

Series: The Confident, Loving Church – week 10

CDOBC – beginning on 2/14/10

Title: **“Knowing the Truth”**

1 John 2:18-23 ~ May 16, 2010

OBJECTIVE: To encourage believers that their faith and the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence equips them to know the truth about Christ.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Michelle Racioppo to ann. – Women of Faith Conf. – tickets available in courtyard
- “Serve” page on website
- Missions – Youth “Rent-A-Kid” - \$ needed by the end of May for Latvia
- Missions – Dale to ann. – 2011 *Vacation With a Purpose* trip to Europe
- VBS Registration begins today – visit table in courtyard
- Church directories available – 1 per family please

Opening Prayer

Open your Bibles to 1 John 2:18-23

Read 1 John 2:18-19

The reality of antichrists vs. 18

With verse 18, John begins a new section that deals with the heresy – and the false teachers the churches throughout Asia Minor were dealing with toward the end of the first century. He begins by addresses them as “dear children”, which not only affirms their faith, but communicates the Apostle’s affection for them.

The term “last hour” is confusing for us since our culture is so connected to the clock. The term “last hour” in Scripture, like the term “last days”, refers to the ending phase of God’s redemptive history, which is the church age – the age we are living in now. This is not so much a chronological marker, than it is an indicator of the urgency of the era we live in.

The N.T. clearly teaches that the return of Christ is imminent

(James 5:7-9; 1 Peter 4:7; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 John 2:28; cf. 3:2; Col 3:4; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Pet 5:4) and that we should live in a way that anticipates His return.

This confuses many believers, since these verses were written 1,950 years ago! However, we must remember that God's clock is not the same as ours – “With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day...” 2 Peter 3:8 Why would God wait so long for His return? How can this ‘last hour’ or these ‘last days’ continue for almost 2,000 years? The next verse tells us – “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.” 2 Peter 3:9-10a

John refers to antichrist (“you have heard that the antichrist is coming...”). Some of you may not know what this means, so lets take a few minutes to explain this term that John uses. First, antichrist is a term used exclusively by John 5x in four verses (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

The term is a compound word – anti = *‘the opposite of’* or *‘instead of’*, and Christ = *anointed one, messiah* (Jesus)

Throughout Scripture, there is a prominent figure in prophetic passages that will play a major role in the final days of human history. He will be a powerful and charismatic world leader, and the Bible calls him **“The Antichrist”** (Daniel 7; 11:31; 12:11; Mark 13:22-23; 2 Thess. 2:3-4; Revelation 13). There are specific things this world leader will do, and he will work on behalf of Satan and he will be possessed by Satan as he promises peace and safety, but brings destruction and death to the world.

The topic of antichrist was not an unfamiliar subject to the Christians in the early church, even though John is the only

one who uses this term. John refers to this person when he says, “...as you have heard that the antichrist is coming...”. But John’s focus is not on the prophesied evil world leader and what the future holds, but on the “...many antichrists have come...”. This is where understanding the compound word *antichrist* is helpful. The antichrists John is referring to are the Gnostic false teachers who had been part of the churches, and had been teaching things that were *against* Christ and *against* the Word / teaching of Christ.

He says they “have come”, which points not only to their arrival on the scene in the past, but that the wake left from their teaching is still affecting the present – even though they were no longer part of the churches (perfect tense of *ginomai*). He says “This is how we know it is the last hour.”, because Jesus and others prophesied that this era would be hampered by those who would oppose Christ.

The antichrists invalid faith vs. 19

In referring to the false teachers – the antichrists, John says, “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.” vs. 19

These antichrists were no longer a part of the churches (“they went out from us”), and he says they did not “belong to us”. In other words, they were never believers. Why does he say this about them...that they were never believers? Because the crucial element that makes someone a believer is what they believe about Christ! This is why they left the church – because their teaching was opposed to the Apostles teaching – and the “young men” (vs. 13-14) opposed them (antichrists work on behalf of the “evil one”), so they left the churches

because of the opposition they had encountered. They didn't as John says "belong to us" – or to put it in more clear terms, their faith was not invalid because they left those churches, but due to the reason they left those churches – their false view of Christ and their lack of faith in Christ.

What makes someone a believer – a follower of Christ – a child of God – is not what church they attend, but what their belief is about Jesus! Of course, what church you attend is important – since so many churches today do not teach the truth of Scripture, but let's be crystal clear on what the Gospel is...and what it is not. The Gospel is the 'Good News' about Christ and what He has done to redeem us from our sinful state (1 Cor. 15 – Jesus died, was buried, rose, appeared).

We cannot confuse the Gospel with other things – as important to the Christian life those other things might be. Understanding of doctrine and the theological truths in Scripture that go beyond the elementary things of our sin and Christ's sacrifice for our sin – are not part of the Gospel as it relates to our Justification – our conversion.

Let's look at the next four verses in our text this morning...verses 20-23.

The danger of antichrists vs. 21-23

The danger or threat that antichrists pose is a perversion of the truth. They deny the truth – primarily the truth about Christ, and they destroy people's faith because they malign the object of faith – Jesus.

How do they do this?

They deny the deity of Jesus.

They deny the sinless life of Jesus.

They deny the resurrection of Jesus.

They deny the teaching of Jesus (especially John 14:6). In addition, they also deny the reliability and inspiration of the Bible. They have to, because the Bible clearly teaches all of the things about Christ that they deny.

So, the danger of antichrists is that they teach things that are opposed to God's Word – things that are opposed to the truth about Christ – they teach lies about Christ and the effect of this is that they prevent people from putting their faith in Christ – they prevent them from being reconciled to the Father!

The believers defense against lies vs. 20-23

Vs. 18 – “Therefore we know that it is the last hour.” – know = *ginosko* – to know through experience.

Vs. 20-23 – “...know the truth”, “...you do know” – know = *eidō* (*ordate*), to know intuitively – to discern – to perceive or discover.

This is an important detail in the text. John has been writing these churches, helping them understand the foundation of their faith in the person and work of Christ, and that the Christian has a specific lifestyle that God has called him/her to. John has described numerous times that as a Christian, the way you live was important. In the verses we looked at last week (2:15-17), he made it clear that believers are not to love the world, but they should love God and His will.

There are many reasons why God calls believers who are saved by grace, to live in obedience to God's Word, but one of the greatest ones has to do with our knowing truth from lies.

Vs. 20 – each believer has been anointed by the spirit of Christ. We have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit at the

moment of our conversion. It's due to this 'anointing' – due to the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life – that we can know the truth.

Jesus said, “I and the way, the truth, the life” John 14:6

Jesus said, “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” John 17:17

Jesus said, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth...you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.” John 14:16-17

Jesus said, “...the Holy Spirit...will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” John 14:26

Jesus said, “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.” John 16:13

It is because of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life that you can distinguish between what is true and what is a lie. However, if you aren't “walking in the light”, but are “walking in the darkness”, you effectively dull yourself to the voice of God – the Holy Spirit in your life – which disables your ability to distinguish between what is true and what is a lie.

This is why John has been encouraging and commanding us to “walk in the light” – it's why he told us not to deny our sin, but to confess our sin to God – and when we do, “He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1:9)

Proverbs 10:29

“The way of the LORD is a stronghold to the upright, But ruin to the workers of iniquity.”

In vs. 22 – John emphasizes / clarifies who the liar is – who the false teacher is – it is the one who “denies that Jesus is the Christ.”

Many people in our culture – and for the last 2,000 years – have tried to deny the Biblical truth about Jesus, yet they try to claim an intimacy and love for God.

John says this is impossible! Why? Because Jesus was God – “...the fullness of deity in bodily form...” Col. 2:9

Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” John 10:30

Jesus told His disciples, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” John 14:9

John’s point is clear – you can’t deny Christ and embrace the Father. The two are one.

Application

Pray for those unwilling to attend church.

John is not saying if someone leaves our church that they are not a believer.

He is not referring to those who change denominations. Many of you have someone close to you who has made a profession of faith in the past, and they may have even “walked in the light” of Christ for a time.

However, for whatever reason, they no longer attend church. They might not have any interest in attending church – and maybe they have even begun to live a life that is far from the values of Christ. When this occurs, the first thought of many is that the person is not saved.

In fact, they may point to vs. 19 as evidence that “...their going showed that none of them belonged to us.”

However, we must be careful here and not apply this statement in verse 19 to a larger group than John intended. He was speaking specifically about the

antichrists – about those who never believed in Christ and who taught lies about Christ. He was not referring to those who accepted the truth about Christ and had faith in Christ.

Now, I don't want to give false hope to you, but let's remember what is required to become a Christian – it's a person's belief about Christ. Now it may be that your loved one is no longer connected to a church because they never had faith in Christ – but their disassociation with church may be due to other reasons also.

So...how do we handle this? Pray...it might be appropriate to pray for their salvation – but it might be more appropriate to pray that God would heal their hurts – or that as their Heavenly Father, God would discipline them and draw them back to His people. This is an issue that causes many people pain and anxiety as they think about their loved ones – just make sure you don't apply what John writes in vs. 19 beyond what he intends.

Listen to the Holy Spirit's voice.

Can you tell the truth of God from lies about God?
Are you aware of the Spirit's leading in your life – the Spirit's ability to guide you into truth and away from false teaching?

“Walking in the light” enables you to hear the Spirit's voice in your life – and to ‘know’ the truth.

Make sure you are pursuing a godly life so you can not only be assured of your faith, but be protected by your faith.

Close in prayer