

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 18TH-19TH, 2019 // BOOK OF 1 JOHN

DISCERNMENT (1 JOHN 4:1-6)

DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU HEAR!

John was dealing with a lot of Christians being misled by false teachings about Jesus. Because so many "false prophets" have arisen and continue to arise, we are called to **"test the spirits to see if they are from God."**

- *Spirit* means the motives and integrity of the person teaching the theology. **We're to not blindly accept spiritual teaching.**

HOW DO WE "TEST THE SPIRITS?"

First, if we have the **Holy Spirit** we are given a sense of **discernment** and **wisdom** if we seek those gifts. These gifts enable us to feel when something is amiss.

- Secondly, we have the **Word of God** that teaches us the expectations of God and Who Jesus Christ is. **God will not contradict His Word or act contrary to His nature.**

THE IDENTITY OF JESUS IS THE KEY

The main difference between true and false teachers is their view of Jesus' identity.

- False teaching begins with a distortion of Who Jesus is. Though John says, "Every spirit that confesses Jesus has come in the flesh is from God," Jesus also said that many who call Him "Lord" will not inherit the kingdom of God.

FALSE PROPHETS SPEAK TO FLESHLY DESIRES

False teachers speak to what the crowd wants to hear. Paul warned Timothy about teachers that gain power and money by speaking into the shallow desires of others.

- We see this a lot today! **We hate conviction, talk of change, and admitting mistakes, but flock to easy theology that never challenges us.**

THE TRUE GOSPEL PUSHES US TO GREATER THINGS

The unbridled Word and the Holy Spirit of God **convicts, teaches,** calls us to **righteousness,** and **illuminates sin** in our lives **because those things also lead to encouragement, self-worth, better choices, and a content/fulfilled life!**

WE MUST CONNECT IN ORDER TO GROW

The Holy Spirit in us will help us discern good from evil and what is right and wrong. We must intentionally grow closer to God by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- **Prayer, meditation, reading the Word, and being sensitive to what God is teaching us.**

TWO IMPORTANT GIFTS!

- **Wisdom:** The Bible tells us that if we ask for wisdom, He will give it in abundance (Js. 1:5). Everyone in this room needs wisdom in order to navigate this life.
- **Discernment:** We need to have the ability to spot and stay away from evil. This gift makes us sensitive to the things of God, and what is not of God.

LOVING (1 JOHN 4:7-12)

BACK TO THE THEME OF LOVING OTHERS

If we're to evolve into being more like God, we must love other people. If we are to love people to the extent God wants us to, we must have a relationship with Him first.

- Though all people are capable of loving others to a degree, **we cannot fully love others without sharing the God of love with them.**

IF WE DON'T SHOW LOVE, WE DON'T KNOW GOD

John kinda flips the script on us. To love others we must know God, so it makes sense that when we lack love for others we don't really know God.

- The very nature and essence of God is love. **How could one experience the grace and love of God without it spilling over into their daily lives?**

REMEMBER, WE HAVE THE PERFECT EXAMPLE

1 John 3:16 tells us how we know what love should look like; the cross. If Jesus was willing to sacrifice for us when we were at our worst, we should be willing to do the same for others.

- This is only possible if God's Spirit resides in us. **Loving others is not natural, but supernatural.**

JESUS WAS OUR "ATONING SACRIFICE"

Atonement is a reparation for wrong doing. In the Christian context, it's Jesus paying for the guilt and sin of all humanity (expiation). The atonement of the cross also averts and appeases God's wrath (propitiation).

- **The cross enables us to be free and to use our freedom as a means of blessing those around us.**

THE CROSS USHERED IN THE SPIRIT

After Jesus died, rose again, and physically departed the earth, He sent His Spirit to live in those that follow Him. **Because we have His Spirit we are able to live in a way that is far beyond our capabilities!**

ACKNOWLEDGE (1 JOHN 4:13-21)

JOHN WAS AN EYEWITNESS

Because many false claims about the identity of Jesus were circulating, John reminds his readers that he and the other apostles had seen Jesus first hand.

- Though the 12 lived with Jesus, His identity really didn't come into full clarity for them until after the crucifixion and resurrection.

SIGHT COMES TO THOSE WHO WANT TO SEE IT

We often say, "I will believe it when I see it," but the true seeker of God and truth learns that in order to see you must want to believe. It isn't "seeing is believing," it's "believing is seeing."

- **The Spirit of God beckons all of us, but it is only to those that have a desire to see that actually witness the things of God. It takes faith.**

NEVER SEEING GOD, BUT WITNESSING HIS WORK

We don't have to see the earthly Jesus in order to believe in Him. God's love and power has been exercised through people all around us and through nature, making the work of God highly visible.

- If we seek we will find (Mat. 7:7). **Again, the issue is our unwillingness to look.**

BACK TO LOVING OTHERS

John affirms what he has said several times; "God is love, and the one that remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him."

- **We must know that the nature and character of God is love, and that His love for us should resonate onto the people around us.**

"THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE..."

We can live in confidence that "in the day of judgment" we have nothing to fear about our eternity or even the life we live until the end because God's love drives out fear.

- John says, "fear involves punishment," **but there is no punishment for those that seek Jesus. We can be forgiven and made whole in Him.**

THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE WON'T BE SCARED

We will have fears in this life, but when we have a relationship with Christ we overcome our fear by His promises and His example of love on the cross. We also have the Holy Spirit in us that gives us counsel and comfort.

- **The Christian is not designed to be paralyzed by fear and anxiety. We find peace in the Prince of Peace.**

AGAIN, THE LOVE SHOULD TRANSFER TO OTHERS

John passes on the command of Christ, "The one who loves God must also love his brother and sister."

- We must remember that true love not only helps those in **physical** and **mental** need, but also **spiritual** need. **We must share the gospel if we are to fully love others!**

WE MUST WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH

- In order to truly know God, we must approach this journey with a **desire to know the truth regardless of what it is.**
- This means we will start to realize truths that are counter-culture and uncomfortable. It means that **we must be the ones willing to change,** not God or His truths. God never changes.

WE MUST USE THE TOOLS

- God has given His Spirit and the Gifts that come with It. **We are not to be afraid of the Gifts, but we're to be knowledgeable and praying for those tools so we can navigate this confusing life.**
- All of us should be asking for **wisdom** and **discernment!** We should also be testing all "spirits."

WE MUST SHARE GOD'S LOVE

- **The truth sets people free** (Jn. 8). Without the saving knowledge of Christ people live in bondage to sin and sin's effects.
- **We must be the light of Christ to the world through physical, mental, and spiritual aid.** And though many will reject us because of Christ in us, we must still love and reach out to the "world."