THE ANOINTING FROM THE HOLY ONE

1 John 2:18-28

Key Verse: 2:20

“But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.”

In the last lesson, we could hear the great solemn command, “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The love of the Father is “not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Those who have this love of God can truly love God, not the world. Again, the love for the world and the love for the Father cannot coexist in the heart of a true believer. Let’s remember that “the world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.” Today’s passage is unique in that the expression, ‘the antichrist is coming’ or ‘antichrists have come’ and ‘the anointing from the Holy One’ are used only here in the whole Bible. The word ‘antichrist’ or ‘antichrists’ is repeated 3 times this passage and one more time in the phrase ‘the spirit of the antichrist’ in 4:3, and the word ‘anointing’ 4 times here. These ideas are expressed throughout the Bible, but John used these words to covey the ideas clearly with certain emphasis. This passage tells us that there is an opposing power to Christianity and what we have from the Lord and it also tells us how to fight the battle.

**First, the antichrist and antichrists (18-19).** Verse 18 says, “Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.” This last hour is the same expression as the last day(s) (Jn. 6:39; Ac. 2:17; 2 Timothy 3:1; 2 Peter 3:3) or the last time(s) (1 Pe. 1:5, 20; Jude 18). John uniquely used the term, ‘the last hour.’ ‘The last hour’ or ‘the last time’ is sometimes used to cover the whole era, the whole epoch, marking the time from the finished work of Christ until his return in glory. This phrase ‘the last time’ is also used for certain special epochs when sin and evil are unusually severe and fierce. And it also for the time just before the final return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ into this world. This is the ultimate ‘last time’. Again, the last hour began with the first coming of Jesus and will last until he comes again (Heb 1:2), and we can see many signs that we are living in the last minutes of the last hour. We should really live with a sense of the time.

And then John said, “and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come.” Again, John uniquely used the word, ‘antichrist’ and ‘antichrists.’ Daniel used the expression in 8:23, “a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue”, and in 11:36, “the king who will do as he pleases” from political aspect, and Paul, “the man of lawlessness”, “the son of perdition” (2 Thess. 2:3) or “the lawless one” (2:8, 9) from ecclesiastical aspect. In Revelation, we see two beasts, one coming out of the sea (13:1) and another coming out of the earth (13:11). The first beast is known antichrist more like a political figure and the second beast called false prophet with also characteristics of antichrist having two horns like a lamb but speaking like a dragon/Satan. They work together to deceive the inhabitants of the earth, making war against the saints. The antichrists were already at work in the days of Paul and of John. Jesus taught that at the end of the age false Christs/messiahs and false prophets would appear (Mk. 13:6,22). It is abundantly clear that although there have been many imitations of the antichrist, he will reach his maximum power just before the end of this age. The understanding of the concept of the antichrist is very important in our view of the world, particularly at the end time.

Then John said in verse 19, “They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.” Here the antichrists were not out of the world, but out of the believing group. They heard all about Christ and had fellowship among the Christians, but went out from the Christian community, and became known as antichrists. Paul also said in Acts 20:29-30, when he had a farewell meeting with the elders of the church in Ephesus, “I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own member men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.” This is a painful thing, but this kind a thing has been the reality throughout church history.

In verse 19, the word “belong” is repeated 3 times and “us” 5 times. Here we should be very clear about who ‘us’ are. In the flow of 1 John, they are those born of God and so are children of God. As we studied at the beginning of this study, John used the expression “born of God” or “born of him” 7 times (2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18 (2)) and “children of God”, 5 times (3:1, 2, 10; 5:2, 19) in this short epistle with 5 chapters. No book in the Scriptures has such an emphasis on this. Apostle John was very serious and saw this matter of their going out of them from the fundamental viewpoint. Those who went out, their belonging in the community was superficial and their fellowship was not genuine. When he said, “none of them belonged to us” it must have implied that they were not born of God and so were not children of God.

It is a painful thing to see people’s going out and the number decreasing and the size reducing. However, what is really important beyond the number and even organization is for those who remain to be truly the community of children of God, being born of God. They were to be true to Christ and keep the purity of the doctrine of the church and so the purity of the church. We are to know that the history of God is the history of the remnant. This is the doctrine of the remnant. At the time of Elijah, the prophet Elijah despaired a lot to see the Israelites turning away from God despite his zealously serving the LORD. He complained to God, saying “I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me.” But God’s answer to him was this, “I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” Quoting from 1 Kings 19:18, Paul wrote the words in Romans 11:4 and continued in 11:5, “So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.” When we read 2 Timothy, Timothy seemed to be discouraged by the influence of false teachers and people’s going away. Then Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:19, “Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: ‘The Lord knows those who are his,’…” The remnant who remain true to God matters and God continues his work through them. The community of God’s children never ceases to exist but lasts until Jesus comes again. May we have a correct view of the Christian community in any generation, particularly in our time.

**Second, the anointing from the Holy One (20-23).** Verse 20 says,“But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.” Here is a transition from the antichrists to the anointing from the Holy One. Here the Holy One refers to Jesus. Peter confessed in John 6:69, “We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.” We need to understand the anointing. In the Old Testament, priests, kings and prophets were anointed with oil when they were inducted. According to God’s command Moses anointed his brother Aaron and his sons with oil so that they might serve as priests (Ex. 28:41; 29:7). Samuel anointed Saul (1 Sam. 10:1) and later on David (16:13) as kings of Israel. Elijah anointed Elisha to succeed him as prophet (1 Kings 9:16). The anointing was to consecrate them and set them apart for their office. They had become anointed ones who were enabled to do their duty. Very often we find that the Holy Spirit is compared to oil (Zechariah 4:2-6). The oil provides the life or the power for the light (Ex. 27:20). Those are symbols that are used constantly in Scripture for the influence and power of the Holy Spirit.

In the New Testament, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit at the time of his baptism (Lk. 3:21-22). Then being full of the Holy Spirit, Jesus began his earthly messianic ministry (4:1). And Apostle Peter said concerning this Jesus in Acts 10:38 that God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power. Jesus is the Anointed One (Acts 4:26). “Christ” in Greek means the “anointed one.” Jesus Christ is the Prophet, Priest and King. In the Old Testament, no one person held all these offices. Christ Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to anoint those who repent and believe (Ac. 2:33, 38; 2 Cor. 1:21-22). Christians are those who have an anointing from Jesus Christ. When John used the word, ‘anointing’, we see that it is a very graphic way of describing the influence and the effect of the Holy Spirit upon the believer.

“You have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.” This is a most important statement, a very vital part of Christian doctrine and one of the most glorious aspects of Christian truth. When the antichrists appear or unexpected things happen in this ever-changing world, how are we to discern it? The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of the Truth. Jesus said of it three times in John 14:17, 15:26, and 16:13. Jesus said in John 16:13, “But when he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.” The Holy Spirit himself helps believers to discern truth from lies and have discernment at each critical time. How much do we need discernment at a time like this? Human intellect and knowledge cannot give us discerning heart, but the Holy Spirit in us can. We should really be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit through earnest and constant prayer, dying to our desires and the love of the world. Romans 8:12 says, “…those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” Ephesians 4:30 says, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God” and 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says, “Do not quench the Spirit.” Apostle Paul said in Galatians 5:16, “Live by the Spirit” and then he said in 5:25, “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” And he said in Ephesians 5:18, “Be filled with the Spirit.”

When John said, “You have an anointing from the Holy One”, we can think that every Christian is one who has been anointed, set apart by God and enabled by God to do certain things. In the New Testament, Christians are described as prophets, priests and kings. Apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 2:9, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” In these words, all three concepts of Christian identity are here, that of king, of priest and of prophet. And Revelation 1:6 says, “and (Jesus Christ) has made us to be a kingdom and priest to serve his God and Father.” In Revelation 5:10, it says, “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God…” So, there is a sense in which it is true to say that as the Lord Jesus Christ is prophet, priest and King as the result of His anointing, so all of us who belong to Christ are prophets, priests and kings. “But you have an anointing from the Holy One” meaning “You are anointed ones as prophets, priests and kings”, this is our powerful standing to stand with Christ and against the antichrists in this world.

After saying, “But you have an anointing from the Holy One,” John continued, “and all of you know the truth.” This is the foundation of our faith and our standing in this world. John said continually in verse 21, “I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth.” Here the truth is mentioned 3 times. Jesus said to the believing Jews in John 8:31-32, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Indeed, Jesus is the truth. He said in John 14:6, “I am the way and the truth and the life…” In other translations, “all of you know the truth” is “you know all things.” In fact, knowing the truth is basically knowing all things, although those who know the truth need to grow continually in their knowledge. In life, knowing the truth is most important. If one does not know the truth, he knows nothing regardless of all his human knowledge.

Then John says in verse 21, “Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son.” At this point, John seems to be furious. We are reminded of Jesus in John 8:44. He said to the Jews who claimed that they were Abraham’s children and God was their Father, “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” In furiousness, Jesus uses such strong language. John raises a serious question, “Who is the liar?” Right away he answered, “It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist.” We can say that the fundamental and greatest lie is to deny that Jesus is the Christ. We remember that when Jesus rose again from the dead, on that very day the religious leads spread a lie that his disciples stole the body of Jesus away, trying to cover up the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Mt. 28:11-15). At that time Gnostics said that the eternal Christ had come upon Jesus at his baptism and had left him on the cross. So, Jesus the Son of God never died; it was the man Jesus who died—Christ had left him before death. They talked about Jesus, but they denied that Jesus is the Christ.

In verse 21, “all of you know the truth”, we thought that the truth is Jesus. Here more specifically we can induce that the truth is “Jesus is the Christ.” Let’s expound more about this. Simon Peter was the first person who made a confession of Christ when Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus was pleased with this answer and said, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.” Then Jesus predicted his suffering, death and resurrection. At this prediction Peter was greatly troubled and responded, “This shall never happen to you!” Jesus became very solemn and said to Peter, “Get behind me Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” Here we see that it is not easy to have a full and complete view of the Christ, yet it is so critical. Our view of the Christ should be full and complete. It is good to believe that Jesus is my true friend and a kind-hearted shepherd. Jesus is my Saviour who died for my sins and rose again. He is my advocate, being the atoning sacrifice for my sins. Furthermore, Jesus is our King and Lord rising from the dead with all authority in heaven and on earth given to him. He is the object of worship, and he is the one we are to worship and obey. It is easy to say that Jesus is Christ, when things go well in life. But when our life situation becomes hard and even persecution comes because of our faith, it will be a great challenge to confess that Jesus is the Christ and live by it. As we studied in Revelation, the inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast, the final antichrist and the trend of the world goes that way. Yet, true believers will worship Christ Jesus and obey him, keeping the confession that Jesus is the Christ before anyone. Jesus said in Mark 8:38 after Peter’s confession of Christ and talking about the way of Christ, “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angles.” We need to prepare ourselves not to be ashamed of Jesus and his words before anyone. How? We cannot be suddenly courageous one day and certain that we will not deny Jesus as Christ. It is the result of our daily living. Apostle Peter encourages us saying, in 1 Peter 3:14-15, “…‘Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.’ But in your heart set apart Christ as Lord.” We should deeply recognize the Lordship of Christ every day over all the matters in life, whether in a smooth or an extremely difficult situation. The world rejects this truth, even making every effort to get rid of Christ in every area of life. However, the anointed ones will keep the truth of the doctrine that Jesus is the Christ.

John went on to say, “Such a man is the antichrist.” According to this anyone who denies that Jesus is Christ is such a person, the antichrist, who stands against Christ in the end. John continues, “he denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.” This is a simple but profound doctrine. Jesus clearly said after declaring, “I am the way and the truth and the life”, “No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn 14:6). And when his disciple Philip asked, “Show us the Father”, he answered, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (Jn. 14:9). Many times, Jesus said, “The Father sent me.” The Son came to reveal God the Father (Jn. 1:18). On another occasion he said, “I and the Father are one” (Jn. 10:30). So, no one can truly talk about God the Father, ignoring the Son Jesus. Denying the Son is denying God the Father, the only true God.

What does it mean to acknowledge the Son? It is to believe all about him, his birth conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, all of his words, his death and resurrection and ascension and the promise of his coming again. Especially our attitude before his words are truly substantial. We should really learn to obey one word of God. Whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father. Our response to the Son is the whole matter. So, John says more in 5:11-12, “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in the Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

In this part, we learn that as those who have an anointing from the Holy One we can discern antichrists and live with our great identity as prophets and priests and kings to proclaim that Jesus is the Christ standing against the world of antichrists.

**Third, remain in him (24-28).** In verses 24 and 25 it says, “See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised—even eternal life.” Here, we see that remaining in the Son and in the Father is eternal life, what God promised. It is through holding to the gospel, what we have heard from the beginning, Christ’s death and resurrection. In Revelation, Jesus also said to the rest in the church in Thyatira, who did not join in the majority who compromised with the worldly way of the living, “Only hold to what you have until I return” (2:25). Jesus also said to the exemplary church in Philadelphia, “Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown” (3:11). This is also what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5:2, “By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.”

Then in verse 26 John says, “I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray.” How painful it will be when parents see their children being led astray! That’s John’s heart here. He does his best to protect his spiritual children through writing this letter. He reminded them of the anointing, saying, “As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you….” What an encouragement! And How important it is to keep the anointing from our Lord Christ Jesus and live by it!

Then John continues, “and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.” Again, we are reminded of what Jesus said in John 16:13, “But when he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.” Whether we read the Bible and mediate on his words personally or hear the message or have Bible study together, it is the Holy Spirit who teaches and leads us into all truth. The Holy Spirit should work in our hearts, otherwise all human teaching itself cannot be effective. We should really pray and rely on the work of the Holy Spirit.

And how frustrating it will be when the anointing one received turns out to be counterfeit. How can we know that the anointing is real? Again, it is through one’s attitude toward Christ Jesus. Jesus said in John 16:14, “He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.” Those who remain in Jesus show that the anointing is real. Remaining or abiding in the Son and in the Father through the anointing is the essence and power of Christian life. It is life together with him. It is the same with walking with Jesus in life. Apostle Paul expressed the life with Christ excellently in Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” It is to live up to the confession that Jesus is the Christ. It is also the life holding to the words of God and led by the Spirit.

Verse 28 says, “And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.” His second coming is the yearning expectation of all true believers. At his coming the antichrist will be destroyed and all who have yielded to his rule will be greatly ashamed, while those who remain in him will be glorified.

Thank and praise God that Jesus is the Christ. Thank God for teaching us that the antichrist is also reality, yet we have an anointing from the Holy One. May we keep the anointing and have discernment at each critical step of life being led by the Spirit and remain in Christ Jesus so that we can overcome the influence of the antichrist and stand as anointed ones against the world of antichrists.