

Series: "LOVE LETTER from JOHN"

For Message: 1 John 2:18-29

Message Title: "Truth or Consequences"

Introduction: Welcome to BMZ CHURCH! Glad you're here as we CONTINUE our WORSHIP SERIES called: "**LOVE LETTER from JOHN**"! This is a SUMMER Bible Study to help us continue to GROW in our FAITH, so we are ENCOURAGED to SHARE it with OTHERS. When we are FOCUSED on God's WORD, we are LESS DISTRACTED by the THINK/GS of THIS WORLD.

John wants us to experience REAL LIFE, according to JESUS ... WHAT we are CREATED to EXPERIENCE! FELLOWSHIP with OTHERS, GOD, and JESUS. JOY may be FULL and OVERFLOWING. Meaningful and DEEP PURPOSE.

Last week = NOT LOVING the WORLD. SLIDING SCALE from WORLD to WORD.

Now, according to JOHN (and Jesus), it MATTERS WHAT we BELIEVE. IF we are going to EXPERIENCE the REAL LIFE, we BUILD our LIVES on TRUTH. TRUTH, as in God's TRUTH, NOT what some people might SINCERELY BELIEVE is true. We BUILD our LIVES on TRUTH and NOT some Superstition or LIES. It is IMPOSSIBLE to LIVE a REAL LIFE believing LIES.

Just as JOHN has written about CONFLICT between LIGHT and DARK and LOVE and HATRED, NOW he writes about TRUTH vs. ERROR / FALSE TRUTH. Listen to how JOHN LEADS us INTO the SERIOUSNESS of the CONSEQUENCES of TURNING AWAY from THE TRUTH (from 85AD) ... **1 JOHN 2:18 = *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.***

The REASON I remind us JOHN wrote in 85AD is because it's 2,000 YEARS LATER and HE SAID in 85AD, the "**LAST HOUR is HERE**" or "**HAS COME.**" THEN, he uses the TERM, "**ANTICHRIST.**" BOTH these, **LAST HOUR** and **ANTICHRIST ALERT** that CHRISTIANS are LIVING in TIMES of CRISIS and MUST be ON GUARD against the DECEPTION of the ENEMY.

OK ... IF JOHN lived in the LAST HOUR / Times, WHY are we STILL HERE? Well, since JESUS' DEATH and RESURRECTION, we are living in a TIME when GOD is doing a "**NEW THING.**" The LIGHT (Jesus) has COME into the WORLD, and SINCE THEN, it is a NEW AGE / a NEW TIME ... NOT a DURATION of TIME, but a KIND of TIME. ALL HISTORY since JESUS CAME, Died, Resurrected, is PREPARATION for the "**END.**"

The LATTER TIMES or "LAST HOUR" that Paul and John described in the FIRST CENTURY we OBSERVATIONS of WORLD CHARACTERISTICS of the TIMES ... we SEE the SAME CHARACTERISTICS TODAY, but in GREATER INTENSITY. CHRISTIANS have ALWAYS LIVED in the "**LAST HOUR.**" Again, ALL "**TIME**" since JESUS is the "**END TIMES**" ... keeping in mind GOD is NOT LIMITED BY or FUNCTIONS in "**TIME**" like WE DO. HE is ABOVE TIME (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3).

Now, ANTICHRIST ... JOHN is the ONLY WRITER who uses this TERM. It DESCRIBES THREE THINGS: 1) A SPIRIT who OPPOSES or DENIES Christ. 2) A FALSE TEACHER who EMBODIES said SPIRIT. 3) A PERSON who will HEAD UP the FINAL WORLD REBELLION against Christ.

“**ANTI**” has DUAL meaning ... “**AGAINST**” CHRIST and “**INSTEAD OF**” CHRIST. Satan is FIGHTING AGAINST Christ by PUTTING UP FALSE SUBSTITUTES ... The SPIRIT of the ANTI-CHRIST (End Times) is BEHIND EVERY FALSE BELIEF and SUBSTITUTE for TRUE CHRISTIANITY. It can be SO SUBTLE it’s DIFFICULT to DETECT. THEREFORE, we MUST KNOW WHAT we BELIEVE and WHY we BELIEVE it!

YOU and I are LIVING in DAYS of CRISIS ... the “**LAST HOUR.**” The SPIRIT of the ANTI-CHRIST is WORKING through FALSE TEACHERS ... YOU and I need to KNOW what **TRUTH** is and WHAT will BRING GRAVE **CONSEQUENCES**.

JOHN writes about 3 MARKS of a FALSE TEACHER who is CONTROLLED by the SPIRIT of the ANTI-CHRIST ... Now, PASTORS are NOT the ONLY TEACHERS. I don’t KNOW if you’ve NOTICED but THESE DAYS EVERYONE is an EXPERT on EVERYTHING. That INCLUDES people who will VOICE their OPINIONS on HOW CHRISTIANITY WORKS and what “CHRISTIANS” should DO. BEWARE of FALSE TEACHERS ...

### **THREE (3) MARKS OF A FALSE TEACHER:**

#### **#1 = They DEPART**

They LEAVE the FELLOWSHIP of BELIEVERS ... they LEAVE over ALL sorts of things. AND it is EVIDENCE, BECAUSE NOT all who GATHER in a CHURCH WITH BELIEVERS are NECESSARILY MEMBERS of the FAMILY of GOD.

The NT talks about THE CHURCH in TWO WAYS ... There is the UNIVERSAL “Church” and the LOCAL “Church.” The UNIVERSAL CHURCH is the FULL BODY of CHRIST made up of SINNERS who TRUST JESUS as SAVIOR ... they RECEIVE ETERNAL Life and IMMEDIATELY become a MEMBER of God’s FAMILY. This person THEN is to CONNECT with a LOCAL GROUP of CHRISTIANS and begin to SERVE CHRIST together.

The POINT IS it is POSSIBLE to CONNECT with a LOCAL GROUP of CHRISTIANS and NOT have SURRENDERED to JESUS NOR be a PART of the TRUE SPIRITUAL BODY of CHRIST. ONE EVIDENCE of a TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE is to WANT to be WITH the PEOPLE of GOD. We’re SAVED by the SAME JESUS and have HIS SPIRIT INSIDE US and want to ENJOY FELLOWSHIP (to have “*In Common*”) with EACH OTHER. True JESUS FOLLOWERS want to BE WITH OTHER True JESUS FOLLOWERS.

But COUNTERFEIT Christians / FALSE TEACHERS, TEND to LEAVE CHURCHES over SMALL THINGS ... NOT the THINGS of TRUTH, or SO it SEEMS ... **1 JOHN 2:19 = *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.***

Listen, being in a CHURCH does NOT SAVE YOU, but REMAINING in that FELLOWSHIP is ONE EVIDENCE that a PERSON is TRULY a CHRISTIAN / Follower / Surrendered to Jesus. JESUS is CLEAR that ONLY THOSE who PRODUCE FRUIT are BORN AGAIN. IT is POSSIBLE to be CLOSE to SALVATION / SURRENDER and even have so “CHRISTIAN” Characteristics and NOT be a CHILD of GOD.

JOHN writes HERE about those who “NEVER REALLY BELONGED WITH US” ... NEVER BORN AGAIN of The SPIRIT ... NEVER SURRENDERED to JESUS as LORD.

There are unfortunate DIVISIONS among the People of GOD, but ALL TRUE Christians have THINGS in COMMON ... The BELIEVE the BIBLE is the WORD of GOD and JESUS is the SON of GOD. They CONFESS ALL are SINNERS and the ONLY WAY to SALVATION from SIN is through FAITH in CHRIST ... He DIED as HUMANITY’S SUBSTITUTE on a CROSS and ROSE AGAIN (Bodily) from the DEAD. They BELIEVE the HOLY SPIRIT LIVES in TRUE Believers and that ONE DAY, JESUS will COME AGAIN.

Any INDIVIDUAL or GROUP, no matter how “RELIGIOUS” they APPEAR, that SEPARATES from a LOCAL CHURCH who HOLDS to the WORD of GOD, must IMMEDIATELY be SUSPECT of being a FALSE TEACHER ... an ANTI-CHRIST...

JOHN goes on ... 1 JOHN 2:20-21 = *But you are not like that, for the Holy One has given you his Spirit, and all of you know the truth. 21 So I am writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies.* WE MUST KNOW the Difference between TRUTH and LIES. 2<sup>nd</sup> MARK of a False Teacher ...

### **#2 = They DENY**

They DENY the FAITH. They DENY JESUS. The BIG, REVEALING QUESTION: WHO is JESUS CHRIST? Is he MERELY a GOOD Example, a GOOD MAN, a GOOD TEACHER, a MORAL COMPASS ... OR is HE GOD who came in the FLESH / HUMAN?

JOHN'S READERS KNEW the TRUTH ... the TRUTH between TRUTH and LIES. Here's the TRUTH that sets CHRISTIANS APART from ANTI-CHRISTS ... Jesus Christ is GOD come in the FLESH as the ANNOINTED ONE of GOD ... The MESSIAH / CHRIST! 1 JOHN 2:22-23 = *And who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist. 23 Anyone who denies the Son doesn't have the Father, either. But anyone who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

JESUS is GOD in the FLESH. Now, ANYONE can SAY that, but it INVOLVES MORE than to just IDENTIFY WHO JESUS IS. The DEMONS could do THAT! ONCE when JESUS was in the SYNAGOGUE in CAPERNAUM, DEMONS spoke TO Jesus out of a POSSESSED MAN ... MARK 1:24 = *“Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”*

It is NOT ENOUGH just to IDENTIFY WHO JESUS IS. We must CONFESS HIM and that INVOLVES a PERSONAL FAITH IN HIM! We understand by EXPERIENCE WHO He IS and WHAT He has DONE. A CONFESSION (Those who CONFESS their FAITH in ME are SAVED) is a PERSONAL WITNESS (I KNOW what HE has DONE for ME) from your HEART. IF you have TRUSTED Christ and CONFESSED your FAITH, you have ETERNAL LIFE! IF NOT ... well, that is a SERIOUS MATTER!

The CONFESSION comes AFTER we SURRENDER our SINS to HIM and our LIVES to HIM. NO CONFESSION = NO ETERNITY! John continues ... 1 JOHN 2:24-25 = *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.* WHAT have we been TAUGHT from the BEGINNING? The WORD ... we have ACCESS to TRUTH through our BIBLES. IF we do NOT KNOW the TRUTH of HIS WORD, we will be SUSCEPTIBLE to the TEACHINGS of ANTI-CHRISTS / FALSE TEACHERS.

Listen, IF FALSE TEACHERS would just STAY in their OWN MEETINGS and ENJOY THEMSELVES, that would be BAD ENOUGH. BUT they DON'T. Their PURPOSE, LIKE their LEADER ... to OPPOSE CHRIST and His FOLLOWERS. SO, they VIGOROUSLY TRY to CONVERT CHRISTIANS to their ANTI-CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES! #3 =

### **#3 = They DECEIVE**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> MARK of a FALSE TEACHER: they ATTEMPT to DECEIVE those who EARNESTLY want to FOLLOW JESUS! Anti-Christ / FALSE TEACHERS (interchangeable) SELDOM try to LEAD SINNERS to their FALSE BELIEFS ... they're already SINNERS! NO! FALSE TEACHERS go after BELIEVERS ... To “*SEDUCE*” the FAITHFUL!

Why WOLVES in SHEEPS CLOTHING? To GET the SHEEP ... FOLLOWERS of the GREAT SHEPHERD (Jesus). Ever WONDER WHY people IN CHURCH WHO continually GRIPE about the CHURCH / PROGRAMMING / WORSHIP and the PASTOR ... Ever wonder WHY they DON'T just LEAVE? BECAUSE they are being USED to DECEIVE ... **1 JOHN 2:26 = *I am writing these things to warn you about those who want to lead you astray.***

WOLVES in SHEEPS CLOTHING ... FALSE TEACHERS ... ANTI-CHRISTS ... They WORK in CHURCHES where GOD'S WORD is PREACHED CONSISTENTLY and considered HOLY and PEOPLE are being SAVED and GROWING in their FAITH. They DESIRE to SEDUCE the FAITHFUL! PAUL writes to young pastor Tim ... **1 TIMOTHY 4:1 = *Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.***

These DECEPTIVE SPIRITS are in the CHURCH ALL the TIME. Jesus WARNED of it in his PARABLE of the WHEAT and the WEEDS in MATT 13. The WEEDS and the WHEAT grow TOGETHER and JESUS will SORT them in the END ... with the WEEDS being BUNDLED and BURNED ... WEEPING and GNASHING of TEETH!

Well, HOW do we make sure we are GOOD SEED (True Followers of Jesus) and NOT become WEEDS (anti-Christ / False Teachers / Deceived)? TWO THINGS: We need to 1) KNOW (Continually Learn) GOD'S WORD and 2) We need to ABIDE in the HOLY SPIRIT. To "ABIDE" means to REMAIN in FELLOWSHIP (we CONTINUE to be "IN COMMON" with) WITH. We REMAIN / ABIDE / STAY CONTINUALLY in CONVERSATION with the SPIRIT that DWELLS IN YOU ... **1 JOHN 2:27 = *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.***

A BELIEVER MUST ALLOW the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD / Jesus to TEACH him/her from the BIBLE. ONE of, if not THEE, MAJOR FUNCTIONS of the LOCAL CHURCH is to TEACH the WORD of GOD. The Holy SPIRIT GIVES to GIFT of TEACHING / PREACHING to CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS in the LOCAL CHURCH ... BUT WHAT is TAUGHT MUST be TESTED for FALSE TEACHING.

A Surrendered, BORN of the SPIRIT, BELIEVER (a CONFESSING Believer) who spends TIME DAILY in their BIBLE / God's WORD, and in PRAYER will have the DISCERNMENT he / she NEEDS.

I ENCOURAGE you to keep on BELIEVING the CORE of our TRUE FAITH. Jesus is GOD in the FLESH. He DIED for our SINS, but it is up to US to TRUST HIM for our FORGIVENESS. HE ROSE from the DEAD in a RESURRECTED BODY and WE have HOPE for the SAME through HIM. He's COMING AGAIN. He ALONE will JUDGE YOU and ME.

WE who BELIEVE are HIS KIDS and Almighty God wants US with HIM for ALL ETERNITY!

That'll PREACH

Let's PRAY Together!

Next Steps: *I will Memorize 1 John 2:24-25*  
*I will Read 1 John and 2 Timothy 3*  
*I will continually pray for God to fill me with His Holy Spirit*

## Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us!  
In a moment, we are going to RECEIVE the OFFERING so please take this time to finish COMPLETING any information.

- Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)
- AND when our ushers come around to RECEIVE our OFFERING
- You can drop that card in the offering basket.

### **IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today**

• We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you.

It's this book "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...

- all you need to do is **HIT "SEND"** your COMPLETED Connection Card

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- I just want to remind you ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!
- STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... **1 JOHN 2:26 = I am writing these things to warn you about those who want to lead you astray.**
- FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the first place! That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!
- God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!
- As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.
- **MONEY is a HEART ISSUE.** And GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART! Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?! USHERS ...
- NEXT WEEK: **PREACHING the PSALMS with JP!** THREE WEEKS = **LOVE LETTER from JOHN ... JOHN TURNS onto a NEW ROAD ... TOWARDS JESUS.**

*"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."*

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