

w/b 11th June 2017

THEME: HERESY IS ALIVE AND WELL IN THE MODERN WORLD - LIFE APPLICATION

1 John 4:1-6 (NIV)

On Denying the Incarnation

4 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

⁴ You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them.

⁶ We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognise the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

LAUNCH

Can you remember the last time you received some mis-information that had unfortunate consequences. Try to make the example light and humorous. (So for example when Ruth and I were down in the New Forest and I had suspected appendicitis – NHS sent us to a hospital that was located in the middle of Southampton docks (ie we were given the wrong postcode by NHS direct). We actually drove up to the docks security checkpoint before realising we had got it wrong.

DISCOVERY

- What sort of false spirits, teaching and prophecy are in danger of infiltrating their way into the church?
- What threats do such teachings pose to the church?
- How do we go about testing them effectively?
- Why is the incarnation of Christ a good acid test of whether a belief is false or not?

UNDERSTANDING

- Why do our western minds find it hard to believe that false spirits are behind false teaching and prophecy?
- Think about the following statements
 - 'Come to Christ and he will make you prosperous'
 - 'Come to Christ and he will fulfil all the desires of your heart'
 - 'Come to Christ and he will make your problems disappear'
 - 'Come to Christ and achieve your true destiny'
 - 'Come to Christ and he will make you feel better about yourself'
 - 'Come to Christ and he will excuse all your bad behaviour'In what ways are they potentially heretical and yet what fragments of truth do they contain?
- 'The one who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world'. What does this statement mean and how should it change the way we live our lives?
- Are there any challenging events coming up where you would love the Holy Spirit to work through you? Spend time praying for them as a group
- 'Those who are not from God will not listen to us'. What should our attitude be to such people

APPLICATION

- Pray that God will open ears to the truth of the gospel in Thamesmead, at Mike Pilavachi and at JustOne
- Pray for confidence to invite people to these events because God is in us
- Pray that we as a church won't be sent off track by dodgy beliefs that point us away from Christ

[Notes by Dave Webb-Peploe from excellent sermon by Paul Baker]