

AM 1 John 2:18-27 Spirit of Truth Dwelling in us

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Preacher: Rev Robert Dale

[0 : 00] Thank you. There are just a few notices to announce.

This evening's service is at six o'clock. I shall again be leading the services. I shouldn't, of course, be leading the services today at all.

And it was announced last week that Thompson McKenzie would be with us. But he unfortunately isn't well with a throat problem. And I've been asked to step in.

Wednesday night, our Bible study and prayer meeting at seven o'clock will be led by Norman. And then next Lord's Day is the Reverend Douglas Cranston.

And our understanding is that it is permissible for him to travel down, even though he's coming from a level three area, because he is, as the preacher, coming for work.

[1 : 11] I'm sure you'll all want to know news of Jack. Jack is still in hospital, of course, after his heart attack. He is doing well.

And he hopes to come home, he thinks, on Tuesday. That may be ambitious, but we're hopeful that he might be home later this week.

He thanks everyone for their prayers, and he asks to be remembered to you all. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Reminder that there are the Christian Institute Autumn Online Lectures, which continue tomorrow, 7.30pm.

Christian Leadership in Times of Crisis. I imagine you can find that through Google, and find out how to join in with that if you wish.

I'm sure it will be excellent. Minutes of the annual congregational meeting held in August are available. I think they're on the table just behind Jane. And then the last thing to mention, the work on the dry rot, unfortunately, has had to be delayed because of difficulty in finding a roofer who's available.

[2 : 26] We will be meeting here, downstairs, for much longer than we had anticipated. Total cost of the work is now estimated at about £21,000.

And you may be interested to know that grant applications have been made to a couple of small trusts to try to help with that. Now let's worship God by hearing the hymn, which is frequently sung on Remembrance Sunday, based on Psalm 90.

Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

Under the shadow of our throne, the saints at well secure, salvation is thy arm aboard, and our darkened light, our world unified.

[4 : 17] And our defense is joy. It's beyond the mountains of the sea, and our hearts Singing over the sea, beyond the sea.

Our hope in ages past, when we see all of our mysteries enough mae foi The sea's west, the sea's west, the sea's west, the sea.

A thousand angels in thy sight, all I can hear thee call.

Short as the watch that ends the night before the cross is gone.

O God, I help you, the cross that's in the cross is gone.

[5 : 30] O God, I help you, the cross that's in the cross is gone.

O God, I help you, the cross is gone. O God, I help you, the cross is gone.

Now children, it's rather a solemn children's talk today I'm afraid. Because today is Remembrance Sunday.

You may have noticed that I'm wearing a poppy and quite a few other people are wearing poppies as well. In fact I think Samuel's got his own poppy. Yes, got your own poppy?

Yes. Good. You may have noticed quite a few people wearing poppies around the streets about this time of year.

[6 : 35] I wonder if you know why. Why a poppy? Good. Oh, you've got yours there. Good. Well, a poppy is a sign of remembrance.

I wonder if you remember two weeks ago the preacher talked to you about signs. Well, this sign reminds us of the people who died during two world wars.

Now as I was thinking about this I thought, well, I wonder if these little children will understand what I mean when I talk about two world wars.

Because you're so young that you've never actually known war at all. And I hope you never will. War is when two or more nations fight against each other.

And it can be a very horrible thing. You know that even if two children start fighting with each other, that can be nasty, can't it?

[7 : 49] And you can get hurt. Which is why my mother and daddy always stop you if ever you are starting to fight. Well, imagine whole nations fighting each other.

Thousands, maybe millions of people fighting each other. People get more than hurt. People get killed. Lots of people get killed.

There have been two world wars where most of the countries in the world have been fighting. And I think the number of people killed adds up to something like 50 or 60 million people over the course of those two wars.

First world war was over 100 years ago. Long, long time. The second one was about 75 years ago. And there are even people here today who might just about be able to remember it in childhood.

I can't, but my father used to talk to me about it quite a lot. But why a poppy?

[9 : 03] Well, it's said to go back to a poem that was written in 1915 by a Canadian poet called John McRae. He fought in the First World War.

And he had the horrible task of burying people who died. But he noticed they put the crosses in the ground where people had died. And very quickly, poppies grew up between the graves.

And he wrote a poem that began, In Flanders fields, which is where the war was being fought, The poppies blow between the crosses row on row.

And that's why they used the poppy as a way of reminding people. Most people wear their poppy on their jacket, Or they hold it up in the air like Thomas there.

Sometimes you see them on posters. You can see them in other places as well. Maybe, I think Thomas noticed as I came in, I was wearing a face mask with a poppy, or lots of poppies.

- [10 : 15] A friend down in Lincoln very kindly sent me this as a gift. Looking in one of my cupboards, I found a poppy in another place.
- I don't know if you can see this. I can't remember who gave me this, But you can all see, I'm sure, what it is. It's another poppy. But this one is on a little wooden cross.
- And it just has words underneath it. You can't read it from there, but it says, In Remembrance. And this is a reminder, isn't it?
- Of someone else who died. Millions of people died during the wars, But one person, More important than anyone else, Died.
- Not in the war, But on a cross. And you know who that was, don't you? You know who that was who died on the cross?
- [11 : 18] Jesus, the Son of God. Yes. You know why he died? He died not just because people killed him, But he died deliberately as a sacrifice.
- He said, Greater love has no one than this, Than that a man lay down his life for his friend. And he was laying down his life for us, Dying for our sins, That we might live forever.
- And that really is worth remembering. Let's come before our God now in prayer. Heavenly Father, Heavenly Father, We do remember before you, That most memorable of deaths, The death of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- We thank you that that death was not the end, That he rose again from the dead, And ascended to heaven, That he is our everlasting Lord.
- Heavenly Father, These millions who died during the two world wars, And in many wars since then, We lament their death, But we shall not see them again, Until either we shall be with them, If they themselves are in heaven, Or until the great day of the resurrection.
- [13 : 00] But the Lord Jesus Christ did not remain in the grave, And we give thanks for that. We thank you that he rose, And that his disciples saw him, Risen from the dead, On the third day, Just as he said.
- Thank you that he is alive forevermore, King of kings, And the Prince of peace. We pray on this Remembrance Sunday, Particularly for peace.
- We know that there are parts of the world, Where still to this day, There is conflict. We think of the war going on, Between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- We think of the violence going on, In Afghanistan. Lord, We think of terrorism going on, In many parts of the world.
- Lord, You alone are able to calm, These dreadful wars. And yet, Lord, We know that your word has told us, There will be wars, And rumours of wars.
- [14 : 07] We thank you, That the day will come, When Christ shall return, And at last, Then there shall be peace. We pray for the governments, Of this world.
- Lord, We pray that you will not only, Keep them from conflict, But also, That you will guide them, And give them wisdom, In all matters. We think especially, Of the, Present crisis of coronavirus, But also of all the other, Economic and political matters, That concern them.
- We pray for our own government, Both in Westminster, And in Holyrood. We pray, Lord, For the President-elect, Joe Biden, In America.
- We ask you, Lord, For all these, And for other world rulers, That you would protect them, And guide them, And remind them always, That there is one, To whom they must answer.
- We pray for your churches, Worldwide. Lord, We ask you to continue, To grant that the gospel, Of Jesus Christ, Of Christ, Who died and rose again, May continue to spread, Through the earth.

[15 : 19] Grant, Lord, That in the great, Spiritual warfare, The victory of Christ, May be more, And more evident. That many more, May be taken as, Willing captives, Brought into the kingdom of God.

Lord God, Help us in our own, More private, Spiritual warfare, As we battle against, Temptation and sin. And protect us, Lord, In that warfare, That we experience, In this world, When the people of this world, Oppose us.

Remember before you, Our brethren, In various parts of the earth, Where there is persecution, Lord, Surround them with your love, We pray, And grant them courage, To stand firm for you.

Lord, We bring our prayers, Closer home, And we pray, For this church, That you would guide us, Guide the offices, Of this church. Grant, Lord, That we might see, Spiritual, And numerical growth, That we may, Be light and salt, In the, Town in which, You have set us, To proclaim the gospel, To the people, Of Dumfries.

And we pray, For ourselves individually, In all, Of our present needs. We thank you, That Jack has come through, This time, Of serious illness, Lord, A heart attack, Is no small thing.

[16 : 52] But we thank you, That he appears, To be recovering. And Lord, We would, Long that he might, Be able to return home, Even on Tuesday, If it were possible. But whenever it is, Is appropriate, Lord, You are in control, Of that whole situation.

Do continue, To uphold Averill, In what must be, A stressful time, For her. We pray, For any others, In our congregation, Who are, Going through times, Of trial, And for members, And for members, Of our families, Likewise.

Remember before you, Those who are expecting babies, And we rejoice in that. And we pray, That you will continue, To keep them, In safety, And in good health.

We pray, That you will draw near, To us now, As we come, To consider your word. Speak to us, Through the holy scriptures, By the power, Of your spirit, And grant that we may be, Built up, In our most holy faith, For we ask, In Jesus name, Amen.

Amen. Two readings, This morning, Both from the writings, Of John.

[18 : 10] We're going to be, Continuing our studies, In one John. But before we come, To that reading, I'm going to read, From John 14, And verses 15 to 26.

John 14, Verse 15. If you love me, You will keep my commandments, And I will ask the Father, And he will give you, Another helper, To be with you forever, Even the spirit of truth, Even the spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive, Because it neither sees him, Nor knows him.

You know him, For he dwells with you, And will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you.

Yet a little while, And the world will see me no more, But you will see me, Because I live, You also will live. In that day you will know, That I am in my Father, And you in me, And I in you.

Whoever has my commandments, And keeps them, He it is who loves me, And he who loves me, Will be loved by my Father, And I will love him, And manifest myself to him.

[19 : 43] Judas, not Iscariot, Said to him, Lord, how is it, That you will manifest yourself to us, And not to the world? Jesus answered him, If anyone loves me, He will keep my word, And my Father will love him, And we will come to him, And make our home with him.

Whoever does not love me, Does not keep my words, And the word that you hear, Is not mine, But the Father's, Who sent me.

These things I have spoken to you, While I am still with you, But the helper, The Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send, In my name, He will teach you all things, And bring to your remembrance, All that I have said to you.

Now we turn over to, 1 John chapter 2, And reading from verse 18, To verse 27, 1 John chapter 2, Verse 18, Children, 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 it is the last hour, They went out from us, But they were not of us, For if they had been of us, They would have continued with us, But they went out, That it might become plain, That they all are not of us, But you have been anointed,

By the Holy One, And you all have knowledge, 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, Who is the liar, But he who denies, That Jesus is the Christ, This is the Antichrist, He who denies, The Father and the Son, No one who denies the Son, Has the Father, Whoever confesses the Son, Has the Father also, Let what you heard from the beginning, Abide in you, If what you heard from the beginning, Abides in you, Then you too will abide, In the Son, And in the Father, And this is the promise, That he made to us, Eternal life, I write these things to you, About those who are trying to deceive you,

[22 : 44] But the anointing, That you received from him, Abides in you, And you have no need, That anyone should teach you, But as his anointing, Teaches you about everything, And is true, And is no lie, Just as it has taught you, Abide in him, Let's hear now, Another psalm, Psalm 43, From the Scottish Psalter, And it's verses 3 to 5, That we're going to hear, Psalm 43, Verse 3 reads, So send thy light forth, And thy truth, Let them be guides to thee, And bring me to thine holy hill, Even where thy dwellings be, That's what we've been reading of, Isn't it?

Where the Spirit of God is sent, Into our hearts to teach us, Oh send thy light forth, And thy truth, Psalm 43, Oh send thy light forth, And thy truth, Let them be guides to thee, And bring me to thy holy hill, In where thy vanity, Then will I talk, As all's are gone, To God thy children, Be children, to Christ unto thee,

Why art thou then cast out my soul Or should discourage thee And why with mercy close art thou Disposed in me Still draw simple for him to praise But not I yet shall Give it all my countenance is well My God, my God My God, let all be saved Let all be saved

Amen Well, let me ask you to turn, please, to 1 John, chapter 2.

And continuing our studies in 1 John We're going to look at verses 18 to 27 I'll read again verse 20 But you have been anointed by the Holy One And you all have knowledge For my birthday this year Our son Jonathan gave me a rather amazing device called Alexa Maybe some of you have heard of it When it arrived in the post I honestly had no idea what it was It's a little grey ball Which you link up to the internet And it can do all sorts of amazing things Just by talking to it

[27 : 19] You say Alexa What's the weather forecast for Dumfries for tomorrow? And it will tell you Or you say Alexa Who is the president of Mexico?

And it will tell you If you want It can play music for you Or if you want You can link it up With your heating system And it can turn the heating On and off in your house It has its limitations I asked it Alexa How many barnacle geese are there In Scotland?

And I got the answer Hmm I don't know that one Of course It can only give you information It can't give you advice And above all It can't tell you What is true Or what is false In matters of religion Within its limits though Alexa Is quite amazing Hearing this voice Seemingly coming out of nowhere Answering all your questions Now imagine If you had Someone With you All the time Who really does know Everything And really can Tell you What is true And what is false According to John That is exactly What we

As Christians Have The Holy Spirit Dwells within us And he Knows Everything Now the Holy Spirit Can't be Ordered around Like Alexa You can't Demand Answers From him He will only Tell you What you Need to know And most Practical things He'll leave you To find out For yourself But on Spiritual Matters The Holy Spirit Will tell you What is true This is one of the Marks of a genuine Christian That the spirit Of truth Is in us And being taught By him We believe What is true One John

As we've Seen over These studies Over recent weeks Is all about The marks of a real Christian We've seen How real Christians Have fellowship With God And with one Another Real Christians Walk in the Light And have their Sins forgiven Real Christians Love the law Of God And the people Of God Real Christians Are in the World But not Of it Well Here is another Mark Real Christians Have the spirit Of truth Dwelling In them I want us to Consider from This passage The spirit Of error That is in The world The spirit Of truth That is in Us The key Difference Between truth And error And how we

[31 : 07] Can And must Hold fast To the truth So first The spirit Of error That is in The world In verses 18 and 19 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 it Is the Last Hour They went Out from Us But they Were not Of us For if They had Been of Us They would Have continued With us But they Went out That it Might become Plain That they All Are not Of us John is Writing here Remember To Christians He addresses Them Affectionately As Children And he Reminds them That the

End of the World Is approaching It is The last Hour To the Apostles Time Was divided Between the Former days Before Christ Came And the Latter days Since Christ Came And the Next Big event Was and Still is The second Coming Of Christ That day John says Is approaching Paul says The same Romans 13 For example The night Is far Gone The day Is at Hand But Before Christ Returns John Reminds Them The Antichrist Must Come And so We're Confronted With this Difficult And Controversial Doctrine Of the

Antichrist Now this Was not New to Them It was Part of Apostolic Teaching The word Antichrist Is found Only in The writings Of John But the Idea Is found Elsewhere Paul Paul Speaks Of A Mysterious Man Of Lawlessness In 2 Thessalonians 2 Who Opposes And exalts Himself Against Every so Called God Or Object Of Worship So that He Takes His seat In the Temple Of God Proclaiming Himself To be God The Prefix Anti In Antichrist In Greek Can mean Either Against Or In Place On And the Antichrist Seems to Be both An Enemy Of Christ Who Seeks To

Replace Christ So who Is this Antichrist The Westminster Confession Of 1643 Which We As a Church And most Presbyterian Churches Hold To Has A Quite Surprising And Very Outspoken Answer According To the Westminster Confession The Antichrist Is The Pope If you Look up Your copy Of the Westminster Confession You'll Find it In Chapter 25 Section 6 It Says There Is No Other Head Of The Church But The Lord Jesus Christ Nor Can The Pope Of Rome In Any Sense Be Head Thereof But Is That Antichrist That Man Of Sin And

Son Of Perdition That Exalteth Himself In The Church Against Christ And Against All That Is Called God Strong Words But Remember The Experience Of Christians Back In The 17th And 16th Century Beforehand Remember What Experience They Had Of The Pope And Of The Catholic Church Then The Pope Claimed To Be The Head Of The Church Christ's Representative On Earth And Yet He Was Denying The Basic Truth Of The Gospel And Was Bitterly Persecuting The Saints Of God To The Death Is It Surprising That They Saw The Pope As The Antichrist Today

[36 : 10] Thankfully There Isn't The Same Enmity As There Was Then And Many Of Us I'm Sure Have Friends Who Are Roman Catholics Even So There Is Still Much That Is Wrong With The Roman Catholic Church Even To This Day It Still Denies The Doctrine Of Justification By Faith It Still Promotes Idolatrous Practices Such As The Worship Of Mary Or The Worship Of The Host In What They Call The Mass And The Pope Still Claims To Be Christ's Representative On Earth Wears The Triple Crown Suggesting That He Is King Of Kings And Lord Of Lords Titles That Belong Only To Christ Most

Modern Evangelicals However Have Drawn Back From Saying That The Pope Is The Antichrist And Look Instead For Some Future Antichrist To Come Possibly Some World Ruler At The End Of The Age I Won't Weary You With All The The The The The The People Have Looked At The European Community People Have Looked At World Politicians I Think Henry Kissinger Was Thought To Be The Antichrist At One Time But Many Evangelicals Are Looking For Someone Like That Some World Ruler who will gather together the forces of evil against the church.

A future Antichrist. Time will tell. For John, writing in the first century, the Antichrist obviously was still future.

Whether it was the Pope or some future political leader, it was still future to him. But already, he says, many Antichrists have come.

In other words, many false teachers who have the spirit of Antichrist. Just as Jesus himself had warned, Matthew 24, verse 4, many will come and lead many astray.

[39 : 00] Probably he had in mind there the Gnostics, who claimed a secret knowledge of God and yet denied Christ.

Though there were many others, even in his day. That to him was the proof that the end was near. That was the silver lining behind this particular cloud.

It was a sign that the Lord will come again soon. Well, you may say 2,000 years have passed since then and he still hasn't come.

But that shouldn't discourage us. The Lord delays his coming only out of mercy. Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

But meanwhile, down through the centuries, false teachers have multiplied. All kinds of cults.

[40 : 00] All kinds of religious charlatans. Even today, leading people astray. Still, the silver lining behind that cloud is that this multiplication of false teaching shows us the Lord is coming soon.

The day of the Lord is at hand. It is the last hour. These people, he says, went out from us, but they were not of us.

Just as Christians are in the world, but not of it, so these false teachers are often in the church, but not of it.

They start out claiming to be Christians, but sooner or later, they will leave in order to show their true colours. False teaching, then, all around us.

True then, true now. Spiritually, this is a very dangerous world for us, isn't it? The Christian, however, has a perfect protection against all this false teaching.

[41 : 14] Whether from Rome, or whether it's false teaching from the cults, or whether it's some future political leader, wherever it comes from, we have a protection against it.

The Holy Spirit. Let's look now of the Spirit of Truth who is in us. Verse 20 again, but you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.

The idea of anointing goes back to the Old Testament where priests and kings were anointed with oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Christ himself was anointed with the Spirit himself as our prophet, our priest, and our king.

The word Christ means the anointed one. The Holy Spirit, you remember, came upon him like a dove at his baptism. And he himself said, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor.

Now, as Christians, we too are anointed by the same Spirit. As Jesus himself promised in the passage we read in John 14, I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him.

[42 : 48] You know him for he dwells with you and will be in you. As so often in 1 John, he seems to be living back at the Last Supper where those words were spoken.

This was the great promise made to all Christians. The Spirit of Truth will dwell in you. And it is a promise to all Christians.

All Christians have the Spirit. John doesn't say you need an anointing. He says you have an anointing. Now, the Holy Spirit does many things for us.

It was the Spirit who first led us to Christ, convicting us of sin and showing us the Saviour. We're born again of the Spirit as we were hearing last week.

We're made holy by the Spirit. We're empowered for service and for witness by the Spirit. But in particular, here, John says, the Spirit will teach us the truth.

[44 : 01] Just as Jesus said in John 16, He will guide you into all truth. As a result, we will know what is true and what is false.

And false teachers, therefore, will have no power over us because we can see through them. We can see their hypocrisy.

We can see their errors. And it is the Spirit of truth who reveals this to us. Don't you find this to be true?

If you should happen to read some heretical writing, shall we say, you pick up the Watchtower magazine and you actually read through it, don't you feel in your heart as you read this, there's something not right here.

You may not be able to pin it down theologically, but you just know that this isn't true. How is it that you know that?

[45 : 08] It's the Spirit of God in you. Back at the Reformation, when Luther was questioning all these indulgences and things, can it be true?

Who was it who was teaching him? It was the Spirit of God in him, showing him truth and error. Even when you're listening to a sermon sometimes, if I or anyone else preaching to you says something that's not quite right, you know it, don't you?

You just feel in your heart, no, that can't be right. And you check up in the Bible and you discover it isn't right. It was the Spirit of God who was showing that to you.

The Gnostics claimed to have a secret knowledge of the truth. truth. They didn't. But we really do. Because the Spirit of truth is in us.

Now that doesn't mean that we understand everything perfectly. If we did, then all Christians would agree about everything. We're human and sometimes we don't hear the voice of the Spirit of God.

[46 : 26] either in the Word or in our hearts. But the Spirit is there keeping us from falling disastrously into error and protecting us both from the Antichrist and from all those little Antichrists, from all false teaching.

And John is confident therefore that we won't be deceived. The devil is trying to deceive us. Jesus warns us in Matthew 24 false Christs, false prophets will arise.

They'll perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive if possible even the elect. And sometimes even the elect do get led astray for a while.

But ultimately it isn't possible to deceive the elect. It's not possible to deceive us forever because the Spirit of God is in us.

Even so confident as he is that the Spirit will keep us from being deceived John still gives us a helpful rule of thumb to judge truth and error.

[47 : 46] Let's look now at this key difference between truth and error. Verses 21 to 23. I write to you not because you do not know the truth but because you know it.

And no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father.

Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. the key difference is what they believe about Christ.

As the old hymn by John Newton puts it what think ye of Christ is the test to try both your state and your scheme you cannot be right in the rest unless you think rightly of him.

We're reminded perhaps here of Peter's great confession you are the Christ the Son of the living God.

[48 : 51] That statement contained two great truths. First that Jesus was the Messiah or Christ promised in the Old Testament the Anointed One sent by God to save us from our sins and rule over us forever and second that he is the Son of the living God.

Not just an anointed man but God come down to us in human flesh. That is the truth anything else is a lie.

If you get this wrong you deny not only the Son but also the Father who sent the Son and bore testimony to him.

the Gnostics did get it wrong. They taught that Jesus only appeared to be a man. Most of the modern cults get this wrong.

Amidst all the numerous things that they are in error over if you read their writings carefully enough sooner or later you'll find out that they're wrong about Christ that they don't recognize his full deity and his full humanity.

[50 : 13] This then is the simple rule of thumb that enables us to sift out truth and error. It also enables us to test our own faith.

What do you think of Christ? Can you unhesitatingly say he is your saviour and your Lord? That is the confession of every true Christian.

That is our faith and on the basis of that faith we have fellowship with God and with one another. Finally how can we hold fast to the truth and avoid ever falling into error?

Verses 24 to 27 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you then you too will abide in the son and in the father and this is the promise that he made to us eternal life.

I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you but the anointing that you received from him abides in you and you and you and you and is true and is no lie just as it has taught you abide in him.

[51 : 33] You can't miss the leading thought there abiding let the word abide in you then you will abide in the son and the father the holy spirit abides in you and teaches you all truth abide in Christ and you will be safe John's back at the last supper yet again isn't he Jesus said in John 15 abide in me and I in you he likened himself to the vine I am the vine you are the branches the branches can't exist apart from the vine cut off from the vine they will die but as long as they're in the vine they will live I have a small tree which I've planted just outside our house it's only about two foot high but it's exposed to all the gale force winds that we get coming off the

Sol way but somehow it survived but in a particularly strong gale one large branch did actually almost snap off I managed to bind it together again with the rest of the tree and to my delight it took and it's still alive it's still bearing leaves the life is still flowing through it that's how it is with us spiritually we are exposed to all the gale force winds of false teaching but although sometimes we may get damaged as long as we remain in Christ we will still survive we will live forever as long as we are still united with him abide therefore in

Christ abide in the word and abide in the spirit those two go together don't they word and spirit the spirit inspired the word teaches us through the word and the word comes to life through the spirit the spirit is sufficient to keep us in the truth you have no need that anyone teach you John says as long as you're abiding in Christ the spirit will continue to teach you and keep you now that's not to deny the value of human teachers obviously John himself is teaching them here pastors and teachers are gifts from God to prevent us from being tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine but those of us who preach must do so in the spirit and we must do so in recognition that the spirit dwells in the congregation also that's an awesome thought for me as a preacher that you all have the spirit of

God in you if you are Christians imagine a physics teacher giving lessons to a student who happens to have Einstein as his friend sitting next to him how daunting would that be well we have someone greater than Einstein the spirit of God not just sitting next to us but in us John knows that he is writing to people who have the spirit who can judge what he says he's confident though that they will agree with him because he has the spirit also but I hope that what I say also strikes a chord with you because you have the spirit and I speak as the spirit of God has taught me also so so let me ask you now as we come to a close do you have the spirit it's absolutely vital that you do

Paul says in Romans 8 if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ he is not his you know in your heart whether you have the spirit if not then you are not yet saved however religious you might be if you don't have the spirit you're not saved you see the gift of the spirit is part of the package that comes with salvation Peter said on the day of Pentecost repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit come to Christ for salvation and you will receive the spirit but most of you I'm sure do have the spirit rejoice in such a wonderful gift and listen to him if

[57 : 15] I could go back to the illustration that I used at the beginning that amazing piece of technology called Alexa suppose I have Alexa but I don't actually ask it anything or having asked I ignore what it says it will be absolutely useless to me I actually had Alexa switched off for a couple of days so despite all that it was capable of doing it was no use to me well we can't switch off the Holy Spirit thankfully he is God and he will speak to us whenever he wishes but we can sadly ignore him we can also ignore the appointed means by which he speaks the Spirit speaks to us through the word and if we neglect the word then very likely we won't hear the

Spirit and that will make us easy pray for those who would deceive us we need to read the word constantly read it prayerfully and thoughtfully and thoroughly it's not enough to hear the word once a week in church it's not enough just to read a few verses first thing in the morning we need to read mark learn and inwardly digest the word Paul says in Colossians let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom as John says let the word of God abide in you remember too that you can pray for the Spirit to give you understanding when the word is confusing when you read the Bible and you can't grasp what it's saying pray that the Spirit would give you understanding and discernment if you're confronted with some new teaching and you're not quite sure is it true or isn't it pray that the

Spirit would teach you Jesus says in Luke 11 if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him above all keep close to Christ abide in him he is the way the truth and the life and take comfort in the thought that he Christ is the head of the church at the end of the day it is not his will that even one of his sheep should perish he prayed in John 17 Holy Father keep them in your name which you have given me the whole Trinity is committed to this Father Son and Holy Spirit together they want to keep us in the truth that we might have eternal life may all of us here be kept in the truth

Amen Our closing psalm is number 31 from Sing Psalms going to hear the first six verses beginning in you I've taken refuge Lord you are my shelter in distress oh let me never be ashamed but save me in your righteousness Psalm 31 ci■ T o hang where I beat■ I sing, I sing the anger of righteousness.

For turn to live to me in my life. I'll praise you, dear I read.

[62 : 01] Turn to me in my rock and earth in the end. I stumble and see you amazing.

You are my fortress and my wall. For your place in my soul.

Reserving from the trap of sin. You are my fortress and my life.

Bring me my loyalty. I stand like a victory.

I stand like a victory. I stand like a victory. For the Lord is right, I trust the Lord.

[63 : 27] For he is true. Amen. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit remain with us all evermore.

Amen. Thank you.