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1 John 2:22-29

A Righteousness Anointed in Truth

1 John 2:22-29: “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.”

A word that's repeated, especially towards the end of this passage is the word “abide,” which makes reference to “remain;” which makes reference to being steadfast. Jesus Himself declares to us, “Did I not say I would never leave you, nor forsake you?” Fidelity is a big issue with God. It is probably the biggest issue. The faithfulness of God, we just sang, “Great is thy faithfulness.” How wonderful it is that there's Somebody that we can depend on, Somebody who loves us. Our desire is to have a relationship with Him. Our desire is for that relationship be genuine, to be real, and to have confidence that God loves me, I love Him, we're together; we need that confidence. Without that confidence, there is no hope. So, we oftentimes define the word “hope” as confident expectation. We have a great confident expectation because we know that God loves us, but how is it that some people are more confident about this than others, and where does that confidence come from? Well, that's really the reason for this epistle. This epistle is specifically addressed to those who are believers, but in some ways are not feeling as confident as they should; and he begins to convey to them why that's true.

So, as we go through the pages, we begin to see where this confidence comes from, and how this relationship is built. As you begin the book, this epistle, the letter, you begin to read at the very beginning that in order to have this confidence in your relationship, there has to be real contact with the body of Christ; which is interesting because we just came out of that covid thing, and the thought is that you can just get on the internet or whatever, but the way that he describes it is, “what we have seen, what we have held.” I guess if Jesus were to come around in this day and age, we would say, “Just Skype me.” but I wouldn't be happy with that, I would

actually want to be with Him; just like I'd actually rather be with my wife than just a letter, or something given to me because it's that personal touch that was meant to be the relationship; and this is why Hebrews says, "don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together," because what that does is it creates that tangible body of Christ in the very presence of us coming together. So, the reality of our faith has to be in the reality of our actions. We've sort of touched upon that this morning with James, "faith without works is dead." There has to be a tangible reality to what we say we believe.

He begins by saying, if you look at the beginning of the passage in 1 John 1:1,

"What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—"

This is something that is a part of our life and it's real. When you come in contact with the body of Christ, we're referred to in Scripture as the church, and you receive the warm embrace, you actually see in the face and the eyes of the people that care for you that they care for you; and you begin to share things one on one. You begin to realize that's Christ in them, and you feel that real encouragement that you could never get in your attic, stored away in some little corner by yourself, that God has so ordained that the body come together. As he'll declare, "so as often as you come together, do these things." It's recorded in 1 Corinthians 11.

The second thing that we see in 1 John 1 is that in order to have this real confidence, there has to be real transparency between you and God. In other words, you can't deny that you're a sinner. You can't say, "Well, I don't have any sin." You're not being transparent. You're not being real. You're not being truthful with God. So, there has to be a transparency, and of course John will say, "You're lying, the truth's not in you," if you say that.

He then ends chapter 1 by stating that there has to be real faith in God's power, and in His grace. I oftentimes hear people say, "I just have a hard time believing that God can forgive me." Well, then you're calling Him a liar because Scripture says, "He is faithful and just to forgive you if you confess your sins." If you confess your sins, He is faithful and just, and He will forgive you. Now, He stated this, and He said He came for the purpose of your sins. He came to save sinners. So, if you'll just admit you're a sinner then you can be saved, but you have to admit that. It's that proclamation, the moving of the Spirit of God upon us that causes us to confess that absolute truth, as the Spirit of God and the Spirit of truth begins to move within our hearts.

So, the very beginning of this really is about real contact with the body of Christ, it's about real transparency with you and God, and a real faith in the power of God to completely wash away our sins, and to completely forgive us, and have faith in His love for us that He wants to. You actually have to believe that He wants to be gracious, but He says He does, and I believe that. It is in the faith that brings immense comfort to me, not because I'm worthy of it, but because of who He is because He is gracious in mercy, His lovingkindness from everlasting to everlasting. So, he starts off with that fundamental premise, if you want to have a relationship it has to begin in this way.

As you come into chapter 2, this chapter is all about the righteousness of God. If you look at the very beginning of chapter 2, it ends in verse 1 by saying, "Jesus Christ the righteous." So, it's establishing what righteousness is. Now, if you look at the very end of this chapter, it will end with the thing of righteousness.

Verse 29 reads,

"If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him."

It's kind of the sandwich within the whole chapter, that we're dealing with the righteousness of God. The question is, then how does this fit in with giving me confidence? The point is that you're not going to have confidence if in fact you're walking according to your righteousness. That's an interesting thought because like Proverbs says, "there is a way that seems right," and that's where we get the word "righteousness;" There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death. So, you can actually think that you're doing the right thing, and actually do the wrong thing, but more specifically, you could pursue what you define as right, and you'll find yourself feeling empty inside, you'll find yourself feeling unforgiven, and you'll find yourself strangely enough feeling more distant from God than close to Him.

Jesus told a parable in Luke 18:9, and if I could just quote the verse to you, it reads this way,

"And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt."

The point of the passage is that they actually saw themselves as the righteous ones, and because of that they saw others that they sort of pushed away, and that's one of the reasons why Pharisees are called "Pharisees," because the word itself means "separate ones." "We're better than you, we're separate from you." What Jesus continues to do as He begins to speak to the Pharisees, is He begins to show them how far away they are from God, that their perception is, "Oh, well, we know what righteousness is." Look how far you are from God, that the tax gatherer, the sinner, the women caught in adultery is closer to God than you are, "because she's coming in brokenness, and humility before Me and she's believing that it's My righteousness not hers." The problem is that you're not admitting your sin.

So, the reason that it starts off in 1 John 2 the way that it does, is it's establishing within the passage a righteousness that is superior to anything that we could conjure up in our heads or our minds. You know as well as I do that everybody has their own definition of what's the right thing to do. If that weren't true, we wouldn't have politics. Everybody has an idea, "this is altruism," "this is benevolence," "this is kindness," "this is graciousness." And you'll see it on both ends, coming at the wrong angle, and you're going, "Ok, let's let somebody else define it." Then you turn to Jesus, and you go, "Now, that's righteous." So, when God says, "follow Christ," what He's saying is pattern your life after Christ and you'll begin to understand what righteousness actually means. I used to think that I was a pretty nice guy until I came to terms

with what Scripture tells me Jesus is like, and I go, "Wow, I'm not nice at all. I'm not thoughtful at all." I mean, just think about it, you have people in your life, family, or people that just like you, "You're such a nice guy." You have no idea the things that I wrestle with in this head. Somebody said, "That was so nice of you." I go, "You have no idea how horrible I feel about myself right now," because even though there are times that I'll do nice things, I'm mad because I don't want to do it. So, I can hear the Spirit of the Lord say, "Do this because you love Me," and my whole demeanor begins to change; and even though maybe outwardly I might have fooled somebody out there, what does that matter? I'm not going to stand before them, I'm going to stand before God. God begins to move into my heart and somewhere along the line by His grace, by His power, and by His Spirit my heart becomes right. I begin to do things God's way, and I step back and go, "That wasn't me, that was Christ in me. That wasn't my power. I wouldn't do that. I'm not that nice." How wonderful it is that the Spirit of God can move in us and change us and transform us literally into the image of God.

So, when he begins to talk about righteousness, he begins to talk about the righteousness shining within us. If you look in chapter 2, he begins to talk about the fact that we abide in Him, He abides in us, verses 5 and 6. Then He says in verse 7,

"Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard."

This is a key point:

(1 John 2:8) "On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining."

Now, his point is that many of us have heard what is right. I mean, you can read the Bible and see what's right. You can talk to somebody that is doing the right thing, and you can know what the right thing is; but that right doesn't necessarily become a part of who you are. So, his point is there are things that you have heard, that's the old, that's just you listening, but the "new commandment" is that it becomes a part of you. So, for instance, Scripture might say that you need to love one another, or that you need to love someone as you would yourself, but until it becomes a part of you, something that you want to do, beyond somebody saying, "You know, you really need to do that;" then it's not alive, and it's not fresh. The reason why he goes from the beginning is because he wants this to be ever fresh. So, within the passage he begins to talk about this truth that is actually realized and experienced day after day in your life because this light shines in you, it's in you. It's part of who you are. You've been transformed into the image of Christ.

I like the way that 2 Peter 1:19 puts it, He called light out of darkness. You begin to realize, 2 Corinthians 4:6 as well where Peter will say that it's like the day star dawned in my heart. Like Paul said to the Corinthians, you know how God called light out of darkness in creation? It's the same thing because my heart was dark and there's been a transformation that has occurred because of Christ in me. So that what happens is that hope, peace, confidence, and God's love

is actually realized. You can talk about that stuff but until you realize it inside of you, there's no real comfort. I mean, it's just rhetoric up until that point, but to us it's no longer academic. It's no longer philosophical. It's no longer theoretical. Everything about our faith is real. Why? Because it's a part of our lives. We've handled it, we've experienced it, we walk in the church doors, and we go, "Well, I've heard about the love of God but wow, you guys actually love each other." You go, "Well, that's what truth looks like." You begin to experience it, but more than that, you feel a love for the brethren inside of you. Somebody this past week was able to lead somebody to the Lord, and I heard about that, and I go, "Man, I'm just drawn to that person because of their love for Christ. Now, what causes me to do that? Once again, naturally, humanistically, I wouldn't think that way, but the Spirit of God begins to move me.

His point within the passage is there's a righteousness that is actually transforming in our lives. It's Christ in us. Now, as you go further in this chapter (1 John 2), you realize that it's very different from the world. So, that's why he states in verse 15, you can't love the world and you can't love the things of the world, "if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father..." which is that radiant power, "is not in Him."

So, the evidence is that we're not thinking like the world. We're not loving the things that the world loves. Now, that doesn't mean that we're not in it, and it doesn't mean that we don't possess things, but what it means is that our desire and our love is for the Lord. I mean, how wonderful it is that you can possess wonderful things, but you never put them first. How wonderful it is that you can enjoy things. Scripture says that God has given all these things to enjoy freely, but you're willing to give them up at any time to help, to build up, to encourage somebody else. If it would glorify God, it would be better. We would rather do that because we're not tied to these things. This is not our love Our love is for Him. So, how wonderful it is that we're so transformed.

What's interesting as he goes on in this chapter, is the world doesn't like that. The world doesn't like the fact that you don't like them. You go, "Well, I don't think that's true." Ok, I'll tell you what, just go around mentioning Jesus' name. That's all you have to do, just go "Jesus," and see how popular you are. Do it at school meetings. Do it in the political arena. Do it all these places and just see because Jesus was very clear to His disciples, "They hate Me." And you're going, "Why in the world would somebody hate somebody that would die for them?" See, it doesn't make any sense. So, it shows that there's a force, and he uses the word "anti," that is against the anointing; against the Christ, "antichrist." You can feel that force, very powerful, and the bizarre thing is it's a force without any validity. There's no reason for it. We're not going around trying to take over. The only thing that's happening is that if in fact a Christian is walking in the Spirit of Christ, he's going about doing good. But this is a threat to the world. So, the way that it's put within the passage is that they're not going to like you. Now, what's bizarre in all of this, and his point is that we have an anointing, he'll state in verse 20 this phrase,

"But we have an anointing from the Holy One."

“Holy one” would be not like the world. So, “holy” means not common. So, you’re going to be different because you have an anointing from One that is not like the world at all. The world is going to hate you then too, but what’s interesting about this “anointing” is that it causes a fidelity that the world thinks is really bizarre. Why would you be so faithful? Why would you be so consistent? Why would you continue? I think it’s interesting where he says in verse 18,

“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming,” many who are against Christ, would be another way of putting it.

“...even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.

(1 John 2:19) They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us...”

Why? Because you have an anointing of the Spirit of faithfulness, the Spirit of fidelity, and our devotion is to Christ and to His body. We can’t be unfaithful, it’s impossible for a true believer to be unfaithful. It’s impossible, and the wonderful power of the Spirit of God that holds me and keeps me faithful and keeps me devoted to Christ and to His people. Well, it’s just such a comfort of the proof, the evidence of Him within me.

He goes on, and he begins to describe that our devotion and our fidelity is to Christ; to His body. It’s going to be uninterrupted. It’s going to be unapologetic. It’s going to be unashamed. It’s going to be unabatted; it’s ever new, it’s ever fresh, it’s ever confident in our relationship; and it’s ever expectant. You go, “Well, don’t you sometimes kind of lose hope?” Nope, because we have an anchor both sure and steadfast. So, the power of the Spirit of God within us, and one of the things that he’s going to be emphasizing within the passage is that He abides within us. You see that repeated over and over again, if you look with me in verse 24,

“As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.”

So, there’s no doubt that the emphasis is on the remaining. The point is, and James will address this in James 1, that our faith when tested grows stronger. And it’s the difference between real faith and fake faith. If somebody is not sincerely, genuinely believing with the power of the Spirit of God within them, then they won’t last. And the test of endurance won’t be there. But if in fact it’s real, then you’re going to burn brighter, your love for Christ is going to grow deeper; you’re going to have a power of life in you despite the insurmountable pressures that come upon you, despite incontrovertible hostility that the world thrusts upon you, and despite the, I would say, antagonistic deception. The point that he begins to say is that liars, deceivers, and falsehood are coming. People put on masks, they put on faces, and for whatever reason, I never have understood why somebody that didn’t love Christ would want to come to church. Why are you coming to church? Well, maybe somebody asked you to and you’re just returning a favor or something like that, but other than that, I might’ve gone one or two times but that’s it; because church would bore me stiff if I didn’t love Jesus. Really, I mean, what are you listening to? “The

love of Christ... The love of Christ.... oh, yeah.... The love of Christ.” But if you love Christ, “Wow! He’s talking about the love of Christ!” See? It’s just a different way of thinking, and it’s understandable why people feel uncomfortable with this because there’s nothing real within them.

So, he establishes that great energy. We’re going to pick up in verse 26. He talks about those that are trying to deceive. Now, his point is that you know, and you have the anointed, you’re going to be ok. We read about that in 1 Thessalonians, and as you go into chapter 2, Paul begins to express, “I’m very worried about you. You’re new Christians, how are you going to make it? I’m not there.” Then, he gets word back and he goes, “You’re ok! You’re unchanged! You grew stronger! The word of God has gone out more!” What happened? Well, they had the Spirit of God in them. So, the wonderful thing is the reality of the Spirit of God cannot become undaunted by the unfaithful. When someone says, “Someone just left.” Ok. We feel bad about that, but I’m undaunted by that because my faith isn’t based on them being here. My faith is based on my relationship with Christ. As Paul would say, “I know whom I have believed, I am persuaded that He is able.” So, the point is that the unfaithful don’t mess with me. Do what you have to do, I’m staying. We’re undeterred by lies, “Oh, you know, somebody said this. Did you hear what this person said?” It makes no difference to me. “Oh, there’s a new way of looking at this.” What do you mean “new”? There is no “new.” Paul states it very clearly in Galatians 1, if anyone comes to you with a different gospel, let him be accursed. “I’ll say it again,” and he actually repeats it again. The point is you’ve got to stop listening to the people, listen to the Spirit of God. You know what the truth is.

If you look in 1 John 2:26,

“These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.”

But we are unshaken despite the copious amount of energy and effort that the deceitful use to try to get us off the path. It doesn’t matter. We’re not moving. The wisdom of man, they get into philosophies, and into all these academia nuts. They’ll get into their position, and they will begin to stir up all these wonderful ideas and thoughts, but if you listen to them even just a little bit, you’ll go, “That’s nuts. That’s crazy. That doesn’t make any sense. None of their ideas make sense.” The Spirit of truth says, “That’s the lie.” So, we’re not dissuaded by it. He says that they’re trying to deceive you, watch verse 27,

“As for you, the anointing...” See? That’s the Spirit of God that’s come within you.

“The anointing which you received from Him abides in you,” remains with you, can’t be knocked off base.

“And you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie,”

“*Pseudos*,” once again is the word that is used, which is that interesting word that describes somebody that professes to be one thing and really is another. He goes, “but that’s not you

because the Spirit that has come within you is the Spirit of truth, genuine, sincerity, and transparency. That's got to be threatening to the world, isn't it? You walk up to somebody in the world, "Hey, I've been praying for you. I really do love you." "What?!" They're not afraid when nefarious people love them. They're afraid when a Christian loves them. That's "really dangerous."

"As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you..."

I like the phrase there where it says that you don't need anybody to teach you. Of course, that's just going to throw me out of a job, but we know Ephesians 4, that God gives pastors, teachers, and evangelists for the work; the context is telling us you don't have need of anybody to tell you what's true. For instance, if I were standing up here, and I preached or said something wrong then the Spirit of God in you would say, "I don't think that was totally right." And I would need to be corrected. Isn't that an interesting point? It's because you know what the truth is, the Spirit of Christ bears witness in your hearts. Now, I can say this, that truth will be in union with the body at large, and there will be a unity in that. You can't have one or two people going, "Well, I have truth and nobody else does." But you're going to see the body at work, and the body will come together, and you'll understand, "Well, this is the truth. Then I show you the Scripture, and you go, "That's it! That's the reason why it bothered me."

So, his point is that we have this anointing, and He teaches us all things. If you look in verse 27,

"...teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie."

He's actually defining for you what is right, what is wrong, and what is true; and that you might abide in these. Now, he says this in verse 28,

"Now, little children..." Once again, a term for "beloved," not necessarily referring to them being immature, but that he loves them.

"Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence..."

There's the word "confidence" within the passage.

"...and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming."

(1 John 2:29) "If you know that He is righteous,"

and once again, we're ending with the concept of righteousness,

"...you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him."

The point of the matter is that if in fact we've received Jesus Christ as our righteous One. In other words we're not defining righteousness anymore, Jesus defines it, and we've aligned with that pursuit. Then somebody else is saying, "I'm walking in righteousness." and we go, "doesn't look like Jesus to me." He's saying that we would know. We're able to recognize the genuineness and sincerity of what is real.

Now, let me give you an example of this. Go back to 1 Thessalonians, since you're familiar with 1 Thessalonians since we did a study in it. I mean, you guys know this pretty well. So, in 1 Thessalonians 2, what Paul begins to share is that "we came to you in the Spirit of Christ." You go, "Well, what does the Spirit of Christ look like?" Well, it looks a lot different from the world. If the world wants to be "nice" or "kind" to you, they usually have their hand out somewhere in the game. I always like to start off with, "What's the bottom line? Just tell me the bottom line." You don't have to kiss up, just tell me. So, anyway, he goes in, and he begins to say, "You know when I came to you, you realized that I actually loved you. You go, "Well, how would they realize that?" Well, Jesus says in John 3 that truth seekers look for truth, and truth is recognizable to people that are looking for it. So, Paul comes on the scene and he begins to walk and talk like Jesus. They recognized that there was something different about this guy, and he begins to share with them the Gospel, the love of God. "Jesus Christ died for your sins. He saves you." And they began to say, "I believe what he's saying is real." Now, why do they believe that? The answer is because they've seen real in him. They've seen the evidence of the Gospel in him.

1 Thessalonians 2:5 reads this way,

"For we never came with flattering speech..."

Well, that's different from the world, right off the bat.

"...nor with a pretext for greed..."

That's different. If I said it once, I'm going to say it a thousand times, church nor any church organization should ever do any fundraising, period. I'll stop there.

"We never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness—

1 Thessalonians 2:6) nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others..."

That's different from the world.

"...even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.

(1 Thessalonians 2:7) But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

(1 Thessalonians 2:8) Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us."

What does that mean? "You saw we actually cared for you, we actually loved you." I mean, Paul was that transparent. You can tell if somebody's just, "Hi, how are you doing, nice to see you, can we go eat?" or if they actually care for you. It's like Jesus with the woman at the well, and

He stands there talking with her, the disciples come up to Him, and they go, "It's time to eat." and Jesus goes, "This is more important."

Look with me in verse 9,

"For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, *how* working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God."

In other words, "we took on a job because we didn't want you thinking that we wanted your money." Now, we read in Philippians where it was at this time that the church of Philippi was actually sending money to Paul; but he wasn't taking from them, lest they think. There are times we as believers need to make sure that money just stays off the table completely. But he goes on, "You've become very dear to us, and you're witnesses of this behavior." Look at verse 10, "how devoutly and uprightly we were." Read the end of verse 9, "we proclaimed to you the gospel." In what setting? You see the setting and the genuineness of the heart. This looks like Jesus. Jesus went about doing good. You never read any text where it goes, "Jesus went about with His hand out." You never read any of that. Why? Because He was the one that came to save us, and that's what the gospel is about. The gospel is about us proclaiming "God loves you." "What's in it for you?" That's what's in it for me, you being saved. That's the desire of my heart.

"You were witnesses, you've seen how we behaved..." verse 11,

"Just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,

(1 Thessalonians 2:12) so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

(1 Thessalonians 2:13) For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is," a transforming power, God's word.

How powerful it is for somebody to actually walk in the Spirit of God, with the love of God as their motivating factor. The word of God constrains, and brother, I don't want anything from you, except to hear you say, "I love God too." That's all I'm looking for, and if you're with me on that, I'm good. You don't have to join, you don't have to put money in the piggy bank, just love God through Jesus Christ; and I'm with you. We're united, we're brothers and sisters in Christ by virtue of this.

As powerful as this is, Paul beckons Timothy, and I appreciate Greg reading in 2 Timothy referring to the fact that in this letter Paul is passing the baton to his son in the faith, and he's saying, "I'm about ready to die." Nero's in office. He's getting ready to have his head chopped off for his faith. So, he writes this final letter, and he says, "I'm already being poured out as a drink offering," his way of saying, "I'm already being ready to be sacrificed." So, then he turns,

and he says, “Now, what you need to do is you need to stay firm, stand steadfast.” What do you think he uses to beckon Timothy to be steadfast? You’re going to be surprised.

If you look with me in 2 Timothy 1:3, he’ll say,

“I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience.”

See that? Now, what he’s saying is, “Timothy, you saw the transparency in my life, and you saw that I actually believe what I’m preaching about, right?” I mean, there’s nothing worse than seeing a preacher preach, going through his antics, and some are very good at their antics, but they get on their stage, and then you hear them talking behind the stage, and you go, “They don’t believe any of that stuff.” There’s nothing worse than that. If you look here, he goes, “You know with my clear conscience when I came to you.”

(2 Timothy 1:5) “I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.”

Now, his point is you grew up with sincerity, and you can’t argue with real. You can argue with a lot of things. You can debate about philosophy. You can debate about hypothetical and theoretical issues, but you can’t argue with real. How powerful it is to have a member of the family that actually walks in that truth. Somebody that lives by what they say they believe, and you go, “This person not only believes in it, but they’re compelled by it.” It’s like you’re coming into direct contact with the legitimate Spirit of truth. This, Paul knows, will preserve Timothy in the worst of times.

In 2 Timothy 3, you’d think that these would be very discouraging words, but he states, “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.”

That’s really a terrible way to encourage people.

(2 Timothy 3:2) “For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,

(2 Timothy 3:3) unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,

(2 Timothy 3:4) treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,”

They’ll have a form of godliness, but they’ll deny the power thereof. (2 Timothy 3:5) Things don’t look good. He says people will actually ever be learning, verse 7, but never seem to get it; and we live in a day and age which wow, information is all out there, and you tell people something, and they go, “Oh yeah, I’ve already read that;” but they don’t seem to get it. They don’t come to the knowledge of the truth. They don’t come to a reality of it. If you go on, he actually says,

(2 Timothy 3:12) “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

(2 Timothy 3:13) But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

This is not a good looking future, but his point is, if you go on, but you “continue in the things,” why? Because we’re undaunted by the unfaithful. We’re undeterred by the lies. We’re unshaken by the energy and effort of those trying to deceive us. Why? Well, if you look within the passage, “You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of.” What is it that convinced him? “Knowing from whom you have learned them.”

You know, it’s one thing for somebody to preach the gospel to you, and then they live a totally different life, and you go, “Ok, that’s a bunch of bologna;” but verse 15,

“From childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you;” if you go back to chapter 1, by a mother and a grandmother that were very sincere about it. They actually lived the life, how powerful that is.

John’s point is you don’t have any need of anybody to tell you what real is. It’s a part of who you are. You’ve received the Spirit of real when you received Jesus Christ in your heart. You’ve begun walking by it, and you know it so well that you can recognize it in others. Not to say that it’s our job to judge them, but it’s recognizable. “You’ll know them by their fruits.” (Matthew 7:16) It’s highly recognizable, and you know what righteousness is because righteousness is no longer an ambiguous term. Righteousness is a very clear term because it looks exactly like Jesus. And that’s the wonder of our faith, that there’s great clarity in our faith, there’s great consistency in our faith, and there’s great confidence that we have in our faith. The deceivers are not going to deceive us, and the deserters may go, but the true will remain faithful.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we give You thanks for Your word and the encouragement that You give us in this wonderful letter of encouragement of strengthening.

With your heads bowed, and your eyes closed, I’m going to ask you as I believe John would ask you; are you real with your faith? Have you been living this? Is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, alive and well in you? Is there evidence of His existence in your life? We’re not asking you what you know, what you’ve heard before, that’s old stuff. What we’re asking you is, are you living it? By virtue of this becoming a part of your life, you will have a confidence, a contentment, a consistency in your life that the world can’t take away, can’t move you off of. Dearly beloved, you need that in this day and age for there are a tremendous amount of attacks. The world is against you, but you need something that can hold you, something true. What we’re asking you to do at this time is you talk to God through the person of Jesus Christ who died for you, who loved, who gave Himself for you, who told you that He would willingly

sacrifice for your sins; and as that wonderful passage reminds us, in Romans 8, nothing can ever separate you from His love. It's that same love that's been poured out within our hearts, and quite frankly, there's nothing that can cause me to deny Him. You come to God today, and get real about your faith, you're going to find a confidence, joy, peace that will get you through all of this craziness.