

**BCA VISIT WAITARA**  
**Staying faithful to God**

**Don't love the world. Don't be led astray but stay in the truth you heard and stay in the Holy Spirit you received.**

1 John 2: 15-27

**Introduction**

In the NT we're very used to Warning Signs. Because what we're famous for are Crocs, Cyclones and Camping. But you obviously don't want to go camping during a cyclone. You need warning when a cyclone is coming. And you definitely don't want to camp near the water ..... because there's likely to be crocs there. That's why the NT government has a whole warning campaign called – Be Crocwise !

The WARNING SIGNS are great for the tourists - they read them and mostly take them seriously. But for the locals the problem is we see the warning signs all the time and so become complacent.

In 1974 cyclone Tracy destroyed Darwin. And I was interested to read that warnings were given from 4 days earlier right up until the cyclone struck. BUT ..... and I quote from the Bureau of Meteorology, "because it was Christmas eve, and perhaps because no severe cyclone had affected Darwin in many years - many residents were caught unprepared."

As a resident of Darwin for over 10 years I understand the complacency. At the beginning of this year cyclone Marcus came through the middle of Darwin. We were warned and yet we did very little to prepare for the cyclone. But this little category 2 storm took us all by surprise ..... and caused huge destruction. Especially to hundreds of massive trees all over Darwin.

This morning / Tonight as we look at 1 John chapter 2 there is a strong warning for us about staying OR remaining as followers of Jesus. It's a warning we've heard before. But will it be a warning that helps us to avoid destruction? OR is this warning so familiar we've lost the impact and so we're in danger of being caught completely unprepared?

## 1. Staying forever      (v 15-17)

Let's think more about this idea of staying or remaining faithful to God. Point 1 on your outline – staying forever.

Over the last few weeks you will have already seen that there is a sort of repetitive, circular structure to John's preaching. John encourages. And then John warns. The verses before our passage are an encouragement. John wants all parts of the church family to be sure of God's forgiveness and victory in the world through Jesus.

But the problem is the world we live in doesn't acknowledge Jesus as Lord. And Satan although defeated continues to cause as much chaos and destruction as possible. Our society works very hard to keep this hidden. But the results of abandoning God keep leaking out into our lives. Domestic violence, abuse of children, burnout, depression, ..... and that's not just out there ..... BUT it's here in our churches. And so John warns us in verse 15.... Do not love the world ....

Don't love the world because if you do it's a sign that you don't love the Father. And the things of this world are temporary not permanent. They have no lasting value.

Our nature is to try and satisfy our desires. To lust and crave what is not ours - to spend our time and resources and energy seeking our own pleasure. And the world seduces us at every opportunity by twisting the truth. We're no different than Eve in the garden. We want to be like God. We want to choose right and wrong for ourselves.

And so the world says - Sex is good and created for you to enjoy.... So explore your sexuality in whatever way will satisfy your desires. It's a subtle twisting of the truth. In the Bible God's truth is that he created sex as good and to be enjoyed. But by one man and one woman in the life-long covenant bond of marriage.

Don't love this world ..... Our hope is not in this world which will pass away..... But in the future new creation. If we want to live or stay forever then instead of loving the world we must do the will of God. And John has already told us that means we must obey God's word. So firstly, do God's will and stay or remain living forever. Don't debate God's word- his will. Don't test its wisdom against social media. But obey. Even when that's really unpopular. Even when we're hated for it.

**1 John 2:15-17** <sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. <sup>16</sup> For everything in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- comes not from the Father but from the world. <sup>17</sup> The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

## **2. Staying in fellowship (v 18-19)**

Point 2 on the outline. Staying or remaining in fellowship.

Ten years ago we moved. Jodi and I packed up the four children and we left Sydney for the NT. We didn't stay. But in this passage. Staying is a key idea. In fact John's warning is meant to help us to stay or remain. But why is staying so important?

Because twice in verse 18 John tells us – "It is the last hour...". The world and its desires in verse 17 are passing away. And we're in the time now - just like John - before Jesus returns.

We have a registered, practising psychologist in Darwin who celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday last week. Ted's not looking for any new patients. But Ted's heard the warning. Ted's listened to God's word of truth. He knows his 100 years are nothing compared to eternity with his Father who created him. Ted knows it's the last hour. And so Ted stays. Ted remains with his family in Christ - the church. And that's where Ted celebrated his milestone birthday - with family and friends at his Church.

But John warns about those who have gone out from the church. Those who haven't stayed or remained in verses 18 and 19. Their going showed they never really belonged. But John isn't talking here about belonging to some sort of club. NO John's warning is about being part of God's family. For those who hear and submit to the truth of the gospel – that Jesus is God's living king for all eternity. Those people belong. They are Dear children .... verse 18. They are the ones who enjoy fellowship - deep, personal, intimate, soul-satisfying relationship with the Father and His Son.

And so for us when we left NSW for the NT - ten years ago. We still remained in the family. We still remained in your family. We still belong to Christ's church as you do. And my being here is celebrating our partnership we enjoy as brothers and sisters in Christ. John says in these last times before Jesus returns ..... Remain in the family. Stay in the fellowship. Don't go out from the church.

### 3. Staying in God (v 20-25)

But how do we do it? How do we remain in the church? Because it's so easy to drift away. Work commitments, holidays, family, sport, having some time off to rest, ..... and then there's my own sinfulness. How do we stay in the church? The answer is in verse 20

**1 John 2:20** <sup>20</sup> *But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.*

Point 3 and point 4 think about verse 20. First Staying in God.

According to verse 20 – 2 things from outside of us, which help us to remain in God's family. We're not left to work it our ourselves. God gives us his word of truth – that is the good news of salvation and life found in Jesus. And God also gives us his Spirit so that God's word might perform its work of transformation in our lives.

First. John says more about His word of truth in verses 21-25. And the bottom line is if the truth stays within you ..... then you stay in the Son and the Father. What does this mean? John says to his audience .... you already know the truth. And the truth is a person - Jesus. But the truth is more than Jesus. The truth is that Jesus is the Christ (v 21). Jesus is God's anointed king. Jesus is the living ruler over everything and everyone regardless of whether they acknowledge him or not. And that means all those who refuse to submit to Jesus are in reality stockpiling up judgment for themselves no matter how good they are.

Your best friend who doesn't submit to Jesus as king. They might be a good bloke but God is rightfully angry that they reject their creator. Your really nice, friendly nana who bakes the best biscuits in the world for you. If she's not a follower of Jesus then she's snubbing the king of the universe. Your teacher, or boss, or spouse who deny Jesus – They're denying God the Father and any right to eternity with him.

And that is why it's such a dangerous lie to deny Jesus is the Christ. It's not about getting the answer right in a pub trivia quiz. It's about people's eternal future. And so John says in verse 24 ..... see that the truth you heard about Jesus remains in you.

The truth is the apostle's eyewitness testimony about Jesus. It's this library of books the Bible. That is where we find out about Jesus. And it's this word of truth which must remain or stay deep within us. But that will only happen if we read it ..... and listen to it ..... and study it ..... and share it ..... and speak it to each other ..... and obey it.

Take a moment to think about what it will mean to take John's warning here seriously? This isn't about making you feel guilty for not reading your Bible each day. But the truth about the truth is – If we never read it we can never know it, treasure it, or remain in it.

Just recently the NT Anglican church celebrated 50 years of being its own Diocese. And as part of those celebrations the church at Gunbalanya were given the very first copies of the full Kunwinjku New Testament. My friend Lois cried tears of joy to receive God's word in her own language. And Lois cried tears of grief for all those who had suffered and worked for decades on the translation..... But never lived to see it finished. Is that how you feel about God's word of truth?

So we remain in the church. And remain in God if God's gift of the word of truth remains in us. And finally point 4 we stay in the Son if the anointing of the Holy Spirit we received from Jesus remains in us.

#### **4. Staying in the Son (v 26-27)**

John knows there are all sorts of people trying to lead Christians astray. Some do it knowingly. Others do it in ignorance. But Jesus gives us His Spirit to teach us and reassure us about Jesus and God's truth.

Here we see a truth expressed throughout the Bible – that God's word and God's Spirit always go together. If we only God's word of truth to remain in us without the Spirit – then it becomes merely a text book of history. Instead of life giving words. But if we only allow God's Spirit to remain in us without the words of truth then we're in danger of falling for Satan's lies and loving the world.

But verse 20

**1 John 2:20** <sup>20</sup> *But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.*

God is light (1:5). And if we're to walk in the light then we must remain in the fellowship – the church with other believers. And what God has given us to remain – his life-giving Spirit and word of truth – must remain in us.

**1 John 2:26-27** <sup>26</sup> *I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. <sup>27</sup> As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit-- just as it has taught you, remain in him.*

## **Conclusion**

John's warning isn't new to us. BUT the question this morning / evening is are we taking any notice of the warning. Are we prepared?

Or are we in danger of not remaining and so missing out on the eternal life promised to those who trust in Jesus?

A long time ago there was a girl I knew. She seemed to love Jesus. She seemed to love God's word of truth. She was involved in church and leadership. She talked about going to Bible college. She read Christian literature. But she ignored the warning signs. She loved the things of the world in just small ways – chasing career, wearing the right clothes. And she desired a boy who wasn't a follower of Jesus. And so she chased after him and married him. And at the same time she neglected the word of truth – so it didn't remain in her. And she gradually drifted away from the church and left her family in Christ. And she stopped walking in the light until she no longer remained in him.

I pray that one day in his mercy God might rescue her. But I pray for you this morning / evening that you will hear the warning.... And take the warning seriously so that you might remain in God as his truth and Spirit remain in you..... so that you might not forfeit the eternal life promised to you.

- Don't love the world
- Don't leave the church but remain in fellowship with God and his family
- Don't be led astray but stay in the truth you heard and stay in the Holy Spirit you received

**Don't love the world. Don't be led astray but stay in the truth you heard and stay in the Holy Spirit you received.**