

- Our fiscal yr = July-June // 1st ½ 1st yr – not good.
  - While teach thru Bible, when need to address something, do = Being responsible
  - So, Jan = shared on giving
    - People responded
    - Then – March > Vision for our Future
      - Again, responded
- During 2<sup>nd</sup> ½ yr = didn't just match budget, made up for 1<sup>st</sup> ½ !!!
- Giving has increased lil more than **18%** over the same period 1st yr.
- With that said, what's **really** exciting is how God is blessing so many of you!
- We're seeing marriages healed, fam rel restored & God's provision realized.
  - Still lot to do – but no denying God's goodness.

#### Read vs • Forbidden Love

1. The title of today's message sounds like it's drawn from the new genre of Amish Romance novels.
  - a. *Forbidden Love*, 3<sup>rd</sup> book of the 7-part series *Love in the Hinterlands* by Beverly Lewis.
  - b. Pick up a hardcopy or download to your e-reader today
  - c. And follow Amish maiden Siobaughn as she wrestles with her competing desires for outsider Max & loyalty to her community.
2. The forbidden love we're looking at today is a bit different.
3. It's a **fierce contest** **every one of us** is called to enter.
  - a. There isn't a person **here**, at our CI & SP campuses, or the sound of my voice that doesn't need to be reminded of what John pens here.
  - b. Our struggles are **different** in the specifics of **HOW** we'll apply this.
  - c. But all of us fight the same battle with the World
  - d. The only difference is HOW that World takes shape for us & competes for our affection.
4. Before we dive in, let's remember John's overall theme in 1 John
  - a. Everything he writes about deals with our relationships –
  - b. First w/God, then w/1 another.
5. What he says here gets right to the **heart** / core of our relationship w/God from which all **other** relationships flow.

#### V. 15

<sup>15</sup> 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.

1. 2 loves are presented: A Love of the World & The Love of God.
2. John says they're **mutually-exclusive**.
  - a. If we love the world, we **can't** love God.
  - b. And if we love God, we **won't** love the world.
3. To which some might say, "Wait! Does John 3:16 says that God so loved the WORLD, He gave His Son?" Indeed it does.
  - a. The same John wrote **both** that **& this**. //But he means something **different** here.
  - b. In the NT, the word "world" is used in 3 ways.
    - 1) There's the **physical planet** we call Earth. (Acts 17:24)
    - 2) Then there's **world of people** we refer to as humanity. That's what Jesus spoke of in John 3:16 that God loves.
    - 3) The 3<sup>rd</sup> flavor of the word "world," the 1 John means here, is the corrupt world system in rebellion against God.

- a) The Ap Paul says the devil is the “god” (little ‘g’) of **THAT** world. (2 Cor 4:4)
5. That world began in Eden when Adam & Eve chose to sin at satan’s prompting.
- a. Up to that point, they’d loved, served, & obeyed God. The result was **Life**  
Complete Satisfaction & &  
unrestrained Joy.
- b. But the devil floated the idea that they were missing out on something MORE!
- c. He planted the idea there was **another** way to live; one that was **better** because it was **independent** from God.
- 1) As with **all** his deceits, there was a tiny bit of truth in what he said. But it was mis-applied.
- 2) There WAS another way for Adam & Even to live.
- 3) Problem is, they had to forfeit the Satisfaction & Joy obeying God gave them.
- 4) So, they reached for the different way the devil offered & lost the life they had.
- 5) In its place they were given frustration & sorrow because that’s what’s left when you give up the Life God created you for.
6. From that day to this, all of Adam & Eve’s kids; what we call “the human race” has ratified the choice they made by **continuing to believe** the lie that we can **live independently** of God.
7. This is STILL the lie satan promotes. He promotes it **through** the world-system.
8. Just in case there’s someone here who doesn’t believe the Bible calls the devil the god or ruler of this world, let me just do a quick review of a few passages.
- a. **Matt 4** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Temptation: Devil took Jesus up on a high mountain & showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.
- 1) Said it would all be his if He just worshiped him.
- 2) Only way that temptation would be real is if devil had power to do it.
- b. 3 times in **Gspl Jhn**, Jesus called satan = “the **ruler of this world**.” 12:31/14:30/16:11
- c. In **2 Cor. 4:4** Paul calls him the “god of this age.”
- d. In **Eph 2:2**, Paul calls the devil the “prince of the power of the air, who works in & thru the lost.”
9. Just as God works **thru** believers by **Holy** Spirit, the unholy spirit of satan works thru the lost to accomplish **his** purposes.
10. A bit later in 1 John 5:19 John says  
We know that we are of God, & the whole world lies *under the sway* of the wicked one.
11. The “world” John means here is the **system** by which fallen people, under the inspiration of satan & his **minions** the demons, seeks to **live & identify** themselves **apart** from God.
12. Think of it this way: We refer to “the world of sports / finance; the fashion-world.
- a. The world of politics, business-world, world of entertainment.
- b. Put all that together & you have **THE World**
- c. The corporate, united expression of man’s rejection of God.
- d. Now, that’s not to say **every aspect** of all these different realms is wicked or evil.
- 1) The high-jump & pole-vaulting aren’t inherently sinful.
- 2) Denim & plaid aren’t wicked.
- 3) Stocks & bonds aren’t evil.
- e. What makes all these different aspects of human society evil is when they are used as the means to **assert mankind’s independence from God**.
- f. When people **use them** to gain power, glory, satisfaction & joy – **apart from** their identity **in** & relationship **with** God.
- g. And let’s face it: THAT’S what the whole system aims to do!
13. The World has its own rules & values that have little to nothing to do with God.
14. To **succeed** in the world, you have to **go along to get along**.
15. John is crystal in v15: We’re not to love **that** world/ system.
- a. The born again are to make a **clean break** w/it.
- b. That world is in **opposition** to God, but we have been **reconciled** to Him.
- c. We can’t be loyal to **both** God & the world because they call us to mutually exclusive priorities & values.
16. Jesus said it this way in Matt 6:24

“No 1 can serve 2 masters; for either he will hate the 1 and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the 1 and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

- a. Today, “**mammon**” is synonymous w/**money**. // It meant a lot more in Jesus’ day
- b. It referred to **materialism**;
  - 1) The idea that the **bottom line of life** was to live it up in the here & now.
  - 2) And the surest way to do that was to get as much money & power as you could.
  - 3) Never be in need, because you always have the means to get what you want.
  - 4) That’s mammon Materialism; The one who dies w/the most toys wins.
  - 5) Really, mammon was the world’s MO.

17. Jesus said God & the World are 2 masters who place competing & mutually exclusive demands on us.

- a. To obey 1 is to defy the other.
- b. Jesus says we have to **chose** who to obey, because it **can’t** be both. // It’s God or the World.

18. John **echoes** that here.

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.

- a. John’s not saying we can’t enjoy **creation**; the Planet.
- b. On the contrary, in 1 Tim 6:17, Paul says God’s given us an abundance of all these things to enjoy.
- c. and John certainly wouldn’t ban the love of people because we ought to love what God loves, & we know He loves all, even the lost.
- d. what John prohibits is a love of & devotion to the world-*system* that hates & opposes God.

More Love

1. Vs16-17 elaborate on the challenge the world presents to our affection for God.
2. We’ll dive deeply into that this Wednesday.
3. But there’s something suggested by what John says in v15 we need to look at.
4. Because we’re created in God’s image, we have the capacity to **love**.
  - a. More than capacity, we have the NEED to love.
  - b. The question isn’t **IF** we love, only **WHAT** // Everyone loves something or someone.
  - c. And by love, I mean the deep longing of the soul to **be with** what’s loved.
    - 1) To yearn for it to be benefited & blessed.
5. Now, it’s the nature of such love that it can **only be given to one**.
  - a. When you were conceived, God placed a spirit in you.
  - b. With that spirit, God gave you a singular & unique gift, the ability to love.
  - c. It’s your great potential to give that gift to something or someone.
6. When God created Adam, His intention was that Adam would give his love to Him.
  - a. As Adam loved God, God returned that love & enlarged it so it could be poured out on Eve & their home in Eden.
  - b. But the day came when Adam turned his love from God to himself in a bid for a different way of living.
  - c. And all of history since is the long, sad tale of man’s attempt to fashion something worthy of his love, something that will **return** his love, but without success.
7. [Story of the Key]
  - a. After his HS graduation, a young man’s very wealthy father handed him a wrapped box.
  - b. Instead of opening it, he tucked it under his arm, said thank you but begged off further conversation because his friends were headed out to celebrate.
  - c. He climbed into the back seat of a friend’s car and as they drove away, tore the wrapping off the box and opened it to find a single, oddly shaped key. No note or explanation; just the key.
  - d. He put it in his pocket, intending to ask his dad later what it was for.
  - e. Arriving home late that night, his parents already asleep, he took the key out of his pocket and put it in a drawer.
  - f. And forgot about it.
  - g. Months went by, then a couple years & his father died.
  - h. As he packed to move, he discovered the key & realized he’d never asked his dad what it was for.
  - i. He slipped it on his key-ring as a reminder of his father.
  - j. Every lock he came to he tried the key to see if it fit; but of course it didn’t.

k. A few more years went by when it dawned on him his mother might know what the key was for. He asked her.

l. She went to a bookcase in the den & pulled out one of her husband's favorite books.

m. Opening the front cover she withdrew an envelope with the son's name on it.

n. As she handed it to him & said, "Your dad gave me this not long before he died. He said if you ever asked me what that key was for, I was to give you this. He waited for you to ask him, but you never did. I hope this answers your questions."

o. With regret, he carefully opened it & took out a single sheet with his dad's handwriting on it.

Dear Mark, The key I gave you at your HS graduation opens a safe-deposit box at the bank. Inside, you'll find a whole book of pre-signed checks.

I love you son and I'm proud to be your father. // Love Dad.

At the bottom was the address for bank and # of the box.

8. That key, so long ***neglected***, then ***mis-used*** in trying to open the ***wrong*** doors, was the means by which so much more could be accomplished.

9. It's the same with us and our ability/capacity to love.

a. God's given us a gift, a key, if you will.

b. If we give our love to the world, it'll be wasted.

c. But if we give it to God, then He opens to us a treasure-house of more love that floods us with the ability to love others Which is EXACTLY what John goes on to say.

10. If we love the world, we'll find our love consumed & wasted.

11. When we love God, He pours it back to us a hundred-fold.