

“You Have an Anointing from the Holy One”  
(1 John 2:20, 27)

Introduction: Two weeks ago, we examined the Scripture’s teaching concerning the revelation of God in nature. Last week, we saw in 2 Peter 1:16-21 the importance of having God’s Special Revelation, if we are ever to come to a knowledge of Jesus Christ. But this week, I would like for us to examine one more element which is necessary before a person may have what is called a “saving” knowledge of Christ, a knowledge of Christ which indicates that we are truly born again. It is possible to know all about God, all about His Christ, and all about the plan of salvation, and yet not have a saving knowledge. This should come as no surprise to you, especially in a Reformed Church, and especially in a Reformed Church which emphasizes this very thing. If the knowledge of Christ was all that was necessary for a person to be saved, then anyone who possessed the Scriptures would have all that he needs to save his soul. Now it is true that he has all the information he needs, but yet there is one thing lacking. And that is the anointing of the Holy Spirit, that work of the Spirit which makes the invisible things of God real, and which changes the heart to so that it might embrace them.

In our passage, John is reminding his hearers of the imminent coming of the antichrist. Indeed, he says that even now there are many antichrists which have arisen. What he means in this context is that there are many who have raised themselves up who are opposed to Christ. This is what “antichrist” means, an opponent of Christ. John knew that in the last days antichrist was to come. Since now there were many, he concluded that it was the last hour. The interesting thing is that these antichrists were in the church. They continued for a while and then fell away; they apostatized. This doesn’t mean that they were truly born again and that they lost their salvation. No, for John comments, “They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us” (v. 19). An apostate is one who comes under the convicting work of the Spirit of God, short of salvation, continues for a while, and then when the conviction wears off, falls away. But John was not afraid that he would lose his children in this way, for they have an “anointing from the Holy One.” It is this anointing that I would like for us to focus on this evening. What John tells us this evening in our passage is that,

*God imparts to all of His children a new spiritual faculty, or ability, by which they are not only able to discern between truth and error, but also by which they can see the beauty of holy things.*

**I. First, I want you to see what this new faculty is. “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.”**

A. John calls it an anointing.

1. The word is used in Scripture of the application of some symbolic liquid, such as oil, to a person or thing to set them apart for some particular use.
  - a. In the OT, the priests were set apart for service by the anointing with oil.

- b. In Exodus 29:29, we read, “And the holy garments of Aaron shall be for his sons after him, that in them they may be anointed and ordained.”
  - c. Kings were also anointed with oil when they took office, which was really the equivalent of their being crowned. In 2 Samuel 2:4, we read, “Then the men of Judah came and there anointed David king over the house of Judah.”
  - d. We even find that prophets were ordained into their offices through anointing. The Lord told Elijah, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place” (1 Kings 19:15-16).
  - e. Even inanimate objects were anointed when being set apart from common use to sacred or holy use.
  - f. What is also interesting is that this anointing was generally administered by the pouring of oil on the head. With regard to the anointing of the priests, we read, “Then you shall take the anointing oil, and pour it on his head and anoint him” (Ex. 29:7). With regard to Saul we read, “Then Samuel took the flask of oil, poured it on his head, kissed him and said, ‘Has not the LORD anointed you a ruler over His inheritance’” (1 Sam. 10:1).
  - g. The significance of this anointing with oil is generally understood to symbolize the anointing of the Holy Spirit which is necessary if the man who is being set aside is to fulfill his office to the glory of God. The fact that it is administered by way of pouring from above onto the head may symbolize the fact that the Spirit of God comes from above to empower a man for service.
  - h. The same thing may be seen with regard to Christ’s anointing for His work. After He came up out of the water, the Spirit descended upon Him from above in the form of a dove and remained on Him. This is why Jesus is called the Messiah, or “Christ” in Greek, which means “the anointed One.” He was anointed and empowered for the very special task of bringing His people back to God.
2. The meaning of this anointing seems to be carried over into the New Testament where it also refers to that pouring out of the Spirit upon the people of God.
- a. There is no longer a symbolic anointing, except, perhaps, in the case of the elders anointing the sick with oil and praying for them that they might be healed.
  - b. Instead, the people of God are anointed by the Spirit directly, as He is poured out upon them from above, from Christ.
- B. And I believe that this is what John has in mind when he says that this anointing comes from the Holy One.
- 1. Jesus said to His disciples, “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me” (John 15:26).
  - 2. Christ is the Holy One, the One who anoints with the Spirit. And the Spirit, on the other hand, is that anointing itself.

- C. Lastly, I want you to see from verse 20 that this anointing of the Spirit is universal among the people of God. He writes, “But you (collectively) have an anointing from the Holy One, and you *all* know.”
1. This anointing with the Spirit seems to have been very limited in the Old Covenant economy, with only a few possessing it.
  2. But even then there seemed to be some indication that this anointing would one day be more universal among God’s people.
    - a. When the Lord anointed seventy elders of Israel, that they might help Moses bear the burden of all the people, Joshua became jealous for Moses. And then Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them” (Num. 11:29)!
    - b. Moses wanted all of God’s people to have this advantage of the Spirit.
    - c. In the New Covenant, this blessing appears to be given to all of God’s people. Not that they all prophesy, but that they the Spirit’s anointing.

**II. Having seen that anointing is the Holy Spirit, secondly, I want us to see what He does within us. “And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.”**

- A. First, it is something which remains with us and does not depart. “And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you.”
1. John, in the context, is speaking about those who are antichrists who are leaving the church.
    - a. As I said in the introduction, these people were opposed to Christ. They therefore were also opposed to the truth.
    - b. John calls them liars and deceivers. He writes, “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also” (vv. 22-23).
    - c. How in the world did these people get into the church in the first place? After all, John says that they went out from them.
    - d. Again, remember what Jesus says regarding the Spirit’s work, that when He was to come, He would “convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment” (John 16:8).
    - e. There is a convicting work of the Spirit, short of salvation, which can lead some people to believe that they are Christians for a time. But when that influence departs from them, they fall back into their old habits of hating God and His Christ, and therefore they depart.
    - f. It is not true that those who leave the church are losing their salvation. The truth is that they never had it to begin with, for Christ said, “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day” (John 6:39). Christ will lose none of those who have been given to Him by the Father, but will raise them up on the last day

and own them as His own.

2. But, unlike the apostates who departed because they only had the temporary common influences of the Spirit, true believers have an anointing which does not depart.
    - a. It remains. It abides forever.
    - b. And it does so, not because the true believer will continue in his own strength to do what is right and good, but because God has so ordained that He will never completely forsake His children, but will certainly enable them to persevere to the end.
- B. Secondly, this anointing is able to confirm the truth of God with a great measure of certainty. “And you have no need for anyone to teach you.”
1. Now this doesn’t mean that the Christian has no need of teachers.
    - a. To begin with, we mustn’t forget that it was Christ who ordained the office of teaching in His church.
    - b. Paul writes, in Ephesians 4:11-13, “And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.”
    - c. And since this goal has not yet been achieved, obviously the gift of teacher must still remain.
  2. What is it then that John is referring to here?
    - a. I believe that he is referring to the Spirit’s work of confirming His truth.
    - b. John has written to them to tell them about how to interpret the situation of those who are leaving the church. This shows that John himself was not opposed to teachers, for he himself was writing this letter to instruct them in the truth.
    - c. But in his writing to them, he reminds them that they already knew these things. The anointing which was in them had already confirmed the truth of God in their hearts and minds, and they were firmly convinced that Jesus was the Christ and that these who were leaving were doing so to their own destruction.
    - d. They would not be deceived by these messengers of the devil, for they recognized that he is a liar and the father of lies. They were convinced of the truth as they had heard it from the apostle, and as it had been confirmed to them by the Holy Spirit.
    - e. It is this work of the Spirit in confirming the truth that is in view here, and this is the important point that I want you to get.
    - f. Herein lies the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian. This is the reason why you love and embrace the Scripture as truth and the unbeliever does not. It is because of this anointing.
    - g. Jesus said, in John 16:13-14, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will

guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose *it* to you.”

- h. And Paul writes, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Cor. 2:12-14).
  - i. It is the Spirit who gives us the faculty to receive the truth of the Lord.
  - j. Now there are many reasons why we should believe and receive the Bible as the Word of God.
    - (i) First, we should because it is the Word of God, and to not do so would be sinful on our part.
    - (ii) But yet, before there is ever a possibility of our yielding ourselves to it, we must first of all be convinced that it is God’s Word. And there is certainly no lack of evidence.
    - (iii) The Bible is trustworthy, it reports things accurately, and when those things are checked against the findings of archeology, they are vindicated as being true.
    - (iv) It contains amazing prophecies concerning events which didn’t take place until hundreds of years later.
    - (v) It reveals the same God that we learn about in nature.
    - (vi) There is even a body of people, a vast multitude, who have throughout the centuries believed the Bible, even died for its truths. Paul calls the church, “The pillar and support of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).
    - (vii) But yet even all of these evidences, which are very necessary, are not enough to convince the unregenerate man by themselves. Something more is needed, something above nature.
    - (viii) What is needed is this testimony of the Spirit, bearing witness with our Spirit that this is the Word of God! Without this, the Bible will always remain a dead letter.
    - (ix) But one more thing might be added here, and it is that the Spirit must also convince the heart. The mind may be convicted as to the truth of the Bible, even by the Spirit’s common operations short of salvation, as we have already seen in the case of apostates. But the heart will never fully embrace that truth, until the Spirit of God changes the heart from that of hatred of it, to love for it.
    - (x) Once this takes place, we not only believe that what the Word says is true, we also love it and desire it for ourselves.
- C. Thirdly, and lastly, this anointing causes the one who possess it to continue to see the value of Christ and to hold fast to Him. “But as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in Him.”
1. This anointing, as we have already seen, is a fixed principle, a new faculty,

which the Spirit of God permanently places within us, so that we will never depart from it, primarily because we will never want to depart from it.

2. It is not only able to show us the loveliness of Christ, so that we are irresistibly drawn to Him, but it is also able to give us an abiding sense of the worth of Christ so that we will never depart from Him.
  - a. The apostates did not receive this anointing, so they left.
  - b. But it is not so with the true believer. He will continue to abide with Christ, because he desires nothing more than this.
  - c. The Spirit of God imparts a true love in his heart for the Father and the Son, so that this love compels him to remain.
  - d. Brethren, how we ought to thank the Lord Jesus Christ for the gift of His Spirit. Without Him and His anointing, we would be completely dead to the things of the Lord. Without Him Christianity would mere a religion, a system of do's and don'ts, with no real inward motivation to love and serve God. It would be dead formalism. And that exactly what it is in many churches today.
  - e. But the Spirit is the One who makes Christianity a living thing. He is the One who is able to breathe life into this religion. This is what sets it apart from all of the other religions which exist in the world today.
  - f. Is the Spirit within you? Are you alive to God? Can you honestly say that you have this anointing from the Holy One which leads you in the truth and which gives you a great love for it?
  - g. I am not asking if you have a perfect love, or if there are never times when you feel lifeless and cold. But can you honestly say that you love Jesus, as a rule, more than anything or anyone else in the world? Can you honestly say that the things of the Lord take precedence over everything else in your life?
  - h. If not, then run to Christ and lay hold of Him in prayer, and continue to wrestle with heaven until He imparts this principle of life to you, until He pours forth of His Spirit and melts your heart of stone. To have this Spirit is to have everything. But to lack Him, is to lack everything.
  - g. May the Lord Jesus Christ grant that we might all have this anointing and have it to the full. Amen.