

# 1 John 2:18-27

## The Last Hour

Image Church // First John: Week 4

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### Introduction

Welcome guests...

#### Celebrate...

- We've had **29 people** come through Starting Point that have filled out a card
- We have **44 people** signed up for the Core class starting in 2 weeks...
- We had **8** folks attend our Covenant Membership class...
- Several weeks ago, we had **35 women** attend our women's discipleship, Coffee and Conversations
- Last week we launched our **Student ministry!**
- And get this today, we're going to be baptizing **8 people!!**
- We've seen **6 ppl come to Christ this year**, and we had at least **4 people** last weekend indicate that they gave their life to Christ!

God is on the move!! *Can we put our hands together and celebrate all that God's doing here!!*

- All of this represents people taking next steps in their discipleship journey... They represent stories of what God is doing in the lives of people!!
- This is why we exist, this is what God has called His church to be about!
- We care about one more becoming a disciple and one more growing as a disciple!

Alright, **if you have your Bible, go ahead and turn to 1 John 2...**

- *If you don't have a bible, we have one for you at our Connections Center!*

Last week, John showed us what we have access to through Christ, and then in light of that, he moved to challenge them not to fall in love with the things of the world...

- Loving the things of the world is following after the things of this world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of possessions...
- And he says that none of those things you seek after or participate in will last, all of it is passing away...
- The only thing that can sustain and satisfy you is the love of Christ...

So he's talked about the love of the world, now he's going to talk about the **deception present in the world**... Specifically, being deceived away from the things of Christ...

You don't have to look far to see this reality today... Just go to Netflix and you can find documentaries on different cults that will blow your mind...

- How could anyone fall for that?!? Yet so many do...

But here's the thing, deception doesn't just come in the form of cults it comes in other forms as well... In fact, there are many who walk away from the church deceived away from the things of Jesus...

- We've seen that happen here on multiple occasions...

**Illustration:** *Several friends in college... Well known... About Jesus for years and then walked away totally...*

**The question is,** how does this not happen to us?!? How do we guard against deception? How do we know if we're being deceived right now into thinking we're saved and we're not?!? How do we endure through deception and remain steadfast???

## 1 John 2:18-3:10

<sup>18</sup> Children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. By this we know that it is the last hour.

*Oh boy, what did I get myself into today? ... You're going to be ok!*

*Several things to unpack here... First, let's talk about the **Last hour**<sup>1</sup>... Jesus has come and gone, but He will return... The waiting period, the time we're living in right now, is **the last hour** as we wait on His return...*

- This is a reality that should keep us focused...
- This is something that should shape our perspective...
  - At any point, He can and will return...
- It's easy to grab onto parts of Christianity that benefit us and keep us touch-and-go with the things of God, but it's statements like this that remind us of the true nature of Christianity... It's something that shapes our lives... Its implications stretch beyond just right now...

He talks about the **antichrist** and many **antichrists**...

Here's the thing, I know the term **antichrist** can sound weird, and there have been a lot of riffs off of it, **but it's just a title that states a reality**...

- The antichrists that John's talking about that are present today are people operating under the spirit of deception... **anantithetical to the truths of Jesus...**
- **Simplify the term** → Anti - Christ

Keep in mind John also wrote **Revelation**, where he talks about all this a lot more, but here's what we got here...

John seems to point to the reality that one day, there will be a singular **antichrist** that will come...

This is an individual who will embody the fullness of **deception**, who will oppose the things of Jesus and lead people astray...

- The goal of **the antichrist** is to deny that Jesus was God in the flesh, who came to be the Savior of the World and Lord overall...
- To deny that Jesus was God... Diminish Jesus' work... <sup>2</sup>

But currently, the *spirit of the antichrist is active in the world in lesser forms through people whose hearts have been captivated by deception*...

- This is what John's talking about when he says that **even now many antichrists have come**...

*Jesus talked about this in **Matthew 24:5** and v. **24**...*

- **verse 5:** For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah,' and they will deceive many.
- **Verse 24:** For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders to lead astray...

The reality is, anyone that operates in opposition to the truths of Jesus is ultimately operating under the spirit of **antichrist**... A spirit of deception...

**Augustine said, "Each person ought to question his own conscience, whether he be an antichrist."**<sup>3</sup>

*Here's the thing that we need to see in this before we move on... We live in the midst of deceptive times, in a deceptive culture where virtually everything in it is operating in opposition to the truths of Jesus... So, we need to pay attention to all that John's going to show us here...*

<sup>2</sup> John Piper, *Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you.*

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *Hom. 1 John Augustine, Homilies on the First Epistle of John via: Robert W. Yarbrough, 1-3 John, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 145.*

<sup>1</sup> Acts 2:16-17; 1 Cor. 10:11; Hebrews 1:1-2; Heb. 9:26; 1 Peter 1:20

John says next in **verse 19**: <sup>19</sup> They [the *antichrists*- people operating under the spirit of deception] went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. However, they went out so that it might be made clear that none of them belongs to us.

So what you have is a group of people who were part of a local church, part of a faith family only to walk out on it... Denouncing who Jesus is and what he had accomplished in His life, death, and resurrection...

*They fell to deception and walked away from Jesus, from the church...*

- They are *anti - christ...*

Here's something I want you to see, John says that they went out from us, but they didn't belong to us... If they truly belonged, if they were truly saved, they wouldn't have left...

- They went out so that it might be made clear none of them belonged to us...

**IOW**: It seemed like they blended in pretty good...

These people would have been religious, they would have gone through the motions...

Which means that they would have modified their behavior for a time to try and fit the mold... But you can only do that for so long...

**Illustration**: holding a beach ball under the water...

- Eventually, the beach ball pops up and hits you in the face...
- You can't keep up behavior modification for so long...

These people were exposed, and the evidence of their exposure was their departure from the church and the truths of Jesus...

Proving they were never really saved to begin with... That they were just going through the motions...

Here's a *scary reality*... **You can be around the things of Jesus but not be surrendered to Jesus...**

- There's a difference in... **belief that, and belief in...**

**Illustration**: Roller coaster at 6 flags...

**Belief in**, means that you surrender all that you are to Jesus... And that you continue in faith until the end...

\*\*One of the biggest deceptions in our culture today is that you can pray a prayer, say you believe in Jesus, and then live how you want and think you're good...

- That is *anti - christ...* **Antithetical** to the claim of Jesus and the call of Jesus...

Here's the thing, ***genuine faith is characterized by transformation, not behavior modification...***

- Here's the difference, **behavior modification** is just about external actions...
- **Transformation** is something that happens at the heart level... This is change at the core of who we are that gives way to a new attitude and new desires...

It's the transformational power of the **gospel** that keeps us from being deceived into being lured away... *Don't have transformation... Have you surrendered to the gospel?*

***The question is how? What does this look like? How can we know if we're being transformed by the gospel? How can we experience hope, stability and protection in the midst of the deception around us?***

**Verse 20:** John says this...

<sup>20</sup> But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.

**Here's how:** The Word of God and the Spirit of God... <sup>4</sup>

- *These two things work together to provide protection, confidence, and confirmation in our salvation.*
- Let's flesh this out starting with the Spirit...

John's talking to believers here... And he's giving **the** defining mark of a true believer...

*Here it is: you have an **anointing from the Holy One**... And all my charismatics are like AMEN!*

This is so powerful though... What he's talking about here is the Holy Spirit that's received through faith in the finished work of Jesus...

- *Flesh this out...*
- *GOSPEL... Life, death, resurrection of Jesus...*
- *Believe, receive the work of Jesus... Through the Spirit...*

**Acts 2:38** Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."**[Reference verse]**

The Spirit is what gives us access to the work of Jesus, but also the power of Jesus to give us new life... Gives us a new heart so that we can walk in the things of Jesus! Freeing us from the power of sin...

**Ezekiel** said this would happen in **Ezekiel 36:26** *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh* **[Reference Verse]**

What we need to see is that this is so much more than religion or praying a prayer...

- This is so much more than just tweaking some things in your life and trying to be a better version of yourself, or cleaning yourself up, or trying to be good...

This is about a **new life**... You were dead in your sin, but you've been made alive through Christ, given a new heart... And you've been given access to the presence and power of God in you!!

**2 Cor. 5:17**... *Anyone who's in Christ is a new creation*...

**BTW:** *This is why it's biblically impossible to say that you've always been a Christian... You may have always known about Jesus, but there's no way that you could have always been a Christian... That's a deceptive reality...*

**Verse 21:**

<sup>21</sup> I have not written to you because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie comes from the truth. <sup>22</sup> Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist: the one who denies the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup> No one who denies the Son has the Father; he who confesses the Son has the Father as well.

He mentions the word **truth** here 3 times in these previous **3 verses**...

See, **here's what the Spirit does**... It opens your eyes to see and understand the truth of who God is and what He's done through Jesus...

- **IOW:** Your eyes are open to the **Word of God**. This is where these truths are laid out for us...

But John shows us that there are rivals to the truth of Jesus... Those that are **anti - christ**...

- What he's talking about here is *not* the **antichrist** that is to come, but the other category of **antichrist** that's active today in people who are under the spirit of deception...

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Here's the nature of their deception... Here's how he categorizes the **antichrists** in our culture today...

- Anyone who denies the Father and the Son...
- **IOW:** He's talking about people who deny who Jesus is and what He came to do... **v. 23b**
- **John 14:6...** *Way, truth, life:* Jesus is the only way to God...

To believe anything other than this is to believe a lie!

Now there's something so important here... This is where I believe that we begin to see the **Spirit** of God and the **Word** of God work together...

- There's a ton of people who would not deny Jesus as the Son of God...
- There's a ton of people that affirm Jesus... They would say, I don't deny Jesus, I believe in Jesus...
- And yet the Jesus they are affirming is not at all the Jesus of the Bible...
  - No religion in the world denies Jesus as a person or that he existed... They would say I believe in Jesus...
  - Yet the Jesus they claim is not the Jesus of the Bible... This matters!!!

**Illustration: Jehovah's** Witness came by the house...

- Claims to believe in Jesus, but it's a different Jesus than the Jesus of the Bible!
- Buddhist, Muslims, and Mormons do the same thing to name a few... This is deception, this is **anti - christ**.

\*Let me bring this together for you practically...

The **Holy Spirit** opens your eyes to the truth of the **Word of God (the bible)**, and it's the **Word of God** that then acts as a guide, and a filter, for us in an opposing and deceptive world...

## 1 Corinthians 2:10-12

10 Now God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit, since the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except his spirit within him? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. **[Reference verse]**

**The Spirit** opens our eyes to the truth of the **Word of God**... And it's the **Word of God** that is our guide and filter for what's true and what's not...

**IOW:** Word of God is the way that you see through deception and the way that you identify lies about Jesus...

- This is what we have to know it... We need to know if for our edification through Jesus, yes! **But we also need to know if for our protection!**
- This is why we teach the bible the way that we do, this is why we offer a **core class**...
- Doctrine, theology, and what you believe about God matters, who you believe Jesus is, matters!!!

Look at what John says next in **verse 24:**

<sup>24</sup> What you have heard from the beginning is to remain in you. If what you have heard from the beginning remains in you, then you will remain in the Son and in the Father. <sup>25</sup> And this is the promise that he himself made to us: eternal life.

**This is the key to the entire section!** John uses the word **remain** 3 times here... *Emphasis...*

*Remain in what? **That which you heard from the beginning...***

- *He's talking about the truths of Jesus that came to them **through the Word of God!***

**Remain:** *present-active... continual state... Remaining in the Word of God...*

**Podcast plug:** *If you want to know more about what time in the Word can look like, we dropped a podcast on this: Devotional Formulas Debunked (March 24) - [imageatl.com/podcast](https://imageatl.com/podcast) links to spotify/apple podcasts*

As you remain in the **Word of God** it keeps you centered on the truths of God...

We even get an **example** of that right here, John references a promise that Jesus made to us... and that is eternal life with Him...

There is hope in the midst of the last hour... **Eternal life...**

- *Pastoral appeal...*

**Verse 26:** <sup>26</sup> I have written these things to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. <sup>27</sup> As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you don't need anyone to teach you. Instead, his anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie; just as it has taught you, remain in him.

**Don't need anyone to teach you:** *Not saying I shouldn't have a job or that you don't need to be taught...*

- *Talking about how you don't need to be taught any additional things to what the Scripture teaches you...*

This is how the **Spirit** and the **Word** work together to *give you understanding that leads to a transformed life...*

- It's the Spirit that opens your eyes and the Word of God that shows you how to live...

**Illustration:** When you buy a house it has the remnants of the old homeowner... Once you get moved in it begins to characterize you...

- Same is true with how the Holy Spirit and the Word works in us...

## Conclusion [VAMP]

So what do we do with all of this?!?! **Surrender** to the work of the **Holy Spirit!** How: *through* the Gospel!

We are in the last days, Jesus is going to return... In the meantime: **Remain** in the Word of God!

- **Ephesians 5:18–19** 18 ... **be filled by the Spirit:** 19 speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord...
- **Colossians 3:16** 16 **Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you,** in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Which **BYW** notice the importance of the gathered body... And how the Spirit and the Word work in and through the local church...

- Some of you need to see the importance of that and lean in...
- You waver because you're not connected to the church consistently...

### **Non Christian:**

Application: **Acts 2:38** **Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."**

*Call to respond...*

- *Salvation*
- *Baptism*

**Pray**