon the day of judgment and envision ourselves standing before that brilliant throne from which heaven and earth flee away, and if we were to hear the sentence in the ears of the mind as it ought to come towards us in terms of what we are by nature, and think of the horrors of being cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and where they have no rest day nor night, and the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever, I say we would have both a greater appreciation for our salvation and a greater burden for the lost. But our text does not point us there. Our text says this: "who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father."

As we saw last night, our Lord procures no other salvation than that which is purchased in the councils of eternity. What the Father purposes, the Son purchases. And here we are told that it was the will of our God and Father, that in giving Himself for our sins, He might deliver us from this out of this present evil world. All that surrounds the shame of His nakedness; all that surrounds the beating, the bruising, the mockery, the shrouded heavens, the cry of dereliction, He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Why? Because He gave Himself for the sins of the people whom He determined in the application of that salvation would be wrenched out of this present evil world. The umbilical cord would be cut. When in the dynamics of redemptive grace, elect sinners would be brought into the kingdom of God and into the possession of the forgiveness of their sins. That's why I'm bold to assert that in every true work of grace in the heart of a sinner, there is a radical, fundamental, real deliverance from attachment to the world and a pattern of worldliness. Why? Because Christ died with this intention in view.

And secondly, because the Spirit makes that intention efficacious in the application of the saving virtue of Christ. Turn to Galatians 6. Without going into the context of the entire Epistle to the Galatians, the part of the text that I wish to highlight stands on its own feet without any reference to either the overall or the immediate context. Suffice it to say, the Judaizers were boasting in the external forms and rituals and making converts to a visit to the rabbi and subsequent adherence to the trappings of Jewish ceremonies. But Paul says in verse 14 of chapter 6, "But far be it from me to glory [or to boast], save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through which [I have obtained the forgiveness of my sins and the hope of everlasting life]." Now that would have been true. And in other places Paul says that. But that's not what he says here. Look at his language: "But far be it from me [to boast], save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ [not the piece of wood on which He died, but the redemption effected upon that piece of wood], through which [what has happened?] the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world." What is he saying? Remember our definition of the world? What is this thing called the world? It is man in his institutions, religious included; his surroundings, religious included; his standards, religious included; goals and principles of thought and action, religious included--how can a man get right with God? The world has its standards of thought, principles and action. It is all of that as penetrated and controlled by malignant, devilish moral forces. And Paul says,

"When I was brought into a saving appropriation of the virtue of the death of Christ, the world was crucified to me. In other words, that whole cosmos under the control of the devil with men's devilish thoughts of how to be right with God, with men's devilish thoughts of how to find acceptance with God, with men's devilish standards of how to please one another--that world system became to me as attractive, as virtuous, as desirable a companion as a Roman felon hanging on a cross with his dead, bloated body having its flesh plucked off by the buzzards that swirled around its head and its sunken eyes."

He said, "The cross of Christ made the world as desirable and attractive a companion to me as a ugly, dead, stinking, bloating body hanging on a cross with the vultures and the buzzards plucking its flesh." You say, "Alright, Pastor Martin, enough is enough. I had supper two hours ago; I don't want to puke." God have mercy. If I got a little more graphic, some of you might puke up your supper, but you never puked up the world. The world to you is still a handsome, striking fellow. His slightest glance makes your heart beat and go pitter patter. A stroke of his hand makes glow for a day. You'll sell your soul to hell forever to have his smile. The world, man and his institutions, surroundings, standards, goals; his principles of thought and action, his approval, his acceptance, his standards of what is virtuous in speech, in dress, in music, in entertainment, in diversions. You would never dare to do anything that would cause the world to frown. He's so handsome to you; he's such a desirable companion. You will curry to his every whim; you will jump to his every wish. Just a glance of his eye, and you're at his feet. Why? Because you are still of the world and under the power of the prince of this world. And the cross of Christ has never been efficaciously applied to your heart by the Holy Spirit.

No sinner ever received forgiveness of sin rooted in the virtue of the cross of Christ who did not have the world crucified to him in the virtue of that same cross. This is not some higher life dimension of experience, because my Bible says, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof." He says, "The world is as attractive to me as a cadaver hanging on a cross." But he says, "You know something? Coming into the virtue of the saving work of Christ something happened that is the obverse of that." Look at it: "By which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world."

Now before Paul came to a Spirit-wrought understanding of who Jesus of Nazareth was and the significance of His cross, he was the darling of a whole segment of Judaism. He was their fair-haired boy. He was their rising star on the horizon of the triumphs of Pharisaic Judaism. He said he outstripped all of his peers in zeal. He was Gamaliel's fair-haired boy, his prized pupil. And it was particularly the Jewish world with all of its Jewish nationalism, and its Jewish pride, and its Jewish arrogance. And in that context, Paul was a worldling, not one who abandoned himself to the standards of the lecherous men of this world and to the cheating men of this world. No, he said,

"Touching the external standards of the law, I was utterly blameless." But he was, nonetheless of this world. And he said, "When my eyes were opened to behold the glory of God in the face of Christ, and I came to understand the identity His person ('Who art Thou, Adoni? I am Jesus whom thou persecuteth. Lord, what will You have me to do?'), that Jesus is God, and He has arrested me in grace, and I have been a fool, and that He has arrested me instead of summoned me to judgment and damned me. Dear Lord, I give myself away. It is all that I can do."

And when he came to an understanding of the identity of Jesus and an understanding of the significance of the cross of Christ, not only did the world become crucified to him, but he says he became crucified to the world. What's that mean? "He said,

"Well, as I looked upon the world, particularly that religious world [and that was the issue in the epistle to the Galatians--'If I should yet please man, I should not be the bond slave of Christ' he says in the first chapter], when the world became crucified to me, there was a precise parallel in the world's estimation of me. When I began to acknowledge that, in spite of all of my Pharisaic perfection (touching the law blameless), that when I saw my heart (Romans 7:1-12), I saw a seething caldron of all forms evil desire and impulse, and I saw myself a wretched, hell-deserving, vile and polluted sinner. And when that estimation was made of myself, and I cast all the weight of my guilt and my sinfulness and my bondage upon Jesus of Nazareth as crucified, and I found forgiveness and life in Him, and I declared boldly in the synagogue of my hometown that He is Son of God and Messiah, the world that looked upon me as the handsome man, whose glances they loved, from whom they desired a stroke and a touch, suddenly I became as attractive to the world as cadaver hanging on a cross. I became crucified to the world. I began to live by a set of standards; I began to live by a set of perspectives. I began to conduct my life under the pressure of goals and desires and longings and realities that made me as despicable and out of place in good, upright, respectable company as a cadaver hanging on a cross."

There was this cleavage that went in both directions. And my friend, it happens every time the virtue of the cross is applied by the Spirit. That's why Jesus could pray, "They are not of the world as I am not of the world." And then went on or previously said, "If the world hated Me, it will hate you." Why? "Because you are not of the world even as I am not of the world." And as we come to contemplate the implications of this truth of our deliverance from the world and from worldliness, no true child of God ever lives dominated by the threefold cord by which sinners are bound to the world. That's why John says in 1 John 2, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." Why? "If any man love the world [if there is a basic fundamental undisturbed attachment in love to the world]...." He's not talking about the struggle with remaining affinities for certain aspects of the world and its pleasures and its standards. He is talking about a fundamental basic pattern of attachment to the world. And he doesn't say, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is in him but not developed as it ought, or the love of the Father is squelched, or the love of the Father is in him, though you can't see it." He says, "The love of the Father is not in him."

The term worldly Christian is a radically heretical misnomer. You're either a Christian or a worldling, an imperfect Christian, but a Christian. The world has been crucified to you, and you to the world. So you no longer live under that impulse of seeking simply to enjoy things (the lust of the flesh), to have things (the lust of the eyes), to be somebody (the pride of life). Now you see, it can be a very small circle; it can be a very limited number of things. But if that which makes you tick, that which sets your standards, that which draws out your energies and excites your emotions has to do with the lust of the flesh (merely enjoying things), the lust of the eyes (merely having things), and the pride of life (desiring to be somebody), my friend, the love of the Father is not in you. You have never know the application of the virtue of the death of

Christ either in forgiveness or the dynamics of cutting the umbilical cord that holds you entrapped in the womb of this present world.

You see, the child of God no longer dances to the world's tune, no longer marches to the beat of the world's drum. He's got a transplanted citizenship--"Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we wait for the coming of our Lord." And where our citizenship is that's where the rules that govern us originate. And we live by the rule and the law of heaven. We live not for this present age, but for the age to come. We are strangers and sojourners; we have here no abiding place, but we look for a city to come. And above all, we look for the King who sits enthroned in majesty, in splendor and glory, for the Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's land. Our gracious deliverance from the world and worldliness begins on the threshold when, in a true work of grace, there is a radical, fundamental, real deliverance from attachment to the world and a pattern of worldliness.

But very quickly, let me touch on this gracious deliverance as it works out continually. Just like with the matter of sin, in the initial implantation of grace, the dominion of sin is broken. It no longer reigns, though it remains. It is not the president, while it is yet resident. And the same is true with the world. The fundamental attachment to the world in the imagery of the world being our moral womb, and our unregenerate heart is, as it were, the umbilical cord that binds us to that realm of existence. Though that umbilical cord is cut and we are transplanted into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and we become crucified to the world and the world to us, the reality is that part of our remaining sin finds expression in the remnant of worldliness; this is, the desire to have the approval of those who are living by the standards and goals and principles of thought and action which are penetrated and controlled by malignant, devilish moral forces. And so we are tempted for the saving of face; we are tempted for the sake of peer acceptance; we are tempted for economic advancement to conform to the world's standards of ethics. Our yea is not quite yea in a business deal; our yea is not quite yea in a personal relationship where we may incur the frown of a worldling. Our nay is not nay when the overtures are made to us as single men and women, that we should allow ourselves the indulgence of the use of our bodies under the impulse of God-given sexual appetites to compromise and begin to indulge in forms of sexual intimacy and kissing and petting and even intercourse outside the sacred marriage bed. And that's why Christians fall into that worldly sin of fornication.

How is this gracious deliverance to be continually wrought in us? Well, let me give you just three simple heads and a text on which to hang them.

We must believe it is crucial to fight against worldliness. You see, if you're not convince that you must fight against it with all your being, you'll never make any headway. James says it is of the very essence of true religion, pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is what? To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, to show practical compassion to the needy, and then, listen, not to keep one self respectfully aloof from the world, but unspotted from the world. The purity of my religion is in direct proportion to my commitment that I shall not allow one stain of the world to be placed upon the garments of the imparted, not imputed, righteousness that God has graciously granted me in His regenerating work and in the cleansing work that He did on the threshold.

Do I really believe what James says--what vivid language. He says in James 4:4, "Don't you know that whosoever would be a friend of the world makes himself the

enemy of God?" Not only is friendship with the world a form of expressing enmity to God, but if you read earlier, he uses other imagery drawn out of rich Old Testament perspectives. He says, "You adulterers, don't you know that friendship of the world is enmity with God?" When you curry the favor of the world you are guilty of spiritual adultery. Why? Christ died as the heavenly bridegroom to have a chaste and spotless bride whose heart is wholly His. And when you flirt with the world, you are guilty of spiritual adultery.

You teenagers, listen to me. You say, "I know that some of the standards of dress and hairstyles that are present are in reflective in great part of a lifestyle and a perspective on life that is not Biblical and Godly, but I couldn't bear being out of step with the latest hairstyle, with the latest clothing style. I must be the world's friend in my external appearance. At the price of being a harlot to Jesus? God have mercy on you. "Ah, you see, when the kids get together, if I can't name the latest groups, they'll look at me like I'm some kind of a dummy. O, I know that the lyrics are abominable and hellish; I know that the music itself with all of the den of its repetitive cacophony is like music out of the pit of hell where there is no order and beauty and symmetry, but you know, they'd mock me out and laugh me to scorn. I've got to listen to just enough to be able to be with it." At the expense of being a harlot to Jesus? I didn't write it, folks.

Some people tell me, "Pastor Martin, you're coarse in your preaching." My friend, you open your Bible and tell God He's coarse. And how do you commit adultery? By having illicit sexual intercourse. When you voluntarily open your soul to receive the world, you commit spiritual adultery as much as a wife goes to bed with her neighbor's husband. That's not Albert Martin coarseness; that's Holy Spirit boldness. And if you're offended, it's probably because you're guilty of that very harlotry. And the raw nerve of your own love of the world has been pinched.

You and I will make no progress in the continual battle against the world and worldliness unless we believe it's crucial to fight worldliness. Do I want pure religion with a pure conscience? Then I might fight to keep unspotted from the world. If I would have my heart as the heart of a chaste virgin of Christ, in the language of Paul, I must be sure that the world's smiles or frowns never cause me to alter my standards, change my goals in any way, shape, or mold when I am convinced from the Word of God are the standards for personal dress and appearance and the use of TV and what movies I do or do not watch, if I watch any; what TV programs I watch or don't watch; where I go and will not go. It is a matter of I'm jealous to have a virgin's heart for my blessed Savior who loved me and died for me. You better believe it's crucial or you'll never fight.

Secondly, you must use every ordained means to conquer worldliness. I commend Pastor Bob's sermon on Romans 12:1 and 2. You must use every God-ordained means. "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. And what is the grand instrument of that renewal? Psalm 1. The blessed man is he who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly (the worldling). "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted...."

May I again pour out my heart to you young people. I thank God for so much that I see in so many of you. But you know, frankly, one thing that disturbs me, I don't see many of you (unless I'm really ignorant, and it could be that I am. There may be

hidden depths that I've not yet locked in to) using the relatively carefree single state to soak up your Bibles. When God saved me at age 18, in two years time I wore out a Thompson Chain Reference Bible--committed whole passages to memory. I couldn't get enough of my Bible. Sure it meant sometimes doing construction work and being awake all night with asthma. So don't let anyone cop out. It's amazing how people will try to squirm out of things: "Ah, you had it easy." No, no. I know what it's like to sit in a chair wheezing like an old horse ready for the gloom factory all night with asthma. And before going of to do coolly work for Mason and Plaster Construction Man 8 and 9 and 10 hours in the hot and humid weather of Connecticut in July and August, to get that Bible out and pour over it's pages and pray in its truth. O dear young people, the world is seeking to squeeze you into its mold, its standards, its perspectives. Its values scream at you through all the media; scream at you through your peers and their attitudes, their bearing, their dress, their walk. How can you ever hope to be the blessed man, the blessed woman of Psalm 1, unless you use the God-ordained means of constant interaction with the Word of God. Other texts could be quoted.

Then thirdly, we must continually trust in our great High Priest. That's why I asked Pastor Lamar to read John 17. At times when it seems that the remaining propensity to reattached that umbilical cord to that whole womb of worldliness is so strong, O what power there is when I remember my Savior is praying, "Father, I pray not that Thou shouldest not take them out of the world [you see how "world" is used differently there; that is, 'Don't take them out of the realm of the inhabitants of the earth, in that little orb down there into the safety of My presence and into the company of just men made perfect'], but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil one." Blessed be God, at times when it seems that every last defense is down and we were as vulnerable before the fowl power of the enemy of our souls and we cannot trace our deliverance to any human means, it's in those times that I look back and I say, "Lord Jesus, were not for your intercession, I'd have been gone." When Peter looked back after his oaths and after his self maledictions that he never knew Him--no attachment to Him--I wonder how many times in later life he said, "Look, there wasn't a thing in me that was keeping me attached to my Savior. I was sold out to the world in those moments of weakness." He would remember the words of Jesus: "Satan hath desired you to sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you. And when you are turned again, My prayers are efficacious." And O dear child of God, while believing it is crucial to fight worldliness while engaging in every means to oppose it, constantly remember and look to your blessed Savior at the right hand of the Father who is praying that you should be kept from the world and from the evil one.

Then, of course, our gracious deliverance that begins initially, as we've described, goes on continually and will be consummated in the age to come. This age is the age where worldliness is part of the burden of the overlapping of the ages. Heaven is in our hearts and in our deepest affections, and yet the world and the devil are still very much our daily companions. But thank God, in the age to come, it will be the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwells nothing but righteousness. I love sometimes when I'm running, sometimes when I'm engaged in other activities where I'm in direct contact with the terra firma, I like to look down and say there's a time coming when every square inch from the surface I'm running on, right down to the center of the core of the earth, will be marked by nothing but righteousness. The new heavens, the new earth wherein dwells righteousness. And this I aion, this world system, this cosmos under the curse and under the prince of the power of the air will be no more. Satan and his minions and all of his children will be banished to eternal

perdition. And the people of God will shine as stars in the firmament of God's redemptive glory.

Now I want to close on this very sober note. Having giving you, I hope, what is at least a somewhat accurate Biblical definition. And then having considered our native attachment to the world, our gracious deliverance from the world, I want to close on this note: the present danger we all face from the world. In my preparation, my preacher brethren, you know what text kept coming back to me? "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present age." Think of it, to have prayed with Paul, labored with Paul; at one point, he calls him Demas my fellow worker. Read Hendrikson's commentary on 2 Timothy 4:9. I don't have time to read it, but I brought it with me. It's so moving. Think of it, Demas who knelt and prayed with Paul and heard him weep over his fellow countrymen, the Jews; who saw him with his tears staining the parchment when he wrote his pastoral letters. "Demas hath forsaken me" and all that this man was: to whom the world was crucified, and who was crucified to the world. "Demas hath forsaken me." And what caused him to leave Paul and everything that he stood for? The world had bewitched him.

My preacher friend, listen to me. You beware of anything that has its taproots in this world's standard of success. If you don't die to the world's standard of success, you'll learn how to begin to cut the corners off the offence of the cross. That's what the Judaizers were doing. Paul said if the root of their heresy was not a real conviction about truth, they didn't want to bear the offense of the cross. It was an aversion to persecution. And who among us does not have an aversion to persecution? And if you've not died to your own success standard and your own success image, determined to say, "If I must preach to nothing but the echo of my own voice against the walls, I will not cut off one right angle of my Father's truth."

I don't understand. I don't stand in judgment on any man, but I know at least one or two sitting here. And you brethren know me well enough to know, I trust, I am not speaking of you. But frankly, I don't understand, wherever I go in pastor's conference, every Tom, Dick, and Harry is getting his D.Min., spending hours getting an advanced degree. Where do they find the time. I think they've allow the world to influence them. You find the letterhead; you've got D.Min.--give you a little more influence--rubbish! The time you spend chasing that D.Min. you spend on your knees crying to the Holy Spirit to come upon you, and to come upon your people, and to come with power upon sinners. And you'll have the only validation a true servant of God needs. Paul says, "You are my epistle, living transformed lives."

Now don't anyone go out and say Pastor Martin said anyone got a D.Min., he's backslidden and a worldling. Pastor Martin didn't say that. What Pastor Martin did say is, "If you've got the itch for a D.Min., you better ask, 'Where did the itch come from?'" Did it grow out of your most intimate seasons of communion with Christ when the world lay at your feet as a cadaver? Or did it grow out of your association in the local ministerium where everybody was talking about his degrees and you felt a little baggy-kneed and snotty nosed academically? That's worldliness. That's the world dictating your standards of ministerial credibility. Beware of it, men. Under the guise, "Well, I've really got to understand the mindset of my generation." You're reading a little bit too much secular literature. You're watching programs on the TV under the guise of ministerial enlightenment that you know are titillating to your remaining sin. Things that once made you blush now can't even bring a twitch of red to your cheek.

Beware, my brother, or it may be said of you, "So and so hath forsaken Me, having loved this present world."

You single men and women, listen to me. Many, many a single man or woman professing the name of Christ has forsaken Christ because they've got a worldly perspective on marriage. They got their standard from the ladies' and the men's magazines, the body worship magazines. They didn't get them from the Bible. And because they bypassed opportunities to marry according to Biblical standards while they waited for their world-dictated dream standards, they then got desperate and jumped. Beware of the danger of the world. Preachers, single men and women, beware.

Members of Trinity, God have mercy on us if these lovely walls and impressive beams become a source of carnal pride. And God will let the walls stay and the beams stay but take away the only thing that's beautiful around here, and that's His presence. And God help us if that day ever comes. Jesus won't draw near with the kisses of His gracious presence to a bunch of spiritual harlots who've opened their hearts to worldly pride. May God grant that, in the constant fellowship of His cross, the world may lie at our feet as dead, and we dead to the world.

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