**My Little Children**

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (**I John 5:21**, ESV). What an odd way for John to end his first letter. I almost expect to turn the page and find more. However, note the immediate context and how it really caps off the rest of the letter. “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (**I John 5:20-21**, ESV). John wraps up by explaining that Jesus is the true God. Anything else is an idol. Steer clear of it.

John’s statements to his “little children” form a bit of a theme running through the letter that leads to this conclusion. In **I John 2:1**, he says, “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Jesus is the true advocate. There is no other.

In **I John 2:12-13**, he says, “I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name’s sake…I write to you, children, because you know the Father” (ESV). Their sins were forgiven by Him who was from the beginning, who is from the Father. There is no other one who is from the Father.

In **I John 2:18**, he says, “Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come” (ESV). While there is only one Christ, one who is an advocate, one who is from the Father, there are many who deny Him, who deny forgiveness through Him, who deny He is the Christ. We must not listen to them.

Instead we need to abide in Him. “And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming” (**I John 2:28**, ESV). The one Savior is returning. If we follow the world or the things of the world, listening to those who are antichrist, we will only find shame when He returns.

We must not be fooled by those who continually walk in sin. They are of the devil and we must follow only Jesus. “Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil” (**I John 3:7-8**, ESV).

Therefore we are to love as Jesus loves and to love who Jesus loves. “Little children, let us not love in word and talk but in deed and in truth” (**I John 3:18**, ESV). That is, we are not to love the goods of the world more than we love God and our brethren, making idols of our worldly goods.

While the world and the things of the world pull on us and try to get us to stray, we can remember this: “Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (**I John 4:4**, ESV). Satan and the world are vying for our allegiance, but Christ in us is greater than Satan in the world.

And so, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” Satan, the world, the things of the world, the antichrists all compete for our attention. But only Jesus is the advocate, is from the Father, forgives our sins. He is the true God, everything else is just an idol. Keep yourself from idols.