

Summary

In this sermon drawn from 1 John 2, the speaker walks through six practical tests that John gives believers to examine the maturity and authenticity of their faith. Beginning with a recap of 1 John 1, the sermon establishes that John's goal was never for believers to sin freely and then confess, but rather to pursue a life that genuinely turns away from sin. The speaker emphasizes that confession is not what cleanses us. Christ is. His sacrifice as our advocate and propitiation is what satisfies God's justice and makes forgiveness not just merciful but right. From there, the sermon moves through five additional tests: whether obedience marks your relationship with God, whether truth produces love or contempt toward other believers, whether you know your identity in Christ, whether you desire God more than the world, and finally, who you say Jesus is. The speaker argues that this last question is the foundation beneath every other test. If Jesus is not fully God and fully man, then confession, obedience, love, identity, and desire all lose their anchor. The sermon closes with a clear gospel summary: Jesus lived the life we could not live, died the death we deserved, rose again, and now stands as our advocate before the Father.

Intro Prayer

Father, thank you for bringing us together today. We ask that you would open our hearts and quiet our minds as we dig into your Word. We do not want to simply have a good discussion. We want to encounter you. Holy Spirit, reveal to each of us what you want us to take away from this time together. Where we have blind spots, shine your light. Where we have doubts, bring your truth. Where we have grown comfortable, stir us again. We surrender this time to you. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ice Breaker

What is one question about faith or the Bible that you remember asking or hearing when you were newer to Christianity, and looking back, how do you feel about that question now?

Key Verses

- 1 John 2:1-2
- 1 John 2:3-6
- 1 John 2:9-11

- 1 John 2:15-17
- 1 John 2:22-23
- James 1:4

Questions

- The sermon opens with the idea that new believers often ask big theological questions while missing more foundational ones. What do you think are the most important questions a new believer should be asking, and why?
- The speaker describes confession as climbing into the tub, while Christ is what actually cleanses you. How does understanding propitiation, the idea that Christ absorbed God's wrath on your behalf, change the way you approach confession?
- John's second test is obedience. The sermon compares knowing God to knowing a spouse well enough to anticipate their needs without being asked. In what areas of your life do you feel your obedience reflects that kind of deep knowing of God, and where does it fall short?
- The sermon challenges us to ask whether truth produces love or contempt in our lives. Can you think of a time when your theological knowledge or spiritual experience caused you to look down on another believer? What did that reveal about your heart?
- John writes that whoever hates his brother walks in darkness and does not know where he is going (1 John 2:11, ESV). Why do you think John connects love for others so directly to spiritual clarity and direction in our own lives?
- The speaker says that obedience without security turns into performance and love without security turns into self-preservation. How does knowing your identity in Christ, that you are already forgiven and already an overcomer, change the way you live out your faith day to day?
- The sermon describes three counterfeits competing for our desires: the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and pride in possessions. Which of these three do you find most difficult to resist in your current season of life, and why?
- The final test is who you say Jesus is. The speaker argues that every other test in 1 John 2 only makes sense because of this one. How does your personal answer to the question 'Who is Jesus to you?' shape the way you approach confession, obedience, love, identity, and desire?

Life Application

This week, pick one of the six tests from the sermon and spend time honestly evaluating yourself against it. You might journal your thoughts, pray through it with a trusted friend, or simply sit quietly before God

and ask Him to show you the truth. The tests are: Do you understand what truly saves you? Does your life show obedience to God? Does truth produce love or contempt toward others? Do you know who you are in Christ? Do you desire God more than the world? And who do you say Jesus is? Choose the one that felt most convicting or most unclear, and let that be your focus for the week.

Key Takeaways

- Confession is not what cleanses you. It is the act of surrendering to Christ, who is the one who actually cleanses you through His sacrifice as your propitiation and advocate before the Father.
- Obedience is the evidence that you truly know God. It is not about sinless perfection but about a growing, maturing lifestyle that reflects God's character to those around you.
- Truth that does not produce love for other believers was never really truth to begin with. Spiritual knowledge or gifting that leads to contempt for others is a sign of walking in darkness, not light.
- Knowing your identity in Christ, that you are already forgiven, already an overcomer, and already in relationship with Him, is the foundation that makes genuine obedience and love possible without collapsing into performance or self-preservation.
- Every test John gives in 1 John 2 is built on one foundation: who Jesus is. If he is not fully God and fully man, then confession, obedience, love, identity, and desire all lose their meaning and their power.

Ending Prayer

Lord, thank you for this time together and for the truth of your Word. We confess that it is easy to know these things in our heads while still living as though they are not fully real. So we ask you to make them real in us. Remind us that Christ is our advocate, that our sins are already paid for, and that we are not earning your love but living from it. Where truth has produced contempt in us, soften our hearts. Where we have been unsure of our identity in you, speak clearly. And in the moments this week when the world pulls at us, help us to want you more. We anchor everything on who Jesus is: fully God, fully man, our Savior and our Lord. In his name we pray, amen.