

# Blessed Assurance

Part 3

## The Real Deal

*Remaining Connected to the Genuine Article in a World of Counterfeits*

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Presented

**Sunday, August 12, 2018**

at

**Zion Lutheran Church  
Cooperstown, ND**

by

**Pastor Joshua D. Graber**

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Call to Worship

**Psalm 136:1-3**

Scripture Reading

**1 John 2:12-27**

Sermon Text

**1 John 2:12-27**

(And other texts)

Praise Chorus

Blessing

**Romans 16:25-27**

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Notes and Acknowledgments

## **Call to Worship**

### **Responsive Reading**

#### **Psalm 136:1-3 New International Version (NIV)**

*1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.*

*His love endures forever.*

*2 Give thanks to the God of gods.*

*His love endures forever.*

*3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords:*

*His love endures forever.*

## **Prayer**

## **Scripture Reading**

### **1 John 2:12-27 New International Version (NIV)**

*12 I am writing to you, dear children,  
because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.*

*13 I am writing to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.*

*I am writing to you, young men,  
because you have overcome the evil one.*

*14 I write to you, dear children,  
because you know the Father:*

*I write to you, fathers,  
because you know 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.*

*15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. 16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.*

*18 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. 19 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.*

*20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

*24 As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he promised us—eternal life.*

*26 I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 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.*

## **Prayer**

## **Illustration**

### **The Five Most Counterfeited Products in the United States according to USA Today:**

#### **5. Pharmaceuticals/Personal Care**

MSRP of seized goods: \$79.6 million

Pct. of total seized goods: 5%

#### **4. Wearing Apparel/Accessories**

MSRP of seized goods: \$116.2 million

Percentage of total seized goods: 7%

#### **3. Consumer Electronics/Parts**

MSRP of seized goods: \$145.9 million

Percentage of total seized goods: 8%

#### **2. Watches/Jewelry**

MSRP of seized goods: \$502.8 million

Percentage of total seized goods: 29%

#### **1. Handbags/Wallets**

MSRP of seized goods: \$700.2 million

Percentage of total seized goods: 40%

We live in a world where the counterfeits can look almost as real as the genuine article, and in fact, it can be very difficult to discern between the two to the untrained eye. Spiritually it is no different. Our world is full of counterfeit Christs – those who are masquerading as the real-deal but in reality are nothing more than a cheap imitation. But you and I – the church of Christ – have been taught to see with a keen eye so that we are able to identify the counterfeits and not be fooled by them.

When an aspiring agent of the U.S. Treasury is going to learn how to detect counterfeit money, how do you imagine that they are taught to tell the fake stuff from the real stuff? Do they look at counterfeit bills? Do they learn about color-shifting inks, watermarks, ultraviolet glows, and fiber quality? Certainly not! Their training consists of one thing and one thing only: endless hours of touching, ogling, and sniffing real money. For if a person knows what the genuine article looks like then they'll never accept a counterfeit.

E. Lutzer, Putting Your Past Behind You, Here's Life, 1990, p.42.

Let's dive into our text this morning and study what the genuine disciple of Christ looks like, for by studying the genuine article we will be assured of our faith and prepared to identify those who come to us with a counterfeit gospel.

# A Genuine Disciple Knows His Foreman

## 1 John 2:12-14 New International Version (NIV)

*12 I am writing to you, dear children,  
because your sins have been forgiven on account of **his name**.*

*13 I am writing to you, fathers,  
because you know **him who is from the beginning**.*

*I am writing to you, young men,  
because you have overcome the evil one.*

*14 I write to you, dear children,  
because you **know the Father**.*

*I write to you, fathers,  
because you know **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.*

Can I begin by saying that our salvation is not about *what* you know, but it's about *who* you know. Why should God allow you into His kingdom? Think about this for a moment. I use this question often with people I don't know well to evaluate where they might be spiritually. So now, I pose the question to each of you: "Why should God allow *you* into His kingdom?"

Of the myriad of answers I have received over the years when I have used this conversation starter, the most common responses went something like this: "Because I am a good person", or "Because I go to church". Some people say, "I have done more good than the average person". That last answer is a great one if entry into Heaven were based on our merits and if God were grading on a curve. Thankfully, He doesn't.

Like I have said before, we may all know of someone who has worked their way up the cooperate ladder not by what they know but rather by who they know. Perhaps they had a close friend, family member, or even a spouse that promoted them based not on their abilities but only on their compassion and fondness for that individual.

Our text we just read address the three age or maturity groups of the church: John writes to children, young men, and fathers. Notice how John treats all three with equality. In the church, there is a primary, and key roll for both the children, the young adults, as well as the parents and grandparents. Those rolls vary, but each one is every bit as important as the other.

And pay attention to the source from which our our role, our significance, our importance comes. There are four separate references to God in these verses: "His name", "Him who is from the beginning", "the Father", and "the Word of God".

I cannot overemphasize enough the importance of being connected to the vine. Remaining connected to Christ is vital to maintain a spiritually healthy lifestyle. This is the first test of a true disciple – its all about who you know more than what you know. And you are God's holy Church, and as such you know Jesus Christ. As a result, you know the Father as well. Take great joy in this tremendous blessing.

# A Genuine Disciple is Wise with His Investment

## 1 John 2:15-17 New International Version (NIV)

*15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. 16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.*

Once the second-biggest long distance phone company in the U.S., WorldCom (also known as MCI WorldCom) was once seen as one of the great telecom success stories of the '90s. But when it tried to continue its growth-by-merger strategy by joining with Sprint (S), it was blocked by regulators as an attempt at monopolization. When it came to light that CEO Bernie Ebbers was financing his other businesses with personal loans from his WorldCom stock (to the tune of \$360 million), things unraveled further. WorldCom filed for bankruptcy in 2002, resulting in an \$11 billion loss to investors.

As a follower of Christ, we have two commodities of which we have the opportunity to invest. We know that one of these two commodities will indeed fail while the other will reap eternal dividends. The good news is, we have insider-trading information – we know which of these two stocks will succeed.

As a result, you and I have invested in the successful stock – that is, the Kingdom of God – and we have been promised an eternal reward. Those that have put their hope in this world will fail. It's not a matter of *if*, but rather *when*. But as for us – God's church that is holy and set apart – we have a hope that does not disappoint us.

Romans 5:5 (NLT) teaches us this truth:

*5 And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.*

We can either love the flesh – which is carnal and finite – or we can love the Father – which is divine and eternal.

The second mark of a genuine follower of Christ, is that they have invested in the right commodity. Rest assured, you have invested well if you have received the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## A Genuine Disciple Rests in His Assurance

### 1 John 2:18-27 New International Version (NIV)

*18 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. 19 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.*

*20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

*24 As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he promised us—eternal life.*

*26 I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 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.*

An indicator that someone among you is a false believer, is that they will not remain long. It is simply a matter of time. Eventually these anti-Christ's will leave this place of God – since they are not at home among us. The mind of one who is not of *the way* is fickle. They may seem genuine for a short time, but eventually their motives will be revealed. They will fail to plant roots and grow, and eventually will depart back into the world from whence they came. And this ought to be a sign that they did not belong to the church.

You are the church of Christ and have been founded upon the truth of His Word. Remain connected to the vine – that is Christ – and the truth shall remain in you. The more familiar with the truth you become to more you will be able to identify those who are liars and deceivers. If anyone denies that Jesus is the Christ – that is, the Messiah – then that person shall be marked as an anti-Christ. To deny the son is to equally deny the Father. But to accept the son, is to accept the Father as well.

So let us, God's holy body remain in Christ. It is this truth that we have heard from the beginning – which doesn't change like shifting shadows – that will usher us into the presence of God on that glorious day.

When all else fails, remain in Him. It is by Him and through Him that your assurance is made complete. It is not by our good works that we are saved from the fires of hell, but rather it is by the blood of Jesus Christ. The Word testifies to this. The Old Testament and the New; Abraham and Moses as well as Peter and Paul all proclaim one gospel, and that comes through Christ.

Andrew Murray in his book, *Abide in Christ* once said: “A soul filled with large thoughts of the Vine will be a strong branch, and will abide confidently in Him. Be much occupied with Jesus, and believe much in Him, as the True Vine.”

## **Application**

I hope you spend endless hours of your life touching, ogling, and sniffing the real Jesus. For if a person knows what the genuine article looks like, feels like, and smells like, then they'll never accept a counterfeit.

Indeed you know the real deal – the genuine Christ. Take delight today in the security you possess that has been given you by the blood of God's Son. Rest today in your gift of salvation and let your heart be lifted high in worship to the one who gave it.

## **Prayer**

## **Blessing**

### **Romans 16:25-27 New International Version (NIV)**

*25 Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ!*

And together with one voice Christ's church proclaims, *Amen.*