

The First Epistle of John

(Week 20 – 1John 2:18-23)

- I. **Avoid Spiritual Deception (part 1)**
 - A. **Although the Internet and other modern technology have some good uses, they have opened the door to scam artists who are after your money and even your identity.**
 1. **To avoid being ripped off, you need to stay alert and recognize what is legit vs. what is false!**
 - B. **But the greatest deception comes from those who pose as Christians, bring false doctrines to the unsuspecting!**
 1. **The stakes are much higher than losing one's money or identity!**
 2. **Since the days of the New Testament, Satan has planted false teachers among the churches, preying on the untaught or on those who are dissatisfied.**
 3. **Question: How can one avoid spiritual deception?**
 - a. **By developing biblical discernment!**
 - i. **Hide the word of God in your heart! (Psalm 119:11)**
 - ii. **The word makes us wiser than our enemies! (Psalm 119:98)**
 - iii. **Jesus fought off Satan by quoting Scripture (Matthew 4:3-9)**
 - b. **By being watchful and attentive at all times!**
 - i. **Paul warned the elders to be watchful over the church at Ephesus, because men will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw disciples to themselves (Acts 20:28-31)**
 4. **We live in a time where biblical truth is minimized and compromised**
 - a. **Here are 2 examples of slogans used by religious leaders today:**
 - i. ***“Doctrine divides but love unifies”***
 - **Interpretation: *lets aside our doctrinal differences and make Christ the real issue, because it doesn't really matter what we believe as long as you love one another***
 - ii. ***“They'll know we are Christians by our love, not by our doctrine”***
 - **Interpretation: *lets aside our doctrinal differences and accept anyone who believes in Jesus***
 - b. **The deception:**
 - i. **These slogans are designed to bring unity at the expense of truth!**
 - ii. **They also imply that in order to win the lost to Jesus, one must set aside doctrinal differences and proclaim the essential core of the gospel in a positive way!**
 - iii. **Yes, there are those who claim to have the truth!**
 - **They beat you up with it, without showing grace and kindness!**
 - **But such experiences should not cause us to discard the Bible's emphasis on sound doctrine!**
 - **The Bible says to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), not silence it for the sake of “love” or “unity!”**
 - **Biblical love does not silence or compromise truth!**

- c. **Rhetorical Question: Can one separate Jesus from His doctrine?**
 - i. NO!
 - ii. John 12:48 (ESV), *“The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day”*
- d. **Rhetorical Question: Are teachers commanded to teach sound doctrine?**
 - i. YES!
 - ii. Titus 2:1 (ESV), *“But as for you[Titus], teach what accords with sound doctrine”*
- e. **Rhetorical Question: Does the Bible warn of a time where men will not put up with sound doctrine?**
 - i. YES!
 - ii. 2Timothy 4:3-4 (ESV), *“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, (4) and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”*
- f. **Question: What are some identifying marks of a false teacher?**
 - i. They tend to be popular (large following)
 - Luke 6:26 (ESV), *“Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.”*
 - ii. They tend to be men-pleasers
 - 1Thess. 2:1-4 (ESV), *“For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. (2) But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. (3) For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, (4) but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.”*
 - iii. They change the grace of God into immoral behavior
 - Jude 1:4 (ESV), *“For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”*
 - iv. They deny the truth shown them
 - Many reject the essentialness of baptism despite passages shown them.
 - Like Satan in Matthew 4:6-7, they use the Bible against itself to establish their own belief system
 - a. John 3:16 vs. Mark 16:16
 - b. Romans 10:9 vs. Acts 2:38, etc.
 - v. They draw disciples to themselves by distorting the truth
 - Acts 20:30 (ESV), *“and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.”*
 - They develop a “cult of personality” – he/she says it, I believe it!

C. Next class, we will get into 1John 2:18-23