

Abide in Him

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 September 2023

Preacher: Colin Horne

[0 : 00] Turn in your Bibles to 1 John 2. 1 John 2, and we'll be reading verses 18 to 29.

1 John 2, 18 to 29.

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 a liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ.

Such a man is the Antichrist. He denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

[1 : 32] See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you will also remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us, even eternal life.

I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you receive 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, but just as it is taught you, remain in him.

And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears, we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him. Let's hear the word preached. We live in a world of deception.

[2 : 39] It is all around us. And we see in our passage tonight, we are told that we are in the last hour. The time between the ascension of our Lord and his return.

That is the last hour. And the Bible teaches us that deception runs rampant in this time. Not just here in 1 John.

You read in 2 Timothy 3, Paul says that in the last days, the last hour, in the last days there will come times of difficulty, when people will have the appearance of godliness, but deny its power.

So they look like Christians, but they aren't. And then later in 2 Timothy 3, Paul says, Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and imposters will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

So, in the last hour, in this time between the ascension of our Lord and his return, false Christs, false prophets have arisen.

[3 : 53] Just like Jesus said that they would in Matthew 24. And their goal is to deceive. Their goal is to lead us astray.

And they're following the lead of Satan himself. The deceiver of the whole world, Revelation 12 says. Jesus said that he's the father of lies.

That Satan has nothing to do with the truth. He doesn't stand in the realm of the truth. He doesn't operate within the framework of telling the truth.

Because there is no truth in him. He is a liar. That's who he is. That's his character. And so when he speaks, he speaks lies.

And the world is under his power. The world has been deceived. And the world is promoting what is deceiving. But by God's grace.

[4 : 55] By God's grace, we are not of this world. By God's grace, the devil is not our father. And yet, we can still be susceptible even as children of God.

We can still be susceptible to believing his lies. We can still be susceptible to being led astray. And so we must be on guard. We must be on guard against deception.

That's the warning that John gives us tonight. That's what our passage is driving at this evening. You and I, we must be on guard against the deception that is all around us in the last hour.

And so our passage here, it equips us with three defenses against deception. Now before we dive in, we want to be clear on this.

God is our defense. God protects us. God keeps us. God preserves us. It is God who is our defense.

[6 : 02] And yet in this beautiful mystery, God in his word calls us to action. He preserves us and he calls us to persevere.

He is our defense. And at the same time, he says, church, take up a defensive posture. A passive Christian is a sitting duck for Satan's deceptive schemes.

So we need to consider the defenses given to us tonight in our text. Three defenses that guard us against being deceived. And all three defenses, they don't revolve around some kind of fancy game plan or some kind of complex philosophy or a three-step Christian self-help.

All three defenses revolve not around a plan or a philosophy. They revolve around a person. They revolve around the person of Jesus Christ.

So here's our first defense to guard us against being deceived. Defense number one, confess Jesus. Confess Jesus. Read again with me a significant portion of our passage to see this in verses 18 to 27.

[7 : 24] 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 all 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.

[8 : 24] 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 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. One of John's favorite words in this letter is abide.

Or maybe your translation says remain. He uses this term throughout his letter. He uses this term throughout his gospel account and in his other letters that he wrote.

In fact, it shows up 13 times in his gospel account alone. All three other gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke. Grand total, zero times we see that term.

A big goose egg. In fact, outside of John's writings, the word only shows up three times in the entire New Testament. John goes to use it 23 times. It's like he copyrighted it.

[9 : 31] Pretty much only he uses it. And in these verses, we are reminded of what abides in us. What remains in us. What resides in us.

We are reminded that it's the truth. The truth does. Verse 21. I write to you not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it.

Verse 24. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. And so what is this truth that dwells in us?

Well, you could say that the truth is all that God has said in his word. You could say that the truth is all doctrine, all teaching that is biblically sound.

It's grounded in the revealed written word of God. But John is more specific with us. He captures the truth in a nutshell, and he states it in the negative in verse 22.

[10 : 34] He says, Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? So this central truth must be our confession.

Jesus is the Christ. We're just saying we confess Christ in life and death. Christ is the one that we confess. Our confession is Christ alone.

If we know that truth, if we believe that truth, if we confess that truth, then we are standing on solid ground. Because if we confess that Jesus is the Christ, if we confess that Jesus is the Savior, we are also confessing much more at the same time.

We are confessing that we have need of a Savior. We are confessing that we are sinners in need of that Savior. And so by confessing that Jesus is the Christ, we're saying we need salvation.

We're confessing more than simply Jesus is the Christ. Those words. This is theological shorthand for saying we confess the good news of the gospel. And where do we find the gospel?

[11 : 41] But in the word of God. And how does the word of God tie together? It ties together. It centers around the good news of Christ. So when we say confess Christ, we are confessing the truth of God's word.

So John writes not to tell us this truth, but to remind us. You know this truth. You confess this truth.

This is the truth that John wants us to especially camp on. So why? Why does John want to share this reminder with us?

If we know the truth and it abides in us, why do we need to be reminded? Because we live in a world of lies. It's the last hour.

Deception abounds. We can be deceived into believing that maybe we don't actually know the truth. We can be deceived into believing the truth that we heard from the beginning, the truth that abides in us.

[12 : 51] Perhaps that truth is not the only truth. Perhaps that truth is not the final truth. Perhaps that truth is not the sufficient truth for salvation.

Perhaps there are other ways. Perhaps there's other information that I don't know. There are deceptive forces at work in our world, and they take aim at our hearts and at our minds.

The father of lies hates the truth, and he wants to persuade us. You know what? What is true is actually false. And what is false, that's actually true. See, John wrote this letter originally to a body of believers who are needing to guard themselves against a very specific deception.

Very specific deception. That Jesus was not really God in the flesh. That God didn't actually take on a human body.

That's why John was so adamant in chapter 1 to say to us, I witnessed the earthly life. I witnessed the death. I witnessed the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[13 : 59] I was there. I saw him. I touched him. I know what I saw. It was God in the flesh. And so now, John is more directly addressing the deception of these false teachers.

He calls them out as antichrists, because that is what they are. Antichrist. Against Christ. Opposed to Christ.

They don't confess him to be the Savior that he is. And now we see that these antichrists had left the church, apparently. They had been among this body of believers, but now they were gone.

And yet it seems that there was a temptation for others to follow them. There was a temptation that remained where people were thinking, yeah, but maybe what they said was the truth.

Maybe it wasn't as false as we thought that it was. Perhaps it was true. Perhaps it was sound doctrine. So John writes, and he's very clear with the original audience.

[15 : 08] He's very clear with us. You know the truth. This. What these antichrists were saying is not the truth.

That's why they had left the church. That's the evidence. They went out because they were never Christians to begin with. But you are Christians. You have been anointed by the Holy One.

Set apart unto salvation. And in that, you now have the truth. It abides in you. It doesn't abide in them.

They were opposing Christ. They weren't teaching the truth. So don't listen to them. And then John says this. Very interesting. You have no need for anyone to teach you.

Huh. That's an interesting line. You might be thinking, but isn't John teaching us right now? He says in verse 27, you don't need anyone to teach you. But then, isn't he teaching us?

[16 : 11] And you may even be thinking, I need to be taught. I need to grow. I want to learn. What does John mean by that? We do need to be taught. We do need to be growing.

We do need to be learning. But we don't need a new teaching that deviates from the truth of God's Word. You don't need a new teaching that leads you away from sound doctrine.

We need to be growing and learning the same truth over and over. And more deeply soaking it in. And more deeply submitting ourselves to the truth of God's Word that we first believed.

There's a lot of teaching out there. There are lots of different philosophies and ideas and opinions that are out in the public square.

And we've already seen in 1 John, newer is not always better. Sometimes what is tried and true is best.

[17 : 15] And that is certainly the case with biblical truth. The new teaching might be exciting. There's something about what's familiar to us that the remaining sin in our hearts hates what's familiar.

Familiarity breeds contempt, right? That's boring. That's dull. I'm tired of that. I want something new. I want something different.

Let's spice things up with our theology. And so we're enticed by lies that promote a new way of thinking. A new way of living. And John is saying, stick with what you know.

Because what you know is the truth. You don't need to be gallivanting off into some new theological frontier. Fear. And if you do, if you find something new, it's really just a new attempt at saying something that's been done before.

That's proven false. There's nothing new under the sun. Don't go after that. Stick with the truth. So John has been very intent on passing along sound biblical doctrine to the next generation of the church.

[18 : 28] And the next. And the next. Remember, John was taught by Jesus. Remember that John was taught by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of truth.

After Jesus had ascended into heaven. Do you remember what Jesus promised to John and the other apostles? When he was in the upper room with them, he said, When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak. And he will declare to you the things that are to come. The Holy Spirit had done this.

The apostles had been taught. And they had then put down what they were taught in what we now have. The final, complete canon of Scripture. And so John was focused on combating this idea of some new teaching that existed.

Some further teaching that the believers in this church needed. The apostle Peter was also intent on fighting that idea.

[19 : 32] Listen to his words in 2 Peter 1. That's another way of saying, The truth abides in you.

Let me remind you of it. And so that's what John is doing. He's stirring us up by way of reminder. You have no need that anyone should teach you something that doesn't align with Scripture.

You know the truth. You know it. So confess what is true. Continue to confess. Jesus is the Christ.

Stand firm in that. And be on guard. The first way to be on guard is to remember what you know. Maintain right orthodoxy.

Don't stray into falsehood and error. Stay close to the truth. Confess Jesus is the Christ. Here's our second defense against deception.

[20 : 47] And we're actually going to read verses 26 and 27 again. Because they really tie in with our first defense. I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you.

But the anointing that you have 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.

So we just examined the first defense. The truth abides in us if we're Christians. And now here's the second defense. And you, Christian, abide in Jesus.

Do you see the relationship of that? The truth is in you and you are in Christ. Abide in him. Maintain a close, vibrant relationship with Christ.

This is relational language that John is using. He is, Jesus is the Christ. But even more so, he is your Christ. He is your Savior.

[21 : 54] He is your Lord. You confess, Jesus is my Savior. Savior. It's one thing to correctly identify someone.

It's another thing to have an invested relationship with that person. You might have some of the first through third graders in here. A couple weeks ago in Sunday school, do you remember the difference between the knowing about somebody and actually knowing somebody?

We talked about the difference between saying, I know the president. And actually what I should have said is, I know about the president. The same is true here. We not only know about Jesus, we know what is true of Jesus, but we know him.

We have a relationship with him. We need to have right theology about Jesus. And we also need to know him. We need to relate to him.

And so we see here that both defenses come together in this beautiful harmony. We need the truth to abide in us. And we need to abide in Jesus.

[23 : 09] Some of us, myself included, can struggle with being overly intellectual. We love the truth. We love soaking up the truth.

We love learning the truth and more deeply growing in our knowledge of the truth. We love the gospel. We love reading books about the gospel. We love confessing Jesus is the Christ.

We're excited about theology. We like reading theological books and articles and listening to theological podcasts. We are all in on the truth abiding in us.

We confess Jesus is the Christ with gladness. But abiding in Jesus. Relating to Jesus. For some of us, that's challenging.

We read the Bible and we're energized as we grow in our knowledge of the truth, but we stop short of actually reading the Bible to know and love and worship and adore the Savior that the truth teaches us of.

[24 : 12] There's this disassociation between the head and the heart. We have a deep affection for knowledge of God, which is good, but we stop short of actually knowing God.

That's some of us. Then others of us can struggle in the opposite way. We love knowing Jesus, relating to Jesus. Our affections are warmed at the thought of Him and speaking to Him.

But then we struggle to know the truth about Him because we're not in the truth to know Him. And so we begin to fashion a Jesus in our own image because we don't actually know what the truth says about this Jesus that we love.

So both positions are incredibly, they're dangerous in their imbalance. A maturing Christian knows the truth more and more, knows the Word of God more and more, and a maturing Christian knows the God of the Word more and more.

They go hand in hand in perfect harmony. Confess Jesus and abide in Jesus. Stay close to Jesus. That's the second defense that we're given.

[25 : 36] Here's the third. Defense number three. Wait for Jesus. Verse 28. And now, little children, abide in Him so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink from Him in shame at His coming.

If you know that He is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him. are you eager?

Are you eager? Are you eager for Christ to return? When you consider that day, what fills your heart? Those who abide in Jesus, those who are indeed beloved children of God, we have no need for dread.

We have no need for fear. We wait with joy and eagerness. We are longing for the day when Jesus comes because on that day, we can be sure of this.

No judgment awaits us. No judgment awaits those beloved by God. No fear of God's wrath. No fear of condemnation. So, we won't shrink in shame at His coming if we're abiding in Him.

[26 : 56] If we've been close to Jesus, communing with Jesus, then His appearance, it's going to be a welcome sight to us. We won't be caught off guard. We won't be caught unawares because we won't be busy doing our own thing, living our own way, so much so that we're somehow surprised at His appearing.

So, how do we wait? What does our waiting look like? How do we wait well? Now, waiting can sound like a very passive activity.

No one bursts into a waiting room with their game face on. Like, I am here and I am ready to wait. I am hardcore waiting. Nobody does that.

And if you did, that would be very socially unacceptable. It is appropriate that we're pretty passive in the waiting room at the doctor's office. Nobody's in there all jazzed up to be at the doctor's office.

We're going to sit quietly, maybe read a magazine, Home and Garden. Only time some of us ever read that magazine. We're going to wait. But the waiting that we see in the Word is not this passive kind of waiting.

[28 : 10] Waiting for Christ, there is an active engagement to it. Think less about the waiting room in the doctor's office and think more about the waiting that is done at the airport by a crowd of friends and family who are eager for a loved one who's coming home.

Maybe they've been away for months, maybe years, and these people are very excited for that loved one to return. There is intentional effort that has gone into this waiting.

Signs have been made, people have been called, the words have been prepared to say to this loved one. There is an active engagement that goes on in that waiting.

Can you imagine those people at the airport waiting for that loved one like they would be waiting at the doctor's office? Got their Home and Garden magazine, maybe taking a little nap while they wait.

That would be inappropriate. That would be socially odd. Don't those people want to see this loved one? They are all here and they're just going to sit like they're at the doctor's office? We don't wait like we're at the doctor's office.

[29 : 18] We wait like we're at the airport. We work hard in our waiting. Where do we see that here in this chapter? Well, what does John say at the conclusion of our verses?

You may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him. You wait by making a practice of righteousness.

Not sitting idly back and waiting for the Lord to return. It's not a lazy waiting. We are practicing righteousness. We are striving after holiness.

We are seeking to put sin to death in our lives. Similar to what God teaches us in 2 Peter 3. There we read these words beginning in verse 11.

Since then all these things are thus to be dissolved. So since this is how God is going to bring all things to a conclusion at the end of history, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn.

[30 : 35] So we wait for the coming of the day of the Lord but we wait by living holy lives. We don't wait with our hands folded and our eyes closed at the doctor's office.

We don't wait with a magazine like Home and Garden. In our waiting we aren't just passing the time. Read 2 Thessalonians. You will see that is not how we ought to wait.

What does Peter say? We are hastening the coming of the day. What does he mean by that? Hastening the coming of the day. The return of Christ hurries on as God works through human agents.

As God sovereignly works through our efforts feeble as they may be he is bringing to pass his plans just as he intended.

Yet again a beautiful mystery there. but he is hastening. He is working through our effort to bring that day to pass. We aren't lounging around as we wait.

[31 : 45] We are hastening it in God's perfect timing. And so how incredible is it to think that God actually involves us in that way. We are hard at work in our waiting.

So this is the defense that God has given to us. We wait for Jesus and when the Lord returns what a day that will be. That day is coming soon.

And until that day comes we continue to abide in Christ. We continue to meet him in his word. We continue to meet him in prayer. We continue to meet him around the Lord's table.

We continue to do the hard work of keeping a close walk with him. obviously we don't relate to Jesus like we may relate to other people.

We don't hear his audible voice. We don't see his physical body. It's hard enough to relate to people over the phone or on FaceTime or in a text or an email but we don't even have those options available to communicate in those ways.

[32 : 54] And so for now we continue to meet him in his word and prayer at the Lord's table. And he meets us by his spirit. And he has promised that one day we will see him face to face.

That day is coming. For now we see in a mirror dimly lit but then face to face. And when we see his face it will be shining on us.

May God's face shine upon you shine upon us in his presence. And so we wait for that day. We wait with eager expectation.

Eternal life is yours John says. God has promised it to his people. So don't be easily deceived. Be on guard.

Confess Jesus. Abide in Jesus. Wait for Jesus. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father much like this morning we give you thanks that you have given us your word and that we can know with confidence your word is the truth.

[34 : 12] We pray Lord that you would sanctify us with the truth. We pray Lord that you would help us to know and understand what you have said in your word.

Not just so that we may gain more knowledge about it but so that we may better know your son. That we may have even greater affection and love for him.

Foster that within us we pray. We thank you Lord that you give us these defenses but we thank you most of all that we can entrust our lives to you knowing that you are our defense.

That you give us commands to confess to abide to wait but Lord we recognize that you must preserve us. So we give you thanks that you do.

We pray Lord that you would help us all the more to trust you. We pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen.