

# Warning Concerning Antichrists!

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, you might like, friends, to turn up the first letter of John towards the end of the New Testament. And if you have one of our visitor's Bibles, it begins on page 1021.

1021, first letter of John. We'll be looking at two or three short passages from this morning. Now, this is the third and the last of a short series in which we've been trying to come to grips with the main message that John has for us.

And I've been trying to make the point over these two previous sessions and again today that one of John's main purposes in his first letter is to give to his Christian readers three measures, three measuring rules, if you like, by which they may know and be assured that they really are Christians. You see, they were being attacked by false teachers within their own church who were upsetting their understanding of what it means to be a Christian. So John is reassuring them here. And for those who haven't been here over the last couple of times that we've been looking at one, John, let me remind you of what the first two measures are.

The first measure is that the true Christian does not continue to sin. And it's put like this in chapter 3, verse 9. No one born of God, no one truly born again, makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and so on.

[ 1 : 24 ] So that's the first measure. Yes, there will of course be sins. John is not saying we shall live a sinless life. But he is saying that the fundamental direction and progress of that person's life is away from the swamps and the mires and towards an increasing obedience to Christ.

Then the second measure of the true Christian, you might like to look at chapter 3, verse 14 here, is that the true Christian loves other Christians.

So 3, verse 14, we know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. So the true Christian is drawn towards other Christians with a real sense to love them and support them and care for them at many different levels and in a way which is going to be self-sacrificial. Now, John's third measure, and this is what I want us to get down to this morning. His third measure of the true Christian is that he or she holds the truth. That is to say, the right doctrine about Jesus.

John Stott, in his 1964 commentary on 1 John, describes John's three measuring rules as tests. And very helpfully to my mind, he calls these three the moral test, the social test, and the doctrinal test.

[ 2 : 43 ] The moral test concerns the Christian's obedience to Christ. The social test concerns the Christian's relationship with other Christians. And then the doctrinal test concerns the doctrinal test concerns the doctrine that we believe about Jesus.

Now, in a way, this is the hardest of the three tests for people in our period of history to understand. The moral test, the test of obedience to Christ, and the social test of our relationship to other Christians, I think we can identify with these things fairly readily.

These are categories that we can understand, even if it's pretty hard to practice them at times. But doctrine is becoming an increasingly foreign territory in the late 20th century or the early 21st century.

In 1993, David Wells produced a book called No Place for Truth. I can very much recommend it, No Place for Truth. David Wells was then, I think still is, the professor of historical and systematic theology at Gordon-Conwell Seminary in Massachusetts, one of America's best ministerial training institutions.

And in this book, David Wells tells the story of his opening lecture at the beginning of a new college year to a new intake of students preparing for Christian ministry.

[ 4 : 04 ] And this particular module that David Wells was teaching was a module on the study of theology. And at the end of his very first lecture, a young student came forward and confessed to the professor that he had had a real struggle of conscience over whether or not he should attend this course of lectures on theology.

Well, said the professor, why is that? Why this struggle of conscience? Because, said the young student, it's so hard to know whether it's right to spend so much money on a course of study that is so irrelevant to the desire to minister to people in the church today.

And do you find that surprising? Did I hear a hiss of air up here somewhere? A real surprise it is, isn't it? I find it so surprising, but it's a sign of the times. The study of theology, the study of the great doctrines of the Christian faith, is regarded by some as increasingly irrelevant to the task of Christian ministry.

Now, John the Apostle will not allow us to get away with that kind of thinking. The difference between right doctrine and wrong doctrine is, according to John, the difference between life and death.

Look with me at chapter 4, verses 1, 2, and 3. Beloved, do not believe every spirit. When he says spirit here, he's not so much talking about spirits in heaven or hell or whatever.

[ 5 : 28 ] He really means every human being, the heart and soul of a person. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false prophets have gone out into the world.

By this you know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, or you could translate that, every spirit that confesses that Jesus is the Christ who has come in the flesh, is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.

This is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard was coming, and now is in the world already. Now, you'll notice here that John, as usual, employs only two colours in painting his picture for us. Black and white. That's typical John, isn't it? You're either this, or you're that. Mind you, it's typical Bible throughout. It's typical of the Lord Jesus, typical of Paul the Apostle, typical of all the Bible's authors.

It is the Bible's way. The reason is, I think, we are so dim and befogged in our understanding, I speak certainly for myself, that we need to have black and white teaching.

[ 6 : 38 ] We can't cope with the delicate pastel tints. So what is John the Apostle saying to us in these three verses here in chapter 4? He is saying that the true Christian acknowledges that Jesus is the Christ who has come in the flesh.

Verse 2, Every spirit that confesses that Jesus is the Christ who has come in the flesh is from God, but, verse 3, Every spirit that does not confess Jesus to be the Christ who has come in the flesh is not from God.

Where is it from then? It is the spirit of Antichrist. And you see in verse 1, it is the false prophet who is the mouthpiece of the spirit of Antichrist.

So the true Christian is measured by the acknowledgement that Jesus is the Christ who has come in the flesh. Now, like Hercule Poirot, let's follow this trail backwards to its beginning in the opening three verses of chapter 1, the opening three verses of the letter, because this opening, it's a strange opening, helps us to understand this idea of Christ coming in the flesh, or Jesus being the Christ who has come in the flesh.

So let me read verses 1, 2, and 3 at the beginning. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life, the life was made manifest and we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.

[ 8 : 14 ] That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you so that you too may have fellowship with us. And indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Now, what a striking but odd way to begin a letter. Why does John go into all this business of seeing and hearing and looking and touching?

Why not simply proclaim or say, we declare Jesus to you? Now, the reason is that the people who have left the church, there's been a split in the church, do you remember, here at Ephesus.

The people who have left the church who are called antichrists at chapter 2, verse 18, they were denying that Jesus was the Christ who had come in the flesh.

So what is John teaching here at the beginning of chapter 1? He is teaching that real Christianity is based upon a historical Christ. The false teachers seem to have held the idea that the divine Christ, they believed in a Christ, a divine Christ, but they held the idea that the divine Christ could not have inhabited human flesh.

[ 9 : 26 ] Now, their teaching seemed to run something like this. The physical and material world, including our own human bodies, is intrinsically evil. Whereas the spiritual realm, everything that is non-physical and non-material, is good and pure.

But, they said, there's a great divide between the spiritual realm, which is pure and good, and the physical realm, which is tainted and evil. And since human flesh and the physical world are evil, it's impossible to believe that God's pure Son could have inhabited a human body.

Therefore, they said, Jesus Christ was not really a man. Ah, yes, he appeared to be a man, we accept that, but he was not, in reality, a human being. Now, you will realize that that position is a straightforward denial of the incarnation.

The incarnation is the truth that Jesus was and is both truly God and truly man and fully God and fully man, if you like, 100% divine and 100% human at the same time.

Let me give a simple illustration, which may show how we misunderstand this. If you're interested in dogs and you like to go for a walk in the park every now and again, you will sometimes see a dog that you can't immediately christen, won't you?

[ 10 : 46 ] Do you know what I mean? You perhaps get talking to the dog owner as you walk along and you say to him, that's a magnificent dog you have there, but I can't quite tell what sort of breed is it. Is it perhaps a cross between a wolfhound and a bear hound, a boar hound?

And the owner says to you, no, it's not actually, it's a cross between a Pekingese and a miniature poodle. Oh, you say, I'm so sorry, I got that wrong. At least you've put me right now, I understand what sort of dog it is.

So that means that 50% of the blood in its veins is Pekingese and 50% is miniature poodle. That's right, that's right, says the owner. Now, we can make the mistake, by analogy, of thinking that Jesus is somehow 50% divine and 50% human.

We reckon that 50 and 50 makes 100 and you can't have 200%. So we think of him, or we may be tempted to think of him like that. But that is never the way the Bible speaks of him. The Bible says he is fully man, 100%, and fully God, 100%.

So if you say, as these false teachers were saying in Ephesus, that he wasn't really a man, you're denying that truth of the incarnation. But this false teaching was not only denying the incarnation, it was also denying the creation.

[ 11 : 58 ] Because you remember how God said at the very beginning in early Genesis, Genesis chapter 1, as he was creating everything, behold, he said, this is the physical material world, behold, he said, it is very good.

So the physical world is good and not evil. So when these false teachers say that the Christ could not be a human being because the world and human flesh are intrinsically evil, they are denying both the creation and the incarnation.

It's breathtaking, isn't it? Now this is why, if you look on to chapter 4, verse 3 again, John says, every spirit that does not acknowledge or confess that Jesus is the Christ who has come in the flesh is not from God.

Indeed is the spirit of the Antichrist. So it's profoundly anti-Christian and anti-God and anti-gospel to say that Jesus Christ was not truly a human flesh and blood man.

That is why John starts his letter in this strange way, insisting, in verses 1 and 2, that he and the other apostles heard Jesus and saw him, looked at him and touched him.

[ 13 : 09 ] And you may remember that incident in Luke chapter 24 at the end of the Gospel, just after the resurrection, when Jesus appears to his disciples and they think, they're rather frightened, they think this is a ghost.

So he says, touch me and see. A ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have. This is after the resurrection. And then he picks up a piece of battered fish that happened to be there and he eats it in their presence to ram the point home.

So John is saying in his opening verses that real Christianity is historical. It depends upon the real flesh and blood Jesus Christ.

a physical man before he was crucified and a physical man still after he was raised. You see, Christianity is not some airy-fairy philosophy.

That's the point. It starts with a man in history and it forever depends upon that man whom John and the other apostles heard and saw and touched.

[14:10] Now in today's atmosphere many people surely would be astonished to see John taking so seriously a point which to them does not seem serious.

My dear John, many people would wish to say, my dear John, why be so dogmatic? Does it really matter? Now John would reply, it does matter.

if Jesus was not on earth as truly flesh and blood he could not have saved us. It was a representative man who had to take the penalty of our sins on the cross.

Only a real man could accomplish that horrendous task. A disembodied spirit could not have died for the human race however man-like in appearance.

If there is no flesh and blood Christ there is no salvation. That's what it boils down to. But this heresy in John's day in Ephesus specifically denied the incarnation.

[15:14] One of the leaders of the heretics at Ephesus was a man called Serinthus. And the great Polycarp who was Bishop of Smyrna in the 2nd century AD used to tell the story that John, that's John the Apostle, John the disciple of the Lord going to bathe one day at Ephesus bathe meant have a bath in the public bathhouse not going to swim in the river.

So John, going to bathe one day at Ephesus and perceiving Corinthus within the bathhouse rushed out of the bathhouse without bathing exclaiming let us fly lest even the bathhouse fall down because Serinthus the enemy of the truth is within.

It's a good story isn't it? He went dirty. He couldn't bear to be so close to this heretic. Now the nettle, the nettle that John is bidding us grasp is the nettle of being prepared to draw lines as John draws them between truth and error.

Not only this particular truth and particular error but indeed all the truths and all the errors described in the Bible. Professor Don Carson from North America wrote a big book about ten years ago called The Gagging of God it's a great book I do recommend it subtitled Christianity Confronts Pluralism isn't that a great subtitle?

Christianity Confronts Pluralism and when I first got my copy of the book and I opened the contents page and looked down the chapters to see what each chapter was called I chuckled when I saw that one chapter had the heading On Drawing Lines Where Drawing Lines is Rude I think rude with a capital R On Drawing Lines Where Drawing Lines is Rude Now the true Christian according to John is prepared to draw lines is unashamed to draw lines between what is true about Jesus Christ and what is false about him So if we say it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you're sincere we're simply departing from the Bible and will inevitably be unpopular with some folk for drawing lines between truth and falsehood because we live in an age which is not merely unwilling to draw lines frighteningly it is losing its capacity to draw lines so when we do so we may need to be prepared to lose a few friends

[17:37] Now I'd like to pursue this a bit further because John has more to say about it in his letter These are not just academic questions to be sorted out within the confines of our own heads These questions affect real relationships and real church life and that's why John in the section which begins at chapter 2 verse 18 teaches us about the people he dubs antichrists So let me read to you now chapter 2 verse 18 to the end of chapter 2 Children it is the last hour and as you have heard that antichrist is coming so now many antichrists have come therefore we know that it is the last hour they went out from us but they were not of us for if they had been of us they would have continued with us but they went out that it might become plain that they all are not of us but you have been anointed by the Holy One and you all have knowledge

I write to you not because you do not know the truth but because you know it and because no lie is of the truth who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ this is the antichrist he who denies the Father and the Son no one who denies the Son has the Father whoever confesses the Son has the Father also let what you heard from the beginning abide in you if what you heard from the beginning abides in you then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father and this is the promise that he made to us eternal life I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you but the anointing that you received from him abides in you and you have no need that anyone should teach you but as his anointing teaches you about everything and is true and is no lie just as it has taught you abide in him now you'll see that the section that I've just read has the rather

forbidding title warning concerning antichrists now we're used to warnings aren't we and warning signs we have government health warnings about tobacco and warnings about car thieves I'll tell you the best warning I ever saw I was on a walking holiday down in West Wales years ago with a friend of mine and we were walking down a very small country lane and there was a beautiful green field on one side the sort of field you just want to hop over the fence into and walk across you know that kind of field but there was a warning sign at the beginning of the field which said if you think you can cross this field in ten seconds you'd better know that the bull can do it in nine now friends imagine imagine coming into a church building a building like this and seeing a big notice a big warning sign which says warnings antichrists might be present you'd be shocked wouldn't you you'd be even more shocked if you came up to the pulpit and you saw a big sign hanging on the pulpit which said warning the occupant of this pulpit may be against Christ now this passage in 1 John chapter 2 is given to us precisely because it is in church fellowships and particularly in church pulpits that people can be found who ultimately prove to be against or anti

Christ and in his fatherly wisdom and care for us God has caused this passage to be in the Bible precisely to warn us against these dangers so that we can be on our guard so let me give you two points from this section and each one is an imperative first of all beware and secondly continue first then beware beware of those who are against Christ you'll remember how Jesus in Matthew chapter 7 gives people this warning beware of false prophets they come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ferocious wolves now you see the wolf is dressed up in sheep's clothing that's why he's so hard to recognize if it was a wolf in wolf's clothing we'd know wouldn't we fangs and you know that sort of thing we'd know but the point is the wolf the false prophet comes to us in sheep's clothing so it's very hard to tell him so these people look fine on the outside that's the sheep's clothing they're charming nice, smiling well organized people but says Jesus inside they are hungry to devour unsuspecting individuals the apostle Paul sounds exactly the same warning in Acts chapter 20 when he speaks to his friends the elders from Ephesus he says

I know that after I leave savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth so as to draw away disciples after them so be on your guard that's a rather chilling and unsettling element in the Bible's teaching isn't it it makes one feel rather uncomfortable but as I said before God has included this in the scriptures for our good because he is concerned to protect us from this kind of wolfish behavior so let's look harder at what John teaches about the antichrists and about how to beware of them first from verse 18 in chapter 2 there are many antichrists many of them quite often we hear the idea that there's going to be one antichrist with a capital A some towering figure who combines all the merits of Nero and Hitler and Attila the Hun some world conquering blasphemer who will somehow ravage the earth and threaten to destroy the church and I don't know what else well there may be some such figure in the end but this is not what John is saying here he speaks in verse 18 of many antichrists and then secondly he tells us they are already here many antichrists the same verse says have come and John was writing in the first century

[ 24 : 04 ] A.D. more than 1900 years ago so just as it's wrong to think of antichrist as a single figure it's also wrong to think of antichrist as a future figure no says John there are many of them and they've been around for a long time already next they originate from within the church fellowship you see we would we would naturally imagine that such folk would invade and infiltrate from foreign parts we sometimes hear stories of horrible poisonous spiders coming in on bunches of bananas from South America or the Caribbean we might think they're like that but John says no in verse 19 they went out from us in other words these were people that we knew and sang hymns with and drank tea with to all appearances they were part of our fellowship but they went out from us and next John explains that these antichrists are most likely to be leaders within the church look at verse 26 which I think makes this point

I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you in other words these people clearly have some influence and they're trying to exert it they're trying to win other people over to their deluded point of view now it's this aspect of the matter which I think is the most sobering part of it if these antichrist people were to keep their wrong doctrine sealed up there'd be no danger to others but the fact is John is saying they're broadcasting it they're actively engaged in trying to change the minds deceitfully of other people it's a little bit like the boy who loves fishing and he has a great store of maggots in a box which he keeps in the cold larder have you ever known a boy like that?

now you're not worried about these maggots are you as long as they stay in their box with the lid firmly fastened down but as soon as that lid is lifted off the maggots are out and they're all over the bacon and cheese ruining it if the wrong teaching were to stay hermetically sealed inside the people who hold it there wouldn't be so much to worry about but verse 26 shows us that these antichrists are actively trying to delude and lead others astray so these four things there are many antichrists they're already here they originate from within the church and they're most likely to be leaders in the churches now two practical points arise from this the first is that we must expect divergences of doctrine in the churches we must expect divergence of doctrine or to put it in a slightly different way we mustn't be so naive as to think that every church claiming to be

Christian holds the same doctrinal position years ago when I was living and working in Manchester I remember on one of the main roads leading into the city centre there was quite a prominent church building and this church building was used by the Unitarians and over the entrance porch they put up a sign which said we are a free Christian church that's deceptive isn't it Christian the Unitarians don't hold that Jesus is divine and they reject the doctrine of the Trinity so for them to announce to the world that they were a free Christian church was really a distortion it was misleading remember verse 26 those who are against Christ are trying to deceive you and delude you so friends part of growing in maturity as Christians is that we expect to find divergence and we leave behind the naivety of thinking that really everybody believes the same thing across the churches on the contrary some groups and some individuals will flatly contradict what the

Bible teaches about Jesus then secondly we must be discriminating therefore we must be discriminating we mustn't be afraid to probe and to ask questions of people or groups now we're very discriminating aren't we in many areas of our lives so for example if you're booking a holiday with a travel agent you're pretty choosy aren't you and you'll ask all kinds of questions does the hotel room have a view over the sea or over the gas works you'll be asking that kind of question is there an N suite bathroom can you get fish and chips locally can I plug in my hair dryer now in just the same way we're pretty discriminating about shops that we go to about local services choice of schools for children and so on but despite all this very discriminating thinking that we exercise in all these areas so often we are indiscriminating in the most important things which are the things that concern what people teach and believe about God so a maturing church is an increasingly discriminating church in matters of doctrine a maturing individual is increasingly discriminating in matters of doctrine as well so here is

[ 29 : 22 ] John's first imperative beware of those who seek to lead indiscriminating persons astray any of us is in danger there's no person here who is free of danger so we must expect divergences of doctrine we must not be naive but discriminating as we grow in Christian maturity I was very struck about 15 years ago hearing John MacArthur who's a fine Christian preacher from Los Angeles saying to a large conference of British clergy in London he said there has never been an age in which church leaders have been so indiscriminating not just church members church leaders we must beware secondly John says to us continue now you'll see that command comes in verse 28 of chapter 2 now little children abide in him so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming and you see how

John has just said in verse 27 at the end of the verse abide in him and you'll be aware that those two commands pick up directly from what Jesus says in John's gospel chapter 15 where he says abide in me remain in me continue in me now how do we do that what steps do Christian people need to take to be sure of continuing in Christ well John tells us with a beautiful simplicity in verse 24 let what you heard from the beginning that's the real gospel abide in you if what you heard from the beginning abides in you then you too will abide in the son and in the father and that leads you see verse 25 to eternal life so the command is see that the gospel the truth of the whole bible remains in you stick with it pastor john he knows the human heart so well he knows that the truth may not remain in some and that's why he tells us to take steps to ensure that it does that we abide in him if you put a beautiful plant in your garden you have to take steps that that beautiful plant is able to remain there and flourish because if you do nothing for it in the course of time it's likely to disappear it'll either be choked by weeds or devoured by pests and the same way with the truth of the gospel we need to take the necessary steps says says john to ensure that what we have heard from the beginning remains in us and then we will remain or abide in the son and in the father therefore let's continue to get to know the truth of the bible and the gospel better and better and better let's sing about it discuss it as much as possible with friends rejoice in it read about it base

our prayers upon it mould our life around it and then we will remain in Christ if the bible and the gospel becomes bigger and bigger in our thought our imagination our very dreams it will help us to abide in Christ otherwise we may end up like a dear lady I knew in a parish down in England many years ago who was confirmed which is like making vows of church membership she was confirmed in the church as a teenager about 16 and she never read her bible again she thought she'd graduated as it were when she was confirmed in the church of England and when she was dying some 50 or so years later she had no conviction or assurance of the truth of the gospel let me pass on a little tip every Christian goes through difficult times in their own walk with Christ and their own understanding of the bible times of difficulty and doubt now when we do what advice would the apostle John give us well I think he would say that the answer to doubt is not so much faith as truth if you're doubting and some well intentioned friend says to you well have more faith have more faith inevitably you're going to look inside yourself aren't you at your own heart and mind you're going to take your faith temperature with a faithometer every day and you'll say have I got enough faith and almost certainly the answer will be well I'm not sure probably not but if you look not within at your own heart but outside at all the great truths about Jesus the great gospel about him his cross his resurrection the forgiveness of sins that he promises and the assurance of heaven then your heart will soon warm up and your trust will be renewed as somebody said years ago for each look within take ten looks at him it's not great poetry doesn't even rhyme but it's very good advice isn't it John doesn't tell us to look inside ourselves his command is to abide in Jesus and if we will do that the loveliest of outcomes is promised in verse 28 look at it with me and now little children abide in him what's the outcome so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming so when the believer meets him at his second coming there won't be embarrassment or dreadful misgivings or fear there will only be love and delight confidence and joy as we enter the eternal kingdom isn't that a wonderful incentive isn't that a good reason to continue in him so that at the end we shall be unashamed well just a few words now as we finish

John's letter this first letter sharply distinguishes between the true Christian and the person who has religion but not real Christianity holding to that kind of distinction in 2007 will rub some people up the wrong way pluralism pluralism means not simply the fact that there are many different faiths and many different positions and beliefs it's more than that it's the idea that it's good that there should be many different beliefs and positions because no individual belief is really true or valid in an absolute sense now John the apostle will have none of that he says in chapter 5 verse 12 just look across the page 512 whoever has the son in other words whoever believes in Jesus and holds the doctrine about him has life whoever does not have the son of God does not have life but John's purpose in writing is not first and foremost to exclude those who are against

[ 36 : 23 ] Christ though of course he does that as well but his primary purpose is to assure those who are Christians that they are Christians and so he writes in chapter 5 verse 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the son of God that you may know that you have eternal life true Christians know that they have eternal life so John is saying to us throughout this letter that if our lives are obedient to Christ if they are loving towards other Christians if they hold that Jesus is truly the Christ who has come in the flesh then we can rest assured that we're on our way to heaven if we were to say as some folk do well that's presumptuous and arrogant to say I know I have eternal life if we talk like that we're denying chapter 5 verse 13 we're saying in effect to God well God tells me that in 1 John 5 verse 13 that I can know that I have eternal life but I know better than God and I won't accept that verse

I'll go on saying it's presumptuous for a person to assert that he's on his way to heaven no friends let's not be like that let's accept this because God says it who are we to say that we know better than he does I write these things to you who believe in the name of the son of God that you may know that you have eternal life let's bow our heads and pray to him thankfully dear God our father we're not presumptuous we simply hold on to your words and believe them to be true and we thank you so much for this short but great letter in the new testament and we pray that though that it may be true dear father that not one person who is here today who has been reading these words of the apostle will in the end be ashamed of Jesus or at his coming and be unable to be part of him and the fellowship of heaven so we pray that you will write these great assurances into our hearts more and more that you'll help us indeed dear father to love other

Christians with a growing depth of joy and delight and support and care we pray that you'll help us more and more to obey and to want to obey the commands of the Lord Jesus we pray that you'll help us more deeply and truly to understand the doctrines about him and to hold on to them graciously but very firmly so may our lives be one John type Christian lives we pray and we ask it all to the glory of the name of our Lord Jesus Amen