

A Topical Sermon on the World

Today, I would like to preach a topical sermon on the world, particularly the fact that this world is evil, and this world is opposed to God's people. And then, as we look toward to the Lord's table, I will focus on the truth that Jesus has overcome the world. There is nothing new here. We've heard these things before. These truths will be a needed reminder for us this morning. And as we occasionally do, after each explanation, we will read a number of verses together. And in between, I will give some applications. So let's begin.

1. This world is evil. The Bible uses the term "world" in different ways. Sometimes it is simply the whole creation of God, the inhabited earth, without reference to sin and salvation. But Scripture is clear to remind us that the human world has fallen into sin. God created the world good. And, God is not the author of sin. However, in his secret will, he allowed Satan to fall from heaven. And then, Satan tempts Eve and questions the goodness of God and his will of command not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And both Adam and Eve eat of this tree. This is what we call the "fall" of man into sin. They and all their children (all of us) inherit a sin nature. And because of this fact, the term "world" refers to everything that opposes God. And, Satan is called the "ruler of this world." In God's providence, He has given authority, though limited, to Satan to have some control over evil that happens in this world. Before making some comments, let's read some verses together that show this truth: The world is evil.

Pastor: We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19).

Congregation: For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12).

Pastor: They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon (Rev. 9:11).

Congregation: And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind (Eph. 2:1–3).

Pastor: And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him (Rev. 12:9).

Congregation: 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. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever (1 John 2:15-17).

Pastor: The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil (John 7:7).

Congregation: For the land is full of adulterers; because of the curse the land mourns, and the pastures of the wilderness are dried up. Their course is evil, and their might is not right (Jer. 23:10).

Pastor: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen (Gal. 1:3–5).

Congregation: See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ (Col. 2:8).

Pastor: You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God (James 4:4).

Congregation: For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God (John 3:17–18).

Application: As Christians, we have an answer as to why sin and evil are found in this world. We know why kids have tantrums. We know why we “lose” our temper. We know why people think evil in their hearts against their enemies and their neighbors. We know why spouses are unfaithful. We know why young men look at pornography. We know why nations attack nations. We know why there is sickness and death and all kinds of evil in between. We know why there is such rebellion in this world. This world is evil! Really, there is no explanation that compares with the truths taught in the Bible about this evil world.

2. This world is opposed to God and his people. I think often we become very comfortable and forget this truth. It is such a mystery how Satan could fall from heaven along with many other angels, and how evil was in the world with those angels before the fall of man. And with the fall of Satan, it is obvious that God did not judge them (still hasn't), and in his providence he allows them to oppose Him. And we see his opposition to God and his ways as he tempted Adam and Eve, God's most special creation, those who are created in his image. And we see his opposition to God and his people throughout the Scriptures. I think of the Book of Job as God asks him, **“From where have you come? Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it’** (Job 1:7).

But, we must also note that this created world in which we live did not become evil until the fall of man into sin. In Adam's disobedience there was a GREAT Fall. What are the results? Well, physical death enters the world. And, spiritual death results as Adam and Eve were separated from their source of life. And, there is punishment for their disobedience, culminating in the creation of hell for all those who oppose God. And, the Bible doesn't merely speak of the fall of man, but also of the fall of the created order. Today, sin and death and evil reign in this world. This is why one day God will recreate a new heavens and a new earth. The apostle Paul says that "**creation groans**" and waits for this day (Rom. 8:22-23). For us, this means that Satan opposes us. This also means that this "world" and all that is a part of this world in opposing God, also opposes God's people . . . us. This means also that Satan, along with this world, are against God's plan to fix this problem.

If you remember back to Gen. 3:15, in his judgment, God says to Satan, "**I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.**" This is the first promise that God gives as He Himself will remedy this great problem. God promises that good will prevail. Here we see the first prophecy of the Gospel and the sending of the Son, who will be bruised (cross), but will crush Satan (cross, resurrection, and ascension) and restore, in an even greater manner, what was lost in the fall. This means that Satan is against this sure plan of God in sending the Son, and those who align with the Son. With this mind, let's turn to the Bible and read together some verses that teach this truth.

Pastor: If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (John 15:18-19).

Congregation: Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me (John 15:20-21).

Pastor: If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (John 15:18–19).

Congregation: And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 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 (2 Cor. 4:3–4).

Pastor: Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil (John 7:6-7).

Application: Because Satan is against Jesus and his people, persecution is our lot. And since this world lies in his power, this world is also against us. Jesus said, "**if they persecute me, they will persecute you**" (John 15:20). He also says to all of us, "**If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me**" (Matt. 16:24).

Application: God will not allow you to be tempted/tested beyond what you can bare. 1 Cor. 10:13: **“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”**

Application: The Scriptures never tell us to leave this world, or to go live in a cave to escape its evils. We live in this world, but we are not of the world. This means we must engage our culture. We are salt and light. We are the city that sits on a hill. We are a lamp that is put up on a stool for everyone to see.

Applications: We are pilgrims. We are just passing through. Our home is heaven.

Application: The plan of God will prevail. I think of Prov. 21:1 when I think of our current crisis in Europe and the world. **“The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.”** Through suffering and persecution and hardships, through natural disasters to wars and fears of wars, whatever happens in this evil world, God is working his plan to reconcile all things to himself. (See Col. 1:20).

Application: God is working all things for our good! Rom. 8:28!!!! (which brings us to our last truth.)

3. Jesus has overcome the world. I get this truth mostly from John 16:33 which says, **“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart: I have overcome the world”** (John 16:33). Brothers and sisters, this is the good news of the gospel of Christ. He has done what we, in our own power, cannot do. This is the application of **“For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him would not perish, but have everlasting life.”** Today, as we take the Lord’s Supper, we remember that the Lord Jesus Christ has conquered sin, death, and at his coming, he will reconcile all things to himself. If left to ourselves, us as sons of Adam, we cannot conquer sin. We are by nature children of wrath. Outside of Christ, we are separated from God because of our sins. And the “wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Whether we realize it or not, this world fears death (though they don’t necessarily know why). The people of this world are constantly trying to prolong death and even think that they can beat it. But we cannot.

And this is why the world has no peace! Satan is against us. Our sin nature is against us. This world is against us. But, Jesus has overcome the world! How? This is what we celebrate in the Lord’s Supper this morning. The Son of God took on flesh (the incarnation). He became a man just like us. And unlike Adam, He did not sin. And he laid down his life on the cross as a sacrifice . . . in the place of sinners. God poured out his wrath and his anger upon the Son; He poured out EVERYTHING our sins deserved. Christ took our sins upon himself! And he died. But, 3 days later, he conquered death by rising again. This is why we say Christ conquered sin and death. And those who believe on him (faith in him) are saved. This means we are no longer separated from God. This also means that we also will rise with him. Christ’s lot is our lot! Is there any greater news than this?! Let’s read some verses together before we conclude with the Lord’s Supper.

Pastor: There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:1-2)

Congregation: For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:3-4).
(Rom. 8:1-4)

Pastor: Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:30-32).

Congregation: And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judge (John 16:8-11)

Pastor: And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him (Col. 2:13-15).

We need this reminder! This world is evil. Satan, and this world is against us. But, Jesus has overcome the world!