

Joke: This minister just had all of his remaining teeth pulled and new dentures were being made. The first Sunday, he preached only 10 minutes.

The second Sunday, he preached only 20 minutes.

But, on the third Sunday, he preached 1 hour 25 minutes.

When asked about this by some of the congregation, he responded this way.

The first Sunday, my gums were so sore it hurt to talk.

The second Sunday, my dentures were hurting a lot.

The third Sunday, I accidentally grabbed my wife's dentures... and I couldn't stop talking!

Collide Week 4: Love What Matters

The world has offers for things that if we're not careful can cost us more than we bargained for. Success, money, status, or accomplishments in and of themselves are not bad, but they can become the things we value above all else. And that will cause us to not have the relationship with Jesus that He desires us to have.

As a matter of fact really anything we value above Jesus I'd idolatry..

We need to make the decision to love what matters most. And that friend is Jesus.

The world around me wants to flood my mind with things that are temporary. The world defines them as important. However, I want my mind to be reeled in to things which belong completely in Christ.

The things of the world all promise to make you and I feel worthy, valued and loved.

But, Jesus is the only one who can give us our true identity, and show us that I am, that you are already completely, unconditionally loved.

We have come to the end of our series, "Collision course." So far, we have laid the foundation of standing firm in our faith when the world attempts to convince us of a different value system. In week two we talked about the importance of allowing God to transform our minds, and our lives. And last week, we spoke about receiving truth from God's Word, while both holding onto it, not selling it, if you will, and giving it away.

Today, as we close out this series, I want to talk about something we have talked a lot about this weekend with the wedding of Nathan and Rachel yesterday and that is love.

More specifically, we have to love what matters most.

In life the only way to really get to know someone is by spending time with them. Rather it be family, friends, co-workers, or God the only way to truly get to them is to spend time with them.

The Bible talks about the importance of choosing to spend time with God in order to grow in our love of God.

Now the reason that it is so important to do that is because as we do, we will be drawn closer to God rather than the things this world try's to have us draw attention to.

Let's look at 1 John 2:15-17. This is the apostle John writing, and here is what he has to say about this idea.

1 John 2:15–17 (NIV): Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. 16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

1 John 2:15–17 (TPT): 15 Don't set the affections of your heart on this world or in loving the things of the world. The love of the Father and the love of the world are incompatible. 16 For all that the world can offer us—the gratification of our flesh, the allurements of the things of the world, and the obsession with status and importance—none of these things come from the Father but from the world. 17 This world and its desires are in the process of passing away, but those who love to do the will of God live forever. Those three things, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life are things that the enemy of our soul has from the beginning of man tried to get us to focus on.

What did the serpent tell Eve in the garden? You can't have the fruit of that tree? Lust of the flesh. Doesn't this fruit look so good? Lust of the eyes. If you eat it you will become like God. Pride of life.

So, John talks about a craving here in this passage. He says we are tempted to crave the things of this world. And listen we all have cravings. Most every night I have a craving for chips and salsa. It's my midnight snack I just have it before midnight. But when it

comes to our spiritual cravings, the first step to loving what matters is 'Correcting the Crave.'

And that is point number one. . .

Point 1: Correct the Crave

We have highlighted different desires that the world tempts us with throughout this series, and John names cravings for us that have to do with our flesh. He talks about the lust of the flesh, things like "physical pleasure." Maybe you can relate with this one.

You are tempted to keep going back to the same website that fulfills you physically for about 5 minutes. Or, you are tempted to respond to a lustful feeling that comes your way every time you start scrolling through Instagram.

The desire for physical intimacy and connection are not wrong desires. However, John says we are often tempted to fulfill these desires in the wrong places.

He next lists out a craving for everything we see around us. Another way to say this would be the "lust of the eyes." Many things in this world look glamorous to us at first glance. For some it's that desire is to be famous, to have people know their name.

I purpose to you that fame only looks glamorous before someone has it.

Let's look at any Hollywood celebrity for example . There fame has made them millions of dollars, but they cannot even leave there house without being photographed or stormed by fans.

That kind of lifestyle is not what it seems from our point of view, is it?

You see, God knows once we get things like fame, status, and hear this once again those things in and of themselves aren't bad, but they will not ultimately satisfy or fulfill us.

But the good news is, they were never meant to do that. There is only one thing made to satisfy our craving for deep abiding intimacy and connection... the love of God!

I think God wants to correct your crave.

He wants you to hunger after something more than this world could give you, and that's His love. And, the way in which we find God's love, is by finding God.

After all God is love. Amen.

Which brings me to point number two. . .

Point 2: Live in love

Elsewhere in 1 John, the Bible tells us that God IS Love! When we find God, we find true love. In the verse we read a few moments ago, we have to pay attention to how John ends this section. He says the things of the world, even the world itself, will one day pass away. To close out his teaching, John says, "but anyone who does what pleases God will live forever."

Let those words sink in for a moment.

Everything in this world, one day, will all pass away.

Luke 21:33 says, Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Jesus says, one day heaven and earth will pass away. BUT, God's word will last forever. All throughout the Bible, God shows us how to live as He desires us to live. The things we are to say, the ways we are to act, and it all comes down to the love we are to show those around us.

The world's love is mostly "conditional." Conditional love basically means that you are only showing love to those who you believe deserve it or those who can give it back to us.

You know what I mean its those who are in your family, maybe those who agree with you on certain topics, those who you would consider friends of yours.

But as soon as someone wrongs you, or says something rude to you, or causes you pain in some way, they are no longer worthy of love. At least, according to the world's love.

God wants to rewrite the narrative of love. His love is "unconditional." Whats the difference? Here's one, none of us here today deserves to be loved by God.

Paul tells us,

Romans 3:23 (NIV): for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Even with this being true, God decided to show us love, grace, and mercy anyway, because we are His children. God has already made the decision to love you and me.

Hebrews 8:12 (NIV): For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

I'm not sure if you ever thought about this verse. But it is saying that God chooses to forget our sins. Now that's good news,

because if it was just that he forgot them then he could be reminded of them, but he chooses to never even talk about them again.

The only question left is: will we make the decision to love Him in return?

1 John 4:19 (NIV): We love because he first loved us.

And that brings me to point number 3. . .

Point 3: It's a daily decision

Some people believe once you pray the sinner's prayer, and invite Jesus to be the king of your heart and your life, you are good to go.

Truth is I don't find a prayer like that anywhere in Scripture.

Listen I know a lot that confess, but they haven't expressed any interest in the process of living out what God requests.

Hear this church, Scripture has plenty to say about confessing your faults, but I want us to understand the decision to follow Christ with our lives has to be made every single day.

Because every day, we will be confronted with innumerable temptations to give our lives to something else. John knew that we would be confronted with these. Jesus Himself knew we would be confronted with these. But He gave us His word as a guide. Here is the question we have to ask ourselves each day:

“Do the decisions I make align with the word of God?”

“Do my actions reflect that I am a disciple of Christ?”

John 14:15–17 (NIV): If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

Let me try and bring this plane in for a landing.

God sent His one and only Son into the world to redeem the world.

You could say that Jesus was sent on a collision course with the world. His desire, as we see in 2 Peter 3:9, is this; “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

But we so easily can get distracted. The negative and lifeless messaging of the world is constantly pervasive, and enticing.

But I believe we are able to make a conscious decision each day to say “no” to the things of this world, and say “yes” to the things of God and love of God, we will be able to live the fruitful, and abundant life Jesus came to bring us.

If we will invest in the word, in the fellowship, in Christ-centered teaching, in prayer. . .then we can renew our minds with the things of the kingdom of God.

When you find that the world’s values collide with the kingdom’s values in your life, will you make the decision to choose the path of Christ?

What are some minor adjustments you can make in your life now that will have major consequences 1, 2, 5 years from now?

- Daily time in the word
- Cutting off destructive habits and tendencies

The list could go on and on.

The point is, there is space for you in the kingdom of God. Will you make space for the kingdom in you?

Let's pray.