

Deception and Protection

(1 John 2:18-27)

10/26/16; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

Most of you may have never heard of the musical group Milli Vanilli, but most people my age have.

They were a group that consisted of two lead singers in the late 80s and early 90s that were from Germany.

Their first few songs took America by storm and they even won a Grammy for best new artist in 1990...

But then the unthinkable happened.

While they were on stage at a live concert, one line of the song that they were singing got hung up...

And it began to play over and over, revealing the fact that neither of them were signing the song but it was coming from a recording...

A few months later, the duo confessed that they had not one song on their album..

They had simply lip synced all of it..

They gave their grammy back, and went into hiding...

Now the point of telling you that is this...

They fooled everyone with their lip synching...

They even fooled the people who give out awards in the industry...

They fooled people who had even watched them perform...

But the truth is that they were simply imposters...

In fact, they were not only imposters, they took credit for someone else's voice...

And even accepted an award that they didn't earn...

Now in 1 John, we have been talking about imposters..

About phony Christians that say one thing but do the other...

They are imposters.

And John has been writing this letter to help true believers identify them...

John cared for the true church..

He cared for real believers.

He knew that the people he was writing to were saved.

He wanted them to give them some tests of salvation so that they would know they were saved, but also to help them identify imposters and false teachers...

We come to another test tonight that is really a list of traits to help us identify false teachers and false converts and phony Christians...

And we need a list of traits because let's face it....

Nobody comes to you and says, "Hey, I am a false believer. I joined the church to introduce lies."

"Hopefully, I can lead you astray."

So, how do we identify these people?

Well, John is going to help us do that this evening in 1 John 2:18-27...

He is going to give us three actions that characterize false Christians and false Christian teachers...

The first action is found in verses 18-21....

I. Antichrists Depart (18-21)

Let's read verses 18-21..

18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that [d]it would be shown that they all are not of us. 20 [e]But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. 21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and [f]because no lie is of the truth.

John opens this section with another term of endearment to the people he is writing...

They are his children in the faith, and like any good father, he wants them protected...

So, he is going to help them identify any strangers that may appear to them posing as fellow believers..

And he uses a very strong word to identify these phony Christians in verse 18 by calling them antichrists.

Now last fall, we spent some time on Sunday nights talking about the end times...

And if you remember, there is a major player in the ends times who is simply called the Antichrist...

He is a single figure who I believe will be a Gentile who will step on the world stage and establish world wide peace...

That will allow him to gather worldwide fame, which will give him the confidence to eventually turn against Israel and declare himself to be their god...

While demanding that they worship him in the temple...

The Bible says that he will be empowered by Satan to do his work, and he will wage war against God until the very end of time...

When Jesus returns and destroys him with a single word from his mouth...

That Antichrist deserves a capital A because it is a proper name, yet John also lets us know that there are also small a antichrists at work in the world today as well.

These antichrists have been in the world ever since Christ departed this world..

They stand in opposition to the true Christ in every way, and even in day in which John wrote this letter, there were antichrists everywhere....

John even writes that he and his readers were living in the last hour because of the presence of so many antichrists..

Now, we know that Jesus didn't return then, but John expected it simply because there were so many false teachers around...

And we should expect that return because there are even more false teachers around today...

There are not only false Christian teachers today, there are entire false Christian religions today...

Mormons, Roman Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses all consider themselves Christians as do the leaders of those false religions...

Not only are there antichrists in the world today, there are antiChristian religions...

So, if the presence of antichrists teachers alarmed Joh that the end of the world was near, antichristian

religions in our day should cause us to stay looking upward...

Then in verse 19, John makes a very important point about antichrists....

Most of them started in the church...

John says that these antichrists went out from us, and by that, he simply means that many of these false teachers were at one time in the church...

If you do any research on the founders of false religions, you will find that many of them grew up in good churches..

Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, went to a Methodist church for years...

Charles Take Russell, the founder of Jehovah's Witnesses was raised in a Bible-believgn Presbyterian church...

And the worst of all is the fact the modern Roman Catholic Church is the modern day perversion of the church that was founded by the apostles after the church began in the book of Acts....

It has been true and it remains that the greatest enemies to true Christianity often began sitting in the pews of good churches...

And John is simply reminding his readers and us that false teachers, false Christians, antichrists are known by the fact that they leave the church...

Now, it needs to be said that this is not talking about someone who leaves the church and goes to another church..

OR someone who is shut in and can't make it to church for various physical reasons...

John is talking about people who come and enjoy fellowship with the church....

They take part in the activities of the church...

They sing in the choir...

They eat at the church get togethers...

They teach, they pray, they show concern for you...

But then, they always depart...

Not just your church, but any church anywhere in the world...

And often times, they leave to start their own church...

They will say things like, “traditional Christianity isn’t for me.”

Or “I just want to have an authentic church.”

But the point that John is making is this...

They leave...

And he adds in verse 19 that their leaving proves that they weren’t of us...

They weren’t saved.

They never were saved or they would have stayed.

That is a simple truth about the truly saved.

They may wander at times, but they don’t stay away long.

It is like the 5 year old boy who packed up his suitcase and told his mom he was running away..

He walked out the door and made 5 laps around the neighborhood, and a cop saw the suitcase and asked what was going on...

The little boy responded, “Well, I am running away,” and the cop said, “Where are you going? You walked around this same block 5 times.”

And the little boy replied, “Well, my mom want let me cross the street by myself.”

Look, truly saved people may walk out of the church, but God won't let them leave if they are His..

Antichrists, false teachers and false converts leave and cross the street and never come back because they never were in God's church...

And then John adds this in verse 20..

You, true church, know that this is true...

You know that false Christians leave.

You know that they weren't saved when they came or when they left...

You even know that true believers stay...

And why do true believers know that?

They have an anointing from the Holy One.

What is John talking about here?

What is this anointing?

It is simply the gift of the Holy Spirit who indwells believers at the moment of salvation.

He takes up residence at the direction of Christ to lead true believers to the truth..

Do you know why true believers don't depart the church?

Because the Holy Spirit keeps them there...

He leads them to stay in fellowship with the church...

Do you remember what Peter said to Jesus one day when a number of Jesus' followers had left Him and Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Do y'all want to leave me too?"

Peter said, "Where else would we go. Only you have the words of eternal life."

That is what the anointing of the Holy Spirit says to the believer every time he is tempted to walk away from the fellowship of the church...

"Only the church is the source of truth..."

Where else are you going to go?"

You have that anointed but a antichirst doesn't.

Therefore, he departs and he stays away.

The second characteristic of an antichrist or false teacher is this...

II. Antichrists Deny (22-25)

Let's look at verse 22...

22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the [g]Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. 24 As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 This is the promise which He Himself [h]made to us: eternal life.

It may go without saying but antichrists deny the humanity and deity of Jesus Christ...

Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses both say that Jesus is a god but not equal to God the Father...

And in doing so, they deny the truth about Jesus Christ...

Jesus is both fully God and fully man, and anyone who denies that or tinkers with that or doesn't affirm that is an antichrist...

This verse is would also apply to modern day Jews...

They claim a relationship with the God of the OT...

They try to follow the law and claim to please the God of the Bible, but what is their problem?

They deny Jesus as the Son of God.

And John is very clear here once again...

If you deny the Son, you deny the Father...

This is where we have to be careful in working with modern day Jews in the world...

IF you aren't a believer in Christ, the church needs to see you as an antichrist...

We can love you in order to share the gospel with you in hopes that you will repent of your view of Christ and come to faith in Him...

But we can't call you a brother in the Lord until you have the right view of Jesus Christ...

Look, I love the Jewish people but only to the point of them coming to faith in Christ...

In their current unbelief they are enemies of Christ because they deny that he was the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior of the world...

And until they get that right, they are antichrists that stand in opposition to God.

John then reminds his readers that they do not deny Christ...

Verse 24...

24 As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

John's readers had the right view of Christ..

They didn't deny his deity.

They affirmed it.

They believed that Jesus was fully God and fully man because they had been taught that by John and by others..

The word had come to them through the testimony of John and others..

And the key to seeing that they were true believers about Christ is that they had stayed in that truth..

The truth about Jesus had gripped them and held them, just like it holds us today..

We are gripped by the truth about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ..

It is the anchor of what we believe and who we are.

And where do we get that truth about Christ?

We get it through the word of God?

Be very careful of people who lead you away from the word of God in their teaching...

I am not saying there is not a place for teaching valuable things from other Christian books...

But the foundation of a pulpit or a Sunday school curriculum must be the word of God...

The truth of the word of God is what sets us free and keeps us free..

It has to be our rock and what we abide in each and every day...

To many men have been led astray by literature other than the word of God....

Mormons have the book of Mormon and a book called the Pearl of Great Price that lead them into error...

The Jehovah's Witnesses have their own Bible translation that breaks many rules of Bible translation.

The Catholics have thrown out the Bible in exchange for the words of a Pope...

And the Jews love the OT, but reject God's Word in the NT..

Long story short, you must stay in the Scriptures to get the truth and abide in the truth...

And then John adds this in verse 25...

25 This is the promise which He Himself [h]made to us: eternal life.

In other words, a right view of Jesus Christ leads to eternal life...

If you have the wrong view of Christ, you will get the wrong road in eternity..

I shudder in fear when I consider the false teachings, teachers and false religions of our day...

They promise eternal life to those who are in their churches, but they pave the way to hell with their teaching..

Any teacher who denies Jesus Christ is not offering eternal life to his listeners but eternal death in a lake of fire...

False teachers and antichrists depart from the church, they deny the truth about Christ...

And the final characteristic of them is this..

III. Antichrists Deceive (26-27)

Verse 26...

26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

A final characteristic of false teachers is obvious...

They live to deceive others...

Ever since the Garden of Eden, Satan has deceived, and those under his influence have sought to deceive as well..

This is true of every antichrist from the garden until today.

They aim at deception.

They seek to lead astray.

They walk people away from the truth.

Now, all those warnings being said...

John once again reassures true believers in verse 27...

27 As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for

anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, [i]f you abide in Him.

This verse has often been used by false teachers to lure people away from good churches...

John is not saying that the Christian doesn't need someone teaching them...

The Bible assigns roles for pastors and teachers and elders in the church...

John is even teaching believers through this letter...

Christians need to be taught.

Discipleship is a very important and overlooked part of spiritual growth.

And discipleship occurs in the context of new beliefs being taught by other Christians...

Teaching is not being downplayed here at all...

John is just simply reminding his readers to be wary of teachers who said that they were necessary for Christians to understand the Bible..

Let me be clear...

A person who possesses the Holy Spirit and a Bible has all they need to battle the enemy...

You don't need special knowledge from me that I gained in seminary...

You don't need a Sunday School teacher to understand God's Word...

Just like the anointing of the Holy Spirit keeps us near the church...

The anointing of the Spirit teaches us all we need to know to protect ourselves from the deception of false teachers..

Antichrists deceive, but the Holy Spirit protects us from their error and lies..

Conclusion

So, what is John going here in these verses?

First and foremost, he is giving his readers and a few characteristics of antichrists...

#1 - They depart...

Maybe to start their own church..

Maybe to enjoy their own sin...

Maybe in an effort to take others with them..

But they stay away, and by staying they show their true colors...

#2 - They deny.

Antichrists deny the basic truths about Jesus being God in the flesh...

They deny that He is one with the Father..

and #3 - They deceive.

Antichrists are experts at deception and lies...

But second, John is trying to reassure his readers that they are safe because the Holy Spirit resides in them...

He leads them to see the truth about antichrists who depart the church...

He leads them to hear the truth about antichrists who deny Christ...

And He leads to stay in the truth when antichrists try to decide them...

Now, how does this impact us tonight?

Let me give you a few thoughts....

#1 - Know that antichrists and false teachers are everywhere today.

And realize that they are not wearing horns and holding pitchforks..

Some are writing books, leading huge churches, and have lots of money...

They look the part, speak the part, and live the part out in public...

But they seek to deceive and lead astray those in the church..

#2 - The Holy Spirit and the Bible are your best weapons.

Now, here is where it gets tricky and you got to listen...

Your feelings may or may not reveal the intentions of an antichrist...

I hear people say, "Well, what he said just didn't sound right or I didn't feel right when I listened to him."

That could be an indication of nothing...

There are men who speak truth and give us bad vibes at times...

And there are smooth talkers who sound great, but are full of lies and deadly poison when they speak..

The Holy Spirit guides us to truth in the Word and not in our gut...

The Spirit works with Scripture to help us see the truth or lies when we listen and read others...

You cannot and should not only rely on your feelings when it comes to teachers in the church...

You have the Spirit but He will lead you to Scripture to affirm or deny teaching...

And if you aren't in the Scriptures, you are out of bullets for him to shoot...

#3 - Antichrists are not going away.

You need to teach your children and grandchildren biblical discernment....

You need to tell them that no every man who stands in a pulpit always speaks truth...

Eventually, the Antichrist will lead the whole world astray...

But the groundwork for that worldwide deception is being laid today in people who don't care for the truth or even know it...

A great deception is coming upon the whole world, and now is the time to know the Scriptures and depend on the Spirit...

Let us pray.