

# Confessing Christ

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] 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 are not of us. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you will have, and you have all 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 Antichrist? 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. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, for us this morning, prayer is foundational to our faith.

It was prayer that led us by your grace, brokenhearted at the reality and understanding of our sinful state and eternal destiny to plead with you to save us. It has been prayer that has carried us from day to day through the challenges and the questions of our life. And it is prayer that causes us this morning to come with glad expectation to your word and depend upon the Holy Spirit to allow it to have an effect upon our thinking and our hearts. Our prayer this morning is this, is that you would enable me to preach in such a fashion that your people would say that is the working of the Holy Spirit.

We also pray, Lord, that your word would have free course and that those that are here, that believers would have their faith strengthened, their hearts encouraged, their love for the brethren framed and formed and deepened, their concern and interest in lost mankind and neighbors that don't know the Lord Jesus enriched and intensified. It is our prayer that those that are here today that do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, some who have been deceived by the enemy to think that just because they have had a past experience of some sort, yet have never come to faith, that today your spirit would bring to them convicting power and that they would be drawn to faith in the Lord Jesus. We ask today that we who are your people would delight in the sweetness of your word and the blessing of your grace. In Jesus' name, amen.

It would be helpful as we take this passage in hand to actually get our bearings in the book of 1 John again. And we recognize that here is John towards the very end of his life writing a concluding book. It is not the concluding book that he wrote, but it is one of those that towards the very end he's writing to people that he loves and he communicates with an affection and an interest in their well-being that I think we should not put aside. We should recognize and respect it. He cared deeply for the church that he was writing to and by extension, as he was communicating under the enabling of the Holy Spirit, that affection and interest radiates out to us and reminds us that God cares for us and that what he has here is valuable to us and it is important. Remember that the early church that John was writing to was under attack.

[ 4 : 3 3 ] It was being challenged theologically. It was being challenged physically. And at every turn that the faith of those early believers was being pressed by people that hated the testimony of Christ and were ultimately interested in their failure, their fall, and their discouragement and brokenness. False teachers had actually worked their way into the church and had begun to undermine the sweetness of the hope that people had in the Lord Jesus and the gospel.

And their communication strategy was to kind of communicate the idea that, well, if you really knew the truth, it would bring you to this deeper level and you'd understand blah, blah, blah.

It's not new that we have the same thing going on today. Gnosticism, the idea that, well, you've got to, you know all this deep knowledge and not everybody knows, but those who do, they're the

spiritual giants and they're on top of things. I think it was this week that I'm still in that senior pastor towards retirement stage and Connie threw a thick little stack of things that had come from the Church of Scientology. Has anybody ever heard of them? Church of Scientology. And I thought, well, really, Pastor Andrew, he should get this, but I thought I'd open it just to be sure. And so I read through the Church of Scientology was, they invited me to have free training and they were going to give me an opportunity to learn more. And any of you who know anything about the Church of Scientology, the idea behind it is basically, we'll teach you the deep things and we'll get you started on an introductory offer. It is all about money. The more you spend, the more you know, right? That's their line.

And I passed it off to Pastor and I think he put it in the trash, forthwith. The idea of Gnosticism was, we're going to teach you the deep things and you can really understand these things and then you'll be really spiritual. How many of you have ever walked away from a sermon and thought to yourself, well, that guy's incredibly intelligent, but I really don't know what he said.

The Gnosticism was this idea of that, well, we're smarter than the rest of you and we'll kind of let you in on some of the clues, but you know, you really got to dig deep to get there. Well, John writes to make things simple and to help us understand the sweetness of our salvation resting in the finished work of Christ. And so I think it's important for us as we look at this book and kind of remind ourselves again and again that here is John, the apostle, writing to help struggling believers and give them tools for affirming and holding on to the faith that they had received. As a result of that, there are several passages that I want you to kind of use as compass points in your life when you are kind of thinking your way through the book of 1 John. Let me give these to you and you hold on to them. One is 1 John chapter 1 verse 4. Take a look at it. 1 John chapter 1 verse 4. I'll press it together and put it this way. I wrote this book, this is John speaking, so that your joy may be full.

[ 8 : 00 ] Why'd you write the book, John? I wrote the book so people can be joyful. It goes without saying that people that know the Lord Jesus Christ have every reason to be joyful in a world that is absolutely traumatized by the miserable state of sin. Am I right? I mean, we as Christians have every reason to be joyful. And here is John saying, I wrote this book so you can be joyful. Secondly, in 1 John chapter 5 verse 13, turn your pages real quickly and get over there. It says, I wrote this book so that you might know you have eternal life. That you might know you have eternal life. And I love to be able to say to people that our faith is not a hope so faith. Ours is a no so faith. I've bumped into a lot of people and on occasion when I say to them, so why would God let you into heaven? Many people will say, well, I'm not real sure. I'm trying my best. I'm hoping I'm going to get there. You know what? Tim Knoyer is not hoping that he's going there. I know I'm going there. And it has nothing to do with Tim Knoyer being the most wonderful person in the room. It has to do with the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And John wrote, so that you and so that I may have absolute confidence in the certainty of our final destiny.

Third, we find in 1 John chapter 5 verse 19, I wrote the book so that you can know that you are of God. In other words, that you can know that you are his. And so as you sit here this morning, kind of thinking about 1 John, I want you to understand that this book is written so you who are sitting here and know the Lord Jesus Christ can have great confidence in the certainty of your relationship with him. As a result of that goal, you can understand that John would give us a series of challenging questions that we can use to figure out, are we indeed who we think we are?

I was listening and thinking at the same time as we were singing this morning. And we were singing, how many of you realize that sometimes we lie when we sing? How many of you realize that sometimes we lie when we sing? How many of you admit, I have lied when I've been singing? I mean, we sing some of the sweetest, nicest, most wonderful things about the love of Christ and the love for each other. And then we get in the car and what do we do? We are just downright surly and unkind and inconsiderate. And we just sang about the grace of God and how wonderful it is that we're part of his family and how because he loves us, we love each other. And then we what? I mean, it's about, I think it's about 600 feet from back to front. And by the time we hit Trebu, we've been unsanctified. And so, you know, here is John saying, I'm going to give you some tests so you can kind of check out how you're doing, whether you really are who you say you are. Now, I do want you to understand that John's book is a little more mystical and abstract than Paul's writings. You have to admit that Romans and Ephesians, for example, are fairly logical and relatively easy to follow through. I can still give you the five major portions of Romans. Stuck in my mind. Practical. John is a little more, I hate to use the word, but it has to fit, esoteric and abstract. It's like, ah, well,

you know, it's like, really?

And it takes a little more work, but it's there for us. It's there for us. And it helps to remind ourselves that in the early portion of John, one of the things that he did, 1 John, is that he challenged us to consider the authenticity of our relationship with God despite the ongoing struggle we have with sin. If any man says he has not sinned, he's what? He's a liar. The fact of the matter is we do deal with sin. And so we understand that despite that ongoing struggle with sin, we who have a relationship with God can see that relationship play out by confession and forsaking it. Another thing that John helps us understand is that another way we can verify the authenticity of our faith is our relationship with one another. It's pretty easy to say, I love God. But the reality of it is to say that you love God and not be committed to loving the brethren is actually to be a liar. And John is going to make that clear over and over again in a very practical way. And one of the things that is part and parcel with being a family of believers is that because we are family, we have an opportunity to get to know the bumps and warts in the family. Am I right? And we get to actually practice love in real time. And over and over again in the book of John, we're going to see this issue of, okay, you love God? Really? Okay, we're going to work at loving each other. Now that brings us to the practical part that we're going to be looking at here. We have the issue of how we deal with sin early on. We have the issue of how we relate to one another following that. And now we come to a very clear theological test of our faith. What do we think about Jesus? Now there in verse 18, pick up the passage. It says, Children, it is the last hour. And so you have to ask yourself the question, what is being said here?

[14:05] Let me explain it this way. At the outset, as we deal with the text, one of the purposes of preaching, and let me make this clear, is to take what God has said and make it clear and practical through the enabling of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of preaching is to take what God has said and make it clear and practical through the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Does that make sense? So when you walk away, you say, did I understand that? Was the Holy Spirit helping me to get my hands and heart around the Word of God so that I can live it out in real time? Is it the last hour? You look here in chapter 2, verse 18, and John begins by saying, children, children. Now, children is a term that communicates what?

How many of you had teachers, and it's nice to have all these college graduates up here. I'm just curious. Molly, did any of your teachers walk into nursing class and say, children? No, it didn't. Josiah, any of your professors come in and say, children? Samantha? No? Okay. The word children communicates affection and a level of tenderness. Wouldn't you agree with that? And I touched on this several weeks ago, but I want to come back because we find that John uses this term over and over again, a term of endurance and affection for the bride of Christ that I think is important for us to recognize. So when you read it here, you understand that what John is communicating is a level of attention and affection for the people that he cares for. In relationship to that, I think it's appropriate for us to recognize that all those who serve as faithful messengers of the Lord of hosts and speak his words to people should be known for their affection for the bride. Given the truth's significance that those who represent Christ and teach the word of God are to be known for their affection for the people they're teaching, it is understandable to us as believers that in the family of God, those who teach the word of God should be known for what? For their love. Now, do all people communicate their love the same way? And the answer is not in your life.

I hate to bring Pastor Saul up now that he's retired, but I remember, I remember years ago when we called him to be our pastor here and Pastor Saul began teaching a class and we used to meet quite regularly. And one day he said to me, you know, I've been praying every day for this class that I'm teaching. And as I began to listen to Pastor Saul, I began to pick up that despite this engineering veneer, do you know what I mean by veneer? Underneath there was this tender affection for the people that he was ministering to. And so I start out by having you understand that those who minister in Christ's stead in the body of Christ have a responsibility to love those who they serve and minister and teach. Let's come to another piece here. It says, this, it is the last hour.

So when you hear the word, the last hour, what goes through your mind? How many of you have heard, because I am in Home Depot often, and I'm hoping that this is the last time this happens, that I'm in Home Depot often. I have been in there when they say, we will be closing in, okay?

[18:02] And that means that I really have to scurry around and get what I need because the cashiers are shutting down and it's all over. And so when you hear the last hour, you're thinking, okay, what's all that about it? What's going on? Last hour of the sale, last hour of the day, last hour

to finish an assignment. And that kind of communicates to us the idea that we're getting towards the end of something. And here is John telling the believers that he's writing to, it's the last hour.

What's this about? In broad terms, the phrase was used in the New Testament to refer to the time between Christ's first coming and Christ's second coming. You remember when he ascended into heaven, he said, hey, I'm coming back. And one of the things that characterized the hearts of the early New Testament believers and actually should characterize our heart is that we are looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus. And not because we're tired of where we are, but because we're just absolutely enthralled with the prospect of seeing him. It's the last hour.

It's the last hour. And in relationship to that, one of the things that you're going to see as we work our way through the passage is that in the last hour, things are going to be hard.

I do want you to understand that it wasn't just John that made this issue clear. Jesus made it clear that the last times would be difficult for believers. Over and over again, as you're working your way through the gospels and various parts of the gospel where Jesus speaks about how things are going to be, he made it clear that it would be trying. I want you to think with me just for a moment of a passage over in 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 1. Let me just kind of recite it to you. It says this, but understand this, that in the last days, there will come times of difficulty. In the last days, there will come times of difficulty. And so when we look around today at the world that is growing ever more hostile towards believers and towards our faith, as we see things getting more and more difficult for those who profess their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we shouldn't be surprised at all.

What it should do is, as we think about the last hour, it should kind of prompt our hearts to live with an interest and an expectation that he's coming back soon, and we want to be prepared.

[ 20 : 34 ] We want to be ready. We want to have our lives in the place where when he comes, there is no shame at the fact that we're unprepared for his arrival. And so I want you to think this morning, as you look at this passage, and John says it is the last hour, that you're thinking, hey, am I ready for his return, and does my life reflect that state? As you look at the passage, he identifies the issue of the last hour with a particular individual and a mindset. We find there, it says, as you have heard that Antichrist is coming. In the last hour, the Antichrist is coming. So now, many Antichrists have come.

Let me help you understand that the word Antichrist refers, in simple terms, to someone who is opposing Christ, anti-against, against Christ. And if you were to work your way through the Scriptures in relationship to the Antichrist that is going to be present during the Great Tribulation, there is a fact that there is going to be a supremely powerful individual that will oppose the Lord Jesus and oppose the testimony of Christ. The fact of the matter is, is that while the Antichrist has not yet been revealed, there are Antichrists that are functioning and are actively engaged in undermining the work and testimony of Christ. And John wants the church to realize that that is going on. That's what's happening. He says, therefore, we know it's the last hour. I want you to think with me for a moment about what he is saying here in regards to their role in the churches. If you were to think back with me just for a second, back to Matthew chapter 13, Jesus was talking about the fact that a master would sow a field. He'd put wheat into the field. And then his enemy would come. And what he would do behind that is he would throw tares in.

And as a result, the wheat and the tares would grow up together. And the enemy of our souls has done that very same thing, that he has sown in among the church of the living God individuals who actually are opposed to Christ, but they show up and are in the church. They're present. They're active. They're engaged in going about doing churchy things. But in time, their heart and their attitudes are revealed.

And what we find here is that John is saying you ought not to be surprised with the fact that these anti-Christ attitudes and anti-Christ are appearing in the church because it is the last hour.

I am reminded also of the passage in Acts chapter 20. What a passage of the affection of the apostle for the church there in Ephesus. And he says, after I leave, grievous wolves are going to rise. And where are they going to come from? Where are wolves going to show up from? Inside. Inside. And he says, they're going to cause great heartache. And so as we look here at verse 18, John is letting us know that there is an anti-Christ who is coming and he's not been revealed yet. How many of you, by the way, just are old enough to have remembered when I wasn't around, but I remember hearing that Hitler was the anti-Christ.

[ 24 : 02 ] Anybody remember hearing that? Or that Mousy Tung was the anti-Christ. Or that, you know, Gorbachev. We've had a lot of people saying so-and-so is the anti-Christ. I don't know who

he is. And I'm not up here proposing that because of A, B, C, D, and blah, blah, blah, that I know who it is. The anti-Christ will be revealed someday and he is going to be an adversary of all things that pertain to Christ.

At the same time, anti-Christ will be active in the church trying to undermine the work of Christ in the church. Will their play in the church go on indefinitely? Look at verse 19.

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 are not of us.

Now, I want to make a couple things clear and hold on to these as you're thinking your way through this statement. Number one, John is not talking about people that leave and go to another Christ-exalting church. You get that? They went out from us because they were not of us.

People can change their understanding on secondary issues of faith. What do I mean by that? I remember friends who were absolutely persuaded that baptism was three times forward.

[ 25 : 37 ] And I remember friends who were persuaded that baptism was one times backward. And ended up actually having people move from point A to point B because of this difference over baptism. Friends who have differences over church polity. Friends who have differences over issues that are not primary to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so when we talk about they went out from us, we're not talking about people who know Christ as their Savior and move from point A to point B. What John is talking about is those who abandon the faith, who end up eventually denying the Lord Jesus as their Savior. I want you to understand that over the years of being a pastor, I can think of several individuals who I baptized more than once. How does that happen? That Tim Knoyer baptizes a person twice. Well, here's what happens. A person says to me, I know Jesus and they give their testimony. By the way, when a person's baptized here in Maranatha, they give their testimony publicly, right? You get to hear it too. I know Jesus is my Savior. I believe He saved me from sin. I've trusted in Him. Dunk. Okay. Years later, the person says, I really wasn't saved. I just said the words.

Okay. Well, we'll do it again. And I know of individuals that I have baptized twice and have walked away from the faith and clearly denied the Lord Jesus Christ, not necessarily by what they say publicly, but by everything they do and the conduct of their life. And here is John saying, they went out from us. They went out from us. And the reason they went out from us is because they weren't of us.

One of the realities of this is that salvation brings change in a person's life. Do you realize that? I love what we read over in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 where it says, and such were some of you. Over the years, I have known individuals that were drug dealers. I've known individuals that have made professions that were murderers, prostitutes, pedophiles, and every conceivable sort of sinner has at one time or another, I've heard them say, I have believed in Jesus as my Savior. And I, always enthused by hearing that statement, nevertheless have made it clear, you know, the authenticity of your faith will be proved over time. Those who are genuinely saved will continue growing in grace. And you will see the evidence of their progress and the transformation of their life. Now, would we wish that it was exactly like this? How many of you would like that?

Any like that? I have to tell you, as I've watched in my own life and the life of others, I have seen some of these. How many of you have seen those? You know, it's a bit of a rise and a little bit of a dip and it's like, but it's all right. I want to know, is that person gaining altitude and is the altitude the work of the work of God in their life rather than just kind of learning a new vocabulary or a couple lifestyle habits that they've changed? So let's get this clear in our minds as we look at verse 19. The genuine believer stays true and grows in the faith. Get that anchored in your life. The genuine believer stays true and grows in the faith. And you can sit here this morning and ask yourself the question, am I a believer? I mean, John is interested. The Holy Spirit is interested in you figuring out where you are. Am I a believer? Do I see the evidence of progressive sanctification of God working in my life to change me? I am reading a book, besides the Bible,

[ 29 : 33 ] Bible, by Christopher Ashe. It's about getting old in a godly fashion. And I'm working at it. I was convicted this morning about the fact that I was reading it after I'd finished my scriptures and I was convicted of the fact, you know, the older I get, the sweeter I want to become.

And I'm practicing with my wife. Does that make sense? It's like, she asked me to move something. And, uh, there was a time in my married life that I decided it would help me. Actually, I was not thinking that way. I was thinking to help her. If I wrote the, uh, the last moved on date on the bottom of couches, I found out that it didn't do the least bit for my progressive sanctification.

In fact, you know, when you see the date, it was only three months ago. I was like, I'd really struggle. And so I thought, there's no reason to, to put salt in the wound. Just move it. Let me come back so you understand the point. Listen, those who are saved grow in grace.

Those who are saved grow in grace. Those who aren't, eventually they tire of the process and they hit the exit. So let's come to the next thing there in verse 20. But you have an anointing by the Holy Spirit and you have all knowledge. Now the second piece of our study we find here in verse 20, uh, makes a pretty stunning statement. You have been anointed by the Holy One and you have all knowledge. So let me start out by pointing out what this does not mean.

It doesn't mean that the anointed believer knows the exact time that Jesus is coming back for one. I've, I've lived long enough that I've seen one person after another get a little bit of press about the fact that he's coming back on the 24th of whatever. And, uh, no, I made a miscalculation.

[ 31 : 45 ] He's actually coming back on the 27th and blah, blah, blah. That's not what it's talking about. It's not talking about the fact that the believer knows what the stock market is going to do next week. Uh, it's not saying that the believer knows all the secret things of God. In fact, in, in, uh, Deuteronomy, it tells us there are some things he's given to us and there are some things we don't know.

Nor does it mean that the believer shouldn't study for their final exams. I mean, that'd be a nice thing to have happen, but it's not what it's saying. So what is being said? The anointing that John is speaking about here is the anointing that every believer receives at salvation. Let me get that clear in your hearts. Every believer that is saved receives the Holy Spirit at conversion. When you come to Christ, you are gifted with the indwelling Holy Spirit that is there to be your helper and your ally and your encourager and your admonisher. Passages such as Romans chapter eight, verse nine and 14 through 16, coupled with what Jesus said over in John chapter 16, verse seven through 15, make it clear that one of the many blessings of our salvation is the indwelling Spirit. So if you're sitting here today and you're a child of God, you have the Holy Spirit abiding in you and he is in you there to help you.

He is there to help you. So let me direct your thoughts so you can understand what is being said in verse 20 more clearly back to another passage where Paul addresses the issue of the ministry of the indwelling Spirit. Go to 1 Corinthians chapter two. 1 Corinthians chapter two, verse 12 through 16. By the way, while you're turning there, how many of you can identify with the fact that you have perhaps a brother or a sister or a mom or a dad or a friend who grew up exposed to the same level of blessing in the sweetness of the gospel and you are, you're kind of flummoxed. Why don't they get it? Why can't they see it? Why don't they understand the need of their soul and the offer of salvation in the Lord? What's wrong? Here is Paul.

Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God. Now, by the way, just so you realize, Paul is writing to the Corinthian believers. How many of you recognize that the Corinthian believers were a salty group of people? Am I right? Huh? They didn't have it all together in spiritual issues. They were kind of crusty a little bit. And here's Paul saying, you have the Spirit of God, that we might understand the things freely given to us by God.

And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. Now, in verse 14, the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. That brings us to recognize that part of what Paul is teaching us is that an aspect of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is helping me understand spiritual truths.

[ 35 : 31 ] Now, does that mean that because I'm a believer, every time I open the book, it automatically becomes completely clear and understandable first time out? And the answer is, no. I wish, but no.

And do not think that just because you're a believer, you can kind of sit like some vegetable, and just by virtue of your state of faith, understand everything. It's going to happen by humility and dependence and prayer and pleading for the Holy Spirit to help you understand.

And the way he most of the time will help you, I should say all the time, is by helping you make comparison between one scripture and another and giving you understanding and insight from that study.

I am struck by what we find about Jesus over in Isaiah chapter 50 verse 4 in relationship to this. One of the stunning thoughts, as you so hold on to, is what must it have been like to be Jesus as a little boy reading through the Old Testament and discover that the passages he was reading were

actually about him?

That's what Isaiah chapter 50 verse 4 tells us. Jesus, as he was studying, whoa, this is for me. This is about me. This is for the sake of other people.

[ 37 : 06 ] So, when we look at this passage here and we understand that it is the Holy Spirit that helps us have this knowledge, in relationship to this, I would plead with you that because you have the Holy Spirit indwelling, it would be entirely appropriate for you on a regular basis to ask the Holy Spirit to help you learn and appropriate the scriptures.

Make sense? In relationship to that, when you have your personal devotions and you take up the Word of God and you begin reading it, it would be a good idea to start out by saying, Holy Spirit, I am thankful that you are in me, that Jesus gave you to me, and I need your help this morning to understand the scriptures.

When you come to him in prayer, it would be appropriate to say, I need your help praying this morning. I am very inclined to have my mind wander.

How many of you notice that when you're trying to pray or when you're trying to read the scriptures, every reasonable thought about things you need to do today comes to your mind? It's like, help me, Lord.

It's like people who go into a restaurant to have a good time with their wife and then get on their cell phone and don't pay attention. You follow me? You ever notice conversations going on between two people that both have their cell phones in their hands?

[ 38 : 40 ] They're not communicating. And so if we're going to come into God's presence, we're going to take his Word and we're going to engage in prayer, then we ought to say to the Holy Spirit, would you please help me focus and put away the distracting things?

I have to put my cell phone across the couch because I've had to get up physically and get over there and drag it up to see what the weather is. And I've got to tell you, my devotions in the weather don't have anything to do with each other.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to understand the things of God. He is there for that reason. Now that brings us around to the issue of what the true believer understands.

And I'm going to press together what we find here in verse 21 through 25. The true believer understands who Christ is and he confesses Christ.

I'll admit it. John's way of communicating in 1 John is not as easy to track as the crisp sequential logic of Paul.

[ 39 : 50 ] John used figures of speech in a way that the ancient world was more familiar with. And what he says there beginning in verse 21 is making it clear that his concern isn't that the believer is confused.

Look at verse 21. I write to you not because you don't know the truth. Why are you writing to me, John? Well, I'm not writing to you because you don't get it. No.

He says here, I'm writing to you to help you understand that those who really are believers really know who Jesus is.

So let's kind of come down to what it says there in verse 23. Let me put it this way and then work our way through it.

Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ is a liar. Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ is a liar.

[ 41 : 04 ] It doesn't make any difference how big the crowd is that comes to hear him. It doesn't make any difference if they say that Jesus is a really nice person and he lived a wonderful life.

I have friends that are Muslims and they would have no hesitation telling me that Jesus was a wonderful person and he was the second most important prophet in all of history.

And yet the fact of the matter is they do not believe what Jesus has said about himself. And that's a lie. It's a lie. As we read the text, it's pretty important for us to understand that God does not hesitate to make a distinction between what is true and what is not.

We live in a day and age where it's very, very popular to kind of, well, I don't really want to say, you know. I mean, we kind of avoid the reality of life and death issues and who the Lord Jesus Christ actually is.

And here's John putting it on the table for us. He says, no one who denies the Son has the Father. Whosoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

[ 42 : 19 ] So think with me just for a moment. What does it mean to confess that Jesus is the Christ and to have the Father? In practical terms, what the word confession means is to say the same thing.

To confess means to say the same thing. Say the same thing as who? Say the same thing as some person who's saying that, well, Jesus is a pretty nice person.

He did some pretty nice things. And no, it is to agree with what the Scriptures say about who the Lord Jesus Christ is and to agree with the Father as to who his Son is.

It's to agree with what the apostles had to say when they said, and there is salvation through no other. By the way, confessing that the Lord Jesus Christ is who he says he is is not just what we say with our lips.

I think that's important for us to understand. If you would think with me just for a moment to a passage over in Luke in chapter 6, verse 48, here's what Jesus said. Why do you call me?

[ 43 : 27 ] What? Fill it out. Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things that I say? It's all easy to sit in church and say, yeah, Jesus is my Savior.

But then the way in which you act actually denies the reality of your testimony. Christ-honoring confession includes the way we live.

I want you to look at a passage as we close. Turn over to Titus 1, verse 16. Titus 1, verse 16. Titus 1, verse 16.

Titus 1, verse 16. Titus 1, verse 16. Titus 1, verse 16. Would the people that you work with, would they be able to say, I know you believe in Jesus because of the way you live and act?

Would the people who watch your marriage through the window, how many of you know that your neighbors know what your marriage looks like? How many of you know that? People know how you're getting along.

[ 45 : 03 ] They really do. Would your neighbors say, I know you know Jesus because I've watched the way you treat your wife? Would the people that you are close to in the car driving home say, yeah, yeah, I know you know Jesus because of the way in which your life is affected by the reality of who he is?

Let me read the passage. Let me read the passage and have it just kind of lock into your life. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works.

John wrote this gospel, this epistle, to help us do some self-evaluation, and I want you to do that this morning.

Do I know Jesus? Is he my Savior? Do I confess him as my Master and my Lord?

Does the way I live my life bear witness favorably, or does it deny the sufficiency and the power of the gospel? Do I know Jesus?

[ 46 : 59 ] There are some here this morning that are believers, and yet the way in which they are living contradicts the gospel power. And Lord, it is my plea that you would bring about repentance and confession, that their lives would display the power of the cross.

There are those that are here today that do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, and my plea would be that you would work to bring to them repentance and saving faith, that this morning they can walk out of here knowing that you are their Savior and that you have redeemed them from all evil.

I pray that the word would have free course and bear fruit, and that Christ would be honored, that what we say about Jesus and the way in which we live would match to your glory.

And I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.