

TUESDAY 01 November 2022 "Voices" (1 John 4:4-6)

Good morning my "Walking with Jesus" friends.

As we turn the page to November, I am struck by the global significance of the past few weeks and the next few days. Looking back, we've recently watched the transition of power in the **United Kingdom** both in the royal family and in the Prime Minister and halls of the British government. We've seen **China** name President XI Jinping to an unprecedented third term as supreme leader of the most populous nation on earth. We've seen **Russia's** leadership continue their relentless attack on the people of the small nation of the **Ukraine**. And we've watched **NATO and the EU** respond in support of Ukraine. But those are just a few of the major events of recent days. Looking ahead, in the next few days there will be elections in **America** which may have major implications for the future of the **United States**, both domestically and internationally. *We live in precarious, tumultuous and significant times my friends, don't we?*

For that reason, it is so important we turn to God and seek His guidance, His wisdom for living in these days. Recently we've been with the apostle John, close friend of Jesus, as John is writing his first letter probably in the latter part of the first century. Yesterday we celebrated the powerful truth of this statement from 1 John 4:4 **"You, dear children, are from God and you have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."** I remind you that the words '**dear children**' are intended by John to celebrate our adoption by God the Father into His family when we have trusted in Jesus for our salvation from our sin.

*The words '**you have overcome them**' are intended to be a great confirmation that the power of God in God's people is defeating any evil spirits trying to do the dark and destructive work of Satan in our lives, our families and our cities.* The ONE whom John claims is in us is the Holy Spirit of God, residing INSIDE each authentic Christian, and because He is God, He is supremely powerful! And finally, when John refers to '**the one who is in the world**' John is referring to Satan, the devil, and all his evil spirit demons who are working so hard to oppose God and God's truth, God's purposes and God's people all over the world.

Now today, let's continue with John as he writes more about these evil spirits under the direction of Satan. **"They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We 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."** (1 John 4:5,6) Oh my dear friends this is powerful and so very, very important. Over and over again in the Bible God declares that HE speaks only TRUTH, and that all TRUTH is built on His TRUTH. (Isaiah 45:19) Jesus made it very clear in John 8:44 that Satan speaks lies, and he is a liar, and no truth is found in him. So, the contrast could not be greater... truth and lies, honesty and deception, Jesus and Satan.

The important question is this: does your heart and mind hunger for and greatly value TRUTH or are you drawn to and tempted to engage in deception, dishonesty? What about your family or your neighbors or the teachers and students in the schools in your city or what about business leaders or police or judges or government officials in your city or your region of the world? Truth or lies, honesty or deception, Jesus or Satan?

*Now look very closely at those three short but powerful sentences John wrote, and I urge you to lay them over your part of the world and I wonder what you see? The first word is **THEY** and John is referring to evil spirits at work in people under the profound influence of evil in our world. John is contrasting them and both their speaking and their listening with people seeking to live in God honoring integrity.*

Now pause for a moment and consider this: *of all the media voices speaking information to your part of the world, which ones are passionate about speaking ONLY the truth and which voices seem to distort the facts to tell the story they, the media, want you to believe?* And what about the teachers and university professors in your part of the world... are they passionate about teaching students the truth and how to discern truth or are they intentionally distorting the minds of their students? But friends, communication has two sides, doesn't it... those who speak and those who listen. *Are the speakers speaking with integrity and truth? Are the listeners listening with a careful desire to learn truth and can they discern truth distortion?*

Look closely at this statement from John: **"We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us."** Do you find there are some people who reject what you have to say if you are communicating the truth about Jesus, or any of God's truth about any subject? Does this statement help you understand the problem? One of the roles of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian is to help them receive information and process it diligently, seeking to discern TRUTH in that information. But the person who does NOT have the Holy Spirit of God in them usually is not as interested in TRUTH as they are in validating their own opinion. *These people do not have the God given ability to discern God's truth or even God given wisdom because they do not have the Holy Spirit of God guiding their thinking.*

The apostle Paul wrote about it in 1 Corinthians 2:11 **"No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us... The man without the Spirit of God does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned..."** Wow, that is powerful and clear, isn't it? So, I ask you... *do you see the evidence in your life that you have the Spirit of God living in you, giving you spiritual discernment to understand the things of God which are foolishness to people who have not been saved by Jesus and therefore do not have the Holy Spirit guiding their thinking?*

Do you see John's closing statement: **'This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.'** (1 John 4:6) Do you notice the word **Spirit** is capitalized in the phrase **"Spirit of truth"**? That's because the **Spirit of truth** is the Holy Spirit of God! (John 16:13) Do you notice the word 'spirit' is NOT capitalized in the phrase **'spirit of falsehood'**? *That's because falsehood, deception, distortion of truth, lies, are always a work of evil spirits, of the devil!*

Now my friends, in closing, let me add one more very important statement to what John is saying here. It's written by the apostle Paul but helps us understand why some people hunger for truth and some people reject truth. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Paul writes: **"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so they are not able to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."** Do you see the undeniable work of Satan, the devil and his evil spirits as they **'blind the minds of unbelievers'**?

*A spiritual darkness permeates the thinking of people who have not been redeemed by Jesus from their sin and cleansed by the Holy Spirit in their minds and hearts. That spiritual darkness REJECTS God's truth always! So look around you at the information you hear, the political or scientific or moral discussion on social media or public media or in the classroom or even the barber shop... *can you see that people who have rejected God and God's truth are seeking to discount everything of God and do hear them insisting that society accept new truths, new values, new world views which are totally opposed to God and God's truth?**

Yes, of course we see that all around us... and who are the people who will be able to stand against the decay of societies? God's people who think with minds protected and led by the Holy Spirit of God! In many ways, the future of our world, in every country, depends on the ability of God's people to stand for what is right and true, in an ever-darkening world.

Now ponder that and ask yourself what difference you are making as the darkness seeks to extinguish the light of God and His truth?

Today's Scripture is 1 John 4:4-6.