

1 John 2.18-28 18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. 24 See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he promised us--even eternal life. 26 I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit--just as it has taught you, remain in him. 28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

#### Introduction:

Have you ever anticipated a day to come or looked forward to a day and made preparations for it? For some of you, you will be preparing for graduation and you look forward to it with great expectation. The days of planning, the days of remembrance of the school years, and the joys that come afterward are too exciting for you (hopefully). In all the excitement, though, we can too quickly forget that we have a few weeks left and really mess up in school. We can desire the status of "not being a student" that we forget that we are currently a student. We forget who we are much like Simba did in *The Lion King*. Mufasa comes back in the clouds and speaks to Simba: "You have forgotten me."

Simba, "No, I haven't."

"Yes, you have. For when you have forgotten who you are, you have forgotten me."

Wow! What a line. What a truth. We indeed have, like Simba, forgotten who our Father in heaven when we have forgotten who we are. When we no longer live like children of God but are draped in this world's pleasures, as Joel spoke on last week, we have forgotten who we are and who He is. That is a frightening truth that John brings out this week in our passage. As the title suggests, we need to remain in God or else we will live like children of the devil and not the children of God that we truly are if we have received Christ as Saviour. This is the essence of John 15 and this passage: Remain in Me!

#### 1. An open accusation against the false teachers

In the past few verses John has been speaking kindly and not labelling the teachers who had come into the Ephesian assembly and taught falsehoods, but here he not only labels them but exposes them as he accuses them.

##### a. Accurate labeling (18-19)

18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

John begins by telling us it is the last hour: The last hour in the OT and NT means the time when Christ shall come back. We need to realize that every hour is the last hour for we don't know when He will return.

He calls them the antichrist. This is a telling word. John is the only biblical writer to use this word (1

John 2.22; 4.3; 2 John 7). It means *anti* which means either *in place of* or *in opposition to* and *Christ*. So, these people are labelled as ones who are against the purposes of Christ or directly opposing Him and those who are trying to take His place. The former is more overt and visible while the latter is more covert and invisible. This is what Joel spoke on last week as the subtleties of the deceptive work of the world, the flesh and the devil.

What John is pointing out in these verses is that the antichrist will be battling for us against those who are for Christ. That is to mean, the Christian should be seeking after God and His ways but most of the time isn't. The reason: the antichrist spirit is pervading his thoughts and therefore his deeds. The battle, as always, is for the mind (2 Co 10). This is the battle that Paul spoke of in Acts 20 where the savage wolves will come in to deceive (an activity of the mind) the people of God.

Departure, like Judas going out from the community of disciples, pointed to betrayal, denial of faith, and separation from God's grace. These are the people who left the church but were not really part of her. Church membership doesn't guarantee salvations (Rom 9.6).

b. Exposure of methods (20, 23)

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

Those who are antichrist are men who speak words such as:

20 "We alone of all men are Christians, who complete the mystery of the third portal, and are anointed there with speechless chrism" (*Philosophumena* V. 9.121-2).

John combats that thought with the idea that we all, as Christians, have an anointing from God and know the truth. "But you have an anointing from the Holy One . . ." This is probably an allusion to the coming of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John: "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth." (16.13; 14.17). When the divine teaching was truly recognized, Christians were genuinely protected from false teachers for they knew the truth. That is to say, when we are in the Word of God we are protected from false teachings, as long as we allow Scripture to be the interpreter of Scripture and not our own whims.

21 John doesn't provide new truth just the "old truth" they knew from the beginning. John writes because they already knew the truth he was speaking of and the falsehood of the teachers was made plain when compared to the Scriptures. We must know the truth or else we perish. The greatest Christian defense is to remember what we know and act on it (1 Thess 4.9; Rom 15.14,15).

22 Who is the liar, the antichrist? The one that denies God came in flesh. It goes beyond this though. These false teachers would say words like: We may have different ideas about Jesus and who we are but we believe the same things about God. This is the lie that replaces Christ.

23 In this verse there is no mention of the Holy Spirit. The brunt of the verse is our fellowship with God is clearly through the Son. If we confess Christ we can have fellowship with God. We can also deny God by denying Him His proper relationship with us and that is by Christ through the Spirit.

What is it they deny about the Son? That He is uniquely the Son of God (Matthew 16.16). That He is uniquely Lord (Phil 2.11). That He is uniquely the Saviour (1 John 2.22). And again, these false teachers would have us believe that although they may not see Jesus as all of these or just one of these that our concept of God are the same. Lie.

2. A method of coping with them
  - a. remain in the former teachings (24-27)

24 See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he promised us--even eternal life. 26 I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit--just as it has taught you, remain in him.

26-27 The Bible is very important for it teaches what we are to obey and believe. It is the final arbiter between what is of God and what is of man or the devil. It helps us in three ways:  
God's anointing teaches all things pertaining to the Word of Life, not new revelation but what we need to know regarding what has been given.

The test of the anointing is the faithfulness it has to the Word of God (that which was from the beginning).

The work of the Holy Spirit confirms the anointing and the teaching as from God as He provides insight into the Scripture.

Therefore: Remain in Him.

We cope with these false teachings by remaining in Jesus.

- b. assurance of victory (28)

28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

We are assured victory. Live in that victory.

Conclusion:

We need to live our lives in constant remembrance of who we are and what we are created and destined for. We need to remain in Him. Have you ever seen a dying person's to do list? They know their time on earth is short and limited. The doctors told them they have two-months to live. What do you think that list would look like? Would it be to "stop and smell the roses", to play a little more? What would it be. As I began to reflect on that I became tearful for I realized that I wasn't doing that. A verse in the text before us tells us that the last hour is here. We need to live like we are about to leave this world. This would mean, for me:

1. Get more from God's Word.
2. Listen more closely to the Holy Spirit.
3. Take every opportunity to tell others of Jesus.
4. Take every moment as a moment of worship of God.
5. I probably would find myself weeping over small things:
  - a. people and their ministries.
  - b. music that would be heard for the last time.
6. Take more time and effort in my teaching and preaching to make the most of the time that I have in ministry with others.
7. To equip people to carry on after me.
8. Mostly, I would remain in Him

With that in mind, please take this week to determine what you would do if you knew this was your last year on earth. Write them down. And do them.

Let's pray: Father, we ask that You would bless this people with a remembrance of who You have

created them to be, of what fellowship with You is like, of the need to remain in You. I ask, Father, that this week You cause each one of us to determine the necessary things and to do them in the power of the Spirit, and in the name of the Son to Your glory.

Amen

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