



SCRIPTURE: 1 John 4:1-6: **spirits**

Text updates: TRC to 252-632-6650

Ladies Refresh Friday - This Friday. Refresh Bible Study - Next Sunday - Micah Ordination

Easter Offering: South City Christian Church, Lake Charles, LA

“Don’t drink the Kool-Aid” is used to describe not going into something blindly, or to be duped into believing something that is not true.

Our text today is from 1 John 4...

1 John 4:1-6

¹Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out

into the world. ²This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

⁴You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how

we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

Essentially what John is saying is this...

“DON'T DRINK THE **KOOL-AID!**”

Remember that John is writing this letter to the churches to remind them not to fall victim to the false teachers of the time.

John's letter is written to a group of believers who were in the midst of a serious crisis of faith.

There were some in the fellowship who were abandoning their faith because they could not reconcile the idea of God coming to earth in bodily form with the Greek idea that flesh is evil and only spirit is good.

Here in the first part of 1 John 4... the apostle John gives a clear warning to the early

churches to avoid Gnosticism, the Greek philosophy that was influencing the churches to leave their faith.

Let's go back and understand John's warning...

warning against:
false spirits.

1 John 4:1

¹Dear friends, **do not believe every spirit**, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

do not believe every spirit.

Throughout the NT - the writers often warned about false teaching and false teachers.

Listen to what Paul wrote to one of the early churches...

Galatians 1:6-7

⁶I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Paul says that there were some throwing the believers in Galatia “into confusion” and trying to “pervert the gospel of Christ.”

His encouragement was to stand firm in what you have been taught. There will be opposition in the form of false teaching.

Galatians 1:8

⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel

other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!

What we believe forms what we worship, what we worship forms what we become.

If we listen to the wrong message, then we could find ourselves becoming something we never intended to become.

Think about the 900 people who lost their lives in Guyana.

They listened to the wrong message, they worshiped the wrong things and became the wrong people. Ultimately it cost them their lives.

It may not cost us our lives, but it could cost us our spiritual lives.

If you continue to go down the wrong path, you may find yourself at the wrong destination.

John said, "do not believe every spirit (teacher)."

Paul warned Timothy...

2 Timothy 4:3-4

³For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

It is our natural tendency to entertain false ideas and teachers. So what do we do?

1 John 4:1

¹Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits to see whether they are from God,** because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

test the spirits.

First John establishes that there will be false teachers. There will be false gospels. So we have to test what we hear. We have to test the messages that we hear.

I think John is addressing very directly what is happening in some of the churches and is telling them to test what they hear.

Some of the churches were listening to the false teaching of the Gnostics.

They taught that Jesus could not be fully human and fully God. They believed that anything of this world was evil.

1 John 4:2-3

²This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,
³but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

How do you know? How do you test?

“Everyone who teaches that Jesus has come in the flesh is from God, those who deny this are not from God but from the antichrist, or Satan.”

It is our job as Christians to test what we hear... and what is our test?

1 John 4:6

⁶We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

John says, "we are from God."

We meaning the Apostles.

Acts 2:42

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

The early church devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching.

Where do we find the apostles' teaching? In God's word.

Everything that we hear must be tested by God's word. That's all.

"Test... Try... Examine... Scrutinize what you hear by God's word."

It is our responsibility to see through false teaching. Don't just believe anything you hear.

Listen to what Paul told Timothy.

2 Timothy 2:15

¹⁵Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

John is saying the same to us today. Test the Spirit. Examine. Hold what you hear up to the light of God's word.

Maybe we are dry spiritually. Or maybe we have it deep down, but we have allowed the influences of the world to keep God's spirit from welling up in us and quench our thirst for God.

Let's finish this passage...

1 John 4:4-5

⁴You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them.

Our job is to...

overcome false spirits.

We overcome the false spirits, the false teaching of this world by staying connected to God's word.

John uses the term "antiChrist" here talking about Satan.

Sometimes we get a little hung up on end times and conspiracy theories when we see the term "antiChrist". And John does use end time imagery in the book of Revelation, but here I believe he is not talking about some political figure or apocalyptic reference.

He is simply saying the false teaching is from our enemy Satan. What John is saying is this...Victory is won whenever faith is professed and lived out in love.

Don't let anything distract you from this truth.

If anything else gets in the way, test it to make way for the only thing that matters.

SGL Q's-

1. Did you drink Koop-aid as a kid! What was your favorite color/flavor?
2. What are areas in our current culture where you hear the term "don't drink the kook-aide"?
3. How can someone know if there is a false doctrine being taught?
4. "What we believe forms what we worship, and what we worship is what we become." What are some things our culture worships? How can the church begin to create a healthy worship in our culture?

5. Read 2 Timothy 4:3-4 - how do we battle against the false teachings?
6. Why is it important to read, study, and pray God's word?
7. Why is it dangerous to get our knowledge of God from our own thoughts and feelings? Or the World?
8. How can we keep God #1 in our lives?