

The Perseverance of the Word and Spirit – 1 John 2:24-27

Introduction – The Word of God is spoken and then creation occurs, even *ex nihilo*. The Word of God is spoken and the creation brought forth includes sustenance, and growth, and maturity, and fruitfulness – and this creation is good. The Word of God dwells in us by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God dwelling in us is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword. What we learn from this short passage is the unchanging abiding of the Word of God and the Spirit of God in the lives of those who are in Christ Jesus. We escape the deceptions of antichrists by remaining/abiding in the Word and in the Spirit's anointing. Ultimately though, this perseverance in Christ and the truth does not depend on our own perseverance to the truth, but in the perseverance of this truth in us.

Abiding in the Doctrine (v24) – Our perseverance is found, firstly, in abiding in the truth, the things “*which you heard from the beginning*.” This may not be what you personally heard first about the gospel, but it does apply to you personally regarding what has been passed on to us from the prophets' and apostles' teachings. John teaches plainly that abiding in the Son (and in the Father) is the result of abiding in doctrine (see also 2 John 9). And this abiding means not “*going ahead*” of that doctrine; the false teachers were trying to “*lead astray*” these disciples (v26).

Abiding – This word, *meno*, is used five times in these four verses and so is central to our understanding; it is a favorite word for John in this epistle and in His gospel. God abides in Christ (John 14:10). Believers abide in Christ (6:56, 15:4-7) and Christ in them (15:4-7, 1 John 3:24). God abides in believers and believers in Him (1 John 4:16). The broad understanding of this word is to tarry, remain, endure and continue in this personal relationship. You cannot love abiding in Christ without a love for abiding in His Word; you cannot make up your own Christianity. “*No repetition of it can be too much, since it is well known that it has ever been a cause of ruin to men that being not content with Christ, they have had a hankering to wander beyond the simple doctrine of the gospel*” – Calvin. If you are not content with the gospel, if you find it boring or impotent, the problem is not with the gospel or with Christ. Plumb the depths of His Word even more for grace, assurance, comfort, and contentment (Psalm 119 – all of it). This was the spirit of Calvin and the reformers: back to the Word.

Abiding in the *Chrisma* of *Christos* (v27) – But that's not all. Calvin also said, “*I indeed do my part, but still it is necessary that the Spirit of God should direct you in all things; for in vain shall I beat your ears unless he speaks within you.*” How does doctrine abide in us in a living way? By means of the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Col 3:16, Eph 5:18f), and this is the second means of our perseverance and protection from antichrists. The Spirit glorifies the teachings of Jesus, testifying to Him and His truth (John 16:12-15). The Spirit causes our spirit to cry out to the Father (Rom 8:14-17). The work of the Holy Spirit is not to take us beyond what Christ and His apostles taught us; He does not add to that teaching. He brings forth growth in our understanding, confidence, and strength to will and to do what God has taught. No imposters can come along and say that their anointing is superior or that they have more of the Spirit than another Christian – for we all have been granted the Spirit (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5, Eph 1:13-14).

No One Else to Teach You – The context is that there is no need for an additional teaching beyond what the apostles delivered. What the Spirit teaches is enough and we are to abide in it (or in Him) as well. Of course John is not teaching that we do not have need to be taught – that would be self-contradicting. The ministry of the Spirit to the church is a ministry of teaching (Matt 28:20, Acts 4:18, 5:28, 2 Tim 2:24) and He gifts some in the church with a special ability to teach (1 Cor 12:29, Eph 4:11). And so we need both: the constant abiding of the Word and the Spirit, without neglecting either, and rightly understood, one cannot be abiding in one without the other, for they are two sides of the same coin, two edges of the same sword (Eph 6:17).

The Central, Persevering Promise (v25) – And here is what was delivered to you: a promise. Life. Eternal life. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He was buried and He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. He did this so that you might have life and have it abundantly. This is eternal life – not something only in the future, but now, presently as well, as you abide in God's Son (1 John 5:11-12). This preacher only has the Word to give you, but God has promised His Holy Spirit (Isaiah 44:3, 59:21) to accompany that Word. Abide in the doctrine; abide in the anointing you have received. It is eternal life – be assured of God's Word-promise.