

## 1 John 4:1-6

Last week, Pastor gave an awesome message about the difference between being a Child of God and a Child of the Devil. And there's no middle ground. The Bible makes this expressly clear. There's no in-between. You are either for God or against Him (Matthew 12:30). No one is Switzerland! If you weren't here last week, I want to strongly urge you to go back and listen to it. It helps us take inventory and do self-realization on where we fall...because we don't want to be confused...thinking we are good when we aren't.

Confusion is not a good place to be. JODY CRAZY EYES STORY. He thought he was good, but he certainly wasn't. And spiritually we don't want to be in that spot, because it won't go well for us if we are. And I think this is becoming more prevalent today, with the internet and podcasts, and everyone's cranking out books left and right and there's some good ones and there's some that will strengthen your faith, but it's also an avenue for mind-twisting that Satan can use as a great tool. So today we are looking at the danger of all that and how we can navigate those choppy waters.

Now before we get into the text, I want to make sure we set it up correctly. We will frame it using **3:19-20**.

We hear far too often today to "follow your heart." **JEREMIAH 17:9-10**. If you follow your heart, which is deceitful above all things, then you're heading down a path of destruction. The heart wants what the heart wants, THANKS SELENA...but what the heart wants is death and evil...so you can't trust it. You must deny yourself (deny your heart), crucify your fleshly desires, and pursue Jesus passionately. Don't follow your heart...follow God's words. That's what **3:24** encourages..."whoever keeps Christ's commandments abides in God and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us."

So now the text...and it starts with a warning.

**Vs. 1**

*DO NOT BE SPIRITUALLY GULLIBLE!* Don't believe every spirit. One of my biggest pet peeves is how many people view Christianity as "checking your brain at the door." I know it comes with the territory, but as far as IQ goes, I fall on the rare end of the spectrum. I'm an intelligent guy, and I value

intelligence tremendously. I want students to be as smart as God made them and to push themselves...which drives me crazy when Christians don't apply themselves intellectually...because you are supposed to love God with all your heart, soul, MIND, and strength. If you aren't using your brain to the fullest capacity, then as a Christian it is because you don't love God enough to do so.... That said, the argument is that Christianity is brain-washing, stupid, doesn't make sense, these people are morons who follow blindly...when in actuality, we are told just the opposite. John URGES us to test EVERY spirit. Test EVERY teaching...because there are false prophets and false teachers who have penetrated the ranks, and they're clever because they follow Satan and he is clever and crafty, and they have DUPED you. So, honestly, we see this everywhere today. Don't follow false teachers is what John is saying. Test everything...hold it up to Scripture. Let Scripture be your standard. And it has to be your standard IN CONTEXT! This is important.

Why in context? Philippians 4:13...Jeremiah 29:11 (the next 70 years are going to be awful...eventually I will listen to you crying out and will save you as a NATION, but it isn't going to be a good next 70 years.)

Context is key, or we end up claiming promises that God never promised...or twisting Scripture to make it about us, when it isn't about us. Do you see the danger there? So the scripture in the correct context has to be the Standard for you to judge true and false teachers by...

So who should we be careful of?

I'm concerned. I see it everywhere. This past week I was at a good friend's house and saw a book on their shelf that was written by a false teacher. It makes me sad, and scared. And we just have to be careful.

The two most prevalent or most famous teachers today to be careful of are Joel Osteen and Joyce Meyer.

Joel Osteen is happy. He has some serious happiness...but I think a lot of us could put on a smile if the God we served had no wrath against evil and just wanted us to be happy happy happy all the time. His gospel is that life revolves around you and your happiness. You can have your best life now...which is a terrifying thought if heaven is not your best life. In the words of Christian lyrical theologian Shai Linne, "If you're living your best life now, you're heading for hell."

Joyce Meyer...she's like the Oprah of Christiandom, but is as Christian as Oprah is...which is not at all. Her books are everywhere...matter of fact, she through a

big free thing at Colonial Life Arena a few months ago and some of you likely went. Now, listen, I'm not pointing fingers at you...all I'm hoping is that you probably didn't know...and just to be careful.

Just quickly, because I don't want to spend too much time here...Joyce's Christianity says:

- 1) That she is no longer a sinner. She doesn't sin any more...ever.
- 2) She receives special revelation from God that isn't in the Bible and in order to understand it, that you need a special revelation from God also.
- 3) We become gods if we are in Christ.
- 4) Jesus stopped being the son of God on the Cross and went to hell after his death...and you can't be saved unless you agree.

There's a ton more of false teachers and I'd be glad to talk with any of you sometime if you're interested. My main encouragement today is don't buy everything that Satan is selling. Test everything...even what I'm saying today...test it. Do not be SPIRITUALLY GULLIBLE!

Testing the teaching isn't being judgmental.

Some people will hear this and think I'm being harsh or judgmental...but I can assure you I'm not. My job is to protect the flock God has made me a shepherd over (my youth), and then subsequently this church. Same for pastor, but even on a larger scale. I care about your protection, and so, even if it is viewed as judgmental...I don't care. I know I'm not...I'm actually obeying the word of God. Jesus himself said in John 7:24, "Do not judge by appearances, but judge *WITH RIGHT JUDGMENT.*"

So what is right judgment? What is the standard?

### Vs 2-3

So here's the standard of 1 John: If the spirit (or the person moved to speak by the spirit) does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh – that he was both fully divine and fully human – then that person is misleading God's people. In this day, many false teachers were saying that Jesus only "appeared" to be human.

Even more than that...in vs 3, John uses an awesome phrase "CONFESS JESUS." What this carries with it is that whoever refuses to acknowledge that Jesus is God the Son who stepped out of heaven onto earth is not from God. In other words, anyone can talk about Jesus and even believe that he lived on earth, as

other religions, cults, and philosophies often affirm. But unless such people affirm both the full deity and the full humanity of Jesus, they are not truly confessing Jesus, but instead are under the influence of the spirit of the antichrist. HOLY BANANAS that's heavy.

What does it mean to confess Jesus. We think of "confess" as using words to say something. Webster's defines it as "admitting or acknowledging something reluctantly, typically because one feels slightly embarrassed or ashamed." That's not what confession is in Biblical times.

To Confess (HOMOLOGEO) – "to profess because in full agreement"

So, it means to believe something so wholeheartedly that you absorb the statement so deeply that you make it your own. So to Confess Jesus is to absorb the truth that He is who He says He is and has done what He said He has done and will do what He says He will do, and then reiterate it as your own statement.

You see how that is different? That's not praying a magic prayer, or "asking Jesus into your heart." This is a shift from one mentality as an assaulting enemy of the majesty of God, to a Child of God. That's the switch, and it's not just words...it's a transformation of life to match that statement.

Now, we could stop there, but I think that would be a tragedy because then we would be playing defense the whole time...and I'm not interested in tying with the devil.

#### **Vs. 4-6**

This is the walk-off grand slam. This is our victory here. You're from God. He has overcome. He (Jesus) is greater than Satan. I think we have this idea that there is a battle going on and that at times Satan has the upper hand and they are fighting back and forth...Listen, IT'S NOT A CONTEST! Satan has lost. Jesus has won. Satan stands no chance. Jesus is victorious. All Satan is doing now is thrashing about wreaking as much havoc as He can, but He is WEAK compared to Christ.

So going back because the origin of all of this passage is to test the spirits. Your hope of combatting false teaching and receiving truth rests entirely on your sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit within you (Holy Spirit) is greater than Satan. Because of Jesus, Christians eyes are opened to truth. We will not check our brains at the door. But instead, we will test everything, so that we grow in

wisdom, just as Jesus did (Luke 2:52). And by this, “We know the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error.”

Let’s pray.