



1 JOHN 2:18-29

Part 5 of Epistles of John

Pastor Mark Driscoll | 1 John 2:18-29 | August 08, 2004

You may be seated. Good morning and welcome to Mars Hill. We will be in 1 John Chapter 2 today, beginning in Verse 18. This summer, we're doing 1, 2, and 3 John. We'll start Genesis in the fall, which will be another good series for us. I hope and pray. I'll just pray for us, and we'll get right to work.

Father God, thank you for an opportunity to study together today. Lord Jesus, we pray that as we study that you would be the theme and the subject and the focus of what we have come here to learn this morning, and Holy Spirit, we ask that you would make all of this happen. We ask that you would come and convict us of sin, those who need it. We pray you would come and encourage and comfort those who need it.

We pray that you would give us love for Jesus and a faith in Jesus as we all need it and, Holy Spirit, we ask that just as you have inspired the writing and the Scriptures that we study this morning, we ask now that you would come and illuminate our understanding of them so that we might accurately correctly and rightly know what it is that you intend for each of us. So we come seeking that in Jesus' good name. Amen.

As we get into it today, John's our author. He's an older man. He's a pastor. He's writing to a church filled with primarily younger people and a lot of new Christians, which probably summarizes most of us here this morning, and it's helpful in that the book actually tells us the purpose for which it was written, which helps us understand sort of why he's saying some of the things he's saying.

In the 5th chapter, in the 13th verse, he says, "I write these things so you may know that you have eternal life. He who has the Son has life. He who does not have the Son does not have life, and so he basically says that Christianity can be boiled down to one issue. You want to make it as simple as possible, and that's Jesus. If you're connected to Jesus, you believe in Jesus. You love Jesus. You worship Jesus as God. You have salvation. Sins are forgiven. You have eternal life. You're a Christian. Everything is as it should be.

If you don't have Jesus, you're not connected to God. You don't have your sins forgiven. You will not partake of eternal life in heaven, and everything is in a very precarious and dangerous spot for you. It very quickly needs to get remedied, the evil from being disconnected to connected to Jesus. The book then breaks down into three ways to know whether or not you got Jesus. It would be like that "got milk" campaign, the whole "got Jesus."

You think, "Okay, how do I know I got Jesus? How do I know?" Some of you are sitting there thinking, "I think I got Jesus because I went to church as a kid or I believe in God." I was that same guy. I was in college at age 19, not sure. Do I know Jesus? Am I a Christian? I don't know. 1 John says you can know, and first of all, that is very good because so many religions and philosophies and different ideologies will teach you that you don't know whether or not God loves you.

You don't know whether or not God forgives you, and you don't know whether or not God is please with you until you die and you stand before him, which if he's not, it's a little late. I mean you're kind of – it's like, you know, "Hi, how did I do?" "Not good." "Oh, well, you should have said something. You know, I mean this is a little late in the game. I can't really go back and fix it now."

And that is the good news that we can know in advance that we have a relationship with Jesus, and that Jesus loves us, and that our sins are forgiven, and that we're on the right track. We can know that. We don't need to just hang out until the end. I asked a guy recently. I said, "What is gonna happen to you when you die?" He says, "I don't know. I'm hoping for good." I was like, "Well, you better go with more than that. You better go with, 'I know that I am in good relationship with God through Jesus.'"

And the book breaks down to three ways that we investigate our life and know whether or not we're really Christians, and I would say that the first one, the one is the most important that anchors the other two is the theological question. What do you think about Jesus? That's gonna be what we're talking about today. What do you think about Jesus? Do you believe Jesus is God, that he's the only God, that he's the eternal God? Do you believe Jesus is God?

First question, out of that comes to other questions. Have you seen your life change? Do you hate your sin? This is the moral question. There's a theological question. Out of that comes a moral question. Do you hate your sin? Things you used to do, do you not want to do anymore? Do you want to change? Do you want to get your life together? You want to do things differently and be a different person? If you believe Jesus is God and what you want is moral change in your life, there's a good indication that you know Jesus.

The other is a social change. Do you want to meet other Christians? Do you want to go to church? Do you want to have Christian friends? Do you want

to be married to a Christian spouse? Do you want to raise Christian kids? Do you want to have Christian friendships with other people that know Jesus? You can't be a person who loves Jesus, hates sin, and wants to be friends with other Christians and not be certain that you are a Christian and that God loves you and that you're in good relationship with him.

You say, "Well, I'm a Christian who doesn't believe in Jesus, and I – boy I'm a – you know, really I drink so good, and I can beat anybody up." That's probably – you're probably not doing so good. You probably got to really reevaluate. Am I really a Christian if I don't love Jesus, if I don't hate sin, and if I don't love the other people who love Jesus? As we get into it today, though, it all comes out in this first issue. Who's Jesus? Who do you think he is? Who do you think he is? You got to answer that question for yourself.

John's gonna break this section down, and he's gonna tell us that there's two kinds of people, people who love Jesus as God, people who don't. There are two implications, heaven and hell, and then, there's two safeguards to protect you from being a non-Christian that goes to hell and becoming a Christian who goes to heaven, and that is the Bible and the Holy Spirit, the Ghost. We'll get into the Ghost. It will be good. So here's where he starts.

First, he's gonna talk about the people who don't know God. Some of you are not Christians. Some of you think you're Christians. You're not. Some of you are. Good for you. "Dear children" – these are the brand new Christians. How many of you are brand new Christians like the last couple of years? I still remember I was 19. I became a Christian in college. I was a brand new Christian. I had to figure out where the books of the Bible were and how to pray and all these questions. You're a brand new Christian.

Brand new Christians are excited. They're motivated. They're enthusiastic. They want to learn, but they have to be very careful who they trust because there's a lot of bad teachers out there. So they got to be careful because, you know, and the thing is, too. You don't know you're in the cult until the last day. Isn't that the sad truth? "Hey, white shoes _____ uh oh." You know, you just think you're going to church until it's too late.

So if you're a new Christian, you got to be real careful who your teachers are because there's a lot of bad teaching, a lot of weird teaching. How many of you, as new Christians, went to the wrong church? Some of you say, "I'm there now. I got to go." No, I'm not talking about – I remember that. I remember going to a church as a brand new Christian. It just freaked me out. It just weirded me out. It wasn't a good church, and then, I did find a really good church, but as a new Christian, you got to be really careful, and he tells us why.

"This is the last hour." That's sort of brooding and ominous. I John's filled with this Scooby Doo verses. I call them Scooby Doo verses because they kind of got that. They're a little scary, little, little. They get a little twitchy, you know, like whooo, the Scooby Doo verses. That's one of the Scooby Doo verses in 1 John. This is the last hour. You hear that. You're like, "Whooh. That sounds scary. This sounds like all those books about flying people that everybody's reading and freaked out about."

When it says "the last hour," what it's talking about is that we're coming to the end of human history, that there was God and eternity past, that there was creation and sin and the fall, and then, there was all the promises of Jesus and Israel and the Old Testament, then, the birth and the life and the death and the burial and the resurrection of Jesus, and now we're moved on into that place where the Gospel, the good news that Jesus gone out to the earth and that's the last hour.

Any of you watch 24? You should. It's amazing. It is the best television show ever. It is incredible. You got to start with season one, and you got to work your way up, though, because it's put together brilliantly, but every time I read this verse, I hear this _____ like it's the last hour, and what happens in 24, and this is what I get frustrated by is you got to – it's the last minute of every show that everything gets put together. Everything gets wrapped up. All the loose ends get put together. The virus gets found. The bad guy gets killed.

They still – you know, the President's wife is still alive, but other than that, all the loose ends get put together, and that's what happens in the last hour, right? The last episode of every season, that last hour is when the show wraps up all the loose ends. All the threads come together. This is the last hour. We're living in the last hour. Things have slowed down, and God's pulling it all together, and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming – another Scooby Doo verse is coming – the antichrist verse.

Any of you heard of the antichrist? Everybody tries to guess who the antichrist is, everybody. As a new Christian who went to the wrong church for about 15 minutes, and then, went to a good Evangelical free church. It was a good church. I met a guy who was convinced he knew who the antichrist was because he said 666 was Ronald Wilson Reagan because each of his names, it has six letters. That's the antichrist. Our President is the antichrist. I was like I'm going to find another church. I definitely have the wrong place.

Ronald Reagan is not the antichrist, okay? I won't say that. Anyways, the antichrist is coming, and we get this in Revelation 13. that at the end of the age is coming the antichrist, the bad guy, right? If the Bible is a fight between a guy with a white hat and a black hat, Jesus gets the white hat. The antichrist gets the black hat. He's the bad guy, and the antichrist, some say, will fight Jesus and be against him. Others say that he will set himself up as a counterfeit Jesus.

I think either of which – both of which, actually, are probably true. There's an antichrist coming. Some people are freaked out about that, right? Some of you sleep with the light on. You're like it scares you. Okay, there is an antichrist coming, world dictator, the end of the world, flying people, blood, mayhem, you know, Black Hawk helicopters. You're gonna be eating stuff out of your garden. I mean it's gonna be crazy. Okay, that's true, but even now, many antichrists have come.

This is the little guys. There's the big antichrist. There's the little antichrists, the little guys. They're out all over the world. How many antichrists do you think are in the world today? Billions, billions, many, many. We'll talk about what this means. This is how we know it is the last hour. Okay, we're

gonna talk about it. The antichrist is anyone who is against Jesus. Okay, Jesus is God. Jesus is worthy of honor and devotion and worship and adoration and affection.

Anything that takes away from Jesus what is rightly his is antichrist. It's against Jesus. This may shock you. Most of our world is antichrist. Most of Seattle is antichrist. May not shock you. You may read the paper or leave your house upon occasion to realize that the vast majority is not pro Jesus at all, at all. I still remember being a new Christian in college. I went to my classes, and I realized my first semester that every class was antichrist. It was weird.

I have a philosophy class that tried to systematically dismantle the evidence for Jesus. It wasn't even a class about Jesus. Just everything in it, the prof's agenda was to chip down Jesus. Went to a sociology class. They told me that the Bible was a myth, that we're all born good, right? And I asked the guy, "Then why is it so bad." The guy was like, "Well, that's why you need sociology." I was like, "No, that's why we need repentance and salvation." and then, I went to a class for interpersonal communication. We're gonna talk to each other. "I've done this before. I can major in this and probably not have to stay up all night and study," I was thinking to myself, and first thing they made us read was parts of Japanese spiritism.

They made us read some sections of the _____ and other parts of Japanese Shintoism, and I was like, "What in the world?" The Japanese are not the only people who talk to each other. There are other things we could read. Jesus talked to people, for example. We could study some of that, but we never did, and the whole point that he made was that we live in a Western world built on the teachings of Christianity.

We can't allow that to affect our interpersonal communication. I was like, "What in the world, you faux hippie? What in the, you know?" All these grad students. So then I took another class, and that class was on history, and all I learned that Christianity is the worst thing that ever happened to the world, and it would be better if we never had Jesus or Christians because they've ruined everything, and I remember sitting in my dorm just thinking, "Man, every class I've got, whether it's sociology, philosophy, speech, communications or history is systematically undermining my love for Jesus."

And I couldn't believe that. That is what antichrists do. Am I anti academic? I'm not. Am I anti reading books? I'm not, but I do think that you and I need to be discerning, discretionary people, who when we read a book, when we take a class, when we go to a seminar, when we listen to a talk radio show host, when we watch a television talk program, when we pick up any piece of media or literature, which is overwhelming amount of information, we have to ask ourselves, "Is this causing me to love and trust Jesus more or less?"

Is it pro Christ or is it antichrist? Is it compelling me toward Jesus or is it pulling me away? Is it trusting in him or is it distrusting him? Is it believing him or is it disbelieving him? This is intensely practical because many of us, our first inclination is when we have a hard time. We have questions, and we have needs. We immediately default to the antichrist. We're having marital troubles. Well, let's go talk to this person that doesn't know God and won't quote any verses.

Is that the best place to begin? Will we end up being like Christ, for Christ, with Christ through the instruction of someone who is against Christ? Obviously not. If their agenda is not Jesus, then they're on the wrong mission. I'm not saying that everything that everyone who is a non-Christian teaches is wrong. I'm saying there are bits and pieces of accuracy that they're working with from general revelation, but you have to ask yourself.

Those most influential teachers and leaders and friends and people in your life, those people you give highest authority and weight to, are they pro or antichrist? Do they love Jesus and encourage and inspire you to love Jesus or do they not love Jesus and encourage you and inspire you to things other than the love of Jesus? How many – if antichrist just means you're not for Jesus, and that's all it means. Jesus – I'll say this to you. When you hear John, you're hearing the echo of the teaching of Jesus.

John was discipled and trained by Jesus, and he echoes the instruction of Jesus all the time. Jesus said you're either what? "For me or against me." That's it. No room for indifference. "You're either for me. If you're not for me, you're defacto against me." You have to ask yourself. Are you for Jesus? If not, you're against him. The people that you listen to, admire, follow, respect, are they for Jesus or against him?

If you or those that you admire and aspire to be like are not for Jesus, worshipping him as God and wanting to live like he lived and love as he loved, the marks of a true Christian, then you are antichrist. You're against him. Many people don't think of it that way. They just think that indifference is okay. I don't love Jesus. I don't believe in Jesus. I don't follow Jesus, but I'm not against him. Jesus says you are. Jesus says you are.

He goes on, talks about these antichrists, these false teachers, these heretics, these people that are leading others astray. They went out from us. They were in the church. If you were Satan, and you had some false teachers, some people who were against Jesus, where would you strategically place them? Of course, you would send them in a church. Okay, you want to disrupt the truth.

So you would send in false teachers. That's what Satan does. Satan sends in his servants among the people of God. It's the same thing where he sent Judas Iscariot in to the team of Jesus among the 12 disciples. We see that Satan filled his heart. John's Gospel tells us. Satan got into Judas to get on the team. Satan will send in false teachers into the church to get on the team.

They went out from us. Eventually, what happens, though, people show up, and they shove, shove, shove their agenda on a church. "I want to do this. I want to talk about this. I want to do this. No, that's not going to Jesus. That's not promoting Jesus. That's not about Jesus. We don't do that here." Eventually, they got frustrated and they left. Okay, now I'll say this. There are good and bad reasons why people leave a church.

Sometimes, people leave a church because God called them to. Right, like Smithville Bible Church over here needs a little help. So Chuck goes to Smithville, and that's what Chuck does because Chuck loves Jesus, and Smithville needs Jesus, and Chuck loves Jesus. So Chuck goes over to help Jesus at Smithville Bible Church. That's good. We're for that. What means is you can leave here and go to a Baptist church if they teach the Bible and

love Jesus and you go to a Baptist church.

That's great. When you get there, tell them you love them. Tell them that even though they may not believe it, we'll see them in heaven, and we love them, too. If you go to Presbyterian church and they love Jesus and teach the Bible, you can go to a Presbyterian church, and when you get there, tell them you love them. We love them and that they're wrong on baptism, and just tell them "Hi."

Just tell them "Hi" for us, and what we're not talking about here is someone leaving a church for a good reason, and we're not talking about somebody leaving a church to go to another church that loves Jesus. That's not what we're talking about. There's bad reasons why people leave a church because the church is teaching the truth, and they're wrong, and they don't want to change their mind or they don't want to give up on their error. That's what's happening here.

They were in the church, and they left, and they didn't go to church anymore. It's not like they went from the Presbyterian church to the Baptist church. They went from the Christian church to nothing or some little weird, fringe, cultish, freakish group. How many of you had had that happen, people that you knew that you thought were Christians because they went to church? Maybe they were baptized. Maybe they prayed. Maybe they taught a Bible study. Maybe they even helped lead you to Christ.

You know the guy who is most influential leading me to Christ today is not going to church, does not claim to be a Christian, and says that Jesus isn't God. That was really hard for me as a new Christian because I had become a Christian in large part because this guy took me to church and gave me a Bible, and then, he tells me, "I don't believe the Bible, and I'm not going to church anymore."

I said, "What about Jesus?" He said, "I don't know. I don't know if he's God. I don't think he is." How many of you had had that happen, somebody you knew that you thought was a Christian? They just leave the church. They leave Jesus. It's not like they go to another church. They just give up altogether. This is very confusing for people. This is very sad. It's very troubling. What do you do with that?

Some of you will say, "Maybe they lost their salvation." Well, the problem is you can't lose your salvation. John's gonna tell us in a little bit, "It's eternal life." You don't lose an eternal gift. It's a gift that God gives forever. Secondly, salvation is not something that belongs to us. Jonah, too, says that salvation belongs to the Lord. So we can't lose something that belongs to God. You see what I'm saying? It would have to be that God lost us.

Did they lose salvation? Wrong question. Did God lose them? No, God doesn't lose them. Jesus says in John 17 that, "No one could take us from God's hand, that nothing could separate us." Paul says in Romans 8, "Nothing could separate us from the love of God." So they didn't lose their salvation. So what happened? I even know guys that were pastors that today are not Christians. I'd say, "What happened? What happened?" This is a very important verse.

"They went out from us" – Verse 19, but what? "They did not really belong to us. They weren't really Christians. If you'd like at the team, you'd say, "Judas is a Christian," and then, you look and you say, "No, he wasn't." He just hung out with the Christians. The same language that is used here for these people who left the church is used for Judas. When they had the last supper and Judas had agreed to obey Jesus, it says that, "He went out." He literally just walked away from Jesus. That's physically what he did and spiritually what he did as well.

These people have done the same thing. They have literally just walked out of Christianity and out of church and out of relationship with Jesus and Jesus' people, and the question is, "Why?" Because they weren't Christians. They weren't Christians. You need to know then, too, there is a differentiation here theologically between the visible and the invisible church. This is a visible church. Okay, we're all here.

Some of you are Christians. Some of you are not. Some of you know it. Some of you don't. Some of you think you're Christians. You're not. Some of you are Christians. You know it. Some of you are non-Christians. You know it. Within this visible church, there's an invisible church. God knows the hearts of each you who sit here today. He may be able – if you're faking Christianity or just playing a spiritual game, you may be able to convince others around you that you're a Christian, but God really knows your heart, and out of this visible church, God knows the invisible church.

He knows the heart of each of us, and he knows which of us really are his possession. A lot of people look at the church. They say, "Oh, it's all filled with hypocrites." Well, it's also filled with non-Christians, and just because somebody's in church doesn't mean they're in Christ, and just because someone is seated here doesn't mean that they will be standing in the kingdom in the end, and so there's a distinction here that's very important.

These new Christians are very confused because these friends of theirs left the church and they're saying, scratching their head going, "Well, are they still Christians? Are they not Christians? Were they ever Christians? Did they lose their salvation? What happened here?" John answers that question for them as a good pastor should. "For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us, but their going showed that none of them belonged to us."

What he says is this: Real Christians hang in there. They persevere as a theological nomenclature for this. This doesn't mean that if you keep being a Christian, that you'll be saved in the end. What it does mean is if you were really saved in the beginning, you will persevere to the end, that the person who loves Jesus and meets Jesus sticks with Jesus. It's evidence that they love him. It's evidence that they belong to him.

This doesn't mean that you don't rebel and sin, but it does mean you come back. How many of you, it's been a yo-yo? You were going to church, walking with God, and then, you totally went out doing your own crazy thing, but then, you've come back. That's what a true Christian does. A true Christian either doesn't leave relationship with Jesus and God's people and reading Bible and praying, the hang in there or if they do give up or hang it up, they get convicted, and they come back.

They say, "Ah, I'm back." So then he goes on, and he talks about what's at stake. These people are sitting there going, "Well, are we gonna go out? Are we gonna lose it? Are we gonna fall apart? Are we gonna lose our mind?" He says, "No, but you, the whole church have an anointing from the holy one, and all of you know the truth." Now this is a great verse. Not that the other ones aren't, but this one is really helpful. Now how many of you, when you heard the word "anointing," you come out of some charismaniac church's aerobics class, fat sweaty guy with a handkerchief and praise banners, and it gives you a twitch like a 'Nam vet with posttraumatic stress disorder.

background, right? How many of you have that, and you're like, "We're not doing that, are we?" It's early in the day. We'll see, but my point is this. When the Bible speaks of anointing, that has been widely misunderstood. Now anointing in the charismaniac, and I'm distinguishing that from charismatic for those of you who that know what all this means.

Great, I'm not – I'm kind of charismatic. I'm charismatic with a seatbelt. Now I don't know what that means. Now anointing means this: That you have the Ghost. We're not gonna call it the Holy Spirit because Oprah's got a section on her show called "Spirit," and I hate that section. So we're gonna go with the King James. The King James calls it the "Ghost." Now that is much better. That, you can mark it the Ghost.

That's got a little more to it. So we're gonna go with the Ghost. The anointing is the Ghost. Everybody say it. One, two, three, Ghost. Whoo, see that's good. That's good. We're all about the Ghost here. "You don't talk about the Holy Spirit?" We're into the Ghost. That's what we're into, the Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the anointing. Okay, now in the Old Testament, there was anointing with oil. You get anointed with oil. It was prefiguring, typologizing, foreshadowing the coming of the Holy Spirit, who would anoint you.

Jesus, we're told in Isaiah, would be anointed in his earthly ministry, and he was. He was baptized. He came up out the water, and what came down from heaven? The Ghost anointed the Lord Jesus for his ministry. We now are anointed by the Ghost. One of us or all of us? Read it. "You" – plural – "have an anointing from the holy one, and all of you know the truth." All Christians have the anointing of the Ghost. This is hugely important because if you go to the wrong church, they'll tell you one guy has the Ghost.

He yells a lot, and he's always got a hanky to do this. Apparently, the Ghost makes you sweat a lot. You know, the Ghost sort of triggers the secretion glands and the sweat in the guy. "Oh, the Ghost is on me now." So he's got the hanky. He's doing a lot of this, a lot of this, and he's always got a handheld mike. "Whoo," and he's doing a lot of this. You know, he pulls a hamstring, comes up _____. That guy's busy. That guy's – and you know that guy's got the Ghost because he's just, "Look what I can do. You know, you can do it, too," and everybody's, "Yee, whoo, hoo, ha, ha. The Ghost, he's anointed. I'm anointed. We're all anointed."

The problem with that is it sets up. I wore myself out. I don't know how they can do that in a suit, in a suit. How do you do that? I don't – they must have the Ghost, and now the problem with that theology is that God only has one man in every church, and that man is the fourth member of the Trinity, and that man. God speaks to that man. He's the Lord's anointed. You don't come against the Lord's anointed, and he's real powerful and authoritative and does a lot of this stuff, and the problem with that is that if you believe that only one man has the Ghost and only one man's anointed, you put your Bible down.

You stop praying. You stop asking Jesus. You just go to that guy, and you walk around quoting that guy, and not the words that were inspired by the ghostwriter. Yeah, it was supposed to be – it wasn't as good as I was thinking, but it was still a pretty good line. Now that's what happened, I think, in this church. These guys show up. "We got the Ghost. Everybody, Bible's down. We got new revelation. Listen to us, secret things we know. All you need is us." Everybody's like, "Hmm. That's good," and then, they start quoting all their teachers and leaders, not their Bible anymore.

They're not going to the Holy Spirit saying, "Holy Spirit, you wrote the book. Holy Spirit, you live in me. Teach me the Scripture. I want to know the truth." Don't quote me, okay? Don't test sound doctrine by me. If I do my job well, which I aspire you, I want you to learn the Scriptures, okay? That's my goal. You then should check everything by what the Ghost has said. You should take it to the Bible, and if anyone, myself included or especially myself, should say something that is in disagreement with what the Ghost has said, please go with Ghost. Please go with the Scripture.

I don't intend to get off track, but if I do, let me know. My whole goal is not to be an antichrist. That's one of my big objectives. You know, that's a huge deal for me, but if I make a mistake or if I get off track, this is the problem where people get lazy with their Bible. They stop reading. They stop studying. They stop praying. They stop relying on the teaching ministry, the Holy Spirit because they think, "Well, I just need that guy. He's anointed," and John says we're all anointed.

Every Christian is anointed by the spirit of God. Every one of us that is a child of God has the spirit of God. You're all anointed. It is a false teaching to say that one guy has the Ghost and everybody else doesn't. That's wrong. That's just terrible. That's just terrible. He goes, "And all of you know the truth." Which Christians know the truth, that Jesus Christ is God? All of them.

How do they know it? The spirit of God, the Ghost, shows up. How many of you – it was a supernatural thing? You were just living your life, a lot of questions, and you woke up one day, and the Holy Spirit, the Ghost of God just gave you faith. You just said, "You know what? Jesus is God. I'm in." How many of you are still trying to figure out what that means, but you knew by the power of the spirit of God that Jesus was God?

Now some of you wonder, "I don't know if I have the Holy Spirit. I haven't spoken in tongues. Nobody's whacked me in the forehead. I don't know what to do." I'll whack you, but that won't fix the problem. Here is how you know you have the Ghost. How do you know you have the Ghost? You love Jesus as God. That's what Paul says to the Corinthians. "No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." We all, if we are truly Christians, have the spirit of God, and we all know the truth.

Jesus is God. It's just that simple, but sometimes, you make it so complicated. He goes on. "I do not write to you because you do not know the truth." They all know the truth. You all know the truth if you have been here for length of time. The truth is Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. He's the truth. You know the truth. So don't let anyone lead you astray. Don't let anyone give you false teaching that is not consistent with the Holy Spirit and does not promote you trusting in Jesus, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth, he goes on to talk about here are two kinds of people: Christians who love the Ghost who love Jesus, non-Christians who don't have the Ghost and are just working out of their own best academic rigor or gut hunch.

Here's what's at stake. Two things are at stake. First is the truth. He says, "Who is the liar?" Don't raise your hands. It's kind of a rhetorical question, but do you know that people lie? Now we don't like to say that in our culture. "Well, they were _____ perspective." We like that word a lot better, as a perspective, as an interpretation of a perspective. Well, it worked for them. The question is not, "How do they see it and how does it work for them?"

The question is, "How does God see it and what works for him?" That's where we go from sort of the fog of speculation to sort of the lifting of the fog through revelation, and that's where we hear from God, and God says, "Here's how it is." He says, "I don't see it that way." "Well, trust me. My seat's better. I got a clear view here." Who is the liar? People lie. You people lie about Jesus. More books have been written about Jesus than anyone in the history of the world. You think all of them tell the truth?

That's one of the first things I teach to my kids. Not every book about Jesus is an honest book. Not every teacher about Jesus is an honest teacher. I tell my kids this all the time because I don't want my little Christian kids to just because they heard the word "Jesus," they just believe everything else, and we need to grow up and mature in our faith and say, "You know what? Some people are lying," and this gets down to motive. It's not just their perspective or angle. They're lying about Jesus.

This is a very serious thing. Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. You say, "What does that mean?" Jesus Christ, if you had to summarize Christian doctrine down to two words, those would be it, Jesus Christ. That is the most succinct doctrinal statement we have. What do you believe? Jesus Christ, that's what we believe. Now we can expand from there and articulate, but that's what we believe. If you just drilled down to bedrock, that's where it's at, Jesus Christ.

Not some sky fairy named God that you can call he, she, us, we, they or it, Jesus Christ. Now this is so popular in Seattle because, you know, people just love to be called liars and that Jesus is God. Don't people love that? I mean we live in a place, guys, that is exceedingly antichrist. Now we're here to love it. We're here to serve it. We're here to speak into it so that it changes, but you need to know that if you go with prevailing wisdom, you too will be an antichrist and a liar.

You're gonna have to decide where you're at with Jesus. Now when we say Jesus Christ, we're talking about Jesus is his human name. Christ is his divine name. We're talking the Jesus man, Christ God. Jesus Christ is God who became a man, has risen from death in payment of sin and is seated again, right now, as God. To say Jesus Christ is simply to say, "Jesus is my God." That's exactly what that means. Jesus is my God. When we say Jesus Christ, that is exactly what we are saying.

That's why we're not to blaspheme that name. That's why there is no name under heaven by which we might be saved other than that name. That's why faith comes by hearing the word of God, and as we listen to the word of God, it reveals to us this man, Jesus Christ. Let me ask you a question. Is Jesus your God? Is Jesus your God? Not so enthusiastic. Calm down. Be quiet. I can barely hear myself. You see this is the problem. This is the problem in that those who know Christ are quiet about it, and those who are not are prone to lie incessantly and teach voraciously.

This is the same problem that's going on in John's epistle. You and I need to answer that question for ourselves. Is Jesus Christ my God? That is the issue. That is the issue of all issues because that is God. Now some people will say, "I believe in God, but not Jesus." He goes on. "Who is the liar? It is the man" – or the woman, it's a general term there – "who denies that Jesus is the Christ" – who denies that Jesus is God. Such a man is the antichrist. He's against Christ. Anyone who does not believe that Jesus is God is actively working against him.

You say, "I'm here. I'm not a Christian. I'm not against Jesus. I'm just indifferent." You're against him. I tell you that not to condemn you, but to concern you, that you are in a very precarious place because you have ignored God, and indifference is treacherous. Such a man is the antichrist. Some of you are little antichrists running around with your agendas and your philosophies and your criticisms of the Bible, your elevation of human teachers over the instruction of the Ghost. Some of you infiltrate the church in an effort to be used of Satan to create tension and disorder and to form an agenda that is not Biblical.

I don't know who you are. There's too many of you, but the Ghost knows. He searches the heart. He searches the mind. He knows the intentions of all, and he knows who is for Christ, and he knows who is against Christ. He denies the Father and the Son. This is very important. Many people will say, "I believe in God, but not Jesus." Jesus Christ is God. You can not say, "I believe in God, but not Jesus," because Jesus is God.

That's why I despise spirituality. Spirituality is where someone is their own God. It is the first and greatest temptation from Genesis 3. "I'm my own God. I decide if there is a God. I decide what this God is like. I decide what is true and false and right and wrong, and I make all these judgments depending upon what I think is best for me. After all, what works for me and what works for you is most important."

Mars Hill is not about spirituality. We're about Jesus as God. It's not about what works for us. It's about what works for him. It's not about how we see it. It's about how he sees it. It's not about what glorifies us. It's about what honors him. The difference between Jesus and spirituality is the difference between God and Satan. It's the difference between worship and idolatry. It's the difference between heaven and hell. We live in a world that

is in exceedingly spiritual. You would be hard pressed to find an atheist.

You will be hard pressed to find anyone who does not believe in the existence of God. You will be equally hard pressed to find people who deeply love Jesus as God. Everyone is spiritual, but not everyone worships Jesus. You say, "What does it matter what you name God? What does it matter who you call God?" Because the Bible says that there is Jesus and a pantheon of demons, and there is only one name by which you will be saved, and that is the name the Lord Jesus.

Everything rides on this. Everything rides on this. I actually think that those people who are spiritual are farther from Jesus than atheists because at least atheists know who they're dealing with, and they're fighting. Spiritualists have completely missed him altogether. Are you a spiritual person or a Christian? Are you a person that believes there is a way to know God without Jesus? Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one makes it into the heavens without me. No one sees the Father," Jesus says, "apart from me."

The Bible says there's one mediator between us and God, and that is Jesus. We have to have Jesus. Do you know that that's why they killed Jesus because he was continually emphatic on this very issue? "I am God, and I am God alone, and there is no God apart from me." They murdered him from this fact. All the little antichrists gathered around and criticized him, came up with alternatives and fought him and argued him. They put him to death, and they still pick away at him today.

Are you for Christ? Are you against him? Is he your God or do you have some other God that you have fashioned in your own imagination, which just makes you God? And you worship and project an image of yourself and what you think you need and what you think you want. He who denies the Father and the Son has neither, and no one who denies the Son has the Father, but whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. Some of you say, "I love Jesus. I worship Jesus. I belong to Jesus. I trust Jesus. I want to live like Jesus lived. I want to love like Jesus loved. Am I okay with the Father?" Absolutely.

He's reconciled you to the Father. He's taken away your sin. He'll give you eternal life. He died for your sin. He rose. He has conquered Satan's sin and death. He has given the gift to you of eternal life. You're secure with your relationship with your heavenly Father because of Jesus. Some of you are thinking, "Man, I feel judged." Don't feel judged. Here's what I'm not doing, I don't want condemnation. I do want conviction, okay?

Conviction is where your dad looks at you and says, "That's wrong. You need to straighten this out." Condemnation is where somebody looks at you and says, "Just die and go to hell. There's no hope for you, and I've given up on you." Conviction is an act of love trying to straighten you out. Condemnation is just an act of hatred, just trying to get rid of you. I don't want you to feel condemned, but I do want you to feel convicted, and who convicts? The Ghost. The Ghost convicts.

If you're feeling convicted, and some of you want to get up and leave. I always get people leave during service, cuss on the way out. Hear me through. Maybe the first time you felt deep conviction. Go with it. Maybe your views of God are wrong. Maybe your religion is wrong. Maybe your spirituality is wrong. Maybe you're wrong. Maybe Jesus is God. You're not, and his goal today is to straighten you out, not to destroy you because he loves you.

It goes on. Here's what's at stake. "See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also remain in the Son and in the Father," and this is what he promised us: Eternal life. Here's what's at stake. Eternal life is at stake. When you die, you will live forever somewhere, somewhere. I talked to a guy recently. I said, "What do you think will happen to you when you die?" He says, "I don't know." Well, that's – you should not sleep well. You should sleep very poorly. That is the question.

I don't like being somewhere bad for an hour. You know, eternity, that's another Scooby Doo verse. That's scary stuff right there, eternal life. You and I will live forever somewhere. Daniel 12:1, 2 says that at the end, we will all get out of our graves just as the Lord Jesus got out of his. Some of us will go to everlasting joy. Others of us will go to everlasting judgment. We're all gonna live forever. It's just a matter of what circumstances we find ourselves in.

Eternal life is that life that begins now. It's the life of the eternal God coming to us. An eternal life is a quality of life and a duration of life. Eternal life means I begin my life with God right now in this lifetime, and it continues forever. That's why we hate death, friends. That's why it's an enemy. That's why we fight it. That's why it's not natural. That's why we don't clap and cheer at a funeral. We know that death is wrong, and that's because death is the result of sin. Have we not sinned, we wouldn't die.

We were made to live forever. Kids are not supposed to bury their grandparents. That is not the way it's supposed to go. We were built for eternal life, and something in us, no matter what we do, cries out for life everlasting and hope beyond the grave. It's why Ecclesiastes says that God has set eternity in the hearts of men. God has placed that yearning within us, and it's only realized in Jesus, that through his death and resurrection, he has shown that he is alone the one who can conquer death and give us eternal life.

Two kinds of people, Christian and non-Christians. Two kinds of destinies, eternal life and eternal death, and there are two resources that God has graciously given to us so that we can have life and not death. We can have Christianity and not being a little antichrist. He goes on. He closes with this, "I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray." Hey, this is indicative that you and I will continually have pressure against us, family, friends, books, culture.

There will continually be an onslaught trying to chip away at the simple thing for you that Jesus is my God. That's it. Jesus is my God. I want to be like him. I want to love him. I want to represent him. I want to take my sin to him. I want to trust in him. That's what I'm about. I'm about Jesus. You will continually have people trying to lead you astray into false teaching, into other Gods. So here's what you need. As for you, the anointing, that's the

Ghost, the Ghost. You can not live the Christian life by your own will, effort, organization, skill. You need the power of God. You need the spirit of God.

I read this. Help all need help, and God has graciously given us his spirit. For you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. That is a weird statement, isn't it? John saying, "You don't need anyone to teach you." You say, "Well, how do I know that?" He says, "Well, I'm teaching you." A little confused. That's a weird syllogism. That's a peculiar premise. That's weird.

"I'm teaching you that you don't need teaching." Here's what he's saying. He's not saying that there is no place for teachers in the church. Is there a spiritual gift of teacher that God gives to churches, that there are people who are gifted teachers? Yes, yes. Paul says that in Ephesians 4 that there are prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Of the five important leaders in the church, teachers are among them. We need teachers. We need teachers, but what he's saying here is this: You can not learn anything apart from the Holy Spirit, no matter how gifted the teacher.

Now the spirit of God will work through a teacher. A spirit filled teacher is one who opens the Bible and just encourages you to love and worship Jesus as God. That is a spirit filled, spirit used teacher. Sometimes, the spirit of God will work through a teacher. Absolutely, he does. Other times, however, the spirit of God will just teach you all by himself. How many of you are really scared to just read the Bible? "I don't know if I'll understand it. I don't know if I'll get it. I don't know if I'm gonna do it right."

What you start with is asking the Holy Spirit to teach you. Guys, I do this all the time. I open – if I remember rightly, I open my sermons by asking the Holy Spirit to come and teach us because it is the spirit of God who inspired the writing of Scripture. It's the spirit of God who will illuminate the instruction of Scripture. If – and do you think that the Holy Spirit went to all the trouble of inspiring writers to write the book, preserving the book, interpreting the book, getting you a copy of the book, putting you in a society where you're literate so you can sit down and read the book, and if you sit down with the book and you ask that Holy Spirit, "Help, me learn," do you think he's gonna say no?

He's going to a lot of trouble to get you to the point where you'd actually have the book in your hand and the capacity to read it. He desperately wants you to read the Scriptures. That's what he wants for you, and what he's saying is this. These false teachers are saying, "Well, you can't just pick up the Bible and read it. You can't just pray and ask God to teach you. You can't just think that just because you love Jesus and pray a lot and have a receptive, humble heart, you can just open the Bible and learn something." John says, "You sure can. You sure can." You know there was a period in church history where people didn't have a copy of the Bible. They were told this very same thing.

"Better leave that up to the professionals." I'll tell you what guys. More important than your IQ is your humility when it comes to rightly understanding the Bible, and more important than your academic pedigree is your deepened profound love for Jesus, okay? I am not against academics. Okay, I've said this before. I'm finishing my Master's in theology. I intend to work toward a PhD. I'm not against academics at all, but some of the most wise people were some of the least intelligent that I have ever met.

Ever met somebody who is wise, but not brilliant? You ever met somebody who is brilliant, but not wise? There is a difference between information and a life that has been transformed. There's a difference between a person who's really smart, and there's a difference between that person and the person who knows God. Now if you have a high IQ and a deep love for God, you could be an enormous blessing to the whole world, but if you're a simple person who just picks up the Bible and just says, "Holy Spirit, I know you wrote it. I know you live in me. I know you're powerful and good. I know you can teach me. Jesus is my God. I want to live like him. I want to love like him. Please teach me."

I'll tell you what guys. That accomplishes more than you could ever imagine because the same spirit who rose Christ from the dead, the same spirit who brought order out of chaos and creation, the same spirit who put faith into your heart, the same spirit who has gifted you for service will open your understanding so that you can love Jesus even more than you do, and you can live like him and by him and through him and for him and with him to a degree that you have not yet before, and if you don't believe that, then what you will be is like these people, chasing the latest hip trends, spiritual teachers, faddish books, just on one bandwagon, another bandwagon, another bandwagon.

What John is saying, let's just ask the Holy Spirit to keep us in the Bible, and let's make some sense of that because that's where the truth is from, right? He's talking here about the truth, and Jesus says in John 17, "Father, sanctify them by the truth." What is truth? "Your word is truth." That's what Jesus said. Jesus says, "This is the truth." This is the truth, and so for those of us who want to remain in him and have this truth, the Holy Spirit will teach us through the Bible.

These are the two things that God gives us so that we won't get off track, the Holy Spirit and the Bible, the Holy Spirit and the Bible. Some of you feel safe because you come to Mars Hill. You say, "You know, I don't pray to the Holy Spirit and ask him to teach me or read the Bible as much as I should, but that's okay because I go to a really good church, and we have a lot of Bible teaching and classes and community groups, and we learn the Bible on Sundays, and we go right through the Bible. So I feel safe here."

Don't. Here's my great fear. All it takes is for you to close the book and say, "You know what? Now I follow teachers, and I don't read the Bible for myself." That sets us up so that then Satan's just got to send in the wrong teachers, and you'll just go with them because you got into the habit of following teachers and not Scripture and not testing everything that is taught by the Scripture themselves.

That's exactly how this church got into that predicament. At some point, they had such good Bible teaching, that they put the Bible down and just said, "Oh, the teachers are doing all the work. Why do we need to read it? Those guys are great," and the false teachers come in, and everything gets crooked. My great fear is that we are such a church that is so devoted to Bible teaching and instruction that it may encourage you to get lazy in just reading your own Bible, just asking the Holy Spirit to teach you, not just picking up the phone to call a teacher that you know as your first line of defense when you have a question or a problem.

Your first line of defense should always be prayer, the Holy Spirit, Scripture, asking the Holy Spirit to illuminate the Scriptures for you so that you can learn the Bible for yourself. Okay, please don't use the gift of teaching as an excuse for laziness. I guess that's what I'm saying. Do you bring your Bible to church and check what's said. Do you bring your Bible to the classes, check what's said? Do you read the Bible for yourself? Do you read it before you even show up to church to make sure that what I'm saying is decent, on track?

That's really, really what John's getting at here. He doesn't want everyone dependent on a few self-appointed spiritual giants who say they've got the Holy Ghost. He wants everyone dependent on the Holy Spirit and the word of God, and from there, teachers and leaders and other people can do their job. He says, "But as this anointing teaches you about all things." Isn't that great? There is no teacher that can teach you about all things.

We're finite. We're limited. We don't have expertise in everything, but the Holy Spirit is omniscient. He knows all things. Whatever you need to know, he can teach you. That's the great news about God, and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit. Just as it is taught, you remain in him. The whole point of the Bible, the whole point in teaching, the whole point in the Holy Spirit is that you would remain in Jesus. It's the echoing of Jesus' words where he says, "If you abide in me, I'll abide in you. You'll bear much fruit for it to last."

The whole point of the Holy Spirit is that you would love Jesus as God and that you would stick close to him. When you commit sin, you would repent and get right back in step with him, that you would love him, that you would listen to him, that you would obey him, that you would follow his example, that you would heed his instruction. Two people, Christians and non-Christians. Two destinies, eternal life and eternal death. Two resources that God has graciously given to Christians, the truth of his word and the instruction of his spirit.

Again, this is an echo of Jesus. John keeps echoing Jesus. In John 4, Jesus says that we will worship in spirit and truth. Isn't that great? That's all he's saying, spirit and truth. Some churches are known for the truth, lots of Bible teaching, but dull. Holy smokes, just dull. Like I was watching a guy on TV last week. He was preaching. He was like Bible hypnosis. I mean it was unbelievable. Everything he said was great, but he said it _____.

I was like, "Man, the teacher from Peanuts got a job as a pastor. What is that guy doing?" And he was just so dull. Oh, just so dull. Just gosh. "And Jesus died for sin." What kind of Monty Python skit is this? Come on. Say it like you mean it. Give them something. This guy is so dull, but so orthodox. I mean I learned a ton, and I was nodding off on the couch, and after him, this other guy came on, this television preacher. This guy was incredible. He was screaming, yelling, full blown hanky.

People were up, cheering, screaming, freaking out. The guy was a complete heretic. My wife comes in. She's like, "What are you listening to?" I said, "Listen to this guy." She says, "Mark, he's a heretic." I said, "I know, but he's exciting. Listen to that guy. Whoa, he's exciting" I – you know, and I just – I told her. I said, "If we could clone these two guys into one guy, we might actually get something done because it's dead orthodoxy and passionate heresy."

Bummer options, how many of you have bounced between churches like, well, at least they're excited. Yeah, they're going to hell. Well, at least they're going to heaven, but they're dull. You're sort of frustrated by it. We want to be this kind of people. We want to be the truth and spirit people, the people who follow the Ghost. You know what the Ghost does, fires you up. We get a little excited, and you're not crazy, right?

These guys, map, no gas. These guys, gas, no map. You really got to get this together, right? If we're gonna go somewhere, we need the – now the spirit of the God is the spirit that inspires and a spirit that illuminates, the spirit that motivates us to love Jesus, press deeper into him, and it's the spirit, too, inspires the _____ Scriptures so that it's truth and not air, and we're on track, and it's right and not wrong, and we're light and not darkness, and I think that this is so important for us as a church because we are dull.

You guys – I love you, but it's like playing tennis with myself every Sunday. No volley. I mean, you know, just it's okay to – it's okay, all right? Just because you raise your hands when you worship or you pray a little or you think that maybe if you pray for a sick person, they might get better, it doesn't mean you're one of the whack jobs on TV. It just means you read the text, and the Ghost said so. So you're cool with that, and what we need to grow in as a people, some of you people need to grow in truth.

You're excited about all the wrong things, and some of you are you're orthodox, Biblical, but you're so dull. You're so dull. It's like man alive. It's like you're just like a nap for Christ. You know, you're just – so this is the life. This is what eternal life is. It's the spirit of God motivating us to be passionate and inspired and instructing us so that we're on track pressing into Jesus, loving him as God, loving as he loves, and living as he's living. That's what we're talking about. So there you go.

So here's what we're gonna do. We're gonna take communion, which is remembering Jesus' body and blood shed for our sin. He's God. If you want to become a Christian, get your sin forgiven, you can just tell Jesus today. "I have sinned. You died for my sin. Please forgive me." He will. You get the Ghost. Off you go. Pick up your Bible. Start reading. If you are a Christian, this is a good time for you to remind yourself of spirit and truth and to take inventory of your life to say, "Where am I strong? Where am I weak?" And then, we're gonna sing, and we're gonna celebrate. We're gonna have a good time because we have to, because you know what?

You can't hear that there is one God who loves you. We've all, like Judas and these heretics, gone our own way. We've all walked away. We've all gotten off track. We have all been antichrists. We have all been liars. We have all deserved eternal death, and he came on a rescue mission, and he loved us, and he pursued us, and he found us, and he saved us, and he bought us, and he sough us. He redeemed us. He called us by name. He filled us with his spirit. He put the book in our hands, and one day, he wants to tell us, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Come on in and kick back with me," and so out of that, there has to be a little bit of Pentecostal. You got to tap that in here this morning.

Father God, we do love you. We thank you that we get to study the Scriptures together as a church. It's a great privilege, God, to have Scripture. I thank you that we don't have to just wait for the latest insight or the hippest teacher, the newest trend. I think that we could go back to the eternal word from the eternal God with eternal truth that fits in all times and places. Jesus, I thank you that in the end, it really is all about you. You are God. You are our God. You are our only God. You are our eternal God.

You are our loving God, our good God, our sovereign God, our patient God, our merciful God, our pursuing God. Jesus, we thank you that when we say "Jesus Christ," we have the sum total of sound doctrine, and it's not just things we believe. It's a person we love because he has first loved us. Holy Spirit, I ask that none of us would leave the room without faith that you give without redemption, without recognition that apart from Jesus, spirituality and religion is at best silly and at worst, an antichrist.

I pray, God, as we get into a time of communion and celebration, giving of our tithes and offerings, receiving of communion, that God, you would cause us to be a spirit filled people of truth, of truth and spirit, enthusiasm that comes out of the Scriptures and isn't trying to manipulate and whip us into a frenzy in spite of them. We love you, Lord Jesus. We thank you that we have something to sing about. We sing in your honor today. Amen.