

1 John - Protecting our Fellowship Pt.2

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[0 : 00] Verses 18 to 27, which is on page 1226. 1226.

1 John chapter 2, and we're going to read verses 18 to 27. Okay, verse 18 of 1 John chapter 2. Dear children, this is the last hour. And as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many Antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

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 belong to us.

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie comes from the truth.

[1 : 33] Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the Antichrist. He denies the Father and the Son.

No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you.

If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us, even eternal life. I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray.

As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit, just as it is taught you, remain in him.

Well, we've been looking together on Sunday mornings at this short letter of 1 John, which is all about fellowship with God, that relationship that we can enjoy with him.

[2 : 56] We're going to pray first and ask God's help for us as we look at his word together. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for its truth. Thank you for its truth about the Lord Jesus. And we ask that you would also give to us your Holy Spirit, so that we may understand Holy Scripture.

that we would understand your word, what it has to say to us today, how it applies to our lives, and how we should respond as your people.

We ask that through this time together, we may know something more of the rich fellowship that we can have with God.

We ask for your help in Jesus' name. Amen. One of my bedtime stories when I was little was the Pied Piper of Hamelin.

[4 : 28] Do you remember it? I'm not quite sure why it was read to me, because it would cause any child to have nightmares. They didn't live happily ever after. I'll not spoil the whole story for you, but the end of it finishes with the Pied Piper playing a mesmerising tune that the children can't help but follow.

The parents try to stop them, but they're captivated by the music. And one by one, all the children follow the tune of the Pied Piper, never to be seen again.

Remember that we have been invited into fellowship with God. That's the big theme of 1 John. We get to share in the love the Father has for the Son, and the love the Son has for the Father.

And it's in this relationship where we find joy in all its fullness. But, we need to be so very careful to protect this fellowship.

Because, look at verse 26. Verse 26 from our reading. He says, You see, this comes with a serious warning.

[5 : 59] There are people, he says, who are close by, who are teaching things that sound wonderful. And if we are not careful, we will be captivated by their music, by their tune, and we'll be led away from our fellowship with God.

In fact, if we stop to listen to what they have to say, it's going to rob us of that deep, personal, relational joy that we have with the Father and with his Son.

So, we need to do everything possible to be able to protect our fellowship with God. Move on a few verses.

Chapter 3, verse 7. Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray.

So, how are we to protect ourselves so that we are not led astray? Well, we're going to look at four things this morning.

[7 : 08] The first two are quite quick. And then the other two, we look in a bit more detail. So, here's the first thing we need to look at. Know who they are. So, who is it that is going to lead us astray?

Well, go back to chapter 2, verse 18. The beginning of our text this morning. verse 18. Dear children, this is the last hour.

Now, the last hour is the Bible's way of describing that time before Jesus returns. Sometimes, it's referred in the New Testament as the last days.

It's simply a time frame to explain what will happen before Jesus comes again. So, what can we expect to happen during this time?

Well, let's read verse 18 again. He says, Dear children, this is the last hour. And as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many Antichrists have come.

[8 : 16] This is how we know it is the last hour. Now, I wonder what comes to your mind when you hear that word Antichrist. It all sounds very threatening and frightening, almost satanic.

And what could be quite worrying for us is we don't have to wait because, look again at verse 18, it says, Even now many Antichrists have come.

In other words, they are already here. Now, I don't want to cause us any nightmares, but we do need to take this seriously.

An Antichrist is simply someone who is in direct opposition to Jesus Christ. In fact, we're given a definition in verse 22.

Have a look at verse 22. Who is the liar? It is the man or the person who denies that Jesus is the Christ.

[9 : 24] Such a person is the Antichrist. So, they are not just people who don't believe in Jesus. They are people who actually go out of their way to persuade or teach others not to believe.

So, these Antichrists, or we might call them false teachers, are trying to deceive us and lead us astray from our fellowship with God.

And if we listen to them, they will rob us of the joy that we have with the Father and with the Son. So, that's the first thing.

Know who they are. Second thing, know where they come from. Where will we find these Antichrists, these false teachers?

Well, look at verse 19. They went out from us. Now, that's a scary thought, isn't it? They're actually among us.

[10 : 36] They are in the church. They don't come from the outside. They have come from the inside. And don't expect to try and identify them by the way they dress or the way they look.

They don't have two little horns protruding out of their head. They don't have a demon tattooed on their back. They look just like me. Ordinary people, just like you, who come on a Sunday or come on a Wednesday to home groups.

People who preach and teach, who teach in Sunday school, who teach on a Sunday morning. They might even be baptised. They may even be members of the church.

They give the impression that they too enjoy fellowship with God. but they are not true believers.

Look at verse 19 again. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. You see, they claimed to know Christ.

[11 : 48] They said that they followed Jesus, but in reality their claim was false. Let's read the rest of verse 19. for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us, but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

Those who are true believers, or sorry, those who are not true believers, will walk away from the truth.

It's not that they've somehow become unbelievers, that they were believers and now they've become unbelievers, the point is they never believed in the first place. They never did genuinely follow the Lord Jesus, because true believers will always hold to the truth.

So he's giving a very serious warning to the church, to people like you and me, we must be very careful of those who will try and lead us astray, and rob us of the joy and the fellowship that we can have with God.

And they come from inside the church. For now that we're all very paranoid and we're sitting uncomfortably in our seats thinking, hmm, is the person next to me one of these people?

[13:16] Or how about me? How do you know I'm not a false teacher? How do you know I'm not trying to lead you astray each Sunday morning?

How are you going to tell? Which brings us to the third aspect. We must know what they teach. Have a look at verse 22. Here's how you will identify those who are trying to lead us astray. verse 22. Who is the liar?

Well, it's the person who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the Antichrist. He denies the Father and the Son.

You see, we can tell who these people are by listening to what they teach. And in particular, what they teach about the Lord Jesus.

[14:20] You see, at the heart of this distorted teaching is this denial. We read it there in verse 22. They deny that Jesus is the Christ.

Oh, they'll claim all kinds of things. They'll say, Jesus was a good teacher. And maybe you've met people like that. They're quite happy to accept that Jesus is a kind person.

He's a compassionate person. Sure, didn't he help people and make people better and feed people? And they will admit that he was a historical figure.

Yes, Jesus existed. He walked on earth. But they deny that Jesus is the Christ. In other words, they deny that Jesus is both God and man.

man. Now, that is a false or a distorted doctrine. And it's very damaging.

[15:22] Let's for a minute assume, okay, I want us to follow this line of thinking. Let's assume that Jesus is not God and man.

What difference would it make? Does it really matter who Jesus is or what we think of Jesus? Well, first, if Jesus is not fully man, then that means Jesus could never be our substitute on the cross.

Think about it. Jesus came as a man, as a human being, somebody just like you and me. And he came as a person to take the place of people, to suffer the punishment that you and I deserve.

He had to be human so that he could serve as a substitute for human beings. That's why he came as a man and walked this earth.

He ate and drank just like one of us. He came to take my place and your place. He stood in as our representative to take our sin on himself as a man to die the punishment that we deserve.

[16:40] He had to be man. But secondly, let's think about what would it be if Jesus was not fully God. Well, if Jesus was not fully God, then there would be no salvation for people like us.

Because as Jesus came as God, he came to pay for not just my sin and your sin, but he came to pay for all the sins of the whole world.

Now, who could do that? I can't stand in and pay for the sin of everybody. I can't even pay for the sin of myself. Jesus had to be God so that he could perfectly represent all people.

No human being could do that. So, you see, if Jesus is not the Christ, if Jesus is not both God and man, then everything falls apart.

That means we have no forgiveness, we have no acceptance, we have no welcome before God, that means we have no way of enjoying fellowship with God.

[17:58] Look at verse 23. No one who denies the Son has the Father. So, if we cannot accept the true identity of Jesus, then we can't enjoy fellowship with God.

But, whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. They are invited and they share in this deep fellowship with God.

You see, what we believe really matters. And distorted doctrine or wrong belief will lead us astray from God.

It robs us of that deep, intimate, relational joy that we have with the Father and with the Son. So, it's important to pay attention to what we believe.

Now, some of you will be thinking, aren't you taking this a little bit too serious? Surely, it really doesn't matter what you believe.

[19:04] You're into your doctrine, that's good for you. What counts is not what you believe, but how you behave. That's really what matters.

You believe that Jesus is the God man, well, that's a good enough belief for you. But, you know what, the way I think of it is, I'm just here to help people and love people.

It doesn't really matter what you believe. Maybe people have said that to you before. Well, as much as we might try, we can't separate belief and behaviour.

In fact, wrong belief will always lead to wrong behaviour. Wrong belief will always lead to wrong behaviour. Again, follow with me this line of thinking.

If you don't believe that Jesus is God and man, then what would it lead to? If you don't believe in that, what would it lead to? Well, first, it means we will never, ever take sin seriously.

[20 : 14] It means we will live as we want and do as we please. What does it matter if I cheat on my wife? What does it matter if I steal from my employer?

If sin's not an issue, well, I can do what I like. It doesn't matter if I tell lies to people. It doesn't matter if I gossip about my friend. So, you see, rather than love others and put others first, it actually causes us to love self more than everybody else.

If I don't believe that Jesus is the God-man, then I'll live however I want to live, and I'll be the most important person on the planet. So, belief affects how we behave.

But it also follows this way as well, that if I don't believe Jesus is God and man, that means I will never know true joy. Instead, it means my life will be shaped by guilt and fear, because we'll carry with us all the pains and the hurts of the past.

We will live looking backwards, thinking of all the things I've done, living in regret, living in shame because of past action, and there's never any way of undoing it, and we will never know true joy because we can never escape our guilt.

[21 : 47] You see, what we believe has a direct effect on how we behave, and how that forms my relationship with God.

So you see, if we get led astray on who Jesus is, then we will get led astray in our fellowship with God. We will not enjoy that relationship with him because we are not living the way that we should do.

So never discount doctrine, never discount what we believe. It's vital that we understand what we believe. So that's the third aspect.

Know what they teach, and then finally, how we protect. Because we want to protect ourselves from being led astray. We want to make sure that we don't get sucked in and get dragged away like those with the Pied Piper.

So two ways we need to keep protected. Two things we desperately need or we'll lose that joy in our fellowship with God. So here's the two things that we need to apply to our lives.

[23 : 02] The first thing we need to protect ourselves is the scriptures. Look at verse 24. He says, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you.

What you heard from the beginning remains in you. Well, what was it? What did they hear in the beginning? Well, have a look back at chapter 1 verse 1.

This is how the letter first starts. So here's John writing and he's writing on behalf of the other apostles and this is what he says.

Verse 1, that which was from the beginning, so he's talking about Jesus, that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, so we heard Jesus, which we have seen with our eyes, they're saying we saw Jesus ourselves, which we have looked at, we saw him doing all those miracles and all those wonderful things, and our hands have touched.

This we proclaim concerning the word of life, the life appeared, we have seen it and testified to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

[24 : 29] So John and his fellow apostles, he's saying we were the first eyewitnesses of the person of Jesus. We saw him.

So Jesus is not made up. This is all true. It's not legend or lies. We heard him, we saw him, we touched him, we looked at him, and all of those things we saw and we heard, we have written down so that you can read the testimony for yourself.

And that testimony that they have written down is recorded for us in scripture, the Bible. That's what the gospels are, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, they're testimonies, they're accounts about the person of Jesus.

So go back to chapter 2 verse 24. He says, see what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. Keep reading, keep learning the truth about Jesus that we have passed on to you and that we

have told about you.

And look what happens if we keep to the truth, if we keep to what we've heard from the beginning. Look at verse 24 again. See what you have heard from the beginning remains in you.

[25 : 50] If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us, even eternal life.

You see this is God's means of keeping us in fellowship with the Father and with his Son. As we read the Bible, as we go back to the truth, as we go back to the very foundation of what we believe, it is there that we meet God, that we know him and enjoy him.

It's in the word, it's in the scriptures, that we encounter and experience the true and living God. If you want to know more about Jesus, then we go back to the beginning, we read what we know is true.

And if we immerse ourselves in scripture, we protect ourselves from being led astray. So that's the first thing we need to be people of.

We need to be people who are reading the Bible on our own, together with others. And that will make sure we protect our fellowship with God.

[27 : 03] The second thing that's going to protect us is the Holy Spirit. Look at verse 27. He says, as for you, the anointing you received.

Now the anointing, whenever we read of that word through the New Testament, it refers to the pouring out or the giving of the Holy Spirit upon God's people.

So he says, as for you, the anointing or the Holy Spirit that you received from him remains in you and you do not need anyone to teach you.

So he's saying you have the Holy Spirit in your life, so you do not need anyone to teach you. Now that's caused a lot of confusion for a lot of people.

I remember telling another Christian that I was going to Bible college to help me to be a better teacher of the Bible.

[28 : 08] I wanted to learn more about the Bible so that I could help other people understand the Bible. And this was his response and I remember it so clearly and he quoted 1 John chapter 2 verse 27.

He says, what do you want to go to college for? You don't need anybody to teach you because we have the Holy Spirit. So does that mean we just do away with the Bible?

We don't need anybody to teach us? I mean, what are we all doing here this morning? Are we all wasting our time? We don't need any teachers. We've got the Holy Spirit. I might as well stay at home and let him teach me.

What do you think? Well, John has written a letter, hasn't he? And he obviously thinks that teaching is important otherwise he wouldn't have written a letter.

So John is teaching them as he writes. So he can't mean you don't need any more teachers. So what does he mean? Well he means we don't need to be taught anything new about Jesus.

[29 : 18] We don't need to be taught anything new that's outside of God's word. There's no new revelation about Jesus to be found.

Everything that we need to know about Jesus and God is contained in scripture. You see I get very, very worried when people talk to me or tell me or they go on television and listen to certain things and they say I heard this person speaking and they said they got a message from God or they heard something from God to tell them something and I just get very worried about that.

Why? Because everything that we have is in scripture. If somebody says I'm going to tell you something new about God, I get concerned.

You see the Holy Spirit, let's read verse 27 again. As for you the Holy Spirit you received from him remains in you and you do not need anyone to teach you.

That's teach you anything new. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit, just as it is taught you, remain in him.

[30 : 35] You see the work of the Holy Spirit is to remind us and to confirm in us what we have already been taught about Jesus. Go back to verse 21.

He says I do not write to you because you do not know the truth but because you do know it. You've already received it, you know what the truth is. And so the Holy Spirit is there to remind you of the truth you already know.

And let's be clear about this, it isn't a case of well you've got to choose between the Bible and the Spirit. You choose this church is into the Scriptures but this church over here is into the Spirit and you've got to choose which one you like.

No, we desperately need more of both. We need to pray for more of God's Holy Spirit so that we can understand more of God's Holy Scripture.

So the Spirit is God's gift to us to protect us from being led astray. He reminds us of the truth about Jesus so that we can quickly turn back to what is right and good.

[31 : 48] So God has given to us the gift of the Scriptures and the gift of his Spirit. Why? Because we've got antichrists, false teachers who are out to lead us astray and if we listen to them they will ruin our fellowship with God.

and they will rob you of your joy. One commentator and I'm going to finish with this. As he was commenting about these false teachers he said, they can knock you or sorry they can't knock you off the ship if God has truly put you on it.

In other words, don't be worried about losing your salvation or being led away from God. but these teachers, they can break your arms and legs and leave you in the infirmary the whole time so that you don't enjoy the cruise as it was meant to be enjoyed.

we've been invited into fellowship and to know and enjoy that fellowship keep with the truth.

Immerse yourself in scripture. Saturate yourself by praying for more of the Holy Spirit and if we do that, we will not go astray.

[33 : 11] Instead, we will enjoy a rich fellowship with God. Let's pray together. Amen. Our Father God, it's our desire that we would know and experience a rich deep fellowship with God.

We long to know you more, to know more of the Father and more of the Son. We long to experience you in our life. So please help us that we may keep to the truth, to learn from your word and may your Holy Spirit drive that truth deep into our lives, to change us and transform us so that we know you as we should.

Keep us from going astray. For those that we know who have gone astray, we pray that you would lead them back, that they may walk in your truth and follow you.

we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing together.