

Real Disciples (5): Remember Who You Are

(1 John 2:12-17)

I. Introduction

- A. Songs (whether hymns or praise songs) tend to be a bit repetitive
 - 1. Some have a chorus that we repeat several times (*Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus*)
 - a. Some have a phrase that's repeated over and over (*Hallelujah! What a Savior*)
 - b. And some songs repeat both a phrase and a chorus (*Nothing but the Blood*)
 - 2. Songs are not for communicating information or data (*the cows are in the corn*)
 - 3. Songs do communicate— emotion, impressions, feelings and relationships
- B. Our text for this morning is quite possibly a first century song.
 - 1. I don't know if it was a hymn or a praise chorus, but it was a song.
 - a. John quotes these lyrics to remind his readers of something important
 - b. Actually, these words are quoted to remind them of who they are
 - 2. The church in 1 John was in danger of forgetting their identity
 - a. They were being directed and confused about the point of Christianity
 - b. John wants to bring them back to the real point of who they are

II. Remember Who You Are: John's Song (1 John 2:12-14, NLT)

- A. If this indeed is a song, then it is a song in **two stanzas** (12-13a and 13b-14)
 - 1. **First line** is to Christians in general—"you who are God's children" (NLT)
 - a. **Second line** is to "fathers" or "you who are mature in the faith" (NLT)
 - b. **Last line** is to "young men" or "you who are young in the faith" (NLT)
 - 2. While the message to each group is different, they are stress **IDENTITY**
 - a. John is reminding them of who they are and what God has done in them
 - b. They aren't to be distracted by the false teachers or the world around them
 - 3. There is a lot of repetition in his message, but it is the repetition of a song
- B. We'll look at both stanza's together (*song leader holding up fingers for verses*)
 - 1. **Church in General:** "sins are forgiven" (12) and "known the father" (13)
 - a. It was easy for the church to be distracted by new theories and philosophy
 - 1) It is easy for us to buy into the value systems of the world around us
 - 2) We need to remember what is important—forgiveness & know God
 - b. Must remember that who we are is ultimately defined by who God is

2. **Mature** (*Fathers*): “*You have known Him from beginning*” (**13, 14**)
 - a. John points them to what they have always know—don’t give up on it
 - 1) Hebrews reminds readers of early days of service and struggles
 - 2) They are not to give up or “throw away your confidence” (**He 10:35**)
 - b. John points to the mature in the faith and reminds them of their past
 - 1) The problem with us old timers—the old faith can seem to get old
 - 2) It can loose some of its wonder and become rundown and worn out
 - c. John points to identity and commitment— “*known Him from beginning*”
3. **Younger**: “*overcome the evil one*” (**13**), “*the word of God lives in you*” (**14**)
 - a. Those new to faith were particularly susceptible to false teachers
 - 1) They felt the pull of those temptations and sins they had left behind
 - 2) To hear it didn’t matter if they continued in sin was intriguing
 - b. John assures them they have overcome the evil one— can’t go back
 - 1) The word here is the verb form of Greek “*nike*” (*like athletic shoe*)
 - 2) It’s the world is used for “*victory*” and “*overcome*” in **1 John 5:4-5**
 - c. They are not to let go of their faith—it is faith that overcomes the world
4. John’s song here reminds the church of their identity, of who they really are

III. Remember Who You Are Not (Reading: **1 John 2:15-17, NLT)**

- A. We are not to love the world, anything about it, or the horse it rode in on!
 1. That is a curious command given John’s most famous verse (**John 3:16**).
 - a. God loves the world... why would he turn around and tell us not to
 - b. That would be like me telling you not to like chocolate cake!
 2. The word John uses is “*kosmos*” and it is used in several ways in NT
 - a. Sometimes “*kosmos*” refers to the creation, the universe, the planet.
 - 1) Paul says God “*made the world and everything in it*” (**Acts 17:24**)
 - 2) “*Love not world*” doesn’t mean not enjoy the good things of creation
 - 3) Frankly, some Christians have acted like that (*love being miserable*)
 - b. But “*world*” (*kosmos*) can also refer to the people that live on the planet.
 - 1) Jesus says, “*Go into all the world...*” Not explore terrain— people.
 - 2) God “*sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.*” People (**1 Jn 4:14**)
 - 3) Not only is it OK to love the world of people, John will insist on it

- B. What John means by “*world*” is the system and the standards of fallen world
1. Jesus refers to Satan as “*the prince of this world.*” ([John 12:31, 14:30](#))
 - a. Because of our sin, the “world” came under the rule of Satan
 - b. So there are two kingdom and two rulers—we must choose ([Eph 1:1-2](#))
 2. Not only is the world the creation of God, but it is a world broken by sin
 - a. Paul suggests something was fundamentally broken in world ([Rom 8:22](#))
 - 1) The entire creation is waiting for God’s final act of redemption
 - 2) Until then, the values, structures, focus of the world has been twisted
 - b. That is the world that we cannot love—the world in rebellion to God
 3. “*Love*” here has different shade from “*God so loved*” (NEB: “*set your heart*”)
- C. John describes this broken world system we are not to love ([1 John 2:16](#), NLT)
1. Some see this as summary or motivation for all possible sins (3 deadly sins)
 - a. And it is hard to imagine a temptation that can’t be summarized here
 - b. Others stress it as a picture of the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve
 2. This is the world that is not from God—from a whole different direction
 - a. “*Craving for physical pleasure*” (NLT) or “*wanting your own way*” (MES)
 - 1) One of things we fought revolution over was “*pursuit of happiness*”
 - 2) Freedom to do whatever brings pleasure is inalienable right in world
 - b. “*Craving for everything we see*” (NLT) or “*the desires of the eyes*” (ESV)
 - 1) World tends to value things by trivial, outward standards (C.H. Dodd)
captivated by the outward show of things without enquiring into their real value
 - 2) This is the tendency to never be satisfied and to want more and more
 - c. “*Pride in our achievements and possessions*” (NLT)
 - 1) The NET has this “*arrogance produced by material possessions*”
 - 2) The word for “*possessions*” is used for both “*life*” and “*possessions*”
 - 3) Some translations point to pride in one or other; NIV, NLT use both
 3. John says that this is the world around us— but this cannot be us
 - a. We cannot conform any longer to the pattern of this world ([Rom 12:2](#))
 - b. We must keep ourselves from being polluted by the world ([Jam 1:27](#))
 - c. We must live as people who are crucified to the world ([Gal 6:14](#))
- D. This world is in the process of fading ([2:17](#), NLT). Don’t fade away with it!

IV. Conclusion

- A. In *The Lion King*, Simba flees Pridelands after his father is murdered Scar.
 1. In the safety of the jungle, Simba joins up with Timon and Pumba.
 - a. Their happy-go-lucky philosophy is “*Hakuna Matata*” (“*No worries*”)
 - b. Simba buys that; he enjoys many years with no worries or responsibility
 - c. All the while, Pridelands suffers under the dictatorship the wicked Scar
 2. Then one night, Simba has a vision of his father in the night sky
 - a. Mustafa points him back to his responsibility, back to his identity
"You have forgotten who you are, and therefore, you have forgotten me."
 - b. Simba re-discovers who he is: He is Mufasa's boy, the son of the king.
 - c. He returns to Pridelands to liberate his people and take his rightful place
- B. He need to hear the voice of God in Mustafa’s words here.
 1. If we forget who we are, then we will forget who God is as well
 - a. We are a child of a King—we know Him and are forgiven by Him
 - b. We overcome the Evil One when God’s word lives in our lives
 2. For that to happen, we must turn our backs on the value system of the world
 - a. Oh, we appreciate God’s creation and we love the people of the world
 - b. But we cannot be captivated by the worlds values or its empty promises
 3. We are children of King—that is who we are and who we are called to be
 - a. The world and its values are in the process of passing away
 - b. Only those who do the will of God will live forever.
- C. Who are you this morning... and what are you going to do about it?