

THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR FAITH

1 JOHN 2: 11-29

Introduction: Pentecostals declined for first time since 1970 according to 2021 census.

- 2021 census was taken in the middle of Covid – in fact, we were shut down that very week.
- Many have not returned to live attendance at church, but continue to watch services online.
- What does this say about the “substance of our faith”?

1. Spiritual Growth Challenge

1 John 2:12-14 *I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.*

I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

- Main components of Spiritual Growth:
 - (a) Courageous Faith:
 - Courageous faith requires:
 - Assurance of forgiveness
 - Forgiven because Jesus paid the price
 - Second-guessing your forgiveness robs you of your courage.
 - Knowing Him, the One you belong to, is both powerful and eternal

(b) Love for the Word of God:

- Word of God lives IN you
 - It has made a home in us
- Word of God is treasured in our heart

(c) Overcome the Evil One:

- The Word and the Spirit operate in us to overcome the enemy
- Word of God gives us strategies to overcome.

2. Life's Challenge

1 John 2:15-17 *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

- Three areas of temptation:

(a) Cravings / gratification of the flesh

- Jesus' temptation in Luke 4
 - "Turn stone into bread..."

(b) Lust for power

- Jesus' temptation in Luke 4
 - "I will give you all the nations' authority and splendour..."

(c) Boasting

- Jesus' temptation in Luke 4
 - "Come on, Jesus... throw yourself off this temple ... show us what you can do..."

1 John 2:17 *The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

3. Faithfulness Challenge

1 John 2:18-19 *Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.*

- How do we handle opposition for being a Christian?
 - Not because of something we have done, but simply because of our faith.
 - It is called “Christophobia”
 - In John’s day called “antichrist”
 - You have heard it was coming, so don’t be surprised
- How do we handle the pain of seeing a professing believer walk away from Christ?
 - There are two groups:
 - One has let the love of the world rob them of their potential
 - The other has become antichrist

1 John 2:22 *Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist – he denies the Father and the Son.*

4. Spiritual Challenge

- The name “Antichrist” is only used in 1 John.
 - Literal meaning: “anti-anointed”
 - The anointing of oil was used in the OT to set apart kings and priests for God’s service.

Acts 10:38 *...How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him.*

- The anointing and the Holy Spirit are connected.

1 John 2:27 *As for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit – just as it has taught you, remain in Him.*

- We have been anointed
 - The Holy Spirit has not only come upon us (filling of HS) but is in us (born again)
 - Does not mean we don't need teachers for some are anointed for that ministry.
- The anointing you received remain
 - You have been born again, sealed and filled with H.S.
 - Don't let doubt or love for the world rob you.
 - It was not counterfeit then, and it's not counterfeit now.

1 John 2:27b *as that anointing is real, not counterfeit – just as it has taught you, remain in Him.*