



REAL CHRISTIANITY

What Jesus Looks Like



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Living In the Last Hour – Part 3

1 John 2:18-29 (24-29)

Tonight we return to our familiar text in 1 John 2.

We have been looking at it for the last two sermons and this morning we finish it.

You know there was an occurrence in the church which had the congregation confused.

There were some who were Defecting from the church, denying Christ, and were seeking to deceive the rest of the church with their false doctrines.

And it seems that the church was having difficulty understanding what was going on.

However, to John the explanation was obvious. "Children, it is the last hour"

Again, "the last hour" refers to the time period between Christ's first and second coming.

- **No one knows how long that is**
- **Only the Father knows when He will send Christ again**
- **It could be today, it could be years from now**

But the time period is called "the last hour" because it is the final chapter of God's redemptive plan.

There's only one thing left to occur and it could occur at any time.

And coupled with this unique time in history is also the promise that in those days there are some who will fall away.

Matthew 24:9-11 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many."

This type of activity just sort of comes with the territory and it shouldn't shock you, it shouldn't be confusing. But John has set out to speak regarding this exodus from the church. So let's go over what we have covered.

#1 SATAN'S SINISTER AGENDA

1 John 2:18-19

We aren't the only ones who realize "it is the last hour"

Satan knows it too.

At any moment Christ could return and crush his head.

HIS TIME IS SHORT. So Satan is running his hurry up offense (he has been for 2,000 years).

But John says God has ordained that some of them leave the church "so that it would be shown that they all are not of us."

But THE SIMPLE POINT you need to understand is that

THERE ARE ANTICHRISTS AMONG US.

Now, that is the reality, but it should not cause anyone to despair.

While it is concerning that Satan is so actively at work to infiltrate and deceive even the church, there is no cause for alarm.

And that is where John went next.

2 YOUR SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGE

1 John 2:20-23

It is true that Satan is at work in non-believers to attack the church.

"But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know."

They may have the god of this world working in them, but we have "the Holy One" working in us.

And as John will say later, "greater is He who is in you than he that is in the world." "The anointing" is nothing less than the outpouring of the Holy Spirit into our lives.

- **It is the Holy Spirit who teaches us**
- **It is the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us**
- **It is the Holy Spirit who seals us**

We are certainly in a battle, but we are not on the losing side.

And we do not fear their lies, because the Holy Spirit has taught us the truth.

As John said, these liars have come in with preposterous deception.

(22) “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.”

- **That is their great lie**
- **They leave the church and they deny Christ**
- **They say Jesus is not the Messiah**

And we know better and we know the truth about Jesus.

But the reason we know that is not because we are somehow smarter or more intelligent than the world.

The reason we know is because we have the Holy Spirit who has come to teach us all things and to testify to us regarding Christ.

- The reason THEY leave the church is because they don't really know Christ
- The reason WE stay is because we do
- And the reason WE know Christ is because of the Holy Spirit

It is encouraging to us to know that God is at work in us and for us.

We are thankful that He did not leave us to our own intellect...

We are thankful that He did not leave us to our own ability to understand...

He poured the Holy Spirit upon us and through Him He gave us the truth regarding Christ. Because of this we are not deceived and because of this we do not defect with them. Just as their lying and leaving proves them false and our overwhelming endurance proves us true.

AND THAT IS WHAT JOHN HAS SHOWN US SO FAR.

- Satan is desperately working to deceive us.
- The Holy Spirit is in us exposing his lies

Satan has a Sinister Agenda, but we have a Spiritual Advantage.

THAT'S GOOD NEWS.

But there is still ONE MORE POINT to be made in this regard.

Tonight we come to the APPLICATION.

All we've really seen so far is a spiritual reality.

- We see Satan at work behind the scenes...
- We see the Holy Spirit at work behind the scenes...

But it still comes to the point of application.

Since we are living in the last hour, John, **WHAT SHALL WE DO?**

Now that we know what's going on, it is time we understand our course of action. There is a real responsibility that now falls to us.

Satan's Sinister Agenda, Your Spiritual Advantage

3. JOHN'S SIMPLE ADMONITION

1 John 2:24-29

We notice the phrase in verse 24, and again in verse 27, "As for you..."

- John spent 6 verses explaining "them"
- John spent 6 verses helping us understand who "they" are and what "they" do.

But now, "As for you..."

And if you were paying attention when you read those six verses the command becomes obvious.

John uses the same word 7 times "Abide"

It is the word MENO in the Greek and it simply means "to remain".

Matthew 10:11 "And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city."

Matthew 26:38 "Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with me." You get it, it's simple.

Stay here and remain here, but don't leave.

THAT IS THE COMMAND! You see these people denying Christ and leaving the church and you don't know how to respond.

It's simple: DON'T GO WITH THEM you stay here. You cling to Christ.

And to this we come across a very important truth that we need to understand.

IN ORDER TO BE SAVED, YOU MUST PERSEVERE UNTIL THE END.

If you do not persevere until the end, you will not be saved.

And this should be obvious to us based on what John just said up in verse 19, "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us."

I mean there was really only one distinguishing mark in that verse. Those who were saved remained, those who were lost departed. In order to be saved, you must persevere until the end. And let's just solidify that real quickly.

(Read Matthew 10:22 and Matthew 24:11-13)

That's pretty clear from our Lord isn't it?

If you want to be saved then you must persevere until the end.

- **You must not leave**
- **You must not defect**
- **You must not deny**
- **You must remain**

Listen to the writer of Hebrews who was dealing with a group of professing Christians who were sort of debating leaving because the persecution was so intense. (Hebrews 3:14) (Hebrews 10:36-39)

There it is again: If you shrink back, if you depart, there is no salvation.

Listen to James 1:12

Listen to Jesus again as He addresses those churches in the Revelation.

Specifically the church at Thyatira :(Revelation 2:25-29) It's unmistakable.

To be saved you must hold fast your faith until the end.

Now at this point someone might say, "Pastor, I thought you believed in the sovereignty of God! I thought you believed in the security of the believer. I thought you believed in 'once saved always saved'."

- I absolutely do
- I absolutely believe that those who are saved will never lose that salvation
- I absolutely believe that the life which Christ gave His own is eternal life

John even reiterates that in verse 25, "This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life." I absolutely believe that those who are saved are secure.

Then you how can you also say that in order to be saved you must persevere?

Because that is also what the Bible says and that is where the debates comes in.

That is where the confusion lies. Are we saved because God has secured us in our salvation OR are we saved because we endure to the end?

And the answer is: YES

In order to be saved you must endure to the end and if God has saved you, you will endure until the end. But if you do not endure until the end,

- That does not mean you that you somehow lost your salvation,
- It only means you were never really saved.

See, endurance DOES NOT EARN your salvation, but it does not prove that your faith is real.

(1 Peter 1:6-7) (1 Peter 4:12-13)

There is certainly the aspect of God's sovereignty in which God foreknows, predestines, chooses, regenerates, saves, and secures His elect.

But there is also the aspect of man's responsibility in which that man must repent, believe, and persevere until the end.

We know that this man cannot do those things apart from God, for God must make him alive, God must grant him repentance,

God must grant him faith, and God must grant him the strength to endure.

MAN CANNOT fulfill his responsibility apart from the work of God, but at the same time GOD WILL NOT save those who do not fulfill the requirements that He set forth.

No man, for instance, could say: "I don't believe in Jesus, but I'm going to heaven because I'm one of God's elect."

"I won't repent of my sin, but I'll be saved, because I was chosen."

We would balk at such foolish statements.

Just as God requires His elect to repent (and those who are elect will)

Just as God requires His elect to believe (and those who are elect will)

God also requires His elect to persevere (and those who are elect will)

SO TO ASSUME THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO ENDURE would be just as foolish as telling me you don't have to repent or you don't have to believe.

SO I'LL SAY IT AGAIN: IN ORDER TO BE SAVED, YOU MUST ENDURE TO THE END.

Think about it similar to how we discuss sanctification.

On one hand God does it, but on the other hand we are also called to strive for it. (Philippians 2:12-13)

Do you see how both realities are present?

- On one hand you work hard for it.
- On the other hand God is working in you for it.

You should view endurance exactly the same way.

Yes God is saving you, but you should be working hard to endure. For if you don't endure you will not be saved. (In fact, you've never actually been saved)

Now, all of that is just to point out to you the command of John.

Our command is simple, "Abide" (remain)

Certainly it brings up memories in our mind of that great analogy Christ gave in the upper room. (John 15:5-6)

John is giving the same requirement here.

WHAT IS YOUR CHIEF OBJECTIVE WHILE LIVING IN THE LAST HOUR?

"Abide"

YOU STICK WITH JESUS!

Now, let's ask the next question: HOW?

How do I do that John?

Well, in these 6 verses John gives some real simple and practical advice

And we'll break it down into 3 quick points. This is how you endure. This is how you abide. This is how you remain.

First of all you,

1) RECEIVE THE WORD (24-25)

Look at how clear this is,

“As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning.”

What are we talking about there?

- The gospel
- This is the word of Christ

John says, “You need to let the word remain in you.”

Paul said it like this: (Colossians 3:16)

James said it like this: (James 1:21)

This is step one,

- **You need to receive the word**
- **You need to be devoted to the gospel**
- **You need to put God’s word in you**
- **You need to let the word of Christ dwell within you**

WHY?

Because the message of the gospel is powerful to cause you to endure.

Let’s look at it like this. Let’s discuss a lost man, someone who does not know Christ.

If you want that man to be saved, what are you going to give him?

You’re going to go give him the gospel.

You’re going to try to get the word into his heart.

Why?

Romans 10:17 “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

Very simply put, “faith comes from hearing” and Faith is produced when a lost man hears God’s word.

Now we understand all the work which God must do to awaken that lost man's ears to hear, but the reality still is, when that man hears God's word, it produces faith.

DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT REALITY CHANGES AFTER SALVATION?

- Do you suppose that God's word only produces faith in lost people?
- Do you suppose that God's word won't help the faith of the redeemed?

OF COURSE NOT!

God's word produces faith and God's word strengthens faith.

If you want to endure to the end, you must receive the word of God. Read it; meditate on it; study it; wrestle with it; "let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning" WHY?

"If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father." That's biblical algebra right there.

- Put the gospel in your mind!
- Let Christ's words richly dwell within you.
- Receive the word!
- AND YOU WILL ABIDE

And it's a good word!

(25) "This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life."

- That's encouraging is it not?
- That's motivating is it not?

It makes no sense that a redeemed child of God would neglect God's word.

And I can tell you this, no one ever defected from Christ who humbly received the word of God. IT IS A SAFE HAVEN!

So what steps do you take to endure to the end?

Well first, receive the word.

2) BELIEVE THE WORD (26-27)

Now you will notice again that there is a very real presence of deception.

You are going to hear many things in your life which are not true...

"These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you."

It is an active deception. They are "trying" to do it. And then we see the phrase again: "As for you..."

As for one who is a target of the deceiver...

"The anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him." Again John reminds us of the Holy Spirit and he is that great teacher.

Again, this does not nullify the benefit of teachers and preachers, but it does nullify the absolute necessity of them.

The Holy Spirit is the great teacher. (John 14:26)

You have Satan who is actively lying to you and trying to deceive you.

Don't listen to Satan, listen to the Spirit.

And I would remind again how you do that.

Read the Bible!

First you should receive it, but then you should believe it.

And look at how trustworthy it

This is him – "the anointing which you received from Him..."

- The Bible comes from God that makes it believable since God cannot lie.

IT IS PERSONAL – "abides in you"

- Your ability to understand the Scriptures is because the author of the Scriptures has taken up residence in you. That is remarkable!

IT IS SUFFICIENT – "His anointing teaches you about all things"

- Everything pertaining to life and godliness is found here.
- So far as eternal life is concerned, you'll never need another book.

IT IS TRUE – "it is true and not a lie"

- What else can make that claim in the world today?

When God speaks (God speaks through the Bible) you can believe it!

And you should believe it. So if you want to stand firm until the end:

Receive the word – Believe the word

3) OBEY THE WORD (28-29)

And this really gets clear here now doesn't it.

John told us early on that “it is the last hour” any moment now Christ could return.

How do you want to feel on that moment when you see Him split the sky?

- Do you want to be terrified or do you want to be excited to see Him?
- Do you want to have been faithful, or do you want Him to find you a deserter?

Well, again THE COMMAND IS CLEAR:

“Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.”

It's the same point.

- **I want to have been faithful**
- **I want to have endured**
- **I want to be excited**

HOW?

(29) “If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.”

What is the key phrase there? “Practice righteousness”

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT OBEDIENCE.

We are talking about doing what His word says.

See when we talk about endurance

We DON'T MEAN simply having a faithful church attendance record.

When we talk about endurance

We are talking about endurance in obedience.

We are talking about the one who obeys Christ until the end.

And John here says, if you do that you won't have any fear of the return of Christ.

Obedience is necessary (James 1:21-25)

In John Bunyan's famed "Pilgrim's Progress" which is one of my favorites.

There is a moment when CHRISTIAN and FAITHFUL come across a man named TALKATIVE. It isn't long before FAITHFUL begins to challenge this man who boasts of great Bible knowledge by asking him about the evidences of grace upon the heart.

In other words, "What are some evidences of salvation?"

The second thing TALKATIVE lists is: "Great knowledge of Gospel mysteries."

To which FAITHFUL responds:

"This sign should have been first; but first or last, it is also false: for knowledge, great knowledge, may be obtained in the mysteries of the Gospel, and yet no work of grace in the soul.

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:2

Yea, if a man have all knowledge, he may yet be nothing; and so consequently be no child of God. When Christ said, do you know all these things? And the disciples had answered, yes: he added, blessed are ye if ye do them! He doth not lay the blessing in the knowing of them; but in the doing of them. For there is a knowledge that is not attended with doing: "he that knows his Master's will, and does it not." A man may know like an angel, and yet be no Christian; therefore your sign of it is not true. Indeed, to know is a thing that pleases talkers and boasters; but to do is that which pleases God. Not that the heart can be good without knowledge; for without that the heart is naught: there is, therefore, knowledge and knowledge. Knowledge that rests in the bare speculation of things; and knowledge that is accompanied with the grace of faith and love, which puts a man upon doing even the will of God from the heart: the first of these will serve the talker; but without the other the true Christian is not content. "Give me understanding, and I shall keep Thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart".

We must receive the word and we must believe the word,

But it also must accompany obeying the word.

This is John's directive to those who are living in the last hour and surrounded by many who fall away and would deceive us.

- Do you want to endure?
- Do you want to be found faithful at the return of Christ?
- Do you want to smile at the future?

Then receive the word, believe the word, and obey the word.

This will put you squarely on the path of endurance

That you may anticipate the return of the Lord

And not shrink away from Him when He comes.

This is how you live in the last hour.

Keep coming to Bible Study and Sunday service so that you can hear to the Word. See all of you next Wednesday for Wednesday in the Word!!