

Do Not Be Deceived – Part 2

1 John 2:18-28

Pastor John Miller

...And I want you to follow with me in your Bible, 1st John verse 24, and let's read our text. John says, "Let that therefore abide in you in which you have heard from the beginning. If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the son and in the Father.

And this is the purpose or the promise of God that he has promised us even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that would seduce you or lead you astray. But the anointing which you have received from him, if it abides in you, you need not that any man teaches you, but the same anointing which teaches you all things and is truth and is no lie. And even as that have taught you, you shall abide in him."

In the verse 18, that introduces the section of the test of the doctrine of Christ, John says these words, "Little children, it is the last time. And as you have heard, the antichrist shall come even now there are many antichrist in the world. This is how we know it is the last day." And then in verse 28, "And now little children." Now I point that out to you because this phrase, little children, they're like the bookends of the section on the doctrine of Christ and not being deceived by antichrist.

In verse 18, "Little children," John speaking as a pastor to the people, he says, "it is the last time." John tells us that we're living in the last hour. Now how do we know that it is the last hour? Verse 18, "The presence and the proliferation of antichrist teachers, they are a forerunner of the antichrist who is yet to come. There's coming a man we call the antichrist, but he will come or be revealed after the church I believe is raptured or caught up to be with Christ and he will be on earth for seven years. He will be a world ruling dictator.

But before that man of sin called the son of perdition comes on the scene. There will be other antichrist, they will be false teachers, they will be deceivers." And John says that they will deny that Jesus is the Christ. We saw that last Sunday. Look at verse 22 in this chapter, "Who is a liar, but he that denies the Jesus is the Christ the Messiah. He is antichrist that denies the father and the son."

Now, that means more than just Jesus is not the Messiah. That means that they deny his virgin birth. They deny his divine nature and human nature. They deny his sinless life. They deny his substitutionary death upon the cross. They deny his bodily resurrection and ascension. They deny his second coming. They are antichrist and they are in the world today. And so John is writing these things that we be not deceived following them.

Notice verse 26 of chapter two. He says in verse 26, "These things have I written unto you." John is telling us why he wrote these words. "Concerning them who would seduce you or lead you astray." John is telling us the whole reason for this epistle and especially the reason for this

section is I don't want you to be deceived.

You say, "Well, that's a scary thought, Pastor John, could I be deceived? Could I be led astray? Is there any defense that I might have to protect me from the cultist on my doorstep or from the false preacher on the television or from literature that is antichrist or from a false prophet?" The answer is yes. God has given us what we need as his little children to defend ourselves against the false teaching and deception of the antichrist.

There are four things that I see in this passage that are a defense against deception. This passage is what I call a prescription for deception. It is a prescription to protect us or defend us against those who would lead us astray or seduce us. If you're writing notes, I want you to write them down. There are four of them and they're so very important.

Now what I want to point out is normally I will follow in chronological order through the text, but I have taken the liberty today to take this passage, rearrange my points all from the passage, but to put them in a logical or theological order. There's an order to how I'm going to package them for you. But if you're taking notes, write this down. Number one, God has given us the defense against deception in that we have the life of God in our soul. Just write down life of God.

And for that I want you to look at verse 25. And this is the promise that he, that is a reference to Jesus, has promised us even eternal life. The he there is emphatic in the Greek and it means he himself and no one else. Jesus has promised to us eternal life. Remember John 3:16, you all know it right? For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten son, that whoever... What? Believes in him shall not perish but have, here it is, everlasting life. I love that.

If you are a Christian, you have everlasting life. Thus the title of our series, life that is real. You have life that is real. Now, what exactly do we mean by everlasting life? I'm glad you asked the question. Everlasting life has two aspects to it. It means quantity. I will live forever. But it actually primarily has the idea of quality, a new dimension, a new sphere, a new kind of life.

You're not really living until you've accepted Jesus Christ and been born again. Amen. The Bible says that we're dead in our trespasses and sins. And by the way, when the Bible describes us as being dead in sin, the idea conveyed there is that we're separated from God. It doesn't mean that we have no ability to choose to believe in Jesus or to reject Jesus. It's not talking about what some called the bondage of the will.

It's talking about a state in which we are separated from God. The word death literally means separation. That's why physical death is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body, the physical body, separation, death. Spiritual death is the separation of the believer, the person from God. You're separated from God. We're all born spiritually, dead, separated from God. We need to be born again of the spirit and we need to come back into a relationship with God.

And at that moment, theologians use the term you are regenerated. That means you're given new life. And that new life is this very thing, eternal life. It's life on a new plane, it's life on a new dimension, the sky looks bluer, the grass looks greener, the birds sing a little nicer. You don't

shoot at them anymore. I had a friend the other day said he was shooting at crows. They were so noisy at his house. Like you're going to get arrested for that, dude.

But everything is better. Food tastes better. You just have more joy in your heart. You come into a new dimension, a new plane. It's what we call eternal life. And you're not really living until you have the life of God in your soul. Now, the unregenerated individual or the unsaved person, the non-Christian, he's what the Bible calls a natural man or woman. In other words, they only operate on the physical plane. They don't have spiritual life.

Eternal life is a spiritual life that starts the moment you believe in Jesus Christ and you are born again. But I want you to understand something. The moment you trust in Jesus Christ, you have present possession eternal life. Jesus said, "Whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

Isn't that awesome? Right now when you leave church this morning and you're driving out of the parking lot, just tell yourself, "I have eternal life. That's good news. I have eternal life. Not only will I live with God when I get to heaven, but I have the life of God right now in my soul." When you die, you're going to go to heaven, but before you die, you got heaven in your soul.

A little faith will get your soul to heaven. A lot of faith will bring heaven to your soul. And you can live your life with the joy of the Lord. You can wake up in the morning actually singing. Think about that. My dad used to come to work on Monday morning whistling. My dad was a whistler. He'd whistle all the time. And this coworker, his name was John Miller. He said, "John Miller, shut up. Just don't swing anyone." And they had headaches and they'd been partying and they had the hangovers. And they'd say, "Why are you so happy anyway, Miller?" And he'd smile real big and say, "Because I have Jesus in my heart. I have Jesus in my heart."

And you got something to smile about. You can actually go to work on Monday morning and actually be happy because you have eternal life. You have the joy of the Lord, the life of God in your soul. Now, how is this a defense against deception? You can't be led astray when you have the truth of God abiding in your life. If you are a child of God, we learn from this letter, you will walk in the light, you will confess your sins, you'll keep his commandments, you'll love your brother, and you will believe that Jesus is the Christ or he is the Messiah.

My question to you today is is the life of God in your soul? That's the only thing that can make you a child of God. Going to church won't make you a child of God. Being baptized won't make you a child of God. Reading your Bible won't make you a child of God. You have to actually put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ to be saved. Are you saved? Are you born again? Is the life of God in your soul? There's nothing more important than for you to know that you have eternal life.

Here's the second defense, write this down. It is the spirit of God in dwelling you so you have the life of God, having regenerated you. You have the spirit of God that is now indwelling you and teaching you all things and teaching you and leading you into truth. Go back with me. We read it last Sunday, verse 20 of chapter two. John says, "But you have an unction." Notice you

have an unction, referring to the believers. "From the Holy one," which is a reference to Christ. "And you know all things." You have this intuitive knowledge. You have this understanding from the Holy Spirit.

Now the Holy Spirit is called here an unction and it comes from Jesus, the holy one. All Christians have the Holy Spirit. Now jump down to our text, verse 27. "But the anointing," same reference to the Holy Spirit as there in verse 20. "But the anointing which you have received of him," when did you receive it of him? The moment you got the life of God. "If he abides in you, you need not that any man teach you. But the same anointing, the Holy Spirit, he will teach you all things and is truth." Notice that. "And is no lie, even as that have taught you, you shall abide in him. All Christians have been given the Holy Spirit as a permanent in dwelling and abiding in your life."

Now, I want to make this very, very clear because I occasionally run into people that believe that you can be a Christian without having the Holy Spirit. No, you cannot. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit. And when you have the Holy Spirit, you have eternal life. And when you have the Holy Spirit, he's the spirit of truth. He's not only the Holy Spirit, he's the spirit of truth. He's inspired God's word, which is true and he's abiding in you and dwelling in you. And this is why John makes this statement here in verse 27. "You need not that any man teaches you."

Now that troubles some people or it confuses them. What do you mean? Aren't you a teacher? Aren't you a pastor? Aren't you teaching the Bible? Yes. And the Bible teaches that God has given to the church pastor teachers. And I believe to be a pastor you have to be a teacher. You can be a teacher without being a pastor, but you can't be a pastor without being a teacher.

Because that's what God is doing. He's giving the pastor teacher to teach the church. You say, "Well, the Bible just said here, no man needs to teach us." Let's take it in context. In the context He's talking about false teachers. And these false teachers were wanting to add to the scriptures. They were wanting to give new revelation. They were known as gnostics. And they wanted to initiate these believers into their gnostic knowledge club and wanted to give them or dispense to them truth that doesn't come from the apostles, doesn't come from the word of God, but comes from another source.

And let me just tell you plainly, you don't need that kind of teaching. Anybody that comes along and tells you that you need more than the Bible, you need more than the word of God. You need more than the scriptures, reject that. I believe what John is saying here, "When you have no need a man teach you," he means that the Christian does not need any teaching apart from what is found in the word of God as to the truth of God.

One thing about the cults is they always pedal their literature. They've translated the Bible themselves. How convenient? They have their magazines. They claim if you read the Bible by itself, you'll go into darkness. But if you read the Bible with our awake magazines, you'll go into light. How convenient? You've got to have our teaching, our literature. I am not afraid to give somebody a Bible and tell them, "Read the Bible. God can speak through his word."

And when someone says, "Well, the Bible is only accurate as so far as it's accurately translated. And wherever the Bible contradicts the Book of Mormon, the Book of Mormon is the authority." And they got the doctrine of the covenants and the Pearl of Great Price and they have their science and health to the scriptures and all the different books and magazines they try to pedal. You need nothing more than the word of God.

And here's also an important truth. Though God has given teachers to the church, guess who is the real teacher. The Holy Spirit. And I can talk up here until I'm blue in the face. And lest the Holy Spirit takes God's word and makes it real to you, opens up your eyes, opens up your heart, opens up your ears. That's what we call illumination. The Bible is given by inspiration. The Holy Spirit brings illumination and then the Holy Spirit produces transformation of our lives.

I may be a teacher, but there's a Holy Spirit that opens your heart. It's a Holy Spirit that opens your eyes. It's the Holy Spirit that transforms your life. It's a Holy Spirit that speaks to you. Sometimes people will come out and say, "How did you know what I needed to hear today? Have you been bugging our house? You've been listening in on our conversations?" Yeah, we put little bugging devices on the bulletins. And when you take them out, pastors listen all like, "Ooh, that's juicy. Ooh, I got to preach on that this Sunday. Oh, yeah."

We don't do that. But the Holy Spirit knows you and he knows what you need. And he takes the word of God and the Spirit of God, transforms the child of God into the image of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. You ever been reading your Bible and John Miller's not even talking? And just the spirit of God just shows you something. You go, "Whoa, that's awesome. Whoa, that's cool. I didn't even need Pastor Miller for that one."

That's right, because the Holy Spirit is your teacher and you ought to thank God for that. And guess what? The Holy Spirit again is the spirit of truth. And he will lead you and he will guide you into all truth. Nothing more important to keep from being deceived by the cults that have the life of God and the spirit of God dwelling in you. And I'll throw this in for what it's worth. I believe that when you are born again and the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you, I believe he stays there forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever. Jesus said these words, he said, "He will abide with you forever."

Now you can grieve him and you can lie to him and you can resist him because every Christian has the spirit, but the Spirit does not have every Christian. That's what's called being filled with the Holy Spirit. But you cannot grieve him away. He's come to abide with you forever. That's sonship, not fellowship. First John 1:9, restores our fellowship with God. "If we confess our sin, he's faithful and just to forgive us and he cleanse us from all unrighteousness and then we are in fellowship with him once again."

But the Holy Spirit comes as a abiding possession into the life and the heart of the believer. But the Spirit of God uses this third defense and that is the word of God. Here it is, number one, the life of God. Number two, the spirit of God. And here's point number three. Write this down if you're taking notes, the word of God. I want you to see that in verse 24. Go back to verse 24.

"Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning," which is a reference to God's word. "If that what you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." We have the life of God. We have the spirit of God and we have the word of God. Verse 24 begins with an emphatic personal pronoun, you, you. Literally translated, it would be, "You stick to the original teaching. You heard from the beginning."

This is why I have that statement. I quote Harry Allen Ironside, I'll never get tired of quoting it. "If it's new, it's not true. If it's true, it's not new. That's what John's saying." Somebody comes along and, "Hey, come over here. I got something nobody's ever seen before. I got something no one ever knew before. It's not in the Bible, but it's the word of God and I want to give it to you for 39,99."

There's always a cost involved. You buy these CD packets and you'll learn things you've never heard before. You want to know why? Because they're not in the Bible. And it's like going to the grocery store. It always says new and improved. No, it is not. But they put one more flake in your Cornflake box. New and improved. No, it's not.

You don't need a new and improved gospel. Amen. Same gospel Paul preached and Peter preached and James preached and Jesus preached. It's good enough for Paul and Silas, it's good enough for me. Amen. I got nothing new to give to you. I have no new truth to deliver to you. That what you heard from the beginning, if it abides in you. It's the teaching of the word of God, the gospel, teaching of Jesus and the word of God.

In Colossians 3:16, Paul says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." This is a command to let God's word abide in us. I want you to notice three key words in verse 24. If you have the liberty to mark your Bible, check them out. The word abide, the word remain and the word continue. See them there in verse 24, abide, remain and continue.

What do we abide in? The word of God. What do we remain in? The word of God. What do we continue in? The word of God. The kids sing it in Sunday School. We need to sing it in the sanctuary. The B-I-B-L-E. Yes, that's the book for me. I stand alone on the word of God, the B-I-B-L-E. I love that song. This is the sufficient word.

I believe in the inspiration of scripture. I believe in the sufficiency of scripture. I believe in the clarity of scripture. God said what he said is very clear. Somebody comes along and says, "I've got some hidden code in the Bible." God doesn't hide stuff. "I got some new insight no one's ever known before." God is light and in him is no darkness at all. God wants to reveal truth to you. He doesn't hide it from you. You don't need to be initiated into the deeper life club.

The Bible is your greatest defense against the cultist on your doorstep. You know who the cults like to pray on? They like to pray on people who go to churches where they're not taught the Bible. I mentioned it for service. I say this with all love and compassion, but cults love to pray on Roman Catholics because they believe in God and they love God and they go to church, but

they don't generally know their Bibles.

And, "Oh, we're here. We'll teach you the Bible." And they start denying the Trinity and they start denying the deity of Christ. Things that in the Roman Catholic Church are believed and held but the sad thing is the Bible is not in the pew. When you come to Revival Christian Fellowship, I want you to come with a Bible. And if you don't come with a Bible, I want you to pick one out of the pew rack and I want you to put your name in it and make it yours. Take it home and bring it back next Sunday. It's yours. I want you to read it.

And when I preach on Sunday, I want you to bring your Bible. Well, I do it on my phone. Come on. You know you're texting during the sermon. You're watching a sporting event. "Oh, yeah. Preach it Pastor Miller." Now if you're watching me, you're following me in your Bible phone, that's fine, but nothing like a real Bible. Amen.

Amen.

Amen. I like to feel the Bible. I like to smell the Bible. I like to touch the Bible. I love Bibles. But not the book itself. It's the living word of God alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. If you want to be protected against deception, immerse your mind, your heart, your soul in the Bible.

Know what you believe. Know why you believe it. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and it is profitable for what is right, for what is wrong, how to get right and how to stay right, that you might be firmly equipped in your service to God. But there's a fourth and last defense against deception and it's in verse 28, abiding in God. We have the life of God, the spirit of God, the word of God. And last but not least, verse 28, abiding in God. Let's read the verse.

John says, "And now little children," so this is a summary of the section on truth. "Now little children abide in him that when he shall appear, you shall have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming." Again he uses that endearing term, little children, it's teknon, it's born ones. He's talking to true Christians. What does he tell them to do? Verse 28, abide in him. What does it mean to abide in him? It speaks of your union and communion with Jesus Christ.

Christians are to abide in Christ. Jesus described it in John 15 when he gave the parable of the vine. He said, "I am the vine. You are the branches." He said, "My father, by the way is the husband man or the farmer, God, the farmer. And I'm the vine. You're the branches." The branch is going to produce fruit. It's got to stay connected to the vine, right? You're supposed to say yes.

Yes.

Thank you very much. I got to tell you what you're supposed to say. The branch has to stay connected to the vine. If the vine breaks while the fruit is green and hard and small, and the branch breaks off and the branch is separate. At one time I had a apricot tree. I love apricots. If you have any apricots, I could dig them.

The branch broke off and the apricots were still green. And this thing was, it broke off because the branch was so loaded with fruit. And it broke off and all those apricots were lost. They didn't ripen, they didn't mature. And that's what happens to you as a believer. If you don't stay in union and you don't stay in communion and you don't stay connected to the vine, you will wither and you will die. We have to stay abiding in Christ.

Now, in this closing verse, he gives us two reasons we should abide in him, or three reasons. Number one, he is coming again, appearing. Number two, we want to have confidence when he comes. We want to have plainness of speech and be able to look him in the face. And then number three is negative that we not be ashamed when he comes. Now, I want you to notice again three key words in verse 28. Abide, appearing and ashamed. Abide, appearing, and ashamed. Why should we abide in Jesus Christ? Because he is appearing.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is coming again? I do. I didn't mention this for service, but in the Greek, it's actually if he appears. Not if with doubt, he may not appear, if he appears that he may appear at any moment. That's what John is saying. Do you know that John actually believed that Jesus could come in his time, in his day?

It means that they were living in constant expectation of the coming of the Lord, which by the way supports a pre-tribulation rapture. That Jesus could come even though the antichrist has not been revealed, that Jesus could come even though the tribulation doesn't start. They lived with the expectation what's called the eminent return of Christ, that nothing had to happen before Christ came back. And if John thought that Jesus could come in his day, how much more should we believe Jesus could come in our day?

Why should I abide in him? If he may come at any moment. He may come today. Will I be confident? I want to abide in him, notice in verse 28, so that I can have confidence. The word confidence means plainness of speech. The word conveys the idea of being able to look at someone in the face and talk with them.

The opposite is this phrase we see in verse 28, ashamed, that we be not ashamed when he comes. The word ashamed means to turn away your face. Did you ever notice when somebody is ashamed, they hide their face, they look down? You see these guys that are cuffed up on the news and they're being brought out of the jail and the cameras are there and they're ashamed and they turn their faces.

When Jesus Christ comes back, there are some Christians, and I do believe that this is a reference to Christians, not non-Christians who are ashamed, but Christians. In the context and in the grammar I believe it supports this position that these are Christians who are ashamed when Jesus comes back. Think about that. It's supposed to be a glad day. It's supposed to be a glorious day. Why would they be ashamed? Because they have lived for self. They have lived for self.

They had the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit didn't have them. Maybe they lived in rebellion or

disobedience. There was something going on in their life. And I believe that it's possible to have a saved soul, but a wasted life. I believe it's possible to know I'm going to heaven. My sins are forgiven. The Holy Spirit is in me. I'm sealed into the day of redemption, but I have a wasted life.

I not only want to have a saved soul, I want to have a useful life, a sanctified life. I don't want to be ashamed when Jesus comes back. I want to hear those words "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of the Lord." I don't want to look down and say, "Oh, man, I should have preached more. I should have lived a more godly life, or I should have given more money to missions. I should have served the Lord more. Lord, just I'm ashamed." I want to be able to look into the face of Jesus Christ and be unashamed when he comes.

If you're a Christian, my question to you is, are you going to be ashamed when the Lord returns? Abide in him. Now, to wrap up these last two Sundays messages, I have three thoughts. Number one, truth matters. What you believe will determine how you behave. Do not despise truth. We live in a culture today, and in many cases, Christians have bought into it. The truth is relative. The truth is not important.

We actually live in a culture today that has abandoned any concept of absolute truth. I have a friend that did a video, walked on some university campuses and asked college students, "Do you believe in truth? Do you believe there is truth?" And student after student after student said, "No, no, no, no, no. There is no such thing as truth." And I love it. My friend that was doing the interview said, "Is that a true statement?"

You should have seen their eyes get big. "Well, I never thought of that." These are your bright university students that are going to be our leaders tomorrow. Duh. No, there isn't any truth. Is that a true statement? Well, I guess there's one truth that there is no truth. Some of them said that. Also, you can arbitrarily willy-nilly just invent the fact that one truth is true, but no other truth is truth. You're not thinking.

Truth is that which conforms to reality. They're not living in the real world. Truth matters, people of God. Truth matters, my beloved children of God. And as a church, we have to be devoted to truth, uncompromising in the essentials doctrines of Christ. I will never stop preaching that Jesus Christ is the second person of the Godhead. That God is triune, God the Father, God the Son, God, the only spirit. That Jesus was born of a virgin, that Jesus had two natures, divine and human. That Jesus lived a sinless life, that Jesus died on the cross for your sins. That Jesus rose physically bodily from the dead, that Jesus ascended into heaven, that Jesus is coming back, that Jesus will set up his kingdom on earth for 1,000 years, and that will flow into eternity. I'll never stop preaching that so long as God gives me breath.

Because that is true. It's the doctrine of Christ. Don't be intimidated by the world. Don't be intimidated by the philosophies of the world. Truth matters, and you have the truth in your Bible. You have God's word and the truth will set you free. Second thing that we learned from this passage we've studied for the last two weeks is that as Christians, we have a responsibility to know that truth. Do you know what the Bible teaches about God? Do you know what the Bible

teaches about Jesus?

I find it funny that Christians, just about anybody can be an expert in some field. Some of you know a lot about golf. Some of you know a lot about motorcycles, some of you are experts about cars and engines, some of you know geology, you know astrology, you know biology. You're experts in sporting field or other field. You have an area of expertise. But yet when it comes to knowing the Bible, you don't really know what you believe. You don't know why you believe it.

The time has come for Christians to know what they believe and why they believe it. And that the foundation for what they believe and why they believe is found in the word of God and in the word of God alone. Scripture is all that we need for life and godliness. And some cultist comes along to you and says, "Hey, I want to teach you." And it's new, it's not true. And if it's true, it's not new. And the Holy Spirit will tell you the truth and the spirit will set you free.

Truth matters and truth should be known by Christians. Know what you believe and why. And thirdly, and lastly, the life of God, the Spirit of God and the word of God and abiding in God are your defense against the lies and the deception that is so prevalent in our culture today. Be grounded in the word. Be growing in the word and experience the life of God in your soul. Yield to the spirit of truth in your heart. Pick up your Bible and know the word of God. Know what you believe and why. And abide in Christ that when he comes back and he's coming soon, that you'll not be ashamed at his coming, but that you'll have confidence when he comes. Amen. Let's pray.