



1 John

Lavish Love

Love Tested!

1 John 4:1-6

Message #8 of 10 – S714

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Sunday Morning Service

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Love Tested!

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Opening Comments

- Turn to **1 John 4**
- Today, we continue our series **Lavish Love**
- The Apostle John has been teaching about God's love for us
- And he has been exhorting us to prove that we have the love of God in us, by loving others
- Real godly love isn't just a feeling or way of thinking **1 John 3:18**
My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.
- John says in that verse that love comes out of us, and is based upon truth
- Love and truth cannot be separated
- That is a problem in our post-modern culture
- Many today would ask, just like Pilate did, 'What is truth?'
- I used to believe just as many do today, that you have to check your intellect at the door when you come into the church
- It was all so much superstitious spiritualism
- It was as I discovered that God created me with an intellect, and that He wanted to relate to Him with my mind as much as with my heart that I finally accepted Him as my Savior
- Part of my problem was there were so many different churches and the messages didn't seem match
- And then, there were times when people in the church were doing things that seemed contrary to what the churches taught
- It wasn't until after I was saved that I learned that not all churches are God's churches
- And in today's message John is going to tell us how to tell the difference
- If you are able and willing to do so, please stand as we read today's text as a sign of reverence for God's Word
- Read **1 John 4:1-6**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Love Tested!**
- John loves the word ‘love’ – uses it 117 times in the five books collected into the New Testament
- **1 John 4:1**
- Starts with the word, ‘Beloved’ = believers – includes all of us
- ‘do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits’
- The universe is divided into two realms – material and spiritual
- The material realm is that which we can perceive through our senses
- The spiritual realm is beyond our senses
- They coexist, and regularly the spiritual realm interacts with the material in a manner that can be perceived
- What John is saying here is that not everything that is spiritual is from God
- Many false prophets are in the world, they are not from God
- The spiritual world can also be divided into two camps; God and the Devil **1 Timothy 4:1-2**

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron...

- John is saying that all believers need to be able to ‘test’ to determine whether our teachers or churches are from God or not
- He will give us three tests we can all use to determine which spirit is at work
- The first test – **Confess Divine Lord**
- **1 John 4:2-3**
- Some don’t like to talk about doctrine, but good doctrine is important
- John says the first test a teacher or church must pass relates to the doctrine on the Incarnation
- Jesus is God equal to God the Father in nature and attributes
- Existed uncreated from eternity past
- And when the time was right, He came as baby by a miraculous conception through Mary **John 1:14**

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

- This is the first test – Did Jesus, God the Son come out of the spiritual realm and take on human flesh in the material realm
- The false teachers and cults deny this fact
- JW – Jesus = Archangel Michael – God’s first created being
- Mormons – Jesus = created being – brother of Lucifer
- Islam – Jesus = prophet, but not God the Son
- We don’t have time to elaborate on these but these are some of the reasons why denying the Incarnation is dangerous
- If Jesus was not God become flesh
- Jesus can’t our example
- He can’t be our High Priest, tempted in all ways, yet without sin
- He can’t be our Savior – cross would be meaningless
- Denies the salvation of the body
- Denies that there can ever be any real union between God and man
- This is a foundational doctrine of Christianity
- If someone does not believe in the Incarnation of Christ they are not from God
- They have the spirit of the Antichrist
- 2,000 years ago John said the spirit of Antichrist was in the world
- It still is, not just in the cults, but also in the false teachers who claim to be Christians but deny Christ in the way they live or teach
- First test = Confess Divine Lord
- Second test of truth from error = **Possess Divine Life**
- **1 John 4:4**
- One of the great promises of the Bible is that The Holy Spirit dwells in the believer **Romans 8:9**
But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.
- God, the Holy Spirit in all of His fullness dwells in us
- And He is at work to conform into the image of Jesus
- Speaking of the false prophets Jesus said **Matthew 7:15-20**
Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a

bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

• And Paul tells what that fruit looks like **Galatians 5:22-23**

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

- And in this verse is a statement that ought to give us great confidence as we deal the attacks that come our way
- ‘you...have overcome them’ – complete and abiding victory
- As Christians we are called to stand in the victory that Jesus won on the cross
- The Spirit in you is greater than he who is in the world
- This could be referring to the false prophets/teachers, or to the spirit of Antichrist, or to Satan himself
- Statement is true for all of them
- If you stand in the power of Christ, and upon the truth of His Word, you cannot be moved out of your place
- That should give us great confidence to engage in spiritual battles
- With the Spirit in us, and standing upon the Word of God we cannot be defeated – Paul said, ‘If God is for us, who can be against us?’
- First two tests – Confess Divine Lord, and Possess Divine Life
- Third test – **Profess Divine Truth**
- **1 John 4:5-6**
- No false teacher will come out and tell that they what they are saying is a lie
- In fact, that is part of the problem – they claim that they are speaking the truth
- And typically, they are very good at it
- They are handsome, articulate, charismatic, and very likeable
- They make passionate pleas that touch the hearts of those who are listening to them
- What they say sounds like it is right, in fact it might be 99% right
- Can something be 99% truth and 1% lie and still be true? No!
- Have you ever wondered how Joel Osteen can fill a football stadium every Sunday
- Because he says things that make people feel good about themselves

- He speaks to the emotions of his audience, and he is good at it
- He wants everyone to have a relationship with God and go to heaven
- That's the same thing I want
- The difference between me and him is that he teaches you don't need Jesus to get to heaven
- You just be the best you that you can be and God will accept you
- Hey, if you are fond of Joel Osteen, I'm sorry but he is a false teacher
- He is the fulfilment of the prophecy made by Paul **2 Timothy 4:3-4**
For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.
- Mr. Osteen is an amazing communicator, I wish I was as good a speaker as he is – I don't hate him – I admire the gifts that God has given him
- I just wish he would repent, and start teaching truth, teaching the Bible
- It is part of the role of the pastor to warn the church of spiritual dangers, including false teachers
- And some people may be offended that I name people like Joel Osteen or Oprah as false teachers
- But if I don't warn you, who will?
- And I love you too much to allow anyone to deceive you without at least warning you of the danger
- Once you are warned the responsibility is yours
- John says test the spirits – you don't have to believe what I say
- Check it out for yourself – examine my words, examine my life – compare them to the Word of God
- I'm not suggesting that I am perfect, you all know that I'm not
- Examine or test any and every spiritual leader
- Who is Jesus to them? Can you see spiritual fruit coming out of their life? Do they esteem God's Word over the words of man?
- All false teachers will deviate from the truth in at least one area of doctrine
- But typically, if they are in error in one doctrine, they are probably in error in others

- They are being led either by the Spirit of God or by the spirit of the Antichrist
- Your ability to experience and express the love of God is bound up in your apprehension of the truth of God
- The false teachers might be able to make you feel good about yourself but they won't draw you closer to the God who loves you and wants to pour out His grace and mercy into your life
- It is your responsibility to test the spirit and make sure that the person you are trusting to lead you in spiritual things is of God
- And once you find that person, or church, settle in and get connected with him or the church
- God wants you to engage your intellect, as well as your heart **Mark 12:30**

And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.

- Use your intellect, sanctified by the Word of God, and watch out for the false teachers
- Engage your intellect as you listen to the teaching of the Word
- Allow it to teach you about the wonders of the love of God
- Invite the Holy Spirit to teach you how to experience God's love more deeply
- Ask Him to help you express that love out to others
- Next week we are going to see that the very nature of God is love
- That being the case, we are like God when we love what he loves
- And when we love like He loves, He is glorified, others are blessed, and our faith grows, and we become more like His Son Jesus
- Amen - have a radical week