

Life BPC Sunday School Adults' Class: Study of the First Epistle of John (Nov – Dec 2016)

Lesson 2: Cautions to Fellowship (1John 2:15-2:29)

Overview

Starting from Chapter 2 v.15 to the end, Apostle John gave two cautions that would affect the state fellowship if we are not mindful of – Love of the World (v.15-17) and Spirit of the Antichrist (v.18-27).

Love of the World (2:15-17)

One of the greatest hindrances to fellowship is the love of the world. John said in very clear term that 'if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him' (v.15). You cannot love God and mammon (Mt 6:24). The world represent the present life that is temporal and soon to pass away. It is the world that has fallen, filled with sin and depravity. The world is used to **contrast with** the kingdom of God and the hope of eternity. So what is in the world?

- Lust of the flesh – strong intense desire for material enjoyment, fleshly gratification, sinful lusts (Rom 13:14).
- Lust of the eyes – vanity which delights in pomp and empty splendour, covetousness and sin (Job 31:1).
- Pride of life- pride, haughtiness, ambition, boasting, attention. Story of Samson's folly (Jug 16:19). The account of King Herod's death (Acts 12:23). Read Pro 29:5.

Application: John Calvin sums up the 'world' as an unbridled wild beast that will consume a Christian. It is like a tornado that will draw us to its vortex once we drew too close, and soon we get trapped in its web of spiraling vanities and sin. The world is ripe for judgment. It will soon pass away (v.17). Remember the accounts of Demas (2Tim 4:10) and Lot's wife (Gen 19:26)? Christians are to be separated from the world and do the will of the Father for we shall have eternity and abide forever in the House of Lord. Read Business Times article (25 Oct 16). Story of Jim Elliot in 'Operation Auca'.

Spirit of the Antichrist (2:18-29)

The second caution is to guard against false teachings. The treatment on the Antichrist is given in the Book of Revelation, especially in Chapter 13. The antichrists here refer to false teachers that tried to derail their faith. Their appearance mark the 'last time' i.e., end days. These false teachers were part of the Church, prominent figures who served alongside other leaders. This could have distressed many believers on how could these 'teachers' fall into unbelief? John immediately taught in v.19 that these were not believers to start with. The fruit of unbelief and acts of seduction showed they were not true believers. The doctrine of

'Once saved always saved' holds true as taught in the fifth point of TULIP (John Calvin). True believers have the unction of the Holy Spirit and we will know the truth from the error (2Tim 1:7). Some wrong teachings were:

- Denied Jesus is the Saviour (Christ) (v.22)
- Denied His teachings (Gnosticism – superior knowledge, shunned the material world, embraces spiritualism, taught Christ is just a spirit)
- Denied His humanity (Docetism – taught that Christ is just a spirit)

Application: John said there is no need for any new theology (v.27). Stick to that which you have been taught (v.24). Charles Spurgeon "There is no new theology except that which is false" i.e., Read 2Tim 4:3 on warning against itching ears. Story of Jim Jones and Peoples Temple (1978). Story of the Bahai faith (since mid 19th century).

Abide in the Lord and the proof of a real faith is seen in the fruit i.e., our lifestyle and behavior (fruit of the Spirit). If we pursue holiness, live after righteousness (v.29), this is the proof that we are born again and we shall not be ashamed before Him at His Second Coming (v.28)!

Quiz: How many times was the 2nd Coming of Christ mentioned in 1John?

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