

## ND2-005: " Knowing the world and being separated from the world "

### Outline:

#### I. Understand the nature of the world.

The "world" (Kosmos) in this message is not referring to God's created physical cosmos or "the people" of the world but rather a systematic, organized, and coordinated entity set to oppose God and to resist His will and everything belonging to Him. This "world" has its own ruler who is Satan, the devil.

##### 1. The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one

*We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. (1 John 5:19)*

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12).*

##### 2. This world system exists solely to oppose and resist God

*For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:16).*

###### a) It is enmity with God and wars against God

▪ *Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (James 4:4)*

*... If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)*

▪ *No one can serve two masters: ... You cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:24).*

###### b) It rejects and killed the Son of God

*He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ...did not receive Him. (John 1:10)*

*... have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death (Acts 2:23).*

###### c) It hates and persecutes the children of God

▪ *If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, ...therefore the world hates you. (John 15:19)*

*Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. (1 John 3:13)*

▪ *Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. (Luke 8:14).*

d) It hinders people from believing and loving God

▪ *whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (2 Corinthians 4:4).*

▪ *...If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)*

*For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. (2 Timothy 4:10).*

### 3. The world's end

▪ *Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. (John 12:31)*

*And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:17).*

▪ *But the day of the Lord will come, ... the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10)*

## II. Why be separated from the world?

### 1. This is the desire and work of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost

a) It is God's call and command

*Allow my people to go and serve me (Exodus)/ Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)*

*Do not love the world or the things in the world... (1 John 2:15)*

b) It is the consequential fruit of Christ's salvation.

*Christ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father (Galatians 1:4)*

*... He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)*

*But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (Galatians 6:14).*

c) It is the unceasing work of the Holy Ghost.

- *...the same anointing teaches you concerning all things (1 John 2:27), "The meaning of being Holy"*

- *Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16)*

2. This world is not my home, we do not belong to this world

*These all died in faith, ... confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ... that they seek a homeland ... a heavenly country. (Hebrews 11:13-16)*

*...conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear (1 Peter 1:17).*

- *... the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. (John 17:14-16).*

3. Live out the testimonies and influences that should be evident in the lives of the children of God

- *Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life... (Philippians 2:14-16a).*

- *You are the salt of the earth; ... You are the light of the world. ... gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16).*

### **III. How to overcome the world?**

1. No longer loving this world after knowing the nature of this world, and no longer being conformed to this world.

- *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. (1 John 2:15)*

*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26)*

*And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.... (Romans 12:2).*

- *The Eternal Perspective: And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:17)*

*While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18).*

2. Be drawn by the Lord and captivated by His love

*Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ (Philippians 3:8)*

*For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)*

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, ... Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. (Romans 8:35-37)*

3. Through a perpetual growth in faith and the life of Christ in us

*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4-5)*

*... because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)*

*... that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2 Peter 1:4)*

4. Live in the body of Christ and a sanctified life

a) To have a spiritual companion; b) To live a regular church life; c) To live in self-discipline under the protection of the body.

## **Meditation, practice and discussion**

### **☐ Review: Review key points, difficulties and doubts in a question-and-answer manner based on the key Bible verses and content**

1. From this lesson, write down the definition of "the world":

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2. What are the ways or the systems of this world that are against God?

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why is "separating from the world" the common intent and work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? Because it is:

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

### **☐ Deep Thinking: The impact of the lesson on me and the inspiration from the Holy Spirit**

1. Please take at least 10 minutes of personal quiet time as early as possible after the class and reflect on the nature of the world based on what was said in class and the scriptures

How is this different from your original worldview? Has this different understanding made any impact?

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2. After listening to this lesson, please share with the other members, at which point would you prefer to be "separate from the world"? Why?

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**Implementation:**

1. Write down at least two or three things you have experienced in the "world" (career/career/emotional/family/education, etc.) for the next two weeks. What are your different views and responses now?

**First week:**

1) Summary of things: \_\_\_\_\_

My Response: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Summary of things: \_\_\_\_\_

My Response: \_\_\_\_\_

3) Summary of things: \_\_\_\_\_

My Response: \_\_\_\_\_

**Second week:**

1) Summary of things: \_\_\_\_\_

My Response: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Summary of things: \_\_\_\_\_

My Response: \_\_\_\_\_

3) Summary of things: \_\_\_\_\_

My Response: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Share with the group: Is there any difference in your own view and attitude towards the world after these exercises? Specifically in which respect?

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3. Record one of your own experiences in the next two weeks or for each of the four main points of "How to Overcome the World" mentioned in class in order to prepare a plan and start implementing it:

1) Because of the true understanding of the nature of the world, I do not love the world or no longer follow the world.

(e.g.: Change the habit of shopping not because of a real need or other habits)

First week:

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Second week:

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2) Because of the attraction toward our Lord and God's love, I am inspired.

(e.g.: Reduce the amount of time spent watching TV, playing video games, or on social media, instead of doing things to please the Lord)

First week:

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Second week:

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3) Because of the growing faith and change of life

(e.g.: regular and specific cultivation of "Christ like" character. For example, my languagethis month: say words of gratitude and affirmation, do not lie or speaknegative, judgmental words)

First week:

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Second week:

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4) Live a Holy life and have a) a spiritual companion; b) regular church life; and c) a self-disciplined under the protection of the body.

(e.g.: commit to attending church services again; regularly ask your spiritual companion or elders to give you advice on your spiritual growth.)

First week:

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Second week:

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## Message Text File (Draft):

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you!

The topic to be addressed today is "Separating from the World". Before we talk about the topic, we need to understand what is the essence of this "world". Our understanding and assessment of the world is often wrong or inaccurate. Let's look at the world we live in today from the Bible point of view.

First of all, it should be noted that the "world" (kosmos) mentioned in this topic is translated into Chinese as "world" (like for God so love the world), "generation", "property of the world", and so on. Mrs. Yu did her research when she gave a sermon with a title "Don't Love the World" several years ago. She said that kosmos appeared 187 times in the New Testament, and for 186 times, it was translated into "the world", only once, in the book of 1 Peter chapter 3, about being a wife, *"Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel" (1 Peter 3:3)*. Here the love of beautiful, decorative dress outside is the same word as "world". This is the use of the word in the Bible.

We speak today of "Being Different from the World", not about the world of matter, nor about the world, but about "a systematic, organized, planned system" that is dedicated in fighting against God, resisting God's will and all that belongs to God." Whether it is the people of God, or the ministry of God, it against all. This is a very organized, planned system, and its sole purpose is to resist God.

At this point, the brothers and sisters may ask, since God has created such a vast universe, such a beautiful world, why should He tell us to be different from the world? Isn't that contradictory? Since He made it, why should we be separated from the world?

This is because the world has fallen. When sin has not yet entered man, and when the world has not fallen into the jurisdiction of the enemy, the whole world created by God is good. More than once in the Bible, God has said: "good" (*Genesis 1:10,12,18,21,25*), and even "very good" (*Genesis 1:31*). Chapter 4, verse 11 of the book of *Revelation* tells us "... You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created", and the book of *Colossians* tells us "*For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*" (*Colossians 1:16*). Therefore, before human depravity, the whole creation was good, for God's will and for Christ. But when human depravity, sin enters the human being, the whole world becomes "old creation", and Satan controls the world. So, God told us to be different from the world.

I will make a very simple analogy. If you go to a foreign country in the world today, the mountains, waters and the scenery is very good, you enjoy them very much. However, there's radiation leaking out of this area, although it's invisible, it can do fatal damage to your body, or you cannot drink the water in this area because you're going to have stomach cancer or other cancers. If no one tells you and you can't see it, you will just live in it. But when someone tells you, you will react immediately in a different way. Last week I talked about Silicon Valley, California. It is one of the three places that have best climates in the world. But during last year's

wildfires, the air index was as high as 200, which is unprecedented in our history, it can cause serious damage. Everyone stayed indoors and have their windows closed and turned on the air purifiers. Nobody runs around outside during those time.

Today's message is important, and it relates closely with us because we live in this "world." God would like us to understand the nature of the world, and perhaps many people would be surprised to find that the original world was like this. But I want to remind the brothers and sisters that all the requirements of the Bible, the requirements of the law, are out of God's love, to protect us. The Bible says, "*Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.*" (1 Timothy 1:5). When God tells us not to love the world and the material things of the world, you don't take it as an unreasonable request.

## I. Understand the nature of the world.

### **1. The whole world lies in the hands of the evil.**

The Bible tells us: "*The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.*" (1 John 5:19b) God had entrusted the land to man, telling him to "*let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.*" (Genesis 1:26) He gave everything to him, to give them power on the earth, and to take charge. But after the fall of mankind, "the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one." Under control or under the power of the evil one. When we expose ourselves to this world, our spiritual lives, our relationships with God, must be damaged. Chapter 6 of the book of *Ephesians* deals with spiritual warfare with full military uniforms, because "*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*" (*Ephesians* 6:12). Satan today hides himself behind this world, through which it governs us, hurts us and destroys us.

### **2. The world becomes a system dedicated to resisting God and confronting God**

The world becomes a system that is dedicated to resisting God, against God, or God's system. *1 John 2:16* tells us, "*For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.*" Please note that there is no mention of the physical world here at all. "*The lust of the body, the lust of the eye, and the pride of this life*" can be hidden in all visible and touchable creations. What is created can be neutral. But when I am in "*the lust of the body, the lust of the eye, and the pride of this life*", these neutral creations can become the king of the world, that is, the enemy, using them to hurt us, to resist God.

#### **a) To be an enemy of God and to compete with God.**

*James 4:4* tells us, "... *Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*" Please note that when you are friends with the world, or you want to be friends with the world, in

God's eyes, it is the enemy of God. *1 John 2:15: "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."* When you love the world, the heart of the Father is gone. You cannot say, "I love both." It's impossible, God says it's impossible. *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."* (*Matthew 6:24*). You may say "I can". But God says no, it's impossible. When you love God, you will not love the world, when you love the world, want to be friends with the world, you not only cannot love God, but you are also even enemies of God. Please note that Jesus did not say here, "One cannot serve two Lords, and you cannot serve God and evil." If so, we will say, "Of course I will not serve Satan or the devil." But the Bible says, "... *You cannot serve God and mammon*" (*Matthew 6:24*). Mammon is translated as finance. Who does not love money? People are easily tempted by money. Jesus here says that you cannot serve God and money at the same time. Because when you serve money, you are serving another god, the king of the world, and satan. The two kings are exclusive **and** cannot coexist.

#### **b) Refuse and kill the Son of God.**

*John 1:10-11* says, "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him." When He comes to his own place, his own people do not receive him". "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death" (*Acts 2:23*). Another reason we cannot love the world is that it doesn't just make us enemies of God, it simply kills Christ. Paul describes "for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia." (*2 Timothy 4:10*) . "Love of today's world" translated in ESV as "in love with present world." You love the world, you fall in love with the world, and the object of the "world" is to kill Jesus. If we really know the world, we will not open the door to it, run freely to pursuit the world. These are terrible, sinful, and hurtful to God and to the heart of Jesus: I gave my life for you, and the world clearly killed me, and you loved it so much!

#### **c) Hate and prosecute God's children**

Jesus said: "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." (*John 15:19*). Apostle John also said: "Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you." (*1 John 3:13*).

Brothers and sisters, if you are popular all over the world today and smooth sailing regardless of what you do, you must be careful. Because those who love God and respect of God will face the pressure of the world. When our church first started, a God loving brother said to me that he performed well in the company, but his colleagues all got raises and promotions except him. One day he sat down with his boss and said: "I'm not trying to compete for these things, I just want to know where I'm not doing well and if you can help me to improve?" The boss smiled and said to him: "Your colleagues often go out for a beer on Friday nights to get together and build relationships with each other but you don't come." He said: "I told you I was a Christian and I had to go to church on Friday night." His boss then said: "Then I cannot help you."

Brothers and sisters, it's called coercion, isn't it? Today in countries where the Christian faith is forced, if you don't deny your faith, you can't work in a state-owned enterprise, be a teacher, or have trouble in your business, and so on. Although we live in a free world, we are still not free.

Our children grew up in the United States. When Chinese school had activities and meet on Sunday mornings, we will call the school and ask them not to choose Sunday morning, because we must go to church on Sunday mornings, and if you choose Sundays, we will not be able to attend. My former classmates worked at Taiwan Customs. When they get into the office, they often have red envelopes and bribes. He said to his boss: "I can't take the bribe!" The boss said: "If you don't take it, what shall we do?" He had to resign. It's not easy to get into a position that everyone admires, but he has to put it down because he doesn't take bribes. Brothers and sisters, in this world, a lot of things are forcing us to make a choice, we must stand for the Lord, it is not necessarily under the prison or on the guillotine. It's just that these forces are too obscure for us to be aware of, but to follow the flow.

*" Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. " (Luke 8:14).* The whole world is here to oppress us in all sorts of ways, not necessarily with knives around our necks. It uses the thoughts, money, banquets of this life to force you, so that your life can not grow normally. When Jesus spoke of the seed, he mentioned four situations in which I personally felt that most Christians fell in the state of thorns. Of course, there is that listen to the Lord's word, but the seeds were eaten by the birds, there are also those fell in the stone fields, the soil is shallow, the seedlings grow fast, but when sun raises, they dry fast too. Those brothers and sisters who love the Lord, the Lord's words entered their thoughts, grew, and even bear fruits, but they cannot bear mature seeds, because we prefer to be with the money in the world, way of thinking and feasting.

#### **d) Prevent people from believing in God and loving God**

*2 Corinthians 4:4 " whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. "* The gods of the world blind the human eyes and do not allow the gospel of Christ to shine on them, and do not allow people to believe in Jesus. Apostle John also said: *"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).* This are the words of the Bible, the king of the world is to make us not to love God, it uses all kinds of temptations and tell us not to love God.

In the last thirty or forty years, products in the world have changed frequently. How often do you change your iPhone? Maybe once in a year, right? It's always something new out there that lets you pursue it. You love the world, and the heart of the Father is gone. This is an unchanging spiritual principle. It is like the attraction of the earth's gravity; it is a law. You walk out of the 10th floor in a building in San Francisco, you must fall; Whoever it is, day or night, it is the same result because it is an unchanging law. Well, the Bible tells us, *"... If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15b).* If you feel that your recent love towards God faded, you now take the holy communion for granted, regardless of what the sermon was about, inside of you were unmoved as still water, then you must be careful! What makes your love towards God lose its warmness, its delicateness, and its sense of that He is the Lord? *"Their*

*sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god....” (Psalm 16:4). Enemies use all kinds of methods to tell us not to love the Lord, to let us fall in the bitter and difficult situations.*

### **3. The end of the world**

*"Now the ruler of this world will be cast out" (John 12:31b) as Jesus said. Apostle John also tells us "And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:17). No matter how good the world is, no matter how you compromise for it, we must look at it from an eternal point of view, knowing that the world and its things are going to pass one day. And the tangible things you can see and touch today all to be burned at the end. If you believe in God, you should believe in what God says -- everything that is said here is going to happen. In the short years of my life through this world, I receive with a grateful heart for what God has given me. But I hold it with the principle of a tent: not to be bound by things on to the ground. When God wants it back, then it goes to God; if God wants to take it, I give it back to Him; because it's all going to pass, and you can't bring with you anything. This is the vision of heaven and the perspective of eternity.*

Did you notice the news of these two days that Amazon's big boss Jeff Bezos was preparing for a trip to space with four people on their own spaceship? They will not really be orbiting the Earth but stopping at the edge of the Earth's atmosphere for ten minutes without ever going through. There are 7,600 people from 159 countries who participated in the bidding to participate. The first place was selected within 7 minutes, with \$28 million (including fees and others, added up to \$30 million). Bezos said before the bid: "Looking at the Earth from space will change you, change your relationship with the planet and humanity." I just don't think it's worth it, for ten minutes to see this little earth with 30 million dollars! I tell you, read the Bible well, and you're not only saving these 30 million dollars, you're getting far more than you've seen in these ten minutes, because we are with Christ, looking at the world from a heavenly and eternal perspective.

Therefore, we need to have the wisdom of heaven, from the vision of heaven to understand the nature of the world. Do not just simply to say that I do not love the world. The church I grew up with was very concerned about this issue. They consider drinking coffee was to love the world, watching movies was loving the world. Our older brothers went to the movies, it was very hot in summer, but they wore raincoats for they were afraid that someone would have seen them went to the movies. They said: "The movie we're going to see this time is about Jesus." They were afraid that when others see them and say: "How come you still love the world?" When I went to China many years ago, in some places, they said not to wear too fashionable, and others said that they don't sleep with a pillow because Jesus didn't have a pillow. Others bought an umbrella and was looking for holes on it as they think that they shouldn't be too comfortable in rainy days. This is the human's definition of "don't love the world".

We have all kinds of rules to define what is "love the world". But, brother and sister, the world is not outside, the world is inside of our hearts. Even if you hide at the ends of the earth, hide in the deep mountains with no one around, the world is still in you. It is an invisible desire of everywhere. The lust of the body, the lust of the eye, the pride of this life, where do you hide?

## **[II. Why to be different from the world?](#)**

## **1. This is the common desire and work of the Holy Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit**

### **a) It is God's call and command**

In the Old Testament, Egypt was the strongest empire in the world at the time, and it was rich and prosperous. God said: *"Let my people go so they will serve me."* He wants to summon His people from Egypt. (This phrase was also used in the New Testament, Jesus who escaped King Herod's murder and went to Egypt, God called Him out of Egypt.) Today we are here with all the sons and daughters of the New Testament. God also called us out of the world. We are holy children called by God, the world is not our home, we are guests. This is God's calling and God's command. He said: *"Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."* (2 Corinthians 6:17-18). Before that, apostle Paul talked about the unbelievers and believers *"unequally yoked"* (2 Corinthians 6:14), and used a series of words to describe the unequally: *"For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"* What is the point between a believer and an unbeliever? What is the same as an idol and God's temple? What we're talking about here are two completely different natures, different realms that can't be together. Therefore, God wants us to be different.

### **b) It is the fruit of Christ's salvation**

*"Christ ... who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age..."* (Galatians 1:4). Please don't think it's a trivial issue. Christ paid for His life to free us from sin, from the body, from the rule of the world. *"...He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."* (1 John 4:4). What a statement! Why can Jesus be in me? Because He died for me, He fulfilled redemption, Christ lived in me, Christ replaced others, so what is inside me can be greater than the world. If you think the world is too lovely, you can't overcome it. God doesn't tell us to win the battle on our own, but to know what Christ has done in me. Apostle Paul said in Galatians: *"But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."* (Galatians 6:14). It is that there is no hope for each other: the world does not have hope for Christians, we have been nailed with Christ. At the same time, Christians have no hope for the world, in Christ, God has nailed it. Brothers and sisters, don't spend so much time in the world. "No one wants to deposit money in a bank that has been declared bankrupt," said brother Watchman Nee. The world has declared itself bankrupt, sooner or later. Why do we still spend so much time, money, and energy on it?

### **c) Is the constant work of the Holy Ghost**

From chapter 2 of book *1 John*, verse 27, we know that "the Lord's anointing teaches us everything." Every time the Old Testament talks about anointing, on the one hand, it talks about the person entrusted with the anointing, and on the other hand, the more important meaning is that "the saints" are the ones who are anointed," that is, the people who are anointed are "separated" from others. Today, God, through the lessons of the Holy Spirit, teaches us in everything, and separates us "to the Lord the Holy one."

## **2. This world is not my home, we do not belong to this world**

Why should we be different from the world? Because this world is not our home, we do not belong to this world. The book of *Hebrews* tells us: *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."* (*Hebrews 11:13*) Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and so on, they admit that they are *guests and inhabiting the world. They envy a more beautiful home, that is, in heaven.* (*Hebrews 11:13,16*).

Apostle Peter also advised us to *"conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear"* (*1 Peter 1:17*).

*"... the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one."* (*John 17:14-15*). These verses tell us once again that we really came from God, lived for God, and are travelers to heavens. However, today we are missing such a mentality.

When you travel for business and come back home, you feel very different, right? We came to the United States to study with only two luggage, but now it is full of things. Today we are talking about transient travel, not to refer to things outside, but to our mentality, understand that we are on earth as guests, because we have a more beautiful home in heaven. When my parents are picked up by the Lord, or when I comfort the bereaved families at a funeral, it is very comforting if we are Christians, because we are all waiting for the family to be reunited, it just that we arrive in batches. Some people went to wait for us first. Just as my parents celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary, four generations of the family had a reunion. Some people arrive two days early, some people arrive two days later, some people arrive at this time, some people arrive at that time, but we all finally arrived. We transit the world for a while today and will eventually go home one day. Someone said that if one day you see on the news that I am dead. You must not believe it and don't be sad. Because I just went home.

One man thought it was boring to go to heaven. He has put what he wanted in heaven in two suitcases, including his phone, tablet, and games. He thought that if the Lord came, he would hurry up and grab the two suitcases together. As a result, one night during his sleep, he dreamed of the Lord, everyone was lifted to heaven, he was also rising. However, he was stuck. Because our bodies would change, and the changing body could not cross the wall, just like Christ, but the two suitcases got him stuck. He could not go up without letting go the suitcases. Is there anything today that has tied your heart to this world? You should pray for yourself.

### **3. Live the testimony and influence of God's children**

Why should we be different from the world? Because we want to live out the testimony and influence that God's children should have. Apostle Paul advised us: *"Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world"* (*Philippians 2:14-15*). He spoke twice about generations, though they were generations that were bent and paradoxical. But he did not call us to quit, he said: *"you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life..."* (*Philippians 2:15-16*). That's because we have an absolute sense of responsibility and mission for our generation, which is to tell the world gospel of Jesus. Jesus also said in His sermon of mount: *"You are the salt of*

*the earth; ... You are the light of the world...*" (Matthew 5:13-14), both of which are the most obvious and influential. Salt is not only anti-corrosion, but salt also makes food tasty. When light comes in, it drives away darkness. Two days ago, a Christian brother wrote his spiritual reflection, and it said: "Don't blame the world for getting darker today, darkness is just doing its part." Why is darkness in control and become popular today? Because the light is out! If the light comes to shine, darkness will be driven away and disappear. Brothers and sisters, where is the light of Christians? This is our responsibility to be different from the world. Jesus did not tell us to leave the world. It is that we want to be in the world, but we don't belong to it; This is the attitude that Christians should have!

### III. How can you overcome the world?

This is the work that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit here to do it together. Don't worry too much as long as we rely on the Lord seriously, sincerely, and humbly. Here are just a few things to mention that may help us to practice in real life.

#### **1. Do not love the world since you know the nature of the world, and no longer follow the example of the world.**

If we really understand the nature of the world, we would not be as obsessed with the world as we used to be and follow it. The Bible says it in a commanding tone: "*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.*" (1 John 2:15).

In the gospel of *Matthew*, Jesus tells us: "*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*" (Matthew 16:26). Life referred here is not just life on earth. I will sacrifice the growth of my spiritual life if I grasp the world and something other than the Lord, and it will sacrifice and destroy my relationship with God, because I love the world and the heart of the Lord is not there. If I love the world and be friends with the world, I am an enemy of God, and the price is too high. We need an eternal vision that will not only stop us from loving the world, but also not to follow it.

In the topic of our class exercise, I hope you can think about what your world is. Some people think that video games are his world and cannot live without it. For me, I don't even want to touch it, so video games are not the world for me. But my world may not be the world to you. Someone may say: brother Yu, why do you love Coke so much? Coke is not my world though. Each of us has his own world, and we pray to the Lord for ourselves.

Don't follow the world means don't follow the style of the world. when making clothes, there is an example, just conform to the pattern and you will be alright. We don't follow the style of the world or it's popularity. Postmodernism says: "There is no real right or wrong, as long as I like, as long as I feel good, you must accept me." These are the ideas of the world.

We don't want to emulate the world, not just the pursuit of the outside world, but also our habits, hobbies, and our ideas. In your life, what bad habits become your bundle and they will affect your relationship with God?



*"And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:17).*

*"While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:18)*

When I preach in many places, young people like to ask a lot of questions in the question-and-answer session. "How to understand God's desire on us" is the most common question. The second question young man liked to ask is: "Can I do this or can I do that?" And then I told them: From the book of 2 *Corinthians*, I tell you the four basic principles of Christian life on earth. You will test yourself according to these four principles, and then you can decide whether to do it or not.

First: *"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful..." (1 Corinthians 6:12a)*. The helpful things here are not anything in the world, but whether they are helpful to you spiritually. If they are not helpful in your life-changing relationship with God, then it's optional to have; if it impacts your relationship with God in a negative way, then you should decide not to do it; even if it's neutral, it means you don't have to do it unless it's really good for you.

Second: *"All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." (1 Corinthians 6:12b)*. If you play video games today, the Lord says: "put it down" and you can't put it down, be careful. This is the thing that you are bundled by.

The last time I changed my job, it happened when I had my second child, and I was preparing myself for serving God fulltime. I have accumulated a lot of vacation hours from my last job and they worth a lot of money. I was bargaining with the Lord to see how I can handle those leave hours. Finally, I said: "Lord, I give you 90 percent, I'll take 10 percent, okay?" The Lord kept silent. I found that money has big influence in my mind. I was reluctant due to family and financial needs, I gave God a lot of reasons, trying to keep the money. But God said "to surrender all" to save me, to release me and to set me free. A lot of times, when you try to put things down then you find out that you have a bondage.

You are governed by things that you have to say which hurt others; by the things you should not read but to read or watch then hurt yourself; and by the negative feelings toward others which in term make yourself miserable. We all need to find out what we are not free of before the Lord and be willing to overcome it.

Third: *"All things are lawful for me, but not all things edify" (1 Corinthians 10:23)*. You need to consider: can I do this to bring blessings to others?

Fourth: *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31)*. Can I bring God glory to this matter? There are a lot of neutral issues in our lives. There are no problems in our daily life to eat and drink. But will God be pleased if you do this?

Think these four principles over. In particular, I would like to emphasize that the world has a governing power in us, and we must be very careful.

## **2. Motivated by the Lord's own attraction and love**

Apostle Paul said: *"Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:8)*. What can free us from the bundles of the world, or from the idols in our hearts? There is a poem that says: "Will your spirit ever be with Him?" "What can make an idol lose its beauty, or lose its appeal?" "It's not frustration, it's not disappointment, it's not advice, it's realization of priceless in others." It's very well written.

If you love someone you shouldn't love, that person becomes your idol. How do you make this idol who attracts you lose his attraction? Not through disappointment, frustration, love or realization that: "Oh, this person is really abominable." You would want Christ to appear as a priceless treasure and attract us, we will then run to follow Him.

Apostle Paul said: *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Romans 8:35)* He said nothing can isolate us from God's love. Because Christ's love is too precious, precious to a point there is nothing, the danger of swords, poverty and hunger, nakedness, nothing can make me isolated from Christ's love. This is to let the Lord attract us, let the Lord's love catch us, and make us willing to let the world go.

Let's be real, not just to listen. For example, if you watch TV, play video games, or social media takes up too much time and energy or you spent on things that are of no value, you then need to pray: Lord, I hope I will reduce my time spent on these things by at least 1/3 this week. It's not worth to do something else that have no meaning after this though. I'm going to use this reduced time to do what the Lord delights. Not only you read spiritual guidance books, read the Bible well, but you also serve at church, or preach the gospel to others and care about others. We all need to think what I would like to do to adjust in my life to love Jesus, to please Him. I do not want to follow the way I lived before, the pattern of the world and I want to change. Don't waste all your time on worthless things. When I used to go to work before fulltime service at church, the Lord asked me not to think about the company projects after I get off work. I never take my work home. Eight hours is enough. I do things very seriously at workplace and God blessed me. When I got home, I really didn't look at my work, and my time was for the Lord. Of course I know you are very competitive now, but don't make excuses for yourself, sometimes learn to be a free man in front of the Lord. For the sake of loving the Lord, not willing to be swallowed by the world, not willing to let the king of the world to seize so much of my time.

Book of *Hebrews* 11:38 says these people: *"of whom the world was not worthy"*. They are in the world, but they live out the kind of dignity that belongs to the children of heaven. Because Jesus' love becomes the power of victory within us. It is worth it for the king of all kings, Jesus who died for me and lived for me.

## **3. Because of ever growing confidence and faith**

*"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5)* "By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious

*promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. " (2 Peter 1:4).*

Faith makes us respect God, and faith makes us think of God as God. Faith makes us open the skylight to believe. *"I believe God that it will be just as it was told me." (Acts 27:25).* It's all by faith. The Bible says: *" Now the just shall live by faith" (Hebrews 10:38).* "By faith" means that I live by faith.

I thought of Moses in particular as I prepared my sermon. Moses was born and grew up in Egypt, and Moses should be the most prosperous man in Egypt, governed by the world's rich and powerful, because he was the prince of Egypt. What is the testimony and the secret of Moses' victory? Bible tells us: *"By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" (Hebrews 11:24).* Moses was at the most noble position; he may become a pharaoh in the future. But Moses refused to be called the son of the Pharaoh's daughter, because *of faith*, he did not want the riches. Then *"choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin" (Hebrews 11:25).*

A lot of things in this world are actually very good, aren't they? Don't think I won't let you play video games, please don't get me wrong. If that's a relaxation for you, it's fine. But for anything, are you the master, or is the game the master? All these things, money is good, hobbies are good, habits are good. But if they are the masters, then you are finished. So, Moses refused, *"choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin."* (Hebrews 11:25) *"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible."* (Hebrews 11:26-27).

We are sometimes afraid of our boss more than God, aren't we? I was about to quit my job and leave our company in the 1990th when the economy was in a very bad state. The vice president of the engineering department brought in hundreds of engineers and said: "I work 15 or 16 hours a day, and who would do less than me?" So, everyone was afraid to go home every day and worked overtime. I packed my bag and always leave the office at six o'clock in the afternoon, because my big boss is God. When I quit to become a pastor, my boss gave me a year off and gave me a salary without tax returns. "You can tell me about a year from now if you really want to quit" he said. I told him: "thank you for your kindness but I don't need it." Because God called me.

Brothers and sisters, we must know that we serve the eternal God, the king of all kings. What was Moses' secret? That's because of faith. The best use of faith is when we treat God as God. Let God be God. God is invisible, but He does exist, and He is always with us. Moses *"endured as seeing Him who is invisible."* (Hebrews 11:27b) To him, he had never seen God. But his faith allowed him to see the Lord on the throne through all the environment, all the situations. He was able to break away from the bundles of the world, from the joy of sin, from the palace of Egypt, so that he was not afraid of the king's wrath and concentrated on pleasing God instead.

#### **4. Live a life of sainthood**

Brothers and sisters, this is a very important point. Because our new disciple training is "to build the body of Christ-oriented". We must protect our bodies. The church, or the body of Christ, supplies our spiritual life, of all help, give our love and supply us all kinds of need in our lives.

At the same time, the church also binds us. When I sinned, said something I shouldn't have said, and did something that offended God, the church will correct me and balance me.

**a) To have a spiritual companion**

If you have a spiritual companion, or a spiritual elder, who support and correct you, please thank him. There are fewer people who is willing to say honest words in love, willing to really help us grow now, you must cherish, and even try to find such people.

**b) Live a regular church life**

To live a regular church life, don't leave the church and be alone.

**c) Live in self-discipline and protection of the body**

Live in the supply, restraint, and protection of church fellowships. Find them on a regular, proactive basis, and let them help you. Sometimes we are in the church, but not in the fellowship of each other, although we attend church services, but we are not living in the protection and restraint of the fellowship and that is also dangerous.

I went quickly here a subject of such importance and size. I pray the Holy Spirit to help us and save us, because we are all in this corrupted world. But God placed us in this bent and contradictory generation, so that we could shine like bright light, show the path of life, and live out the differences of Christians.

**Prayer :**

Lord, in such a short time, we have gone through such a big, important, and very personal subject for our daily lives. Help us to see the world from the perspective of heaven and eternity, let us be different from the world! Thank you for loving us so much and putting so many truths, reminders, commands, and warnings in the Bible. Please let us respect the teachings and advice that you have given us, let us live in the world, yet do not belong to this world, let us know that in just a few decades, everything will pass, we will go home to meet you. By the time we live eternally, we will be into the rich kingdom of God. Bless the brothers and sisters for their study, bless the brothers and sisters to share with each other, and make us all companions on the spiritual path. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen!