Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Christ and Antichrists, Part 3
Scripture: 1 John 2:19-27
Code: 62-20

Now speaking of 1 John, it is that time tonight when we open up the Word of God and continue our study of this wonderful epistle. We are belaboring the epistle in the early chapters in order that we might lay some strong foundation. And I think we're going to see a bit of an increase in speed as we move on through the chapters yet to come because so much of what they tell us, builds upon what we have learned in these opening two chapters.

We are looking at a rather lengthy section, 1 John chapter 2 verse 18 down through verse 27. And I've called this Christians and Antichrists, it's another of the typical contrasts that John gives.

You remember that Jesus Himself divided the whole human race into two parts when He said, "He who is not with Me is against Me." You are either of Christ, or antichrist, you are either a Christian or an antichrist. And that is essentially what we read in verse 18 of this passage. "Children, it is the last hour, and just as you heard that Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen, from this we know that it is the last hour."

There are many antichrists, not just the eschatological Antichrist, the beast of Revelation, the wilful king of Daniel, the ruler that will come, the one we know as THE Antichrist. There are many antichrists. He will be, in some sense, the most formidable one, perhaps the most influential single antichrist figure in human history. He will be empowered by Satan and demons in a way that no other human being has been empowered up to that point. He will be given liberties to ply his wicked antichrist enterprise, liberties granted to him in the purposes of God as God steps back and ceases to restrain evil so that it runs amuck across the face of the earth. And he following the direction of Satan and demons is the earthly perpetrator of the final and most vast crimes against the truth of the gospel. We're not talking about him, we're talking about many who are like Him who perhaps without that formidable world dominance are nonetheless bearers of the same antichrist attitude. There are many antichrists.

Anyone who does not confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is antichrist. There is no middle ground. You cannot be neutral regarding Jesus. You're either with me or you are against me. In 1 Corinthians 16:22 Paul said, "If you don't love the Lord Jesus Christ, you're cursed." So either you are a lover of Christ, or cursed. And again, there is no middle ground.

Now John knows that some antichrists infiltrate the church. They come into the church because obviously this is Satan's approach. He is a deceiver. He is a liar. He wants to mingle himself among those people who are being given the truth, being taught the truth, who are hearing the truth. And he wants to work his work of deception among those, you might say, who are nearing the understanding of the gospel. There are antichrists all over the globe. As I said, anybody not with Christ is antichrist. Those that are most dangerous are those that are cloaked as if they were Christians, as those who are wolves in sheep's clothing, those who are false teachers and not just in the broad category of false teachers but those who are false teachers disguised as true teachers in the church. They come into the church, it becomes difficult for some unwitting or some childlike Christians or some untaught Christians, it becomes difficult for them to sort them out, to separate them, to avoid them. John wants us to make those distinctions clear, to know the true Christian from the antichrist. And so he provides here a contrast.

There are a lot of contrasts throughout this book as we already know. There are doctrinal tests that define true Christians. It is the view of sin and the view of Christ that is defining. There are moral tests that define true Christians. It is their obedience to the Word of God and their love for God for others and the fact that they don't love the world that marks them. So true Christians are marked morally, they're marked in terms of their theology and their doctrine. And in this particular section the emphasis is on the doctrine of Christ. True Christians embrace, love, serve Christ, those who do not are termed antichrists.

Now let me just take you back to verse 10, flow through and read this to you again. "They went out from us but they were not really of us. For if they had been of us they would have remained with us. But they went out in order that it might be shown that they are all not of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One and you all know, I have not written to you because you do not know the truth but because you do know it and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son, doesn't have the Father. The one who confesses the Son has the Father also. As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise which He Himself made to us, eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, you have no need for anyone to teach you but has...as His anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him."

This is typical Johannine prose. It is not the logical, sequential pattern of the Apostle Paul, or even Peter. John has his own style and he moves in circles and moves back and forth through the same themes and so we have been looking at this passage and finding that while we can consider it and extract its truths in order to sort of create some kind of outline and some kind of sequence, we have to jump around a little bit. But the bottom line is distinguishing Christians from antichrists.

Now we know that it is the last hour, verse 18 says, because the last hour, you remember, is defined as the time when Messiah comes. And because so many people hate Jesus Christ, because so many in the world reject Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ the true Jesus Christ of Scripture, because there is such hostility against Him even in our own country, all this effort to remove Christianity from the schools has nothing to do with anything constitutional, it has nothing to do with the separation of church and state, it has everything to do with a hatred of the gospel. This immense animosity toward Jesus is proof enough that He is the Messiah and proof enough that indeed it is the last hour, that is the hour...the last hour, the last era of human history which is marked by the coming of Messiah.

Now in this last era when Messiah comes, many will hate Him. Many will be antichrist. And some of them will infiltrate the church. And John tells the believers and us that you can identify them, first of all, because they depart from the fellowship. Where the church is true to sound doctrine, where it is true to the gospel and true to the Word of God, they depart. Verse 19, "They went out from us..." They left. Their defection is proof of their hypocrisy. "They went out from us but they were not really of us, for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us, but they went out in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us." When somebody hangs around the church, when somebody hangs around the Word of God, God's people, the truth of God, biblical preaching and teaching, for a while and then abandons it, that is proof positive that they do not belong. Their defection is evidence of their hypocrisy.

They would remain if they were the real thing. They would persevere in the truth, in love for Christ and love for His Word. They would, in the worlds that John further uses in this chapter, they would abide, they would stay because that's the characteristic of the regenerate. That's the characteristic of those who have been given new life in Christ.

So John says you need to be able to distinguish the Christians from the antichrists, and, first of all, the antichrists can be recognized because they leave. They defect. Maybe not all of them defect in our lifetime, or in our observation. But those who defect are antichrists. When somebody leaves the church permanently, and I'm not talking about leaving this church and going to another church, people do that, sometimes they move away, sometimes they have relationships somewhere else, sometimes they want a little easier preaching, or shorter. That always bothers me. I can never get enough of God's Word. But they depart for reasons other than the antichrist would depart. When an antichrist departs, they depart from the faith. And that's the second point.

First, they depart from the fellowship. Secondly, they deny the faith. Verse 22, "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son." You couldn't be qualified as an antichrist unless you denied Christ and His gospel. Verse 23, "Whoever denies the Son doesn't have the Father. The one who confesses the Son has the Father." Any denial of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scripture, God in human flesh, the Lord and Redeemer,

is characteristic of an antichrist. They might accept Jesus as a good teacher or religious leader, an angel, an emanation from God, a prophet, whatever. Anything other than the fact that Jesus is who He really is constitutes antichrist. And anybody who permanently departs from the fellowship essentially is denying Jesus Christ as Lord and God and Savior. And we've noted that this is repeated in this epistle. Chapter 4 verse 1 says, "Test the spirits." You need to be discerning because there are so many false prophets in the world. "By this you know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is from God." Everyone who gets the right doctrine of Christ that He is Savior and Anointed Messiah incarnate is from God. In verse 3, "Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God, and this is the spirit of antichrist of which you have heard that it is coming and now it is already in the world."

The attitude is what the spirit means here, the attitude, the antichrist attitude is everywhere in the world. And it is manifest in a wrong view of Jesus Christ. Second John 7, "Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, this is the deceiver and the antichrist." There were people who denied the deity of Christ, there were those who denied the humanity of Christ saying, on the one hand He wasn't God, on the other hand He didn't really come in the flesh, He wasn't human, saying that what the Scripture says about the incarnation was not true. In any case that constitutes an antichrist attitude.

There's a third element that marks them, that characterizes them. Back in 1 John 2 and it's in verse 26, "These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you." They come into the church, they are not truly in the fellowship. They deny the faith, that is they deny the reality of Jesus Christ, and that is central to the gospel. That means you deny the trinity. So you have the wrong God. You deny the deity of Christ so you have the wrong Christ. You are thereby calling the Holy Spirit a liar because the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ. So you've literally blasphemed the entire trinity by denying Jesus. This is...this is damnable, obviously.

But that's not enough for these people. They don't come into the church just to sit there in private and quiet denial. They come into the church with the view to deception. Verse 26, "They are sown by the enemy in the field." That's what it says in Matthew chapter 13. The enemy comes and sows them in the field. That was a very devastating thing to do to your enemy if your enemy sowed wheat, and you had some men go in the middle of the night and sow weeds, tares in the ground alongside the wheat, obviously unknown to that enemy. He would be watching his crop and when it finally came up, he would see the weeds coming up along with his crop and the weeds would destroy the entire crop. That was done in ancient times to destroy an enemy's income, wealth, well-being. And that's exactly what the enemy Satan does, he sends his false teachers in the church, alongside the furrows, as you will, where God has planted the true seed and he sows deceivers. Satan is the deceiver and this is the trade that he plies through other antichrist deceivers. They come into the church, they go into seminaries, they go into colleges, they go into denominational headquarters, they go into church staffs, they go in as elders and leaders in the church. They, if they are able, even ascend to the

leadership of the church and sometimes they come into the church even as the pastor, the true wolf in sheep's clothing, the false shepherd. These are the antichrists who deceive.

We looked at them last time. They are also described by Peter in 2 Peter chapter 2. It might be worth just looking at that so that you understand a little more about it. Second Peter chapter 2 verse 1, Peter says, "False prophets arose among the people in the past, among the people of Israel, just as there will also be false teachers among you." This is their strategy. They come into the church among you, and they secretly introduce destructive heresies, damnable heresies. Underneath denying the Master who bought them, and then comes judgment, bringing swift destruction among themselves. They come into the church secretly, clandestinely, covertly, introducing damnable heresies in the church...and again I'm talking about the church, the broadly defined church. They come in secretly and they're effective. Verse 2 says, "Many will follow their sensuality, because of them the way of truth will be maligned." Boy, is that ever true. Is that ever true. You just can almost stand up to anybody today and say, "I'm a Christian," and the person might say, "Well, what kind of Christian are you?"

"Well, I'm a Christian. I'm a biblical Christian."

"Well what's the difference between a biblical Christian and other kinds? Aren't there all kinds from one extreme to another?"

Christianity has been maligned, the truth has been maligned. The watching world assumes there is no such thing as truth that is recognized, believed and proclaimed by all Christians. They see everything from Catholicism to Mormonism as Christian. Everything from sort of mindless fundamentalism to sort of pseudo intellectual liberalism as Christian. They see certain universities as associated with Christianity historically, etc., etc. They're...what's in the minds of the watching world no single body of truth that they would affirm as Christian. So when you say you're a Christian, it basically doesn't mean anything. And then when you say, "Well this is what it means and only this and that's all and nothing else," they just cannot comprehend that...especially in a post-modern, existential world where everybody's entitled to his own truth. So they come into the church, they infiltrate, they lead people astray, the truth is maligned. Why do they do it? Verse 3, "In their greed," they want money. "They exploit you with false words, but know this, their judgment from long ago is not idle, their destruction is not asleep."

Drop down to verse 12, here's a further description of these antichrists that come into the church. "They're like unreasoning animals, brute beasts, mindless beasts, ravenous beasts, deadly, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed." Boy, that's strong. They're more deadly than a carnivorous beast, loose in the church. You'd be better off, frankly, in a lion's den than a liberal den. "They revile where they have no knowledge." They mock the truth. They mock the Scripture. They mock the gospel of which they have no personal knowledge whatsoever.

Verse 13 says, "They're stains and blemishes." Literally scabs and filth spots, "Reveling in their deceptions as they carouse with you. Watch out for them because their eyes are full of adultery, they never cease from sin because there's nothing in them to restrain the flesh. They entice unstable souls. Again, they have a heart trained in greed, they can figure every way imaginable religiously to separate you from your money. They are accursed children. They have forsaken the right way, they have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the way of unrighteousness." That is, he was a prophet for hire, if you gave him money you could buy his services. Verse 17 says, "They are springs without water, they promise and they can't deliver. They are mists driven by a storm for whom the black darkness has been reserved." Very strong language, this is a description of the infiltrating antichrists that come into the church that deny the faith and deceive the faithful. They are exposed by John as those who leave and abandon the truth, as those who deny the truth of Jesus Christ and His gospel and those who set out to deceive. And you can tell when people are setting out to deceive because they are usually characterized by going against what the Scripture has to say, what has clearly been historic doctrine in the church.

All right, enough of antichrists. Let's go back and see what he says about Christians. And he says three things about them in sort of reverse order, if you will. First of all, they are not deceived...they are not deceived. Verse 20, "You have an anointing from the Holy One and you all know." Verse 21, "I have not written to you because you do not know the truth but because you do know it and because no lie is of the truth." Verse 27, "You don't even have a need for anyone to teach you because His anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie, and just as it is taught you, you abide in Him." So how can you tell a true Christian from an antichrist? A true Christian is not deceived. They may doubt, they may question, they may be temporarily led astray, they may be enticed in their spiritual infancy or instability. But a true believer will not abandon the truth. There may be a time of testing, there may be a time of wandering, there may be a time of questioning and doubting. Doubt is not denial. So true Christians are not deceived.

When you see somebody who has been a part of the church, and I ended last week by talking about such a person, and leaves this place permanently to enter into a false religious system, that is a person who is a antichrist because the faithful remain. The faithful abide. The faithful stay. They persevere in the truth because the truth is in them and so is the anointing from God that teaches them all things. And they would never deny the Son or the Father.

So, first of all, they're not deceived. Secondly, they accept the faith. And this is why they're not deceived. They accept the faith. Go back to those same verses, verse 20, "You have an anointing from the Holy One and you all know." There's one basic reality about being a Christian, you know the truth because you can't be saved if you don't know and believe the truth, right? False Christians who are antichrists in John's day used to use two words to describe their religious experience. The two words that they preferred using were knowledge and anointing. And these sort of self-styled super

Christians as they portrayed themselves, more intellectual, more erudite, more exalted, more transcendent, more lofty, more in the knowledge saw themselves as the knowing ones, that's there the term "Gnostic" later came from. They were in the know, they had the true and elevated and secret and esoteric and divine knowledge. And they also saw themselves as the anointed. They had received a special anointing from God, a special touch, a special designation, a special elevation which gave to them a superior knowledge, putting them on a higher level than everybody else. And so they came in as if they had all of the great insights. And John rebuts them by saying, "We have an anointing from the Holy One," as if to say, you've got an anointing all right, but it is not from the Holy One, it's from the utterly unholy one. "You have an anointing, he says to these believers, and you all know, you are in the know and you have the anointing, not them."

And you can see that this was an effort to intimidate these Christians, to make them feel inadequate, sub-par, second-class by telling them that they were beneath these antichrists. John says, "That's not at all true, you're not about to be deceived. First of all, because you have an anointing, that is to say God has placed His hand upon you, a hand of special favor and you all know. There isn't anything you don't know necessary to salvation. There isn't any secret knowledge. There isn't any elevated knowledge. There isn't any transcendent knowledge. There aren't any mysteries, there aren't any hidden acrostics in the text. There aren't any secrets tucked behind the letters in the white spaces, there isn't any magic. You all know."

It also could be translated, "You know all." Well let's do that, you all know all that is necessary to be known for salvation. The word anointing refers to an anointing oil, *chrisma*. *Chrisma*is the Greek word. It's only used twice in the New Testament, both times here, once in verse 20 and once in verse 27. It's really a word for ointment. And in this text it refers to the Holy Spirit. You have an anointing, all right, you have the touch of God, you have, as it were, the ointment of God on you and that ointment is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has taken up residency in you.

Second Corinthians 1 verse 21 says, "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God." We were anointed by God and what was the anointing? "He gave us the Spirit in our hearts." Second Corinthians 1:21 and 22. The anointing from God was the giving of the Spirit. You're not lacking in anything. You're not on the short end of divine privilege and power. You have the Holy Spirit, you remember Jesus said, after the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you shall receive power.

And who gave us the Holy Spirit? Verse 20, "You have an anointing from the Holy One." Who is the Holy One? Well it's Christ, it's Christ. If you remember our study in Luke, chapter 4, one of the notable statements was made by a demon who had his theology right. The demon says to Jesus, "I know who You are, the Holy One of God." Even the demons knew that Jesus was the Holy One, called earlier in Luke that holy offspring, that holy child. In Acts 3:14 Peter preaching said to the people in Jerusalem, "You disowned the holy and righteous one, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you." Again Jesus Christ is called the holy one.

So, the Holy One has anointed you and that anointing, as we read in 2 Corinthians 1, is the Holy Spirit. You have the Holy Spirit. You have the third member of the trinity dwelling in you. First Corinthians 12:13 literally says that we've all received the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:9 says, "If any man hath not the Spirit, he is not Christ's." So if you are Christ's, you possess the Holy Spirit. That is the anointing. "And you all know, or you know all, that is you have the knowledge of the true gospel, the revelation of the truth so as to understand savingly." You know the truth. The truth is ours by virtue of the anointing. In 1 Corinthians 2:9 we read, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which hasn't entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those that love Him, to us God revealed them through the Spirit."

The Holy Spirit in us is our teacher. Through His presence in us and through His inspired Word, the things of God are revealed to us. "We have not received, it says in 1 Corinthians 2:12, the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God that we might know the things freely given to us by God." The Spirit then is ours as our teacher and as the author of the Scripture. So we do not speak words taught by human wisdom, but we speak in words taught by the Spirit. We actually have the mind of Christ.

So that's what John is saying. John is saying, "Look, you don't lack anything, you may not be noble and mighty and powerful and erudite, and you may not have great presence and authority in the world and all of that, don't let those false teachers deceive you by intimidation, don't let them think that somehow there is an anointing that you don't have and knowledge that you don't have, that is a lie. You know all there is to know savingly. And you have the anointing, you have the Holy Spirit of God. No need to turn to any false teacher because you think you lack something."

Reiterating this again in verse 21, John says, "Let me reinforce this, I have not written to you because you do not know the truth." He's saying...I'm not giving you your first exposure to the gospel here, on the other hand, I am writing because you do know it. I'm writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because I can bank that you do know the truth. And therefore you're going to understand what I'm saying. You know the truth, there isn't any other truth to know.

Or you'd think if you listened to the charismaniacs that get on television and get all the secret messages from God, you'd think you were missing out on a lot, right? Jesus never speaks to me, He never says anything to me, woe is me, I never get voices from heaven. Angels don't come in and out of my room and talk to me. God never shows up. One man told me, as I put in one of my books, that when he was shaving Jesus would come into the room and talk to him while he was shaving. Well the only person that talks to me when I'm shaving is Patricia, sometimes...sometimes she gives me good words from God, passing them along, but God has never showed up at my house. Am I being cheated? As a preacher I might think that these other preachers are drawing some knowledge down from heaven along with some power from the Holy Spirit to attract twenty thousand, thirty, fifth thousand people into massive stadiums who seem to be manipulated in their hands very easily.

Looks like some kind of super knowledge, or some kind of super anointing when the fact of the matter is it is a way of marketing and selling and promoting and manipulating.

So he says to these Christians and to us, you don't need anymore truth, you don't need anymore power, you have it all. You do know. And what he means there is you have the fundamental truth of Christ. You may not know everything about Scripture, you may not know everything about theology, but you know what is necessary for salvation, you know it. And that's why I can write and know you'll understand what I'm saying. You know the truth of Jesus Christ. You know that you must believe in the Son of God for salvation, you know that. You know that you must confess Jesus is the Son of God, as he says in chapter 4 verse 15. You know, verse 1 of chapter 5, you must believe that Jesus is the Christ, that He is born, and if you do you're born of God. The one who does that is born of God. You know that. You know that gospel. You know verse 13 of chapter 5 that you have to believe in the name of the Son of God in order that you may have eternal life and know it, and that's why I'm writing to you. I'm writing to you because you do know these things. And because you do know them I'm affirming and securing that knowledge against the threat and the intimidation and the seduction of these false antichrists. You have the Scripture. You have what is revealed. And you have the Holy Spirit. And so you have everything that is necessary. You can't say, according to 1 Corinthians 12:3, you can't say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. You could never confess Jesus as your Lord except by the Holy Spirit. So you have the Holy Spirit, you have the true gospel, you have the knowledge and the anointing, you have the truth and you have the power. Don't be intimidated by false teachers, don't be intimidated by so-called scholastics, so-called scholars who are anti-Christ attackers of the gospel. John says, I can...I can tell that you're Christians because you know the truth. You are not deceived, that's the first point by way of contrast, and you accept the faith.

He's not even done with that yet. You have to go down to verse 27, 1 John 2:27, and he's going to say it again. "As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, stays, it remains, that's why you don't defect. And you have no need for anyone to teach you." That is, you don't have to do...you don't need a false teacher. He's not talking about your pastors and shepherds and teachers. He says you don't need a human teacher, you don't need somebody to come in and offer to take you to the heights, the higher, deeper, truer, greater knowledge.

There was a pretty potent movement in America some years ago, Deeper Life, Higher Life movement, Kesic Movement. These guys who were in that movement would interpret the Bible allegorically and they believed that they were unveiling the secret knowledge hidden in sort of mystical allegories in the Scripture which no one could ever find on the page, no one. I remember an incident where I was talking to a teacher and he...we were at a conference, Patricia and our family was there, it was back by Chicago. And I said, "What are you going to preach tonight?" Cause I was preaching in the morning and he was preaching at night and I kind of wanted to know so I wouldn't, you know, give something along the same line. And he said, "I'm going to preach the Rapture of the church."

And I said, "You're going to preach the Rapture of the church, wonderful. What's your text?"

He said, "John 11."

John 11, that's not about the Rapture of the church. I didn't say that to him, I just was musing. And he read me a couple of verses in John 11 which is where Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.

And he said, "That's going to be my text." And then he said this, "Have you ever seen the Rapture there?"

I said, "Nope! I have never seen the Rapture in that text."

Well he took that as a badge of his unique insight and so that night he said, "A wonderful thing happened today, John MacArthur told me that he hadn't seen the Rapture in this passage, how wonderful that I can unveil it even for him."

Well the reason I didn't see it, it wasn't even there. It was imported from 1 Thessalonians. We're not lacking some secret knowledge that some mystical allegorical approach to Scripture is supposed to deliver to us.

So, what are we saying? Verse 27 sort of reinforces the same great truth, and we'll come back to that in a minute. But at the end of verse 21 John makes this little statement. He says, "I have not written to you because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie is of the truth." That is such a great statement. That's the law of non-contradiction that any logician understands, the law of non-contradiction. Something cannot be at the same time true and false. And he says, "I'm writing to you because you know the truth, and because you know the truth you reject lies. You have a built-in lie detector, it's called the truth."

If somebody comes along and tells you Jesus is an angel who was created by God and is the Spirit brother of Adam and Lucifer, you're going to say, That's a lie. Right? It's a lie. I don't care what religion says it, it's a lie. If somebody comes to you and says, Jesus did not die on the cross as Islam says, you're going to say, "That is a lie." Because the truth is He did and to say He didn't is contradictory to the truth and no lie is of the truth, they are mutually exclusive by the law of non-contradiction. Truth and non-truth are not equal. They are, in fact, incompatible. So those who are believers who know the truth, as I said, have built-in lie detector capabilities. They because they know the truth, revealed to them by the Spirit, taught them by the Holy Spirit who is the anointing that the Lord Christ has given them, they can see error for what it really is.

Now just talking about that a minute I...when I wrote the little book Why One Way, I had a chapter in there on "Incompatibility." It might be something you would enjoy reading again if you have that little

book. As Christians we know that whatever contradicts biblical truth, and I'll give you just a little bit of what I put in there, whatever contradicts biblical truth is by definition false. In other words, truth is incompatible with error, that's why we can't be tolerant of error. In fact, Jesus clearly and unashamedly affirmed the utter exclusivity of Christianity. He said, "I and the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father except through Me." As we were reminded again this morning, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." That is the exclusivity of the gospel. Whatever is contrary to that is a lie, whatever says there's another way to be saved is a lie. Anything contrary to what Scripture says is not true. Truth and error can't be combined.

You can't dialogue about truth and error. People always want to...Let's dialogue, let's see what we can learn from each other. Look, we know the truth. All we'll learn from error is that it's error. And you can't combine them. What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? What communion has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? What part has a believer with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? All of that in 2 Corinthians 6.

You can't say to people, "Well, this is my truth, and oh, I'm so glad you have your truth." That's not acceptable. Scripture commands us to be intolerant of anything that is contrary to the truth. I'm not saying be unkind, unloving, dogmatic on every fine point of theology. But I am saying be faithful to the truth, the gospel truth. Central teachings of Scripture are so absolutely clear that the only reason you would deny them is because you are blind by Satan and sin and hate the truth.

Westminister Confessions says, "Yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other that not only the learned but the unlearned in a do use of ordinary means may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them," end quote. I love that language. That is to say all the truth is necessary for our salvation and sanctification and hope of glorification can be easily understood and anything that is contrary to that or different from that is error and ought to be exposed as error and there is no place for tolerating it. All views aren't equal, all religions aren't equal, all opinions aren't equal. The truth is the truth. And there isn't any middle ground. I've heard that so much. "Can't we just get together and find some common ground?" Truth...truth can't be defined by the dialectical method. Truth is not discerned in a discussion with people who tell lies. Truth is discerned by careful study in the truth and there isn't any neutral ground. The ground between us isn't neutral.

In fact, 2 John and verses 9 to 11, "Anyone who goes beyond and doesn't abide in the teaching of Christ, the truth of the gospel of Christ, anybody who goes beyond that, outside of that, doesn't have God." That would be a good way to start the dialogue. I have God and you don't, now where do we go? You need God, or this discussion is pointless.

How can you know God? Through Jesus Christ. You say, "Well, shouldn't we dialogue?" No...verse 11 says, "If they come and have false teaching about Christ, don't receive them into your house, don't give them a greeting or you'll be a participator in their evil deeds," verse 11. Don't expose the truth to attack from error.

Psalm 1, "Don't sit in the seat of scoffers." That's what I tell young people. You're trying to decide where to go to school, ask yourself how Psalm 1 relates to your educational life. "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked." You want to be blessed? Then don't get counseled by wicked people. "Nor stand in the path of sinners." Worst of all, "Sit in the seat where somebody is scoffing." You want to be blessed? Don't go there. Truth gains nothing from assaults from error. Well, you understand.

"If we or an angel from heaven," Paul said, "preach any other gospel to you than what we've preached to you, let him be accursed." As strongly as he could say it and then he repeats it. "I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you've received, let him be accursed." You're wrong, you don't have God, you're cursed...strong language. But always the language is strong that warns us against false teachers.

Well let's go back then. John is confident that they are true Christians because they know the truth and because they are not deceived because they understand that something cannot be true and what contradicts it also true. This is very affirming and securing. How can you tell a true Christian? They are not deceived, first of all. They are not deceived. Secondly, they accept the true faith. And thirdly, they abide faithful...they abide faithful.

In verse 27 we'll make a transition there, he says, "The anointing which you've received from Him," that is the Holy Spirit from Christ, "abides in you. You have no need for anyone to teach you, His anointing teaches you about all things, is true and not a lie." There's that same law of non-contradiction. "And just as it is taught you, you abide in Him." So there we find that third element, you abide in Him. You stay faithful. You are not deceived. You accept the faith and you remain faithful.

Boy, this anointing is amazing, just a footnote about that. It proceeds from Christ, it is internal, it abides in you, it is permanent. Jesus said in John 14:16, "The Holy Spirit will abide with you forever." It is sufficient, "You need not that any man should teach you." It is edifying, it is the same anointing that teaches you all things. It is genuine. It is true and is no lie...that is, the Bible does not mix truth and error, the Holy Spirit does not mingle truth with error. So God has endowed us through Christ with the Holy Spirit dwelling in us permanently to teach us everything we need to know as we study the Word of God of which He is the author. He leads us into all truth, never a lie. What an amazing promise. And this Holy Spirit assures, as we see at the end of verse 27, that we will abide in Christ. The Holy Spirit is the seal of our redemption. Remember that in Ephesians 1? We are sealed with the Spirit of promise. This is permanent. This is the gift that God has given us, the truth and the anointing

through the Holy Spirit.

So we're not dependent on human wisdom because we have a divine source of truth and a divine resident teacher. And because of that sealing, we abide. He abides forever. We abide in the truth. And we're back to that idea that we don't defect. And that's the final point, the true believers are not deceived, accept the faith and abide faithful. Verses 24 and 25, "As for you, let that abide in you which you've heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise which He Himself made to us, eternal life."

John says you have the truth, you have the Spirit. He says let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. Stick with the truth. Stick with the truth. And if you do stick with the truth, then you're going to stay with the Son and with the Father and go into eternal life. Stick with the gospel. John wrote this about 40 years after the people first heard the gospel. And he said, "I know you've been exposed to a lot of things. You've been exposed to a lot of influences, stick with the truth. Stick with the truth. Remain, abide, continue, holding to that truth." There's a human responsibility here, you can't just say, "Oh well, God's going to make sure I stay in there and hang in there and I don't need to worry about it." No, you need to persevere. You are eternally secure but you persevere in faith. You have the truth and the truth teacher and the promise that you will abide and remain because your salvation is eternal. But that doesn't mean you can be irresponsible. And so, John says, "As for you, hold on, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. Stick with the truth." Boy, you want to say that so often to people who go off to educational institutions, go off to seminaries, get their faith ripped and shredded. Stick with the truth. Truth is still the truth, isn't it? Still the truth. "Stay with the truth. If you continue in My Word, you're My real disciple," John 8:31. "You have truly been redeemed," the apostle Paul told the Colossians, "if you remain faithful, if you stay." He puts it this way, "If indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast and not moved away from the hope of the gospel." True Christians will do that, they'll hang on to the truth. But not without sanctified, Spirit-empowered effort. And that's how we demonstrate that we are the people of the promise of verse 25, "This is the promise which He Himself made to us, eternal life." Eternal life.

There you have it. John's contrast...antichrists, they depart, they deny, they deceive. True Christians, they aren't deceived, they affirm the faith, and they remain faithful. And that's the difference. And the question then is, "Which are you? Which are you?" Time may tell, but you know now and now is the time to be sure you're a Christian and not an antichrist masquerading because if you're not with Me, Jesus said, you're...what?...you're against Me.

Lord, it's been a wonderful day and it's fitting to bring the day to its conclusion with the crisis of the crossroads again as we saw it this morning. To choose whether we go through the narrow gate, or the broad way, whether we are going to be Christians, or antichrists. May You use this message

mightily, powerfully, savingly in someone's life tonight and wherever it may be heard. To Your eternal glory we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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