1 John Ch2v18-27

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Preacher: Conor O'Neil

[0:00] work backwards and you'll come to 1 John. So over the summer months we have different speakers, some from within the church here.

Connor is going to be speaking this morning. And this passage from 1 John, over the last couple of years when Connor has been preaching, he's been taking us through 1 John.
So if you want to know what he said before, you can look up on the church website and you can listen back to some earlier talks on 1 John. Today we're going to read from chapter 2, verse 18 to 27.
So let's read and hear God's word. 1 John, chapter 2, starting at verse 18.
Dear children, this is the last hour. And as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many Antichrists have come.
[1:17] 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 belonged 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.
Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the Antichrist, denying the Father and the Son.
No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.
As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you.
[2:31] If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us. 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.
Connor, you want to come up and I'll pray for you? Let me pray for Connor and for ourselves.
Father, thank you for Connor. Thank you for his love for you. Thank you for saving him. Thank you for his gifts. And we pray now that he would be a conduit of your grace to us today.
[3:50] That you would aid him and help him by your Spirit. And that we, in turn, would listen to the truth and remain in the truth and not walk away from it.

Help us then, we pray. Amen. Thank you, Connor. Thank you, Connor. Thank you. Thanks, Johnny. Well, not that your prayer wasn't excellent, Johnny, but I'm going to pray again, if that's all right, just as we start. I was at a meeting, actually, with Johnny recently, and I think he said something along the lines of, if a Christian asks to pray, you're not allowed to say no.
So I am going to pray, if that's all right. Father God, I thank you that you are here with us. We ask for your help to listen, to pay attention, and to try and get what you were trying to say to us.
Help us to see the majesty and how important it is to be listening to your word. In Jesus' name, amen. It was a good reminder to put my phone on silent.
[5:14] Bear Grylls. I recently finished his autobiography. I don't have one for everyone in the audience. I'm not even sure I would recommend it.

I enjoyed it, but... Bear Grylls is a former SAS agent, professional adventurer, and a TV star. It took him two attempts to successfully pass the gruelling SAS selection tests.

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He had always enjoyed mountaineering and climbing, but he attempted the SAS selection based solely off this enjoyment and his own grit and determination. Throughout the weeks ahead, the instructors were constantly trying to lead him away from his goal.
After an eight-hour hike, when he was beaten down with everything, they'd say something comforting like, all you have to do is ring this bell. You can go home for a hot meal and shower.
Well, he very nearly made it to the end, but unfortunately fell at one of the final hurdles.
Himself and his friend, who also got called around the same time, then began training properly.
They now knew what was needed. They were forewarned. And they started training and preparing to take the selection test again.
[6:32] The next time the opportunity came around, it was during the winter months, and so it was even tougher conditions and harder to pass the tests. But because of the training and the preparation they put in, and despite the instruction, or the instructors trying to lead them in the wrong direction, both friends passed the tests and went on to reach their goal of becoming SAS agents.

The passage that we're looking at today is a letter written by the Apostle John to churches that are experiencing false teaching. These false teaching are trying to lead people away from the eternal life found only in Jesus.
And as we go through our passage, we'll see that John is saying, if the churches train, if they abide in the truth of the gospel, then they'll be assured of reaching their goal of eternal life.
So I've just told you that John is writing this letter to assure Christians of their salvation, to assure them that what they know as the truth is the truth.
But this passage begins with talking about not only an antichrist, but many antichrists. What a way to assure people that they're safe and secure.
[7:52] Oh, you're having doubts? Well, listen, there's loads of people trying to deceive you.
There's loads of people that are going to tell you different things than that which you've heard.

Also, don't worry, they look like they're one of us, so it's going to be tough to determine whether what they say is truth or lies. Maybe John should have a quick chat with Barnabas, the son of encouragement, because John really doesn't seem to understand what he's supposed to be doing here.
But John knows that being forewarned is being forearmed. He's not trying to tear people down. He's not trying to discourage them into thinking standing strong in the faith is a mammoth task.
He's simply telling the believers that this is the reality. These antichrists will come and they will try and mislead you. And it's the same for the church today.
It's the same for us today. There are people all around us. There are antichrists all around trying to say that Jesus is not the Christ.
[8:57] They claim Jesus is not the God-man that lived a perfect life for us, the perfect life we couldn't. They claim that his death on the cross was not enough for us to experience eternal life.

John is forewarning the church that it will be attacked from all sides. Well, before we go any further, I think it would be helpful to define what antichrist means.
It's a buzzword nowadays, but also back in early church times. We all might have our own ideas of what it is. But like many of us, they would have heard of the antichrist to come at the end of the age, the one who will gain power and persecute the people of God, but who God will eventually judge and whose dominion will eventually be stripped from him.
However, we see in this passage that many antichrists, plural, are already in the world. We're told exactly what to look for in verse 22.
Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist, denying the Father and the Son.
[10:11] So anyone that denies that Jesus is fully God is an antichrist that's trying to deceive.
These false teachers that we've read about were denying the incarnation.

They were denying the divinity of Jesus. And John is putting a stop to this strongly. This is not acceptable. Verse 23.
No one who denies the Son has the Father. Any of these teachers that deny that Jesus is fully God as well as fully man does not have the Father and will not experience eternal life.
If we follow this thinking to its logical conclusion, if you deny the divinity of Jesus, then God has not sufficiently taken care of sin.

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Only God can deal with sin. Jesus, being only human, simply does not cut it. And then no one can experience forgiveness. John is making crystal clear to the church that these people do not belong to us.
[11:19] verse 19. 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. These people who are teaching things contrary to Jesus being the Son of God, God incarnate, who came and died in our place, these people are not brothers in the faith.
Those who deny that Jesus is the only Savior, the only way to eternal life, are liars and do not belong to the church of God.
Now this is not just a message for first century Christians. There are many that deny that Jesus is the God-man that came down from heaven to save the world.
There are many that deny that Jesus and only Jesus can make a way for us to reach the goal of eternal life. Jesus was not just a man like Jehovah's Witnesses claim.
[12:21] Jesus was not just one of many prophets like Islam claims. We cannot work our way to heaven by being good like Catholic doctrine claims. It's not a mystery how to gain eternal life like agnosticism claims.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through him. No one who denies the Son has the Father.
Do not be deceived. So John is told us that we're being attacked from outside the church, from the Antichrist that are denying that Jesus is the Christ.
But John is also told us that we're being attacked from inside the church as many of these Antichrists went out from the church. Even though they did not ever truly belong to the church, they were still in the church initially.
And so it feels like we're being attacked from inside the church as well. Well, believe it or not, there are even more warnings. Just in case I lose anyone, I feel I should give a bit of a spoiler.
[13:29] There will be good news. Just hang in there with me, okay? We're being attacked with doubt and lies from outside the church, we're being attacked from inside the church, and we're being attacked from inside ourselves.

We're being attacked by our own minds and doubts. Listen to all the times that John has to remind us that what we have heard is the truth and that we already know the truth.
Verse 18, as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many Antichrists have come.
Verse 20, all of you know the truth.
Verse 21, I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it.
Verse 24, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you.
Verse 25, this is what he promised us, eternal life, reminding us of the basics of the Christian faith.
Verse 27, you do not need anyone to teach you.
[14:36] Talking about these false teachers. And verse 27, again, that anointing is real, not counterfeit, just as it has taught you, remain in him. Seven, that's a lot of reminders in a few short verses.

John knows that the human condition is to doubt. John knows that when met with trials, we start doubting even that which we know to be true. No one is exempt from these doubts.
It's part of living in a fallen world as a weak human. Well, I remember when I was 10 or 11, I got kicked out of a summer camp. My mum, disgusted and embarrassed no doubt, took me home and explained my punishments, one of them being I had to go to bed early for a week.
My aunt and uncle were over visiting from England at the time, and I had to go to bed while it was still bright outside. I looked longingly out of my window at my siblings, playing with my aunt and uncle and eating ice creams while I was stuck in my room, alone, with no ice cream.
I knew my parents loved me, but there were serious doubts during those days. Knowing me back then, I probably told mum a couple of times I was a lovely child to have to deal with.
[15:59] An even better teenager, actually. How could they do this to me? Why was all this unjust suffering happening to me? They must not love me.

Looking back now as an adult, of course, it's such a small, ridiculous thing to have set me off. My parents' years of love and care for me almost flew out the window instantly because of one simple circumstance.

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I'm convinced that that's what's going to happen to us in eternity. we're going to look back on circumstances in this life that are extremely serious.
We're going to look back on circumstances that may cause extreme hardship and suffering and we're going to realize that they were ridiculous things to ever make us doubt the love of our Father in Heaven that He has spent millennia proving to us.
But this human condition of doubt is ingrained in us from an extremely young age and this particular doubt that I had had absolutely nothing to do with my parents who were fantastic.
[17:10] But one small thing happened and all of a sudden the doubt crept in. Going back to our passage, if we're talking specifically about doubts who Jesus is, His love for us and what He's done for us, experiencing these doubts does not make you less of a Christian.

experiencing these doubts does not mean that you're not saved and does not mean that you're denying Christ. Just like my doubt didn't mean that my parents loved me less or I wasn't really a member of the family.
John is assuring all of us that these doubts are normal. These doubts are prevalent, yes, but they're not taking God by surprise. God does not look down on you when you experience these doubts.
But the fact remains that we're being attacked with lies from all sides, even our own minds. So what hope is there for us?
What hope is there that we'll finish strong and that we'll have the eternal life that we were promised and that we believed in all those years ago when it felt so real to us, when there were no doubts present?
[18:21] Well, the first and most important hope we have is the Holy Spirit. Verse 27.

The anointing you receive from him remains in you. It's the Holy Spirit living in us that enables us to remember the truth we know.
Like we've said already, we doubt all the time, but the Holy Spirit living in us never doubts. We doubt all the time, the Holy Spirit knows the truth all the time.
If we're Christians, we have the power of God, the Holy Spirit inside us to remind us of the truth that we know deep down. Verse 20.
But you have an anointing from the Holy One and all of you know the truth. This isn't speaking of some special anointing that's given to a select few.
[19:24] No, if you have accepted the forgiveness that Jesus offers, then you are anointed with the Holy Spirit. And one of the Holy Spirit's primary purposes is reassuring us when we doubt.

He brings to mind the glorious truth of God's grace through his son Jesus. He reminds us of all the miracles that Jesus did when he was on this earth to prove his deity and his identity so that those doubts can fly from our minds.
Yes, Jesus is God. Yes, he died the punishment that I deserve. Yes, I am forgiven. And yes, I will experience eternal life.
God, through the Holy Spirit, will never let us go. He'll never let us forget the wonderful truths that attracted us to the Christian faith in the first place. No matter what's going on around us or what other people are trying to tell us, no matter what even our own minds are doubting, the Holy Spirit is ever present within us to quash those doubts and quash those false teachers trying to lead us astray.
We have nothing to fear from them. Now, it may seem from all we've said that we're sorted. We're off the hook. Whenever people come to lead us astray, bam, the Holy Spirit steps in, leads us in the right direction.
[20:51] Whenever our own minds are trying to deceive us, bam, the Holy Spirit is all over it to put our minds back in its place. Unfortunately, this is not quite the case.

How can the Holy Spirit bring something back to our minds if it was never there in the first place?
How can the Holy Spirit remind us of the truth if we never truly knew the truth?
It's our job to be studying the truth so that when the time comes that we're met with false teachers or doubts, we'll have the resources for the Holy Spirit to pull upon to lead us in the right direction.
Verse 24, as for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. remains in us.
We have to be in the word of God regularly so we can dispute the false teachers. We have to be praying daily to remain close to God. We have to go to church and listen to sermons being preached to either remind us of the truths we know or help us better understand the truths we've

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heard.
[22:07] As for you, 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.

Ensuring that the truth of God's word remains in us ensures that we remain secure in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father sent the Son to suffer the punishment that sin deserves so we don't have to.
And the Spirit then ensures that we never forget this simple truth that we can experience eternal life. We see all three members of the Trinity at work in this passage, and they all have their roles to play to make sure we make it to eternity.
What power we have in our corner, rooting for us, helping us, as we train towards our goal, as we make the effort on our part to reach our destination.
verse 27 says, As for you, the anointing you receive from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you.
[23:20] But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit, just as it has taught you, remain in him. As his anointing teaches you about all things.

In order for the Holy Spirit to teach us, we need to listen and pay attention. I'm a teacher. I once gave a test to one of my maths classes, and upon receiving her results, one student pipes up, Sir, we never did any questions in class, like question three.
How were we expected to answer that if you never taught us? That's so unfair. Well, it may shock you to learn that I do make the odd mistake, so I turned to question three, trembling in fear.
I was on the verge of tears, thinking what a horrible person I am. How could I do this to these poor girls, as if they don't have enough to worry about, and here I am, throwing questions into tests that we haven't even covered.
Well, upon reading question three, I stared at the SWAT in the front row, and was delighted to see that she wore the same look of confusion on her face, as she too had read question three.
[24:38] She knew what I knew in that moment. I had not done a question like question three in class. I had actually done question three in class a few days previous.

That exact question I went through as a revision question. I made sure the other student was adequately embarrassed before I moved on. I explained again about the importance of paying attention in class.
I cannot teach my students if they simply don't listen or pay attention. Well, in the same way, the Holy Spirit cannot carry out his task of teaching us about all things if we don't listen or pay attention.
God has spoken and is speaking to us through his word, the Bible. If we're not reading, studying, meditating, listening to the words in the Bible, then the Holy Spirit, the best teacher in the world, cannot teach us.
If we're not growing in knowledge and hence growing in love of God, we can all too easily be led astray by false teachers or even by our own doubts that crop into our minds.
[25:54] false teachers. Maybe you're thinking, I don't have to deal with false teachers, like Jehovah's Witnesses don't come to my door, or maybe you're not surrounded by Muslims on a daily basis, but there is false teaching going on everywhere in this world.

There's false teaching going on in the lunchroom and work. There's false teaching going on on social media. There's false teaching on our TV screens. There's false teaching in our sports clubs.
It may not specifically be denying that Jesus is the Christ, but it is denying the truth of scripture. No matter what false teaching we're met with, the truth of God's word is the answer.
If we put the time and effort into reading our Bible and listening to what God has to say, then we're guaranteed that the Holy Spirit will protect us from the Antichrists all around.
verse 27 again. As for you, the anointing you receive from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you.
[27:03] This is not saying, by the way, that we can do it on our own, far from it. We're made to be in community with other believers like we are now. It's saying that we will not fall for the lies in the world around us.

These Antichrists, whether from outside or inside the church or even inside our own minds, they won't be able to teach us. They will not get through to us if we're filling our hearts, minds, and souls with the words that God wants us to hear.

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We will stand strong till the very end, and we will meet our Lord and Savior Jesus. We will get a chance to thank him to his face for all he has done, and we will experience eternal life with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
We're being attacked from all sides, yes, but unfortunately for the attackers, it's not a fair fight at all. The Lord God, creator and sustainer of the whole universe, is in our corner, is even living in us to ensure we overcome, just like the Irish overcame the world championship, the world champions yesterday, we can overcome as well.
All we need to do is make certain that the Holy Spirit has the resources needed for the fight. We have to make sure we're training hard to reach our end goal.
[28:33] We have to fill our hearts, minds, and souls with the truth of God's word, and rely on God to do the real hard work. Let's pray. Amen. Father God, we recognize that we are weak.

We recognize that we can easily be led astray by false teaching or even by doubts in our own minds. But Lord, in the week ahead, help us to rely on the power of your Holy Spirit living within us to remind us of the truth that we know.
Help us to be in your word on a daily basis, to never take it for granted that the Holy Spirit, the greatest teacher in the world, can speak to us any time that we want.
All we need to do is pick up the Bible and talk to you. Help us in the week ahead to do just that and to never have those doubts or never to allow those doubts to take over.
you have saved us. All we need to do is accept the forgiveness that Jesus offers on the cross and we can be assured of gaining eternal life.
[29:56] In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Thank you, Connor.

In response, we're going to sing together, what gift of grace is Jesus, my Redeemer. Let's stand together as we sing. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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