

1 John 2:18-27 Oct 4th 2026

“Abide in Christ”

Well I’ve been going through the book of 1 John, John has been doing something very important. He has been helping us understand what it looks like to genuinely belong to Christ. He has talked about sin and confession. He has talked about obedience. He has talked about love for our brothers and sisters. He has warned us about loving the world.

And now John turns our attention to another very serious matter. And the question comes down to... how do we remain faithful to Christ when there are voices around us trying to pull us away from him? That's not just a 1st century problem. It's our problem today.

We live in a world filled with voices. Our phones probably are the number one culprit for giving us information. But also television and social media and books and podcasts. Friends can be a voice teachers can be a voice. Some of these voices are extremely helpful. And some of them are not.

Some of them speak truth, and some of them distort the truth. And some can sound remarkably Christian while quietly moving us away from the biblical Jesus And that's what John is addressing in our text for this morning. John talks about the last hour in verse 18.

John writes: *“Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that Antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that this is the last hour.”*

Notice how John begins with “children”... That's the language of a pastor. John isn't trying to frighten the church into submission. He is speaking to people that he loves. And then he says it is the last hour. John isn't necessarily saying that Christ is returning within the next 60 minutes. He's describing the age in which we live. Jesus Christ has already come into the world. He has lived the perfect life we could never live.

He died the death we deserve to die. He has risen from the grave and he has ascended to the father. And now the church lives in expectation of his return. The writer of Hebrews says in 9:28 *“So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him”*

we're living between the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ. We are literally living in the dash And John wants us to understand that history is moving toward Jesus. Phillippians 2:10-11 Paul says *“So that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”*

That means the Christian life is not something that we should approach casually. There is an urgency to the Gospel. There is an urgency to making sure that we actually know Christ. And John says that one of the evidences that we are living in this final period is that there are

already many antichrists. Now, scripture does speak About a particular Antichrist associated with the end times. But John also uses the word more broadly here. There are already people who oppose Christ. That's not a surprise to us. And there are already teachings that deny Christ.

And there are already people attempting to replace the truth of Christ with a counterfeit gospel or with something else altogether. And that's why Christians need discernment.

Let's go to verse 19 where John talks about the danger of deception. *"They went out from us, but they were never of us. For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us."*

This is one of the more sobering verses in the passage. These people had been around the church. They had heard the preaching. They had been around Christians. They had apparently participated in Christian fellowship. And yet eventually they left . John says that their departure revealed something about their relationship with Christ. They were not truly of us. That ought to make every Christian pause. Because being around Christianity isn't the same thing as belonging to Christ.

You can sit in a church building every Sunday and not know Jesus. You can know the songs, you can know the terminology, you can know the Bible stories. You can even have Christian parents you can have Christian friends you can be involved in ministry. But the question John wants us to ask is much deeper. Do I know Jesus Christ. Jesus himself gave a similar warning in Matthew 7. *"He said, not everyone who says to me Lord Lord, will enter the Kingdom of heaven."* That's a frightening statement.

And yet it's also an invitation to examine ourselves. We've talked about this a few weeks ago in Sunday school. Paul tells the Corinthians in 2nd Corinthians 13:5 *"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith."* John isn't trying to make genuine Christians live in constant terror that they might somehow accidentally lose Jesus. He's telling us to recognize the difference between genuine faith and empty religion. And the one evidence of genuine faith is *perseverance*. The life of a Christian is perseverance to the end. To finish the race. As we pursue Christ. As we said before, this is a lifelong situation here. And the Christian who follows Jesus doesn't do it perfectly. They continue to have struggles; they even have doubts. But because, and through all of it, there is a continuing attachment to Jesus Christ

Verse 20. Now we shift to the work of the Holy Spirit. *"But you have been anointed by the holy one, and you all have knowledge."* John is encouraging them. These false teachers I have left, but John reminds the believers that they have received something from God. They received the Holy Spirit. The word anointed is connected with the Old Testament practice of anointing someone for a particular purpose. Here John is pointing to the spirit's work in the life of the believer. Jesus promised this very thing in John 14:26, Jesus said: *"But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things."*

And notice what the Spirit's ministry does. It doesn't make Jesus less important, it makes Jesus more important. Jesus said in John 16:14 *"He will glorify me."* That's a tremendous test for

spiritual teaching. If someone claims to be from the Holy Spirit, but constantly moves Jesus into the background, we ought to be concerned. Here are a few attributes of the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit magnifies Christ. The Holy Spirit helps us understand scripture. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. The Holy Spirit points us toward Christ. And finally, the Holy Spirit reminds us of the gospel.

And that is important because we don't need some secret knowledge that only a handful of spiritual people possess. We need the truth God has already revealed to us.

OK, verse 21 *"I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth."* John is reminding them of something they already know. And there's an important lesson there for us. We sometimes think that because we've heard something before we don't really need to hear it again. But the gospel is something we never outgrow, and we can never stop hearing it. We need to be reminded. We need to hear again that Jesus Christ is Lord. We need to hear again that we are sinners. We need to hear again that salvation is by grace. We need to hear again that Jesus died for our sins. And that he rose from the grave, and that he's coming again. The Christian life is not about constantly discovering something new. Sometimes spiritual maturity looks like becoming more deeply rooted in things you've already known for years.

Then John gets extremely direct in verse 22. *"Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ."* That's the heart of the issue this morning. Who is Jesus? That's the question. Christianity isn't built around vague spirituality.

Christianity is built around a person and that person is Jesus Christ. John says that the person who denies that Jesus is the Christ is a liar why?

Because everything depends upon who Jesus is. If Jesus is merely a good teacher, then the cross is simply the tragic death of a good man. If Jesus is merely a prophet, then the cross doesn't accomplish what scripture says it accomplished. But if Jesus is the eternal son of God who became flesh, then everything changes. The cross becomes the place where the son of God bears the judgment of sinners.

The resurrection becomes the declaration that death has been defeated. The ascension becomes the exaltation of the risen king. And his return becomes the coming of the rightful king to establish his Kingdom.

That's why John won't allow us to refine Jesus. Notice verse 23 *"No one who denies the son has the father. Whoever confesses the son has the father also."*

Jesus said exactly the same thing in John 14:6 *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me"*

That's not one religious opinion among many. That's Jesus telling us who he is. There is no Christianity apart from Christ. There is no salvation apart from Christ. There is no reconciliation with God apart from Christ. The question isn't whether Jesus is important. The question is whether we believe what God has revealed about Jesus. Verse 24, John switches the attention to the Gospel. Verse 24 *"Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you."* That word abide is going to become very important. It means to remain, to continue, or to dwell. John is saying, in essence: don't abandoned the gospel you received. Don't let somebody convince you that Christianity needs something beyond Christ. And don't let somebody convince you that scripture isn't enough. Or that Jesus is insufficient. And never let somebody pull you away from the gospel. Paul said something remarkable in Galatians 1:8 *"But even if we or an angel from heaven could preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you let him be accursed"*

That's strong language. But it shows how seriously God takes the gospel. And sometimes we need to hear the same gospel we heard when we first came to Christ. It doesn't become less important as you mature. It becomes MORE important. And you can't be over saturated by the gospel. As you remember pastor Duncan's sermon from last week, he was speaking about the series we are doing in Galatians. Freedom in Christ. And he said some of us get in our car and we think man, that message sounded so much like all the rest of them. That's because Paul's letter to the Galatians is DRIPPING with the gospel message, which doesn't change.

As most of us probably noticed, Pastor Duncan will preach the gospel at baptisms, weddings, funerals, obviously in sermons, any chance he can because the gospel is more precious than anything we have going on.

Think about the cross. When you first became a Christian, perhaps you looked at the cross and thought Jesus died for me. But as you grow in your understanding of scripture you begin to see more. You see the holiness of God you see the seriousness of sin. You see the justice and the mercy and the love of God. And then it becomes plain, you see the substitution and reconciliation and redemption in adoption. Meanwhile grace is flowing through all of it. And you realize yeah I'll never outgrow this gospel, I can never hear it too much. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:2 *"For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified"*. Paul didn't mean he knew nothing else. He meant that everything else was centered around Christ crucified. And John says let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. Then John gives us the reason or the promise in verse 25. *"And this is the promise he made to us— eternal life."* That's a mike drop situation. Let's think about this for a moment. The world offers promises. We talked about that a few weeks ago. More money will make us happy. Success will satisfy us, popularity will satisfy us. Possessions, gotta have the latest gadgets because we will be happy when we have those. A better body will make us happy. A better job or a better house. But like we talked about, all of those things, every single one of them fades.

The gospel gives a promise that cannot fade. Eternal life. Jesus says in John 10:28 *"I give them eternal life, and they will never perish."* That is what Christ gives his people, not simply a better

life here. This is not our forever home it's our temporary home. Not merely temporary happiness on Earth. Eternal life... life with God, life that death cannot destroy, life that sin cannot ultimately defeat, life that Christ purchased with His own blood. And that promise that precious promise, ought to cause us to cling more tightly to Christ.

Verse 26 talks more on deception and how dangerous that can be. *"I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you."* John isn't just being paranoid here. He's being discerning. He knows deception is real. That the number one job of the enemy, Satan is trying to seek and destroy.

We need to recognize something here. You don't have to believe everything simply because someone says it confidently. A person can be sincere and wrong. A person can be intelligent and wrong sometimes. A person can be popular and wrong sometimes. A person can have thousands of followers on Instagram and Facebook and still be wrong. The question isn't: "How many people believe this?" The question always is: "What does scripture say?" The Bereans in Acts 17 were commended because they didn't simply accept what Paul said without examination. Acts 17:11 says *"They received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so."* That's healthy Christianity. To listen and think and search the scriptures. Test what you hear, and then hold firmly to what is true.

We would be well off to do that. How many times in my life I have been just deceived and assumed I was getting good advice. Had I tested it against scripture, I would have known that it was not true.

So now, John brings everything together in verse 27. And there's that word Again, **abide**, That we talked about earlier. Ok, verse 27 *"But the anointing that you received from him abides in you...."* And then here it is at the end. *"And as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him."* He ends this verse with **"Abide in him."**

That's the heart of this entire passage. John isn't simply saying no new information. He's saying: Remain In Christ! Stay connected to Christ. Continue putting your trust in Christ and believing in Christ and walking with Christ. Listening to his word and depend upon his Spirit. Jesus gives us the perfect picture **in John 15:5**

"He says I am the vine, you are the branches." Then he says: **"Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."**

A branch doesn't produce life by trying harder. The branch produces fruit because it is connected to the vine.

And that's what an abiding life in Christ looks like. We don't or can't manufacture spiritual life. Christ gives us life, we don't save ourselves, Christ saves us, just like we don't create righteousness, Christ gives us righteousness.

We don't produce the power necessary to persevere. Christ sustains his people. That's why we abide.

OK, let's take a look at 3 applications for this morning from this text. What does this mean for us?

1 .EXAMINE WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS

Examining yourselves to see where your heart isn't just whether you believe *in* Jesus. Ask yourself these questions: do I believe the Jesus of scripture? Do I believe he is the son of God? Do I believe he is fully God and fully man? Do I believe he lived a life without sin? Do I believe he died as a substitute for sinners? Do I believe he physically rose from the grave? Do I believe he is Lord? Because the truth is that everything rests upon that confession and the knowledge of knowing who Jesus is.

2. BE CAREFUL WHAT VOICES YOU ALLOW TO SHAPE YOUR FAITH.

We live in a world where everybody has a platform. Everybody has an opinion, everybody has something to say about everything. And the louder the world is, the easier it is to assume it must be true. Don't measure truth by popularity. Measure it by scripture. Don't simply ask, "does this sound right?" Does it sound good? Ask if it's biblical? And don't simply ask, "does this make me feel better?" Ask does this lead me toward the Christ that's revealed in scripture? Then open your bibles. Know the word, study the word, talk about the word. And teach it. Tell others about it. Let scripture shape your thinking before the culture does.

3. DON'T MOVE AWAY FROM CHRIST, GO DEEPER INTO CHRIST.

This is where John wants us. In this text. I mean ultimately, this is where Jesus wants us. To abide in him. When you're discouraged, Christ is still your savior. When you sin, Christ is still your advocate, when you're suffering, Christ is still your hope, and when you're confused, Christ is still Lord. When you're afraid, Christ is still holding you, and when death comes Christ is still your life. That's why we don't need to find something beyond Jesus. Because Jesus plus NOTHING equals hope, and security, and salvation. We need to know Jesus more deeply.

Brothers and sisters, the world is going to keep changing. Ideas will change, the way we do things will change cultural opinions will change. Teachers will come and go pastors and elders the deacons will come and go. Movements will rise and fall, but Jesus Christ never changes Hebrews 13: 8 says "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever*" That's where Jesus wants us to rest, not in our ability to understand everything, not in our ability to defend ourselves against every argument, nor in our ability to be perfect, but to rest in Christ, because ultimately, the Christian hope isn't that we are strong enough to hold on to Jesus. The Christian hope is that Jesus is strong enough to hold on to us.

Know what Jesus has done already. He came for sinners, he lived for sinners, he died for sinners, he bore the wrath of God for sinners, He rose for sinners, he ascended for sinners, and now he intercedes for his people.

Hebrews 7:25 says *"Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them."* That's our savior. So when John says abide in him, he's not telling us to somehow earn our salvation by holding on tightly enough. He's calling us to remain where salvation is found. In Christ. John has warned us: do not love the world or the things in the world... for all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, and the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not from the father, but is from the world.

We heard it in verse 17. The world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. So how do we abide? How do we keep from drifting with the world. John tells us in verse 24 ***"Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you if what you have heard from the beginning abides in you then you will abide in the son and in the father."*** One of the main ways Jesus taught us to abide is right here at this table, where we will be celebrating the Lords Supper.

And perhaps there's folks here this morning who has been around Christianity for a long time or has maybe had nothing to do with it maybe you've been in the church, maybe you have never even been in a church ever.

Maybe you've heard the sermons and sung the songs and heard the Gospel, but you've never truly surrendered your life to Christ. Today, don't simply admire Jesus. Come to Jesus, trust in him, repent of your sins and believe the gospel. And rest in what Christ has done for you wherever you're at Jesus will meet you right there.

There will be members of the prayer team maybe an elder or two in the back of the church for prayer during these last two songs. Please avail yourself to talk to someone or if you're going through a specific trial, we would love to pray with you.

As we leave today, as we abide in Him, were doing it not because were strong enough, but because he is worthy because he has given his life for you. Experience Jesus and accept the free gift he's given us. Amen