Surviving Wolves

Message Notes

Tension

- The Crisis John is facing
  - AD 90, he's seen it all. It's been 6 decades since Christ ascended
  - People were leaving the church because false teaching had broken out.
  - Gnosticism was gripping the church
    - Flesh bad, spirit good
    - "Jesus couldn't have been flesh, but was actually a spirit"
    - Salvation came by "special knowledge" and not by Christ's death
    - John is feeling protective!
- 1 John 2:18–19 (NLT) — 18 Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come. 19 **These people left our churches, but they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us.**
- The church was having a crisis
  - Leadership crisis
  - Doctrine crisis
  - Faith crisis
- These types of teachings have sprung up through history
  - **Marcion the rich guy** from Turkey in 144 - God of Old Testament and New were different Gods. Change the Bible. Give back a 4 million dollar gift.
  - **Arian from Alexandria** - Jesus was created
  - **The Roman Catholic Church** sold indulgences in the middle ages to tap into the extra storage of grace from Christ to free you from the penalty of purgatory.
- What about today?
  - Danger
    - People that have no standing, but have a podcast studio
    - People that are filled with unforgiveness and hatred, cloaking it spiritual jargon
    - TikTok preachers that know their message will get views, likes, and money
- Transition - The goal of preaching this sermon is to ground you! That you won't be swept away easily by good sounding things. Not everything that sounds good is right. ACTUALLY, sometimes the better it sounds, the more tricky it becomes. Let's keep reading!

First Leg: Remain

- John's purpose
    - Church split
    - Let me affirm you - Jesus did come
    - Let me affirm you - You have an anointing
    - Let me affirm you - You aren't missing out on special knowledge
- 1 John 2:24–27 (NLT) — 24 **So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning**. If you do, you will remain in fellowship with the Son and with the Father. 25 And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us. 26 I am writing these things to warn you about those who want to lead you astray. 27 **But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you**, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as he has taught you, **remain in fellowship with Christ.**
- **Remain faithful to what you have been taught**
    - It's not about new and impressive doctrines. It's not about how fancy something can be. It's about remaining faithful!
- **Remain faithful to the Spirit -** You have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true.
- **Remain faithful to the fellowship of Christ**
    - John 15, "let my words abide in you"
    - Remain in fellowship with one another!
- Transition - This first part is how you are grounded, but now, how do we test the teaching?

Second Leg: Discern

- 1 John 4:1–8 (NLT) — 1 Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. **You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God**. For there are many false prophets in the world. 2 This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: **If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God**. 3 But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here. 4 But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. 5 Those people belong to this world, so they speak from the world's viewpoint, and the world listens to them. 6 But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. **That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.**
- **Test the SOURCE**
    - Fruit of their life, accountable, seeking to draw
    - Do they have **good fruit**?
        - What fruit is on their life? Gifts come from outside — fruit reveals what's inside

        - (The cell phone analogy — a gift is placed in your hand to pass on. Says nothing about character.)
    - Are they **accountable**?
        - Are they accountable to a church and spiritual authority — or a solo artist?
        - 1 John 2:19 — "They went out from us" — credibility connects to community
    - Are they just **trying to draw a following**?
        - Watch the argumentative, debate-hungry, sect-building spirit
        - The goal becomes attracting people to the teaching instead of to Jesus
        - WHO IS DISCIPLING ME RIGHT NOW?
- **Test the SUBSTANCE**
    - Jesus, Scripture, Simple, Substance, Balanced
    - Is it based on **SCRIPTURE**
        - Is it grounded in Scripture — or built on the teaching of people about people?
        - (When we go extra-biblical, we get off. Everything has to come back to the Word.)
    - Is it **SIMPLE**
        - Does it clarify or confuse? Depth that can't be communicated isn't depth — it's fog
        - (I've reconstructed notes from preachers I thought were profound and got nothing)
    - Does it have **SUBSTANCE**
        - Funny isn't fed. Entertaining isn't ministering
    - Is it **STABLE**
        - Watch the money teaching — when finances become the hyper-focus
        - Watch hyper-grace — grace without repentance isn't the gospel
        - 2 Timothy 4:3 — "They will gather teachers who say what their itching ears want to hear"
- **Test the SPIRIT**
    - What spirit does it produce? Does it produce Love? Does it produce confidence?
        - You don’t know what spirit you’re of
    - Love?
        - Does it produce love for the whole body — or division and superiority?
    - Confidence?
        - Does it produce confidence in God — or fear, anxiety, and hopelessness?
        - The true gospel produces love, joy, and peace — even when it's hard
        - Romans 14:17 — "The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"
    - WHAT IS THIS PRODUCING IN ME?