

Sermon Outline

Looking Ahead:

- January 29 "Why We Love" ~ 1 John 4:7-12, Pastor Corey
- February 5 "Receiving God's Love" ~ 1 John 4:13-16, Pastor Phil
- February 12 "Completing the Circuit of God's Love" ~ 1 John 4:17-21, Pastor Phil
- February 19 "Expressions of the New Birth" ~ 1 John 5:1-5, Pastor Corey

If you would like to TEXT a prayer request to The Chapel Staff, text the word "prayer" to 269-280-2878.

"Knowing the Truth of God's Word"

1 John 4:1-6

January 22, 2023

EFCA Statement of Faith Adopted by the Conference on June 19, 2019

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

Introduction: Truth! Can we know the truth? What is truth? Does truth change or evolve?

Acts 20:21 "I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus."

Acts 20:30 "Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹ So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears."

1 Tim. 1:3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer ⁴ or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith.

1 Tim. 4:16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

1 Tim. 6:20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, ²¹ which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith.

2 Tim. 1:13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

I. Test the Message, Examining What it States, v.1-3.

A. We have the responsibility to apply this test, v.1.

1. It is a command.

a. "Do not believe every spirit."

“Dethroning Jesus ~ Exposing Popular Culture’s Quest to Unseat the Biblical Christ” by Darrell L. Bock and Daniel B. Wallace, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007

- Claim One: The Original New Testament Has Been Corrupted by Copyists So Badly That It Can’t Be Recovered
- Claim Two: Secret Gnostic Gospels, Such as Judas, Show the Existence of Early Alternative Christianities
- Claim Three: The Gospel of Thomas Radically Alters Our Understanding of the Real Jesus
- Claim Four: Jesus’ Message Was Fundamentally Political and Social
- Claim Five: Paul Took Captive the Original Movement of Jesus and James, Moving it from a Jewish Reform Effort to a Movement That Exalted Jesus and Included Gentiles
- Claim Six: Jesus’ Tomb Has Been Found, and His Resurrection and Ascension Did Not Involve a Physical Departure

“The Case for the Real Jesus ~ A Journalist Investigates Current Attacks on the Identity of Christ” by Lee Strobel, Zondervan Publishers, 2007

- Challenge #1: “Scholars are Uncovering a Radically Different Jesus in Ancient Documents Just as Credible as the Four Gospels”
- Challenge #2: “The Bible’s Portrait of Jesus Can’t Be Trusted Because the Church Tampered with the Text”
- Challenge #3:
 - Part 1: “New Explanations Have Refuted Jesus’ Resurrection”
 - Part 2: “The Cross-Examination”
- Challenge #4: “Christianity’s Beliefs about Jesus Were Copied from Pagan Religions”
- Challenge #5: “Jesus Was an Imposter Who Failed to Fulfill the Messianic Prophecies”
- Challenge #6: “People Should Be Free to Pick and Choose What to Believe about Jesus”

Debate Between Dr. Wallace and Dr. Ehrman: “Can we trust the text of the New Testament”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRHjZCKRIu4>

b. “Test the spirits.”

2. It is reasonable.

B. The test is measurable, v.2-3.

1. The positive test: The genuine acknowledge that Jesus Christ is God in flesh.

Jn.1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

2. The negative test: The non-genuine do not acknowledge Jesus, v.3.

C. Application: John calls us to be discerning listeners.

II. Test the Audience, Examining Who is Listening to Whom, v.4-6.

A. Examine those who listen to false teachers, v.5.

1. Where are the teachers from? The world.

Jn 12:31 “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.” (Jn.14:30, 16:11)

2. Where does their message come from? The world.

3. Who listens to them? The world.

B. Examine those who listen to the true teachers, v.4, 6.

1. Look at the teachers, v.6.

a. Where do they come from? God.

b. Where does their message come from? God.

2. Look at the listeners.

a. We know God, v.6.

b. We are from God, v.4.

1) We are children of God!

2) We are overcomers!

3) We are possessors!

C. Application: If we have been born of God, then God dwells in us by His Spirit, giving us His overcoming power.

Conclusion: "This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood," v.6.