



### Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

This is the second week in our teaching series 'deeper' in which we are invited by God to renew our confidence in his love for us and to go 'deeper' in our relationship both with him and with others. The title of today's extract from John's letter is 'loving the world?' The question mark indicates a dilemma! 1 John calls us not to love the world or anything in it (v15) and yet John's gospel tells us that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...' (3:16). What is going on here?

In his letter one of John's intentions is to highlight the difference between a world with God and his love at the centre, and a world without God at all. To love the world with the God who created it out of love is the fulfillment of our very being; to love the world with God absent is ultimately empty and void. There is also something of a 'battle' between these two approaches to the world indicated in 1 John, a cosmic battle fought out at every level – spiritual, physical, intellectual and emotional. John speaks of antichrists (2:2), the devil's work (3:8) and that the 'one in you (Christ) is greater than the one in the world (the devil)' (4:4). Verses 15 and 16 indicate quite clearly where the battle fronts often lay i.e. cravings, lust, self indulgence, boasting...

Without God and his love for us at the heart of our world there is no ultimate reference point for our lives; if God is absent from our world view we may possibly enjoy the scenery for a while but we are on a path to nowhere and are effectively lost. So the battle is on and John writes in poetic form to encourage his readers to walk in light and not in darkness – read 2:12-14.

In his 'poem' John first addresses '**dear children**' (v12,13) a term of endearment that could refer literally to children but is more likely to refer all in the church, 'dear children' being one of John's favoured terms of endearment. John points out to his 'dear children' that the way back to God is through the gift of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Secondly he addresses '**fathers**' - this generation - (13,14) and speaks of God's gift of increasing knowledge over the years - heart knowledge not head knowledge! 'Because you have known him' speaks of the same knowing that husbands have of wives and wives of husbands. I.e. a growing intimacy in relationship. Thirdly John addresses '**young men**' - the next generation - (13, 14) describing their gift from God as being strength to fight the battle, the battle between a world without God and a world with him at the centre. These gifts for children, fathers and young men are gifts for all of us as we live the life of love that God intended for us from the beginning (read v24-25).



### Worship and Witness: ideas for worship and questions to discuss

1. Use Psalm 145. Focus in on one verse, word or picture to say thank you to God for. Spend time worshipping God, each person saying a short thank you prayer. e.g. Thank you God that you are faithful to all your promises. Amen. (v13)

2. What evidence have you seen recently of a world without God?

3. What is an Antichrist? What antichrist movements do we come up against today? How can we counteract their activity and influence?

5. Money, sex and power are some of the 'desires' of this world that can take us away from God. What's your weak spot? What other ways can the world attract and tempt us away from being God centered?

3. John speaks of forgiveness of sins 'on account of his name' (v 12). We often pray for one another in the name of Jesus – Why is this such a powerful thing? Can you give examples?

4. Do you feel you are growing in the security of the knowledge of God's love for you? How do you grow? If you do not feel you are growing why do you think this is?  
Allow time to pray and minister to one another.