

The Anointed Ones

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[0 : 00] This morning I want you to take your Bibles and open them to 1 John.

! And once again I'll have you look at 1 John chapter 2 starting with verse 18. All the way through to verse 27. So 1 John chapter 2 starting with verse 18.

Little children, it is the last hour. That is, it is, we're in this last evil age.

And as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many Antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. It is this present age, this evil age.

They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out that they might be made manifest, and none of them were of us.

[1 : 24] But you, and this will be our focus for this morning, but you, you true believers, genuine believers, you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.

I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist, who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either.

He who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. Therefore, let that abide in you which you have heard from the beginning. If what you have heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he has promised us, eternal life.

These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you, but the anointing which you have received from him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you.

But as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true and is not a lie, just as it has taught you, you will abide in him. All right?

[2 : 59] We, I know you've noticed this, I don't have to tell you. We've been in this passage for a little while, haven't we? In fact, I've already preached two sermons from this passage, and now here's a third. And really, the last part of what I read this morning will, next week, launch us in on into the rest of this chapter and on into chapter three. So, we're kind of taking our time on this. I think it's very important. And for the last couple of Sundays, our subject has been, meet the opposition. Meet the opposition. And John calls them, and only John uses this term in all of the New Testament, he calls them antichrists. Antichrists.

And, of course, you remember, and you've noticed as we read it again, that first of all, he talks about the Antichrist. Antichrist with a capital A. The one Paul called the man of lawlessness.

The son of perdition. The man of sin. He uses all three of those expressions to describe this one person who will one day come. And that's what John says. He says he is coming. Not here yet, but he is coming. And for us today, he is still into the future. This Antichrist. And again, he is the one

whom Paul, in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, said will be revealed just before Christ's return, his second coming. And who's revealing, Paul goes on to say, is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish,

that is among those who are unredeemed, the lost. And so, these will be some of the signs that mark him as the Antichrist, doing these things according to the power of Satan. Power, signs, lying wonders, and all of these things. All right, so this is the Antichrist. So, John begins with him.

But I would tell you and assure you, though not everyone holds this position theologically, or in terms of eschatology, I believe this, that we, as believers, don't have to be concerned about the Antichrist. This person, this man of lawlessness, this son of perdition, this beast, the book of Revelation speaks of. We don't have to be concerned about him. We need to know about him, as we need to know all of what God teaches in his word. We need to be informed and understand these things and teach these things and so forth. But we don't have to worry about him. We don't

have to be concerned about him. And why is that? Because I don't believe we'll be here as the church.

We're not going to be here when the Antichrist is revealed, revealed in the sense of when he comes to power, the power described there by Paul. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 verses 16 and 17 says this, for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, and with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive, who are left, those who remain, we're still alive, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. So the believing church will be caught up, snatched away, we usually refer to it with the term raptured, raptured.

[7:01] And so I believe that this is what Paul is talking about in his second letter to the Thessalonians, in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 6, after Paul tells us about the Antichrist, he says, and now you know what is restraining. I was sharing this with our Wednesday night crowd as we've been working our way through the Olivet Discourse, Matthew chapter 24 and 25. So we were talking about this last Wednesday in this passage, and now this is what Paul writes, and now we know what is restraining.

Restraining, restraining that he, not with a capital H, but a lowercase h, the Antichrist, that the Antichrist may be revealed in his own time, that is, at the appointed time, his appointed time, according to whose plan? God's plan. For, he goes on to say, for the mystery, or the unseen power, of lawlessness, or behind lawlessness, is already at work, and we certainly know that, don't we? We see it all around us. It's already at work, this mystery of lawlessness. Only he, and this is a capital H, reference, I believe, specifically to the Holy Spirit, only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. He is taken out of the way.

So, the idea is that certainly the Antichrist, if Satan had his way, would have come on the stage long before now. But, the restrainer is here. And will continue to restrain until he is taken out of the way. This is what Paul says. Now, think about this. The Holy Spirit is God, right? Third member of the Trinity. And as God, he's omnipresent. He's everywhere present. Nowhere absent. So, the Holy Spirit cannot be taken away from anywhere. Right? He's omnipresent. But, the church, in whom he dwells, and through whom he works, it can be taken out of the way, and I believe one day will be. Will be. And, according to Paul, after that happens, in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 8, Paul says, then the lawless one, that's the Antichrist, will be revealed, whom the Lord, whom the Lord, he says, will consume. And, this will take place at the end of the great tribulation. The Lord will consume with the breath of his mouth and destroy with the brightness of his coming. So, when he comes again, that's it for the

[10:14] Antichrist. All right. So, you know, what I'm trying to say is no reason to concern ourselves about the Antichrist. That is, in the sense of worrying about him and being anxious about that and maybe, you know, being afraid of that. Of course, we should not be. And so, what about the many Antichrists?

Let's put the Antichrist aside. What about the many Antichrists, John tells us, have come? Certainly, they had come in his day. And, by implication, will continue to come. And, will come in our day. They'll continue to come throughout this present age. This present age.

The age, the present evil age between the two comings of Christ. Because, you see, John says that the presence of many Antichrists is how you know that we are in this present evil age. What about them? And, that's really John's focus here. What are we to do about them? Well, as we saw a couple of weeks ago, first of all, there is the age we must realize. We must realize in the first place that we're in this present age. This present evil age. We're not, as some have tried to say or believe, that we're now in the kingdom, the millennium.

Oh, no. We're in this present evil age. We must realize that. This present evil age. We're in it. Again, which is the period of time marked between the first and second comings of Christ. So, we're right smack dab in it. Maybe toward the end of it. I don't know.

[12:09] I suspect that we are. We're certainly closer to the end of this present evil age than when John wrote these words 2,000 years ago. There's no time period attached to it. No number of years or millennia attached to it.

We just know we're in it. And, this evil age, this present evil age, is marked by hostility coming from the unbelieving world. Those who have rejected Christ continue to reject Him.

Hostility coming from the unbelieving world, which is then directed toward Christ and His church, and coming in the form of both persecution, certainly, but also infiltration.

Infiltration. Infiltrating the church with false doctrine. Doctrinal error. Which, again, in this passage, is John's emphasis. In fact, his emphasis in many parts of this letter.

In fact, it's not a matter. And so, John is telling us, I think, that we are in a battle for truth. And we know that, don't we? We should know that.

[13:30] The battle's raging. But really, it has been raging since Christ came the first time. A battle for the truth.

And it is a battle that takes place primarily at the local church level. This is, you know, the group of people John is writing to. The local church.

The local assembly. And so, this battle takes place at that level where antichrists, to use John's word, false teachers, Paul uses quite often, false prophets, where they come into the local church, gain some kind of foothold or some place of influence with one or two or group or maybe even the entire church.

And they seek to lead those who are really weak in the faith and those who really are not true believers yet anyway, to lead them to embrace false doctrine.

This is the work of the antichrists in our day. And they either lead their converts away from the church, because eventually they do leave the true church, or, in some cases, successfully convert the whole body, the whole church.

[14:59] Now, not the true believers. It's then the true believers who ultimately lead that local church. To lead the entire church into the spiritual darkness.

And this is the tragedy I think we're seeing today, be it, again, individual local churches or groups or associations of churches or entire denominations.

Ultimately, by extension, even countries, entire countries and continents. I mean, Britain today and really all of Western Europe, almost eclipsed, totally eclipsed by spiritual darkness.

And the U.S., along with all of North America, is not far behind. And I hate to be disparaging, give you the bad news, but we're not very far behind.

We're getting darker, I think, every year. And this is what happens when the church progressively, gradually abandons biblical truth.

[16:08] And it can happen to Highland Park, it can. And ultimately to our entire country. As the late John R.W. Stott once said, if this generation of evangelical Christians is not committed to believing, living, and passing on God's truth, now while we have the opportunity, there may not be another generation of evangelicals.

That's a very serious statement. And I think Stott is speaking primarily from his own context, that is, of his beloved country, England.

And they are nearly there, if not there. And our country is not far behind. We ought to be concerned about that.

So what do we do? Well, first we must recognize our enemy. That's why I spent a couple of weeks talking about that. We must recognize our enemy. That's what we talked about last week, specifically, the antichrists we must recognize.

So, certainly there is the age we must realize. We're in this last evil age, this present evil age. But there are the antichrists we must recognize.

[17:32] We talked about this last week. Their fatal problem. They deny the fundamentals. Their fiendish program. They deceive the faithful, or at least they try to, attempt to.

And then their false profession. They desert the fellowship. Because they're fakes. They're frauds. They went out from us, John said in verse 19, but they were not of us.

Not of us. For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that they might be made manifest. Be revealed for who they are. That none of them were of us.

Not true believers. So, here is the first thing we must do. We must recognize the antichrists. Know them for who they are.

Recognize them when we see them. Warn others, the people of their presence. That's what we must do. But, of course, that's not enough.

[18:38] I mean, if that's all we do, that's not enough. Well, here they are. That's who they are. Okay, just... And then nothing else. That's not enough. I love the LifeLock commercials.

Have you seen some of these? Especially the one that takes place in a bank. Have you seen this one? Where the bank robbers come in and they tell everyone to get on the floor.

You know, that's kind of what bank robbers do. At least in the movies, they do that. Get on the floor. So all the customers there are on the floor. And so on one side of the room, you have the angry, mean, wicked, with guns, bank robbers.

And on the other side of the room, you have all of the bank customers lying on the floor. Right in the middle is this man dressed in a security guard uniform.

Have you seen this commercial? I love it. I just love it. And, of course, then one of the ladies that's on the floor, she says to him, aren't you going to do anything? And he says, oh, I'm not a security guard.

[19 : 44] I'm a security monitor. I just tell people when there's a bank robbery. That's all I do. And then he looks over at the bank robbers and then back at the lady and says, there's a bank robbery.

And then the commercial ends with this, this question, why monitor a problem if you're not going to do anything about it?

I love that commercial. I know they're trying to sell a product, obviously, but it is a principle that it applies in so many ways in life. In nearly everything in life. It's a great question. Why monitor the situation if you're not going to do anything about it?

And it certainly applies to what we must do about these antichrists that are coming and will continue to come or attempt to come into the churches and threaten to eclipse our churches into spiritual darkness with false doctrine.

Antichrist doctrine. So beyond monitoring that, in an informed way of recognizing who they are and what they do, what actions should we take?

[21 : 03] Or to put it another way, and I put it this way last week, what is our most effective weapon against the many antichrists that will have and will continue to come into the world and into our churches?

What's our most effective weapon? Well, actually, you know, the short answer is the truth. That's the most effective weapon, but at the same time, I'm going to say it's us because the truth abides in us.

And don't ever forget that. And this is what John is going to tell us. So the age we must realize, the antichrist, we must recognize, and then third and finally, in this kind of series from this passage, the anointing.

We must, in a sense, revitalize, continue to revitalize this anointing. And this is very important. And I use the word revitalize because, you know, revitalize means to, you know, to infuse something with new life.

new life, vitality. Sometimes, you know, important things in life just become inactive. You know, like our physical bodies quite often.

[22 : 27] Become inactive and eventually unhealthy. And so to revitalize something that has lost its activity and its health means simply to make it active again.

make it active again and therefore healthy again. Now, in the context of the passage, what I'm talking about is revitalizing God's truth in your life.

Revitalizing. Making it active. Our most effective weapon against antichrists is truth.

It's truth. And so we must, in a sense, revitalize our knowledge of the truth. We're constantly to be engaged in that.

We are to revitalize our kind of our saturation level of truth. Revitalize our entire reliance upon the truth.

[23 : 30] As Adrian Rogers used to say, if you're having truth decay, then brush up on the Bible. I love that. Now, looking at our passage, let's see what John says about this.

And there are three things. Number one, you have received the truth. Know that. As if you're a true believer. Genuinely saved.

You have received the truth. Don't forget that. You know, sometimes we go around thinking, well, I just don't have it. I just don't know it. I just don't understand it. You have it.

And part of our problem is we don't realize what we have. We have the truth. We've received the truth. Look at verse 20 again.

But you have an anointing from the Holy One. You is plural. That means every one of you. Every one of you who are genuine believers.

[24 : 32] you have. That's present tense. You have it right now. It's not something you hope to get one day. You know, you came to faith in Christ, you're a believer, and then you're hoping one day to

have this somehow, this kind of anointing.

You have it right now, is what John said. You have an anointing from the Holy One. Now, let's try to understand what he's talking about. First place, he's making a very strong, very abrupt distinction between these antichrists and true believers.

That's why he begins, but you. See, that's the emphasis. On the other hand, you. So, he's just been talking about these antichrists and who they are and what they do and so forth.

And then, very abruptly, but you have an anointing. So, he's making a distinction between the two. He says, you, true Christians, have received something they don't have.

They claim to have it, but they don't have it. They want you to think to have it, and they want to bring you over to their side to believe in what they say they have, but they don't really have it.

[25 : 53] they don't have this anointing. You have it, though. You have the real anointing from the Holy One.

Now, I admit to you that there are entire denominations who make a big deal about this, but they have got it all wrong. What is this anointing?

Well, it is the word, in the Greek, it's the word charisma, not charisma, which is the word for grace and grace gifting, but charisma, charisma, and in this context it refers to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and the Holy One mentioned here in the passage, that is a reference to Jesus Christ.

He's the Holy One, the Holy One, the Anointed One. We could, other places the Bible uses the word Christos. Christos, and therefore we are, that is true believers are, the Anointed Ones.

The Christoi. Seriously. The Christoi, that's us. That's interesting, isn't it? The Christos, that's Jesus Christ, gives to us the charisma, the Holy Spirit, which makes us the Christoi, the Christians, the Anointed Ones, of the Anointed One, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Christos.

[27 : 36] And this is vitally important, because of this, John says in verse 20, you know all things. Really? Really? That's how it's translated in the New King James, also King James.

Though it's a little confusing, isn't it? Because no one knows all things. Okay. What in the world does this mean? Because you have the Anointed, you have the Holy Spirit, you know all things. The New American Standard, if some of you are looking at that version, it reads, and you all know. know. Even that's a little bit confusing.

Know what? Better translation, I believe, is the ESV, and some of you have that version, not many of you, and it reads this way, and you all have knowledge.

That's getting pretty close to the meaning here. Even the NIV, God help me for saying, I'm sorry.

[28 : 49] I shouldn't do that. NIV puts it this way, and all of you know the truth. That's right. That's what it means. All of you.

All of you who? True believers. You know the truth. And how do we know it? How do we know the truth? through some special gifting, some special anointing?

Well, a special anointing, yes, but it's an anointing that we all have because we all have the Holy Spirit. We know the truth through the Christmas, the Holy Spirit, who we have from the Holy One, the Christos, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so as Christians, we have the truth abiding in us. Did you know that? Oh, you mean I don't have to read the Bible anymore? I've got it all in here?

That's not what it means. You have the truth abiding in you. It's in you. You know the difference between a lie and the truth because of the Christmas, the Holy Spirit in you.

[30 : 17] We all know the difference between what is true and what is false. Otherwise, we would not be Christians, true Christians. This is revolutionary, maybe in our mind, because we think somehow that, you know, everything that we know is all external.

And so some know more than others. And in the sense of pure knowledge and understanding of Scripture, we do progress in this. But we're talking about the knowledge of what is true and what is false.

Because this is the context here. These false teachers. John said, I have not written to you because you do not know the truth.

but because you know it. And that no lie is of the truth. Nothing, that is, nothing can be true and false at the same time. Right?

That's not possible. And, you know, perhaps you heard one of, and I'm not trying to be political here, okay?

[31 : 30] Perhaps you heard one of President Trump's advisors say this last week or refer to alternate facts. And the media's made hay with that.

Alternate facts. Now, I happen to believe she misspoke. I don't think she really meant what others are saying she meant. But alternate facts, let's just take that term for a moment because there are those who do believe in this.

Alternate facts or alternate truth. You know, but that is not possible. You know that, don't you? How do you know that?

It's not possible. It's an oxymoron. Alternate facts. It's not possible to have alternate facts or alternate truth. Facts are facts and truth is truth. wrong is wrong and right is right.

It's not your truth and that person's truth and this person's truth and my truth. It's just the truth. It's just the truth.

[32 : 41] And there are those who are infiltrating the church who are saying, I have an alternate truth. And there are those weak ones in the church who begin to open their minds and the possibility of maybe this is an alternate truth.

Not just the truth rather than my truth, but this is another way, another truth. And somehow the truth about any one thing can be two rather than one and they could coexist side by side and it's all ridiculous, isn't it?

But this is what happens. These alternate truths. And so when an antichrist says, as many of them say, and this is the typical way it's said, it really doesn't matter what you believe is the truth as opposed to what others believe, it doesn't really matter so long as you are committed to it, your truth.

As long as you're sincere about what you say you believe, that's all that really matters. so you could have alternate truths and you'd be okay. But you immediately know that's a lie.

You understand what I'm saying? You've received the truth. You know that's a lie. And those who try to say this thing are not just simply uninformed or ignorant.

[34 : 17] What are they? liars. They're liars. And perhaps if you hear someone espouse an alternate truth concerning some of the fundamentals of the faith, that perhaps Jesus was not virgin born, or that Jesus was not God in human flesh, or that Jesus became God at some point in his life, or at his baptism, or at his ascension, or that his atonement, his blood atonement on the cross, had really nothing to do with the blood.

The atonement, his sacrifice on the cross was just simply a moral example for us, you know, of self-sacrifice. grace. Or that his resurrection was not literal, it was only a spiritual thing, and it really didn't matter anyway.

You hear people say that. The true Christian, you don't have to be a theologian, you don't have to have a seminary degree, the true believer knows in his heart, her heart, that's a lie.

That's not true. Because see, alternate truth is an abandonment of truth, is what that really is. It's not just another truth that maybe you could embrace, and as long as you really go whole hog into it, then God will bless and understand, and you know, there might be a dozen different truths out there about how to be right with God, and how to go to heaven when you die, you know, a dozen different truths about that, and really they're all pretty much equal.

You just pick one and give yourself to it, and you'll be okay. An alternate truth is an abandonment of truth. We've got to understand that, and we do, don't we?

[36 : 20] John says, matter-of-factly, but you, you, that is every one of you, true believers, all of you, not just some spiritually elite ones, not those who claim some special anointing, not those who claim some mystical knowledge, and by the way, these were the kind of characters, the antichrist that the early church was dealing with, these gnostics who claimed to have some mystery knowledge, only a select few have been given.

That's not what he's talking about. He said, you, all true believers, have received an anointing from the Holy One.

You've received the Holy Spirit. He's the one who guides you into all truth, and you all, all of you know the truth. so don't ever forget that.

That's the first thing. You have received the truth. Second, and very quickly, you must remain in the truth.

You must remain in it. Abide in it. Let it abide in you. Let it remain in you. Verses 24 and 25, therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning.

[37 : 52] What is that? That's the gospel. Specifically, the reference to what was taught to the disciples by Jesus and then handed down to us through them, the gospel.

The gospel. We are to remain in the truth. The truth. And John goes on to say, if what you heard from the beginning, that's the gospel, abides in you, if that's the case, really like saying if you're a true believer, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

Relationship with the Son and the Father. You are in them. You have true salvation. Now, the word abide appears in this one verse three times.

A couple of times singular, one time plural, but the word abide, same word, appears three times. And each time, by the way, the grammatical form refers to a continuous action.

So it's not passive, it's active. And so we can say, always, always remain in the truth. Always remain saturated by the truth.

[39 : 10] And John's redundancy is very purposeful. This is urgent. Abide, abide, abide. Remain, remain, remain. Do not move away from the truth you have heard from the very beginning.

You have received the truth. You must remain in the truth. And then one more thing this morning. Therefore, you must rely on the truth.

that is the truth that abides in you by virtue of the presence of the Holy Spirit in dwelling your life. Rely upon the truth. Some of this is kind of confusing and maybe you're thinking, well, all of this is a little bit confusing. thing. And we'll come back to this verse, verse 27 next week as it kind of moves us into somewhat, well, not really a different subject but a little different emphasis.

But look at verse 27. man, but the anointing which you have received from him abides in you. You do not need that anyone teach you.

[40 : 26] What could John possibly mean by that? I read it in the New American Standard. You have no need for anyone to teach you.

Really? I mean, it's another kind of confusing thing that John said. John does that quite a bit. I mean, these kind of absolute statements and they're just right out there and you think, what? What's he talking about? You don't need anybody to teach you. So I guess, you know, you don't need me. Well, in a sense, that's true.

In another sense, you do need me. I've been given to you by God. And so you don't just say, well, John's being, you know, absolute here.

You don't need preachers. You don't need your Sunday school teachers. You don't need your favorite radio. radio preacher teacher. You don't need commentaries if they're good commentary.

[41 : 34] You don't need your study Bible with the study notes there, you know, from John MacArthur or whomever. I want to take this to the full extent and have John say, you just don't need any teachers in your life.

None. None. That's not what he's saying. I mean, not really. I mean, if John meant that, that you don't need any teachers, then why did he write this letter?

Okay. That's just logically. And if God is telling us through John here that we don't need any teachers in our life, no Bible teachers, we don't need them, then why did Paul write in Ephesians 4.12 and God gave pastors and teachers to the church for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry to build up the body of Christ?

us. We have to remember the context here. The context is false teachers who are coming, beginning to proclaim and teach and influence people to believe in some alternate truth.

You know, based upon alternate truth, based upon human wisdom. Or based upon, you know, some man-centered philosophies, and there are many of those, and they're trying to infiltrate the church.

[43 : 13] This is the context. And so, they're teaching these things, and John is saying there's no reason for you to be confused by them.

No reason whatsoever. you're not relying upon them as your teachers. You don't have to be confused. Don't listen to them.

Don't rely on any part of what they're teaching. You search the Word for yourselves. Search the Word. Study it.

Know it. Learn also from godly teachers. Yes, absolutely, God has given them to you. God.

Someone has wisely said, if you have God's Word in your hand, and God's Spirit in your heart, then you have everything you absolutely need to understand truth and grow in Christ.

I don't know that most believers understand that. That the Holy Spirit actually is the best discipler. Now, he's not saying that we don't need other disciples, teachers, and preachers.

[44 : 31] Certainly so. But when it comes to confronting the philosophies of man that are trying to infiltrate the church, you have already abiding in you the knowledge that what they're saying is wrong.

It's a lie. You don't have to rely on what other people are saying about that. You know it in your heart, and you know it in the Word. You have God's Word in your hand, you have God's Spirit in your heart, and you have then everything you need to understand the truth and grow in Christ. Christ. And that applies to studying the Bible for yourself, certainly, as well as sitting under biblical teaching and through the Holy Spirit in you, you know biblical from non-biblical.

Let John's words sink into your hearts. Little children, so affectionate, so loving, little children.

It is the last hour, okay? This is the present evil age. And as you've heard that the Antichrist is coming, I want you to know that even now, there are many Antichrists.

[45 : 56] Many Antichrists have come. Do you hear his heartbeat, his concern? Many have come. This is what they look like. This is what they do. You need to recognize that.

But you, you have a wonderful gift that you don't realize like you should. You have the anointing from the Holy One, from your Lord and Savior Jesus.

You have an anointing. God's It's the Holy Spirit. Therefore, you know the truth. You know the truth. Let that truth abide in you.

Saturate you, your life, your thinking, your decision making. Let the truth abide in you.

these things I've written to you concerning those who try to deceive. This is why I'm writing this to you. But the anointing which you have received from him, Lord, abides in you.

[47 : 11] You do not need anyone to teach you the truth. You're not absolutely dependent upon anyone to teach you the truth. Remain in the truth.

Thank you.