



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 John 2:26–27; John 14:16–17, 16:12–15

"The Sufficiency of the Anointing"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Last Sunday morning, I was in Charleston, South Carolina and attended the church in which I grew up, the old Scots Presbyterian Church, and in the morning service the minister, one of the members of the staff who was preaching that morning, was arrayed in a very impressive robe with some colorful things hanging his front, and I won't comment on whether that is spiritual or unspiritual, because you no doubt have your opinions concerning that. But I want to apologize this morning that I have broken the pattern of the ones who are standing on the platform today, with Mark and his very nice looking light silk jacket and Howard Prier also in it, and I make a public apology for not falling into pattern. [Laughter] I did not bring my doctor's gown and hang anything on it, and here I am just in a suit of clothes.

We're turning for the Scripture reading this morning to John chapter 14, verse 16 and 17, and then chapter 16, verse 12-15, as part of our exposition of 1 John, because the things of which John speaks in 1 John chapter 2, verses 26 and 27 are things that are built upon the words that the Lord Jesus spoke to the apostles in the upper room, and when he speaks of the anointing, he is of course referring to the promise and the gift of the Spirit that was first given to them in the upper room. In John chapter 14, in verse 16 and verse 17 the apostle writes of the things the Lord said to them in the upper room, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive."

Incidentally, the reason the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit is that regeneration must proceed the gift of the Spirit, and so the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit until that regeneration takes place. "Because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

If you have a text that says that, "He dwelleth with you, and is in you," the reason for that is that there is a variant reading at this point, and some question of it, but in my opinion, the future is the preferable reading at this point, and in this case, the Authorized Version is correct, "and shall be in you." In chapter 16, in verse 12 through verse 15 the apostle writes, again giving words our Lord spoke to them in the upper room,

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

Now, remembering that the gift of the Spirit is the anointing, let us now read our two verses that we'll spend our time on this morning. 1st John 2, verse 26 and verse 27, the apostle writes, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him," you can see he considers the promise Jesus made in the upper room to have been fulfilled. "The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things." Remember Jesus said the Spirit would guide them into all truth. "But as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." Or perhaps simply, "You abide in him," or even the original text may be properly rendered, "to abide in him," the imperative.

May the Lord bless this reading of his word, and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father, we approach Thee through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have the anointing, the presence, the permanently indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. We are grateful, indeed Lord, to reflect upon that fact, and to realize the truth of it and to know that the things that we have been taught by Thee, we have been taught through the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit. We are indeed grateful, and thankful, and we can never throughout the ages of eternity, properly express our gratitude for the blessings of the redemption in Christ, which is not only a past experience, but a present, and a future experience as well.

We give Thee thanks for all of the other blessings of the Christian revelation, and the Christian truth in the Lord Jesus Christ. How blessed we are to have been brought by the grace of God to the understanding of our triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We pray, Lord, for the whole church of Jesus Christ, wherever believers in him meet, and meet together in Christian fellowship, bless them richly this day, the Lord's Day. We also pray Lord for this country, and ask Thy blessing upon our president and others associated with him, our state and local governments. We remember that the Scriptures inform us that our political leaders are ministers of God, served by a purpose. O God, if it be Thy will, give us the freedom to express the truth of God in our day as we find it in Holy Scripture.

We pray for the local church here, for our elders who have the oversight over us, for the deacons, for the members and friends, and especially for our visitors. We pray for them, we ask Thy blessing upon them as they hear the word of God, may they be strengthened and built up in the truth.

We especially, too, Lord remember those who are sick. We give Thee thanks for answered prayer in the case of [names redacted], we pray Thy blessing upon them, and if it please Thee Lord, we pray that the transplants may be accepted by [name redacted] body and that he may be returned to a measure of health and strength that he has enjoyed in the past. We commit them to Thee. We pray that their needs may be met, and others also, Lord, who are in our calendar of concern, we pray as well for them. We ask that Thou will give healing in accordance with Thy will. We commit them

to Thee. We thank Thee for the greatness of the God in heaven who answers prayer and has sufficient power to perform his will.

And now Lord, be with us as we sing, as we listen to the word of God. For Jesus sake.
Amen.

[Message] Next week is an important week for the young people in Believers Chapel, and we hope that you will do everything that you can to help those who are laboring in our daily Vacation Bible School, and also bring your children, letting them know in advance. It's so important for the future of the Chapel that God's blessing rest upon our young people and that at an early age, they be given the proper opportunities to turn to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It's so important that we are going to have a second moment of prayer for the daily Vacation Bible School, and not simply for that, but because I forgot in the other prayer to mention them. [Laughter] And not simply because I forgot, but because I was warned before I even left for church this morning, to be sure to include them in prayer. Such is the frailty and failure and foibles of the one who ministers the word to you. Let's bow together in another moment of prayer for the daily Vacation Bible School.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for the opportunity to instruct our young lives in the things that concern our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. How important it is that they be confronted at an early age with the claims of our Lord Jesus and that by Thy grace, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, they may be turned to receive Him, and by Thy grace also, to have their lives built upon the Lord Jesus and the redemption that is found in him.

We thank Thee for those who labor to make the daily Vacation Bible School possible. We thank Thee for the teachers who have prepared themselves for the lessons of next week. Bless them, may they be fruitful lessons. May this assembly be blessed as a result of it. We commit these days to Thee with thanksgiving, and with anticipation in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] We're turning today, in our continuation of the exposition of 1 John to chapter 2, verse 26 and 27. I think I mentioned the 1st chapter, but we are studying the second chapter, verse 26 and 27. The subject for today is, "The Sufficiency of the Anointing." One of modern evangelicalism's curses is impatience in the life of God, leading often to a false craving for emotionalism, hands up in our meetings, toes tapping, tongues flapping, or a false craving for the intellectual. One finds this in many of us who are enamored of modern theology. Many things, of course, we can learn from those who do not follow the Christian faith as we understand it, but there are those who seek, by imbibing our contemporary theology, to suggest to us that the truth found in the word of God is really not sufficient for our day. Impatience, generally speaking, drives men to look without for the guidance which in due time will come from within, that is from the word of God as found in the hands of the Spirit if we only wait.

Its remarkable how often the work of God, in its successful carrying out, takes patience. In western Africa, for example, it was fourteen years before one convert was received into the church. In east Africa, ten years before that took place. In New Zealand, to move thousands of miles away, it was nine years before one baptism and two more years before anyone became a communicant, that is eligible to partake of communion in the church. In Tahiti, where there was a remarkable movement of the Holy Spirit some generations ago, it was some sixteen years before the first harvest. William Carrie, recognized by many as the founder of the modern missionary movement, labored for seven years before the first Hindu convert was baptized. In Burma, Judson toiled for seven years before he had one.

Once writing back to his home country, England, begged the churches to have patience, "If a ship were here to carry me to any part of the world, I would not leave my field. Tell the brethren, success is as certain as the promise of a faithful God can make it." So in the midst of failure, in the midst of error, in the midst of persecution, John called for the receivers of his epistles to have steadfastness, adherence to the apostolic message, and the witness of the Spirit, and he points out along the way that the apostolic message, and also the witness of the Spirit, the present witness of the

Spirit agree. There is no difference between that which they were taught and that which they are being taught at the present time.

Now, turning to our passage, in verse 26 he reiterates his purpose. "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." Now he has made an appeal to the original apostolic message, and now comes an appeal to the inward voice, to be responsive to the inward voice of the Holy Spirit. When he says, "These things have I written unto you," we ask, as readers of the word of God, to what does the expression "these things" refer? Well, most likely he refers to the immediately preceding paragraph beginning in verse 18, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." The apostle has referred to the things that are happening among those to whom he is writing. Individuals have come into the assemblies, or the churches, and they have denied that Jesus is the Messiah who has come in the flesh. The apostle in his characteristic black and white way of speaking calls such antichrists. So that appears to be one of the things prominent in his mind.

Inwardly, these individuals are antichrists. Outwardly, they are deceivers. They are individuals who are seducing the members of the church of Jesus Christ in Asia Minor. So when he says, "These things have I written unto you," he is talking about the antichrists who deny the incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He says of them that they "seduce them." That is characteristic of the work of Satan himself, for Scripture speaks of him as the deceiver. We are not surprised in Believers Chapel, when there are individuals who are seduced by false teaching. There is no excuse for it; I think that the ministry, as whole, in the Chapel is true to the word of God, but there are individuals who are subject to seduction.

All of us are subject to seduction, but some who do not have the truth in them, but who nevertheless are outwardly, at least, a part of us yield to that kind of seduction. So he properly warns them. In the next chapter, he will do the same thing, verse 7 of chapter 3, he writes, "Little children, let no man deceive you." That very fact lets us know that it is possible for one to sit at an assembly where the word of God is proclaimed, and still be seduced. So his purpose then, in writing what he

is writing, and some of it is very sharp, very much to the point, very hard for some people to respond to, is that we might adhere to the apostolic teaching and reject the seduction and deception to which we are exposed.

Now having said that, he turns to what we really have and discusses the possession and adequacy of the abiding anointing. He states in verse 27, in the first half of the verse, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you." This is the distinguishing difference between the false and the true, the possession of the anointing.

Now, let's think for a moment of the word anointing. When the Lord Jesus began his ministry, you'll remember that he was baptized and as he came up out of the water of his baptism, the Holy Spirit came upon him. At that point, he was anointed for his Messianic ministry. In fact, the very term Messiah, means simply the "anointed one." He was anointed by the Holy Spirit. That was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 61, in verse 1 that "the Holy Spirit would come upon the Messiah, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Messiah would perform his ministry." That, of course, successfully took place in the case of our Lord.

But in the upper room, he told the apostles that he would pray to the Father and that the Father would give them another Comforter, another advocate, another Paraclete who would stand by their side; the very fact that he said another, and using the expression that means another of the same kind, indicates that the promise and then the coming of the Holy Spirit is a kind of anointing. In fact, that is why we are called Christians. Christ means "the anointed one." We are called Christians, that is "ones who have been anointed," ones who enjoy an anointed. Thinking of him as the Christ, capital "C" we are also christos, little "c" that is to distinguish us from him.

We, too, have an anointing. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ possess the fullness of the Holy Spirit that is our birthright. In fact, if we do not have it, then we are not Christians. The apostle says, "He that hath not," the Apostle Paul, "He that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his." In Galatians chapter 4, in verses 1 through 7 he says the same thing. We have the anointing. That is what John is speaking about, and he means the ministry of the Holy Spirit who is come to

permanently indwell every believer. Jesus said, when he gave the promise that he would be with us forever, not simply for a time, not until we sin, not until we displease the Lord, but forever. So once we have believed in the Lord Jesus, we have become anointed ones, we have an anointing. In fact, it's that that distinguishes us from other who may even claim to be of us, but who are not really of us.

Now in the opening clause of verse 27 he says, "But the anointing which you have received of him abideth in you." So the anointing, then, is the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is that which we have that others do not have, even though they may be part of a professing body of believers. And the fact that these individuals to whom John was writing have the real thing is evidenced by the statement of verse 19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Those individuals claim the anointing, too. In fact, Hippolytus, one of the later of the early church fathers, commented on the fact that individuals who were purveyors of false doctrine in his day, claimed to have an anointing. So it was fairly common in those early stages for others to make the claim to. We have such an anointing.

But John says the evidence of the failure of those who were with us, and have now left us, the evidence that they don't really have an anointing is that they left. And the evidence that the receivers of the letter do have that anointing is that they have stayed. That is, they didn't accept the false teaching. They really believed that the Lord Jesus was manifested in the flesh as the Messiah. So when John writes, he's writing some very strong language, and he doesn't hesitate to say that "those who left us are not really of us, if they had been of us, they would have continued with us." That proves they don't really have the anointing. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you."

What does he mean when he says, "It abides in you, and you don't need that any man should teach you?" Well, first of all it's clear that he means that the anointing, the presence of the Holy Spirit covers the whole ground of our need. There are some of the things that John doesn't refer to,

lest you may misunderstand because it's very easy, if we took his words out of their context, to misunderstand them. He does not mean that we do not have anybody to teach us all kinds of truth. There are kinds of truth that all Christians can study and of which they could learn a great deal.

In fact, one of the histories of the Christian body has been the history of the discoveries of truth in various areas that are directly traceable to Christian believers who believed that all truth ultimately is from God, and studied it as a believing man. The history of the Christian enterprise in science is a remarkable testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit in guiding men in all of the spheres of human knowledge. John is not talking about that. He doesn't mean that we shouldn't attend a school, we shouldn't go to elementary school, or high school, or college. He's talking about a special kind of truth. He's not talking about absolute independence of human teaching in the church of Jesus Christ.

Think of it for a moment, if he should say, "You do not have need for anyone to teach you," and if he were referring to the Christian church, individuals within the Christian church, incidentally there are people like that you know, who will say, "I don't have to attend church. I have the Holy Spirit. I have believed in Christ. I have the Holy Spirit. There's not need for me to sit under the instruction of others. I'll simply listen to the Lord Jesus as he teaches me through the Holy Spirit." That is false. That is rebellion against the teaching of the word of God, for the simple reason that the same God who has given us the truth, has given us gifted men who are called, men who have the gift of teaching. What a superfluous activity it would be for God to give men the gift of teaching if we were not supposed to listen to them. The apostle is not, therefore, referring to that.

Furthermore, if you think about it for a moment, what's the point of writing 1 John? In other words, the whole epistle would be reduced to what one could call inutility. It's a useless endeavor. And, if he should say, "You don't need that any man should teach you," and really mean that no Christian man should teach other men, if I had been sitting in the audience, I might have said, "Wait a minute John, why are you telling us all of this? We don't need any advice from you if that's the force of those words." So that's not what he's talking about.

And furthermore, he's not saying that every one of us, therefore, has the gift of infallibility. Now, we protestants, or those who think like protestants would think that the idea that some one man is the authoritative voice of God when he speaks *ex cathedra* concerning Christian doctrine, regard that as contrary to the word of God. We would regard papal infallibility as a presumption, but think of it. The papal infallibility doctrine would be a trifle in comparison with the doctrine, if this is what this is supposed to mean, that every one of us has infallibility in biblical teaching. That's not what John means, of course.

What does he mean then? He's talking about essential truth, especially the truth of which he's speaking here. We don't need instruction from those outside the Christian fellowship. We do not have to rush off to some scientist to tell us about scientific things as far as the word of God is concerned. We don't look to a scientist to explain to us Holy Scripture. We do not look to a philosopher who is not one of us, you understand, we can understand a great deal from philosophers in their sphere, and we can learn a great deal, and we ought to learn a great deal from scientists when they speak of their sphere of study, but when a philosopher tries to tell us what the word of God means and does not have the anointing, or a scientist tell us that, then we are not being contrary to the word of God when we express doubt about their conclusions. That's what John means. He's just talking about the essential truth of which he's speaking. We don't need instruction in spiritual things in Christian theology from those who are not within the fellowship, who do not have the anointing, who do not have the Holy Spirit, the only infallible teacher of the word of God.

Put in another way, we do not need to listen to so called experts as final authority. We will listen to anybody of course; we do not have to listen to specialists in some areas of truth. We don't have to listen to priests. We don't have to listen to counsels. We don't have to listen to congresses as final authority, but it is of the utmost importance for us to pay attention to what the Christian church has proclaimed down through the years. In other words, we're not trying to say that we only listen to the Holy Spirit as he teaches the word of God for us, and pay no attention whatsoever to what he may have taught through the centuries. We pay attention to counsels. We pay attention to

congresses. We pay attention to what Christians have taught, but our final judge, and our final authority is the word of God as taught by the Holy Spirit.

I have so many friends, good Christian men, some of them learned in their own spheres within the Christian family, who fail to recognize that the Holy Spirit has been teaching for nineteen hundred years, and therefore we should pay attention to what the believing church as a whole has thought concerning Christian doctrine down through the years. To say that he teaches me, in the 20th Century, and he has not taught them at all, is a kind of arrogance that I really find difficult to understand. And therefore, at least of me, I cannot speak of you, therefore of me, I can only say that I do study the counsels. I study the creeds. I study the congresses. I want to test what the Holy Spirit has taught me by what the Holy Spirit has taught the church. Jesus said the Spirit would come and he would guide us into all things, and he has guided the Christian church. He still is guiding the Christian church, so I pay attention to those things.

Sometimes at theological school you'll have a professor say, "Now I want you to write a paper, and I don't want you to look at any commentary at all." How foolish that is. That's utterly foolish. As an exercise, it might reveal how little you know. [Laughter] And that would be good, but as a really final exercise, and some of them take it that way, it's useless. It would be much better if the professor should say, "Read everything that you possibly can read on this text, and then having looked at all of that which has been said concerning this text, then tell us what it means." Then one could pay greater attention to their conclusions. I've sought to grade papers written in the other way, and the papers themselves are clearly evidence of the foolishness and weakness of that kind of assignment.

Well, what is John saying then? He's saying simply this, that the sole criterion, the ultimate criterion of truth is the word of God as taught by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I must confess, when I read in the papers this past week of the things that have happened at the Southern Baptist Convention, I have to think, how many of these men have paid a great deal of attention to what the Christian church has believed, or what the Christian church has taught down through the years?

Now, of course, if you don't have some inside information you cannot learn anything much about what happened in the convention, because the religion editors of our papers, I won't mention this person by name, I only can say that the local paper that I read, has the initials of D.M.N. And this particular paper, if you want to find out what religious truth is, or what is happening in the spiritual world, you cannot take our papers as worth, really, anything much. Everything is flawed right at the beginning. In other words, the conflict is between, not between the liberals and the conservatives, but between the fundamentalists and the moderates.

Now, in our age of moderation, where are you going to stand? You are immediately told that the place to be is the place of moderation. You don't want to be where those extremists are. Fundamentalism is a term for extremism. And then further, this is one reason, incidentally, I take the *New York Times*, now that's a liberal paper, but they let you know it's a liberal paper. You don't have to read more than a half a dozen pages to know that it's a pretty liberal paper, but their reporters are fine reporters, and what you get is actually what was said. If you'll notice, if the Pope makes a statement, or if a church makes a statement or a rabbi makes a statement of significance, the statement is given. It's cited; it's there. You can read it. You can interpret it as you wish, but it's there.

Now, the Baptists have been criticized. One body of the Baptists, I don't want to get into the Baptist troubles, the Baptists have been fighting ever since they were Baptists. [Laughter] In fact, I have a good Baptist friend who is a pastor, and says that in "Genesis 13, Abraham's herdsmen engaged in strife with Lot's herdsmen, and that's the beginning of the Baptist church." [Laughter] That's what he said, but you know we've had already several articles in this paper of which I'm speaking, and it has been said that the fundamentalists are now giving the pastors greater authority to interpret the word of God, but the statement by which they are giving this authority, that is, the actual resolution has been printed in the paper yet. So how can anyone possibly understand what the issue is really about? It comes to us through a second or third hand.

Incidentally, you may be wondering what I am leading up to, of course we always like to give comments of contemporary affairs, but what I am speaking about is essentially this, when it comes to the interpretation of the Bible, everyone of us has the anointing, and we are responsible to interpret the word of God under the teaching of the anointing. That's what John means when he says, "You do not have need that any man should teach you." That's what Luther said in the Reformation. That's what Calvin proclaimed. Down through the years, that has been the teaching of the Christian church. Augustine, back in the 4th and 5th centuries wrote concerning this, he spoke about the fact that the sound of our words strikes ears, but the teacher, the *magister est intus*, that is, is within us.

He goes on to say finally as he discusses the fact that to learn the word of God, the ultimate authority is from within, that is the Holy Spirit of God, he says, "He," I give you the Latin if you like, *catbedram* this is the word, incidentally, when you say of the Pope that when he teaches *ex cathedra*, that is from his chair, from his office, he speaks infallibly, this is what Augustine writes. *Cathedram in Coelo habet qui corda docet*, or he who teaches the heart has a chair, a *catbedram*, in heaven. In other words, the teacher, the true teacher of the Christian church resides in heaven. That's what John is saying. When it comes to the interpretation of the word of God, we are bound by the exterior authority of the word of God as taught by the interior authority of the Holy Spirit, who authored the word of God. After all, if you read a statement, and you say, "Who wrote it?" Then the ultimate interpretation of it should rest in the hands of the one who wrote it, should it not?

Now, in the remaining time together, I want to say a few words about the rest of verse 27, because this explains to us, in detail, why we don't need an outside teacher. He says, "But as the same anointing teacheth you of all things." That's why we don't need an outside teacher. The "anointing teacheth you of all things." This echoes John's accounting of our Lord's statement in the upper room, where the Lord Jesus in John 14, and verse 26, later on from the passage we read in the Scripture reading, says, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have

said unto you." So when John says, "As the same anointing teacheth you of all things," he's repeating the teaching he received in the upper room.

What is the worth, in value, of the anointing? Well, let me just list some things that come out of this passage. In the first place, it's an inward anointing. When we speak of the Holy Spirit as the gift of the Lord Jesus, when a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are talking about an anointing. In the Old Testament, the priests were anointed with oil. The kings were anointed with oil. The prophets were anointed with oil. But in New Testament times, every single believer is anointed with the Holy Spirit in the heart. That's the tremendous difference that has taken place by the coming of our Lord Jesus as the incarnate Son of God in the flesh. That's why John considers this, such important doctrine. So we're anointed, not with oil on our heads, not with the oil on our feet, or whatever it may be, the priests were anointed in several different places, but with the Holy Spirit in the heart.

And secondly, it is a permanent anointing. He says, "The anointing which you have received." It's not a fitful emotion; it's not a wayward impulse. It's not the rapture of the excitement of the discovery of some particular truth. The anointing abides. As Jesus said, "He will be with you forever." So from the beginning of our Christian experience to the end of our Christian experience on the earth, to the end of our Christian experience throughout eternity, of which there's no end, we have the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Now, if you don't think that's a blessing, think about it for a moment. That means, through the tears and cries of Christian experience, the anointing abides. That means, through the smiles and laughter of Christian experience, the anointing abides. That means through any kind of persecution to which any Christian down through the centuries has been exposed is a persecution in which he can reflect upon the presence of the anointed through it. That's why so many of our friends and fellow believers, our brethren and sisters in Christ, whom we will get to know in the future, gave the kind of testimony that they gave. The presence of the Lord with them, they were assured of. It is an unchanging teaching.

Notice the way John uses tenses here, he says, "But as the same anointing teacheth you," present tense, is teaching now. He assumes they are being taught, and it "is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you," in other words, there is a present teaching of the Holy Spirit and there was an initial teaching of the Holy Spirit, and there is harmony between the two. "And as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you." What is the history of Christian teaching, all of it, if its Christian teaching is fundamentally harmonious with the first teaching? In other words, if you see or sense some difference, it's only the implicit that has become explicit. There is no difference. There is not change. The later lessons grow out of the earlier lessons. The earlier lessons do not need to be unlearned.

That's why we do not take the position, when Christ came and the new age began with the cross, when the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, that therefore the Old Testament is of no significance. It is of significance to us. It is a picture book of the doctrine that is fulfilled in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. We could never be a true student of the word of God if we did not know the Old Testament as well. The later lessons grow out of the earlier lessons, and the earlier lessons do not need to be unlearned. There are no developments in which the truth is abandoned. If there is a development in which other truth is abandoned, then what we have is not development, but departure from the truth. That's why it is so important for us, when we reflect on some of the current movements, to remember what John has taught us.

We commented in our day that we had on John Wimber about three weeks or so ago now, and Mr. Wimber in one of his tapes makes the statement that "experience alters theology." Nothing could be more destructive of the Christian faith, if that really were believed and carried out. "Experience alters theology." If there is one thing that John sets forth here that is opposed to it, it's this, the anointing teaches us, as it has taught us. In other words, the original apostolic teaching is still applicable to us. What we are learning is simply, we are learning things that are more explicit than are involved in the original teaching, if you just reflect upon it. So to say that "experience alters theology" is the reverse of truth.

Our theology, our understanding of the word of God, should alter our experience. No experience is valid Christian experience that is not whetted to the teaching of the word of God. How erroneous can a person be saying, "Experience alters theology." The apostle would have thought that that was rank heresy. He could not have believed that there was any teaching to come that made it unnecessary to learn Christian teaching. The fanaticism characteristic of so many professing Christians today, in which the truth of the word of God is subordinated to experience, would have called from John another of his tracts concerning heretical teaching.

This is a self-evidency, anointing. Its power makes us independent of human testimony. He says, "You need not." One of the reasons that we find this so difficult is that so many of us are not studying the Bible. That's one of the saddest things, I think, with which I as a Christian man, and I think you as a Christian man have to deal with, so many are not reading the Bible. The Bible carries its own credentials as handled by the Holy Spirit, when we read it and study it. The Apostle Paul, when he preached to the Corinthians, said, "I didn't come to you preaching in the wisdom of men in polished discourse. I did not appeal to things like this. I wanted to have the things that I said to you, ultimately, to rest in the power of God."

Isn't that striking that the apostle should say that? That is, should rest in the power of God. His words precisely are, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Why was he not anxious for our faith to stand in the wisdom of men? Wouldn't it be nice to have the wise of this world say, "This is the way Christianity is to be understood, and we are in harmony with it." A lot of people think that would be great. But look, then will come someone a little wiser, a little wiser than our day. Anyone who reads history, or the history of the interpretation of the word of God, as I do constantly, and I know many of you do too, you'll know that human thought at one century is not human thought at another century, and consequently the ultimate credential of the truth of God can only be an unchanging credential. What can that be? Can the unchanging credential of the word of God be human reason? Of course not; we pay attention to human reason, we listen to it, but we always measure it by the word of God.

Can it be human experience like the Texas rancher riding in his pickup, looked down the road, saw what looked like a body of water, was convinced it was only a mirage, and drove his pickup into the water? Human experience is always deceptive. Human experience can never be the test of truth. Philosophy can never be the test of truth. What's the ultimate test of the word of God? It's the testimony of the Holy Spirit. That's the only objective testimony, it's internal, but it's objective, the only testimony that ultimately satisfies. That's why Paul said he wanted their faith to be "not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Christianity carries its credentials with it, its objective credentials, the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

Listen to one of the great reformers, "But in no case is reason the ultimate rule of faith. No authority can be higher than the direct testimony of God. Wouldn't you want the truth to which you've committed your life to have the testimony of God behind it? I would. No certainty can be greater than that imparted by the Spirit shining on the word, an accredited revelation, like an oath among men should put an end to controversy." And so, Christianity, we proclaim is accredited by the highest authority of all. Authority of the Holy Spirit, who wrote the word of God shining within the heart of the man who looks into the word of God and says, "Lord, by Thy grace may I be able to understand that which truth is."

If God, in his marvelous grace, brings you to that place and you realize the hopelessness, the confusion, the failure of human life. You, by his grace will come to understand that about which I am talking. That's what Augustine meant when he said, "The chair in heaven is the chair of the one who teaches the heart." Well, he does say it's an all-embracing anointing. It covers all things that have to do with salvation. It's full orbbed, it's well rounded. We don't mind teachings that are called systems. Systems are very useful, they help to clarify things, but the ultimate authority is the word of God. It's an infallible anointing. He says that it is truth. It is no lie, and then he makes his appeal, "Therefore if that's true, then let his word abide in you. The Spirit will give it fragrance, will give it fruit in your life, and you will come to understand what truth is like."

We don't depend upon human reason. We don't rest our ultimate faith in human reason. We don't rest our ultimate faith in human experience, but in the testimony of the author of the word of God, the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the eternal trinity. So to sum it up then, his essential point is, life rooted in the apostolic gospel, that which they were taught once, and continuously expanded hereafter is the antidote to heresy. And incidentally my Christian friend is the cure to all mental confusion. We don't rest our faith in psychology. How ridiculous. Why, if you go back and study the history of psychiatry and psychology, there is constant change. What a terrible thing it would be to have your faith rest in that. It's not secure until the next book has been written. The cure for all mental confusion is found in the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the word of God. Spiritual safety, spiritual well being, spiritual enlightenment lie not in scholarship, but ultimately in what could be called saintliness, responsiveness to the word of God, responsiveness to the Holy Spirit, the reading of the word of God, the learning of the truth as the apostles were taught it, and as the anointing continues to teach it. We have the external authority of the word of God, the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, and guided by this, with a wise consideration of all of the possibilities that human history has suggested, we have the assurance that that is sufficient for us in our Christian life.

What do we need then? Well, I suggest to you, my Christian friends, that we need patience. The problem with so many of us is that when someone comes to us and says, "Look, I've just heard something. I listened to a tape. And some fellow told us about this experience, and some told us about that, and that seems to be true. Let's follow them for a while." That's source of a great deal of our error today. That's the source of a great deal of the confusion that exists in the church. That's a source of all of the things that range from failing to get along with our marital partners, to failure to get along in our business, to failure to enjoy the life that God has given us to live. May God help us to remember that the authority for truth rests in the word of God, and the life centered upon the word of God, accompanied by patience, has the assurance of the Holy Spirit as the constant teacher,

who will be the anointing guiding us into the truth. May God give us steadfastness. May he give us faithfulness to the word of God, and to the Holy Spirit who dwells within.

I assure you, I'm an old man, one testimony is all its worth, but I assure you, your life will be an entirely different life if you haven't been doing this, if you rest your life upon what God says in his word. If you're here today, and you've never believed in Christ, then of course you need to enter into the Christian faith. Only thereby do you have the anointing. The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit. Acknowledge your need. Acknowledge your sin. Acknowledge your rebellion in your heart. Acknowledge also that Christ has made an atonement for sinners and that you want to participate in it. Receive as a free gift, not by joining the church, not by praying through, not by being baptized, not by sitting at the Lord's table; these are great things for Christians to do, but not ways to receive life. Receive it by grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works lest any one should boast." May God help you to be responsive. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, how marvelous it is to sit under the instruction of an apostle, one who heard our Lord give the great promises, and who confirms them in the letters and gospels written. We thank Thee for the promise of the Paraclete, the promise of the anointing. We thank Thee for the apostle's confirmation of it, and O God, help us, by Thy grace to rest our lives upon the credentials of the divine author of the word of God. We know how impossible it would be for...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]