

Life Groups in Central Telford Parish

Summer Term 2015 "Words of Life – The Letters of John"

Week beginning 17th May 2015

1 John 2: 18-27 - "Warnings Against The Enemy"

• The Aim of this Session

The contrasts of Light and Darkness, Truth and Lies are contrasts which John keeps going back to in his letters and expanding as the themes of his writing. They challenge us to be aware of the battle we are in and the reality of the choices we make. And in this session we see the reality of evil in the world ...

• Welcome

Where is the most dangerous situation you have ever been in ... ?

• Worship

Read Galatians 5:18-26. Take some time to ask God if there is anything in the list of verses 19-21 that you need to repent of and then praise him for the Fruit of your life, as described in verses 22-23. The Fruit may not be fully ripe, but thank God for what you see, whether it is buds or almost fully formed Fruit. Read Matthew 7:16-20 and pray that people will see the Fruit that God is growing in you.

• Word

- ❖ How would you define "evil"?
- ❖ Is evil "relative" – is some evil worse than others?
- ❖ Can evil be personified?
- ❖ Where do you see particular evil in the world today?
- ❖ What causes it?
- ❖ Are there people who promote it?

The question for Christians is how to react to the evil in the world. The early Church believed that Jesus would return very soon (in their lifetime) and so there is encouragement throughout the New Testament to live as though it could well happen today – we have lost that sense of urgency, although it is a central tenet of the Christian faith that Jesus WILL come again.

Read 1 John 2:18-23

- John talks about "the antichrist" and "many antichrists" (v18). How could Christians identify such a person?
- What defines them (see the Worship for a clue!)
- Should we be afraid of such a person? Why ... or why not?
- Can we see one or more in the world today?
- John sees these people as signs of "the last hour" (v18). What effect should they have on us and our faith – and the way we live?
- John says that they have come "from us" (v19). What does this say about the way the devil works?
- What is the contrast with those who remain faithful (v20)?
- What, or who, is the Truth (v20)? Not a difficult question – but what does "knowing" mean in this context and the implications for our lives?
- How do verses 21-23 illustrate this?

Read 1 John 2:24-29

- How does v24 relate to the words of Jesus to the Church in Revelation 2:3-5?
- What is the cost of commitment? And the promised reward (vv24-25)?
- How does John reassure his readers in verse 27?
- What is "the anointing" (v27)?
- How do we know that ours is real (again, go back to the worship)?
- And how do we "continue in him" (v28)? What does that mean in practice?
- In what way do we "know that he is righteous" (v29)?
- What does that mean in our lives?

• **Walk**

Over the past few weeks, we have spoken of John's repeated illustration of Light and Darkness to symbolize the contrasts between those who follow Jesus and those who choose not to. Last week we spoke of the way that we are tempted to step out of the light and live by the light of our own eyes – this study goes further and speaks of the fact that there those who not only choose to live in darkness but draw others into it. This is a real issue and demands that Christians are sure of the decision they have taken and remain committed to it. But how do we do this in practice?

Read Ephesians 6:10-18 and note ...

- ❖ "Be strong" (v10) – our strength comes from "The Lord and his Mighty Power", and him alone. We can do nothing to withstand evil in our own strength.
- ❖ "Put on the full armour" (v11), so you are strong. You cannot afford to choose to put on a few bits and hope for the best.
- ❖ Paul repeats this in v13 – it is important!
- ❖ The Belt of Truth – holding everything together and something on which other aspects hang.
- ❖ The Breastplate of Righteousness – guarding your heart.
- ❖ Feet shod with the Readiness – being alert and ready to go.
- ❖ The Shield of Faith – staying focused on God.
- ❖ The Helmet of Salvation – being sure in your mind of the Salvation you have in Jesus.
- ❖ The Sword of the Spirit – the weapon you have in order to fight back.

Repeatedly, Paul says "Stand firm" – and the clear message is that donning this armour enables the wearer to do just that.

- Are there any bits of armour that you struggle to wear?
- Are there any bits of the armour that you know you clearly need at the moment?
- Paul says: "Pray in the Spirit" and "Be alert" ... pray in the Spirit that you will be!

• **Next Time ...**

AWeek Away From John for Pentecost!

Father, Son and Holy Spirit ... but who is the Spirit?

