

Anti-Christ is Here.

1st John 2:15-27

Hebrews 1

Responsive Reading 1 Peter 1:13-21

Last week we ended here at verse 18, this section about not loving the world actually has some pretty harsh implications, that really would not sit well with most people in 2018, and not just people outside the church, but even people who count themselves a part of the church.

John tell us, that if we love the world, then the Father is not in us. John really isn't talking about the world as the physical world itself, but rather he is using the term to lump into everything together that is fallen, and in rebellion against God. It is the society, the habits, and preferences. The way that John is using the word world here, he is that talking about our societal environment, the culture that is around us. The things that our society counts as values, customs, traditions, and philosophies.

Our culture and society influences us, in ways that we are probably not aware of. If we just look at our society today, and were we are today from where we were 20 years ago we can see a trend that is falling further and further away from God. There was a time when the general consensus in society that attending church was just a good thing to do. While the reasoning behind it may have not been completely right, and even those who said that often found excuses not to attend themselves there was at least an understanding of it's importance.

Now we see quite the opposite, most see it as a waste of time with no real redeeming value. And churches have conformed to society in an attempt to bring people in. Trying to make church more appealing, a fun place to be. We have denominations who claim Christ, but approve of things that scripture clearly states as sin. The culture of the world has influenced these churches and this is exactly what John is saying we need to not do.

There was a time when infidelity, and promiscuity was shameful. But now it seems to be something our society brags about, and takes pride in. We can not let society, our culture, dictate to us what is right and wrong. The bible clearly instructs us in this regard and it puts us at odds with the world, with society, and with the culture around us. And it should, for there is a type of christian culture that runs against secular society. As society continues on its path of accepting more and more sinful behavior, Christians live in a culture of stability, where there is a clear right and wrong. Morality is not a line that moves with the cultural norms, it is found in scripture, and in Christ.

As I was thinking on our past studies, the thought came to me that Paul, James, John, and every other author in scripture does something that our society can not accept. They all claim absolutes, scripture is not dictated by what you think or feel about it, it is absolute. This statement we see here that John says, if you love the world or the things in the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

This destroys the modern notion of a carnal christian. Someone who is claiming God, but lives like the world, As the saying goes, you can't have your cake and eat it to. This seem like such a simple, and easy thing, you either love the world, or you love God. But in our post modern society this is a judgmental, bigoted, narrow minded thing to say. We live in a society now were people can determine what ever they want to be true, there is not such thing as an objective truth, it is all what you think, how you feel about it.

This shows up in everything in our society, sometimes it is subtle, and we have become so ingrained in this thought process now that sometimes we don't even see it. This really is nothing new, Satan has been attacking truth from the beginning.

We see it in the account in the garden when he tells Eve, did god truly tell you that you would die? You won't die, God just doesn't want you to be like him, that is why he said you can't eat that fruit. Satan's target is always truth, if he can destroy the idea that there is anything objectively true then mankind is lost in their own lusts, and deceived in their desires because what is wrong is only what I determine is wrong.

And it seems that the world is falling further, and further from truth for in this day and age we are told that what we feel, and what we think is truth. One example of this became apparent to me after watching the Wonder Woman Movie. It was your typical evil bad guy wants to destroy the world and only this super hero can save it, but in this instance the bad guy is supposedly the God Ares, the God of War who is influencing mankind to fight, and kill each other to prove to Zeus that his creation is wicked and evil. Well Wonder Woman stands as the pure good, and struggles because she sees good, and evil in mankind, but in the end she determines it doesn't matter if there is evil in mankind all that really matters is that one believes that there is good.

No objective truth, it's subtle, but it is there...there really is no evil, and good but rather it is all together and what matters is what you believe it to be. And this mindset has been influencing the churches we see it even in what is considered orthodox faith, despite what scripture teaches about fallen mankind, and salvation, what seems to be the predominate view in christian society today is free-will Arminianism. I will determine my fate, I will decide, I will believe, I will make a choice, I will determine what is true, even though the bible says over and over that it is not you, but it is God who works in you.

The world has influenced the church, Truth has become what we make it, it is what we believe, it is malleable, changeable. The statements that John makes here, you are either walking in the light, or you are in darkness, you either love the world, or you love the father, These statements are no longer accepted in some circles, If we were to make a statement such as John's here, if we were to tell some one that you are not sure about their Christian faith, the response is always, . How dare you judge them, just because they are living in sin doesn't mean they aren't Christians they are just carnal Christians! You can't be so absolute, what about forgiveness and love isn't that what its all about?

We have all heard these arguments before, and from those who are inside the church, the world has influenced the church and we should be standing up against such false teachings, and ideas. As I said a few weeks ago, what we saw in Galatians, James, and now this book all 3 authors were dealing with false teachers who had arisen within the body of believers and was leading them astray. And now we see the same thing with our society and culture's influence with in the church.

Verse 18, John tells his readers, that this is the last hour. Earlier in chapter 1 verse 8, he says that the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining, then here in chapter 2, 17 he says the world is passing away but he who does the will of the God abides forever. John sees that mankind has come to the end, we are in the final chapter of God's plan. We see the author of Hebrews using this language in our reading this morning, God who at various times and in various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets has in these last days spoken to us by his Son.

I do not think that John is referring to the last days as our Dispensational brothers and sisters

may understand this to be. But rather that there is no further revelation, God has unfolded his redemption plan, and all that is left is for its culmination.

Those who would fall under the Dispensational camp see the setting up of the church in Acts as the beginning of the last days, and we are now in this parenthesis, this church age, awaiting Christ's return and final fulfillment to his promises of Israel. But I don't think that is what John means by the last days per say, I don't think that the formation of the church in acts is a new dispensation, or necessarily a last and final act that is ushering in the last days, but rather I think that John sees Christ's incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection as the event that has ushered in the last days . We see this here in Galatians chapter 4, when Paul says When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman. Or as we saw in 1 Peter 1:20 when he says that Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world but was manifest in these last times for you.

Interestingly the Apostle John is the only one who actually used the term anti-Christ. There has been a whole doctrine set up around this term that only appears here in John's writing. John himself tells us exactly what he means by this, in verse 22 here he says Who is a liar, but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is anti-Christ who denies the Father and the Son. Chapter 4:3 he says that every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God, and this spirit is the spirit of the anti-Christ, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. And again in 2nd John verse 7, he says, For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist.

Another thing of note, that the original language does not have capitalization, so here in verse 18 that we see the capitalization of Antichrist, that was something the translators did, applying their own understanding to the translation of this verse. So after looking over John's own description of Antichrist, it is clear he isn't necessarily talking of a single individual in the future to come and set up his kingdom on earth in the last days. But rather it is anyone who denies Christ, and anyone who denies the incarnation, the very people who were sitting in the churches John wrote to, these Gnostic denied Jesus, and John is calling them out.

John says that Antichrists have already come, and there are more coming. It is something that will be a constant battle for the church. Deceivers, false teachers, people will come up and attempt to lead God's children away from the truth. This goes back around to last weeks message about the fellowship of believers, and protecting that fellowship. That is why it is so important to guard the church, to guard Christ's bride from those who would try to woo her away and turn her against her one true love.

That being all said though, scripture does warn us of a man of sin, a man of lawlessness who will come. 2nd Thessalonians, 2:3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God showing himself that he is God.

If we use John's own description of antichrist, someone who is against christ, using that term toward this man of sin is not improper, or wrong, for that is exactly what this man of sin is, he will be someone who sets himself up as God, but we just need to be mindful that we do not make John say something here he may not be because of our own doctrinal grid. I think it is better to use the terms as they are used in scripture by the authors themselves as opposed to making them mean something that might not have been intended.

So John continues, in verse 19, talking about these antichrists, he says that they have left us, they went out from us because they were not of us, if they had been of us they would have continued with us. The implications of this are something is something once again that is hard to hear for the modern mind.

What John is saying, that these who we today might call carnal Christians, who have left the fellowship and have forsaken the gathering together have done so because they were actually not a part of the fellowship to begin with. One who truly is regenerate, and a part of the family of God will remain in the truth, and will remain with the people of God. God's word is full of promises that he will never lose his children, While the term we hear in baptist churches all the time, once saved, always saved is true, it is only true if you were really saved in the first place. God's people will persevere, through no matter what, even when faced with persecution and death.

There really is no such thing as a carnal christian, as someone who accepted Christ, but has gone back to his old ways. John says these are those who were never a part of us, James calls these the people who have deceived themselves. This is a harsh teaching for the modern mind to accept but it is the truth of scripture. And I think that it is high time that we start calling it what it is instead of reassuring these people that they are ok, That was the entire point of the book of James. Your life reflects what you believe! If your life is not reflecting Christ, then you do not truly believe in him.

Instead of making up excuses for these friends and family members, we should share the gospel when given the opportunity. There are a few here that I know of who in their own testimony now say that they thought they were Christians, , thinking they were doing the right thing until they were confronted with the truth, because their life did not truly line up with what scripture says about God's children. This is not an easy thing to do, nor is it an easy thing to hear but sometimes it is exactly what needs to be said.

And that is exactly what John has done here, he has called out the false believers, the deceivers, the antichrists that have gathered among the church of God. But all is not lost, for he knows that God's people remain, that they persevere, because as he says in verse 20, you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. God's people have the very presence of God with them, the Holy spirit who ministers, and witnesses God's truth to them.

But not only do we have the Holy Spirit, we also have knowledge. John says that we know all things. Imagine how that would be received by the Gnostic. The Gnostic were saying Jesus was not the messiah, could not be because salvation comes from knowledge and knowledge transcends life itself. And John is telling his readers that it is actually they who have knowledge, not these false teachers John is simply reminding them they already have the truth, and that these false teachers are liars. They are antichrists. John said that he is antichrist whoever denies the Father and the Son, and Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father.

This simply truth, actually is very controversial today. The common view it seems in society is that all roads lead to heaven. Eventually everyone will be there as long as they haven't done any really bad sins, or as long as they do more good then bad. But that is not what scripture says, and not what John is saying here. The only way to the Father, is through the Son Jesus Christ.

This actually separates out a lot of religions that are predominant in our society today, with just

this simple test, it disqualifies many as false because they deny the deity, or the person of Christ. It is one of the reasons why Christianity is hated so much by those who are outside of it.

But as we have already seen in chapter 1 of John, We must hold fast to these truths if we want to remain in fellowship with the Father and the Son. John says here in verse 24, Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning, if what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. It is clear from the first chapter, that which we have heard from the beginning is that Jesus, is the Christ, and his people are called to love as Christ has loved them.

It all Comes back around again to the fellowship of the saints, of the gathering together in Christ. Those who abide in him, will gather, will have this fellowship together, they will have love for each other, and their lives will be marked by walking in the light. And John continues here, verse 25...to those who abide in the Father, and the Son have the promise of eternal life.

In closing today, looking at the last few verses of this chapter, John says that this anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, so that you do not need anyone to teach you, but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

John really is not teaching his readers anything new, he really is only reminding all of us of what we have heard from the beginning. He tells us, we don't need teachers teaching us new things because we have the Holy Spirit working in us who teaches us all things. Gone are the days when we needed special prophets to interpret, and signs and wonders to teach us for under this new covenant of Christ, we have the holy spirit abiding in us.

As Jeremiah 31:31-34, says.

D.A Carson says, Jeremiah is not so much anticipating the abolition of teachers but rather the abolition of mediating teachers, teachers with privileged access to God. Under the new covenant, there is no need for priests, for all are priests. Such teachers as the new covenant prescribes are seen as members of the body rather than as priestly mediators.

These false teachers that John is addressing, just like those who Paul was addressing in Galatians have set themselves up as an authority, as someone who has the truth, as someone who has the key to unlock true and real religion and communion with God. But John says, nope, we don't need that because we have Christ who was from the beginning who abides in us.