

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

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## *God's Word to a Hesitating Church*

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. (7:1)

*“This World is Passing Away – Set Your Eyes on the Day of the Lord”*

**June 29, 2014**

**Sermon Text:** 2 Corinthians 1:14

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Peter 3

### **Introduction-**

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. (16) For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the

eyes and pride in possessions--is not from the Father but is from the world. (17) And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.



Things are changing rather rapidly in my family of origin. My parents are in their 90's and my father is dying of cancer. You really can't talk to him anymore. As I visited with my mother last week, I heard her say "everything has changed. Everything." She was thinking about their 70 years of marriage and their whole lives – the aunts and uncles and cousins, the family get-togethers, the houses and farms they all lived in over at Perrydale (Oregon) – places we went to regularly when I was a kid growing

up. I still take some occasional motorcycle rides through there. The aunts and uncles and cousins are all gone. Of the houses that remain, total strangers now occupy them. Others, like the house I lived in when I met Verla, are run down with knee high weeds in the yard. They were once all thriving places and the realm of my experience. But they have passed.



*And the world is passing away along with its desires...*

Our worlds may seem like they will last forever. But they will not. When you were a kid, who would have thought that the neighborhood you knew so well would, in a matter of years, be occupied by people who never heard of you? The house your parents built, the yard you played in, the pets you had, your bedroom where you grew up – don't know you anymore.

*The world is passing away...*

As we have been considering this vital theme of the Day of the Lord (as mentioned by Paul here in 2 Cor 1:14) we are necessarily brought to a consideration of the brevity of our lives and of this world.

It is a grave mistake – an error of eternal cost – to set our love on this present world. What is the world? What does it mean to love it? And what is this business of the world “passing away”? Let's spend the rest of our time this morning answering these questions.

### **Do Not Love the World**



The world is not the physical globe we live on. That is the earth. Sometimes “the world” can mean that in Scripture, but most often the “cosmos” is a *kingdom which is the enemy of the kingdom of God, a place of lies and darkness, the god of which is the devil.*

James 1:27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

1 John 5:4-5 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. (5) Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. (4) In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

The world is right now passing away, in process of ceasing to exist. The kingdom of God has come and,

like a mustard seed, is growing until it will totally replace the world.

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,

If a person loves this world, he is going to perish with it. Of course not loving the world does not mean that it is wrong to love people, or to enjoy the blessings God provides us with in this life. It does not mean that we cannot take any joy in family reunions or have good memories of places and times past. What it does mean – to love the world – is to crave and desire and worship and adore and agree with the kingdom of darkness which this world system is – its philosophies, its values, its religion and its gods. If someone sets their affections and loyalties on the world, they are enemies of God – *the love of the Father is not in such a person.*

Why? Verse 16 tells us:

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in

possessions--is not from the Father but is from the world.

The world and its values, its treasures, its mindset, does not have its origin in the Father. These things originate from the devil and his cosmos-

James 3:15-17 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. (16) For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. (17) But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

The world is characterized by these three categories of “desires” or “lusts”

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- The desires of the flesh
- The desires of the eyes
- Pride in possessions (boastful pride of life in other translations)

These are the things in the world that the worldling or earth-dweller loves. All of his efforts and goals are set upon obtaining these things. But these are not from the Father. They are from the wicked one – the world, the flesh, and the devil. Those who give their lives to the love and pursuit of these

things will perish – no, are *right now perishing* and passing away along with this world. Those who have passed out of this world already, having loved it, have perished and will perish on that Day –



Hebrews 13:5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

1 Timothy 6:10-11 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many



pangs. (11) But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

We live in this world. On this earth. It is a creation that is under the curse and it is filled with sin and darkness. We must make our living and work in this place, live in our homes and raise our children. But we must not *love* the world and these things that are of the world. Lot's wife is a perfect picture of the worldling perishing with the world and is a warning to us-

Genesis 13:10-13 And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) (11) So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other. (12) Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. (13) Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.

Genesis 19:24-26 Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out

of heaven. (25) And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. (26) But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

### **Whoever Does the Will of God Abides Forever**

This present world then is passing away. Anyone who lives their life with their heart and affections and loyalties given to the world is perishing right along with it. On that Day it is going up in fire and smoke.

And as we have seen, even in this life over the course of 50 or 60 years, you can see precursors of this passing away –

- In the corrupting of our own bodies as we grow old,
- In the destruction of “moth and rust” of this world's treasures.

It is very, very grievous to see someone come to the end of their life who has given themselves to the love of this present world. All that they loved and treasured and worshipped and believed, is gone.

In contrast, here is the Christian's great and certain hope, and the reason why

we can eagerly anticipate the Day of the Lord. *Whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

1 John 2:24-25 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. (25) And this is the promise that he made to us--eternal life.

The Heidelberg Catechism begins this way –

**Question 1.** What is thy only comfort in life and death?

**Answer:** That I with body and soul, both in life and death, (a) am not my own, (b) but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; (c) who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, (d) and delivered me from all the power of the devil; (e) and so preserves me (f) that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; (g) yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, (h) and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, (i) and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.

That is overcoming the world!

Let's remind ourselves of the permanence of the kingdom of God, of the New Heavens and New Earth that Christ is bringing us into.

Hebrews 1:8 But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.

Luke 1:32-33 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, (33) and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Psalms 89:35-37 Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. (36) His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. (37) Like the moon it shall be established forever, a faithful witness in the skies." Selah

Daniel 7:13-14 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. (14) And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting

dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Revelation 22:3-5 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. (4) They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. (5) And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

As grievous as it is to look at, for example, your old home you grew up in and see it in tatters – or perhaps not even in existence – the fact is that this world is passing away. It is a world ruined by the curse, characterized by spiritual darkness and sin, owning values that are absolutely at every point opposed to God.

But there is another kingdom, and another world which we see by the eyes of faith. It is more glorious than this world could ever imagine, and it is *forever*. Its foundations are not temporal, but permanent because it is built by God, not man.

Young people – as you go out into life, it is vital that you never forget this:

***If what you are ultimately loving and desiring and worshipping and trying to possess is built by man, then you are loving the perishable, and you will perish with it. Because man can only lay temporary foundations.***

Someday Microsoft will not exist. Someday the United States will not exist, just as the so-called “glory” of the Roman Empire no longer exists:



Work hard. Work diligently. Do your best. But do it all to the glory of God and do not set your love on this world. Set your mind on Christ and His kingdom and your real life which is yet to come – and which is eternal.

Foundations. Ask yourself constantly – *what kind of foundation does this thing I am looking at have? Permanent or temporary?* You want to see things by faith and look beyond this present world:

Hebrews 11:6-10 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (7) By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (8) By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (9) By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. (10) For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

went AND he lived in tents because he KNEW that this present land was not THE land. That the promise concerned a new creation yet to be made by God, a city as it were “with foundations” – that is, which is eternal.

Hebrews 11:13-16 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. (14) **For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.** (15) If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. (16) But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

See it? Noah had God’s word that the flood was coming and the earth would be destroyed. He couldn’t see a single raindrop and not a single person outside his family was going to help. But Noah did not love this present world, which was perishing, and by faith he set out to obey God.

Abraham was promised the Land in which he lived, but in his entire life he never possessed it. Nevertheless, he

What homeland are you seeking? Here, we might say, is the ultimate example of homeland security! Seeking and looking for, ordering our entire lives around, the better, heavenly country God has prepared for us. All of that language is simply a further description of the new heavens and new earth that we are headed for at the Day of the Lord and at our resurrection.



Luke 16:19-25 "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. (20) And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, (21) who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. (22) The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, (23) and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. (24) And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' (25) But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.

There is something very grievous and pathetic about seeing a person at the end of their life who has given themselves to the love of this present world. Given their affections and energies to the things in it. As noble as some of those things might sound – family, marriage, raising children, working hard at a career – nothing that is a substitute for Christ is noble.

Christ calls each of us to put off our love for the world and set our hearts upon Him and follow Him where He leads, loving Him above all else. He calls us to die to this world, and tells us that we will then really live.

Children and young people – if Christ delays His return until then, one day YOU are going to be in the same position I am. You are going to visit a place where you once lived, a place where you grew up – that really was your world and life in your early years – right now – and if the Lord permits, then in 30 or 40 or 50 or 60 or more years, you will drive up in front of a place you once lived. Maybe you will have you grandchildren with you and you will tell them about what it was like. “See that tree over there – I had a fort in it.” “See that house next door – that’s where my best friend lived.” And on and on you could go with the stories. But that world, that life will have passed away.

Do not be so foolish as to love the world and to set your desires and affections on the things in it. You must love Christ and set your mind on Him and the permanent City He prepares for all of His people. That must be your object and your destination. I hope and pray that not a single person here today will end their life in grief and anguish as they realize all that they

have lived their life for has passed away.

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. (16) For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions--is not from the Father but is from the world. (17) And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Forever. Next time around you see, we are going to have a home, a neighborhood, a home town, a world – that is forever. No separations. No death. No evil. Never again will we see a place that was once our home dilapidated and overgrown with weeds.

