

# Homily 3 1 John 2:18-27

by St. Augustine

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living according to the doctrine of Christ and warns against the dangers of being an antichrist, who denies the truth and is contrary to Christ.*

**Scripture:** 1 John 2:18-19, 1 John 2:24, 1 John 2:27

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Antichrist Warning"

---

## Description

St. Augustine preaches about the urgency of spiritual growth and readiness for the last hour, emphasizing the importance of clinging to the teachings of Christ and the Church as infants cling to their mother's breasts. He warns against antichrists who deny Jesus as the Christ, highlighting the significance of abiding in the truth and recognizing those who are contrary to Christ by their actions. St. Augustine encourages believers to remain steadfast in the face of temptations, knowing that they have the Holy Spirit's unction to guide them in discerning truth from lies and in staying rooted in Christ to receive the promise of eternal life.

---

## Transcript

Children, it is the last hour: and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us: if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But you have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things. I write unto you, not because you know not the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? [He is antichrist, that denies the Father and the Son.] Whosoever denies the Son, the same has neither the Father nor the Son: and he that acknowledges the Son has both the Father and the Son. Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning. If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you; that you may know that you have an unction, and that the unction which you have received of him may abide in you. And you need not that any man teach you; because His unction teaches you of all things.

1. Children, it is the last hour. In this lesson he addresses the children that they may make haste to grow, because it is the last hour. Age or stature of the body is not at one's own will. A man does not grow in respect of the flesh when he will, any more than he is born when he will: but where the being born rests

with the will, the growth also rests with the will. No man is born of water and the Spirit, John 3:5 except he be willing. Consequently if he will, he grows or makes increase: if he will, he decreases. What is it to grow? To go onward by proficiency. What is it to decrease? To go backward by deficiency. Whoso knows that he is born, let him hear that he is an infant; let him eagerly cling to the breasts of his mother, and he grows apace. Now his mother is the Church; and her breasts are the two Testaments of the Divine Scriptures. Hence let him suck the milk of all the things that as signs of spiritual truths were done in time for our eternal salvation, that being nourished and strengthened, he may attain to the eating of solid meat, which is, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1 Our milk is Christ in His humility; our meat, the selfsame Christ equal with the Father. With milk He nourishes you, that He may feed you with bread: for with the heart spiritually to touch Christ is to know that He is equal with the Father.

2. Therefore it was that He forbade Mary to touch Him, and said to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father. What is this? He gave Himself to be handled by the disciples, and did He shun Mary's touch? Is not He the same that said to the doubting disciple, Reach hither your fingers, and feel the scars? Was He at that time ascended to the Father? Then why does He forbid Mary, and says, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to the Father? Or are we to say, that He feared not to be touched by men, and feared to be touched by women? The touch of Him cleanses all flesh. To whom He willed first to be manifested, by them feared He to be handled? Was not His resurrection announced by women to the men, that so the serpent should by a sort of counterplot be overcome? For because he first by the woman announced death to man, therefore to men was also life announced by a woman. Then why was He unwilling to be touched, but because He would have it to be understood of that spiritual touch? The spiritual touch takes place from a pure heart. That person does of a pure heart reach Christ with his touch who understands Him coequal with the Father. But whoso does not yet understand Christ's Godhead, that person reaches but unto the flesh, reaches not unto the Godhead. Now what great matter is it, to reach only unto that which the persecutors reached unto, who crucified Him? But that is the great thing, to understand the Word God with God, in the beginning, by whom all things were made: such as He would have Himself to be known when He said to Philip, Am I so long time with you, and have you not known me, Philip? He that sees me, sees also the Father. John 14:9

3. But lest any be sluggish to go forward, let him hear: Children, it is the last hour. Go forward, run, grow; it is the last hour. This same last hour is long; yet it is the last. For he has put hour for the last time; because it is in the last times that our Lord Jesus Christ is to come. But some will say, How the last times? How the last hour? Certainly antichrist will first come, and then will come the day of judgment. John perceived these thoughts: lest people should in a manner become secure, and think it was not the last hour because antichrist was to come, he said to them, And as you have heard that antichrist is to come, now are there come many antichrists. Could it have many antichrists, except it were the last hour?

4. Whom has he called antichrists? He goes on and expounds. Whereby we know that it is the last hour. By what? Because many antichrists have come. They went out from us; see the antichrists! They went out from us: therefore we bewail the loss. Hear the consolation. But they were not of us. All heretics, all schismatics went out from us, that is, they go out from the Church; but they would not go out, if they were of us. Therefore, before they went out they were not of us. If before they went out they were not of us, many are within, are not gone out, but yet are antichrists. We dare to say this: and why, but that each one while he is within may not be an antichrist? For he is about to describe and mark the antichrists, and we shall see them now. And each person ought to question his own conscience, whether he be an antichrist.

For antichrist in our tongue means, contrary to Christ. Not, as some take it, that antichrist is to be so called because he is to come ante Christum, before Christ, i.e. Christ to come after him: it does not mean this, neither is it thus written, but Antichristus, i.e. contrary to Christ. Now who is contrary to Christ you already perceive from the apostle's own exposition, and understand that none can go out but antichrists; whereas those who are not contrary to Christ, can in no wise go out. For he that is not contrary to Christ holds fast in His body, and is counted therewith as a member. The members are never contrary one to another. The entire body consists of all the members. And what says the apostle concerning the agreement of the members? If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one member be glorified, all the members rejoice with it. 1 Corinthians 12:26 If then in the glorifying of a member the other members rejoice with it, and in its suffering all the members suffer, the agreement of the members has no antichrist. And there are those who inwardly are in such sort in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ-- seeing His body is yet under cure, and the soundness will not be perfect save in the resurrection of the dead-- are in such wise in the body of Christ, as bad humors. When these are vomited up, the body is relieved: so too when bad men go out, then the Church is relieved. And one says, when the body vomits and casts them out, These humors went out of me, but they were not of me. How were not of me? Were not cut out of my flesh, but oppressed my breast while they were in me.

5. They went out from us; but, be not sad, they were not of us. How do you prove this? If they had been of us, they would doubtless have continued with us. Hence therefore you may see, that many who are not of us, receive with us the Sacraments, receive with us baptism. receive with us what the faithful know they receive, Benediction, the Eucharist, and whatever there is in Holy Sacraments: the communion of the very altar they receive with us, and are not of us. Temptation proves that they are not of us. When temptation comes to them as if blown by a wind they fly abroad; because they were not grain. But all of them will fly abroad, as we must often tell you, when once the fanning of the Lord's threshing-floor shall begin in the day of judgment. They went out from us, but they were not of us; if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. For would you know, beloved, how most certain this saying is, that they who haply have gone out and return, are not antichrists, are not contrary to Christ? Whoso are not antichrists, it cannot be that they should continue without. But of his own will is each either an antichrist or in Christ. Either we are among the members, or among the bad humors. He that changes himself for the better, is in the body, a member: but he that continues in his badness, is a bad humor; and when he is gone out, then they who were oppressed will be relieved. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but (they went out), that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. That he has added, that they might be made manifest, is, because even when they are within they are not of us; yet they are not manifest, but by going out are made manifest. And you have an unction from the Holy One, that you may be manifest to your own selves. The spiritual unction is the Holy Spirit Himself, of which the Sacrament is in the visible unction. Of this unction of Christ he says, that all who have it know the bad and the good; and they need not to be taught, because the unction itself teaches them.

6. I write unto you not because you know not the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 1 John 2:21 Behold, we are admonished how we may know antichrist. What is Christ? Truth. Himself has said I am the Truth. John 14:6 But no lie is of the truth. Consequently, all who lie are not yet of Christ. He has not said that some lie is of the truth, and some lie not of the truth. Mark the sentence. Do not fondle yourselves, do not flatter yourselves, do not deceive yourselves, do not cheat yourselves: No lie is of the truth. Let us see then how antichrists lie, because there is more than one kind of lying. Who is a liar, but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? One is the meaning of the word Jesus, another the meaning of

the word Christ: though it be one Jesus Christ our Saviour, yet Jesus is His proper name. Just as Moses was so called by his proper name, as Elias, as Abraham: so as His proper name our Lord has the name Jesus: but Christ is the name of His sacred character. As when we say, Prophet, as when we say, Priest; so by the name Christ we are given to understand the Anointed, in whom should be the redemption of the whole people. The coming of this Christ was hoped for by the people of the Jews: and because He came in lowliness, He was not acknowledged; because the stone was small, they stumbled at it and were broken. But the stone grew, and became a great mountain; Daniel 2:35 and what says the Scripture? Whosoever shall stumble at this stone shall be broken; and on whomsoever this stone shall come, it will grind him to powder. We must mark the difference of the words: it says, he that stumbles shall be broken; but he on whom it shall come, shall be ground to powder. At the first, because He came lowly, men stumbled at Him: because He shall come lofty to judgment, on whomsoever He shall come, He will grind him to powder. But not that man will He grind to powder at His future coming, whom He broke not when He came. He that stumbled not at the lowly, shall not dread the lofty. Briefly you have heard it, brethren: he that stumbled not at the lowly, shall not dread the lofty. For to all bad men is Christ a stone of stumbling; whatever Christ says is bitter to them.

7. For hear and see. Certainly all who go out from the Church, and are cut off from the unity of the Church, are antichrists; let no man doubt it: for the apostle himself has marked them, They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. Therefore, whoso continue not with us, but go out from us, it is manifest that they are antichrists. And how are they proved to be antichrists? By lying. And who is a liar, but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? 1 John 2:22 Let us ask the heretics: where do you find a heretic that denies that Jesus is the Christ? See now, my beloved, a great mystery. Mark what the Lord God may have inspired us withal, and what I would fain work into your minds. Behold, they went out from us, and turned Donatists: we ask them whether Jesus be the Christ; they instantly confess that Jesus is the Christ. If then that person is an antichrist, who denies that Jesus is the Christ, neither can they call us antichrists, nor we them; therefore, neither they went out from us, nor we from them. If then we have not gone out one from another, we are in unity: if we be in unity, what means it that there are two altars in this city? What, that there are divided houses, divided marriages? That there is a common bed, and a divided Christ? He admonishes us, he would have us confess what is the truth:-- either they went out from us, or we from them. But let it not be imagined that we have gone out from them. For we have the testament of the Lord's inheritance, we recite it, and there we find, I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and for Your possessions the ends of the earth. We hold fast Christ's inheritance; they hold it not, for they do not communicate with the whole earth, do not communicate with the universal body redeemed by the blood of the Lord. We have the Lord Himself rising from the dead, who presented Himself to be felt by the hands of the doubting disciples: and while they yet doubted, He said to them, It behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name Luke 24:46-47 -- Where? Which way? To what persons?-- through all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Our minds are set at rest concerning the unity of the inheritance! Whoso does not communicate with this inheritance, is gone out.

8. But let us not be made sad: They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. 1 John 2:19 If then they went out from us, they are antichrists; if they are antichrists, they are liars; if they are liars, they deny that Jesus is the Christ. Once more we come back to the difficulty of the question. Ask them one by one; they confess that Jesus is the Christ. The difficulty that hampers us comes of our taking what is said in the Epistle in too narrow a sense. At any rate you see the question; this question puts both us and them to a stand, if it be not understood.

Either we are antichrists, or they are antichrists; they call us antichrists, and say that we went out from them; we say the like of them. But now this epistle has marked out the antichrists by this cognizance: Whosoever denies that Jesus is the Christ, that same is an antichrist. Now therefore let us enquire who denies; and let us mark not the tongue, but the deeds. For if all be asked, all with one mouth confess that Jesus is the Christ. Let the tongue keep still for a little while, ask the life. If we shall find this, if the Scripture itself shall tell us that denial is a thing done not only with the tongue, but also with the deeds, then assuredly we find many antichrists, who with the mouth profess Christ, and in their manners dissent from Christ. Where find we this in Scripture? Hear Paul the Apostle; speaking of such, he says, For they confess that they know God, but in their deeds deny Him. Titus 1:16 We find these also to be antichrists: whosoever in his deeds denies Christ, is an antichrist. I listen not to what he says, but I look what life he leads. Works speak, and do we require words? For where is the bad man that does not wish to talk well? But what says the Lord to such? You hypocrites, how can you speak good things, while you are evil? Matthew 12:34 Your voices you bring into my ears: I look into your thoughts. I see an evil will there, and you make a show of false fruits. I know what I must gather, and whence; I do not gather figs of thistles, I do not gather grapes of thorns; for every tree is known by its fruit. Matthew 12:7, 16 A more lying antichrist is he who with his mouth professes that Jesus is the Christ, and with his deeds denies Him. A liar in this, that he speaks one thing, and does another.

9. Now therefore, brethren, if deeds are to be questioned, not only do we find many antichrists gone out; but many not yet manifest, who have not gone out at all. For as many as the Church has within it that are perjured, defrauders, addicted to black arts, consulters of fortune-tellers, adulterers, drunkards, usurers, boy-stealers, and all the other vices that we are not able to enumerate; these things are contrary to the doctrine of Christ, are contrary to the word of God. Now the Word of God is Christ: whatever is contrary to the Word of God is in Antichrist. For Antichrist means, contrary to Christ. And would ye know how openly these resist Christ? Sometimes it happens that they do some evil, and one begins to reprove them; because they dare not blaspheme Christ, they blaspheme His ministers by whom they are reprov'd: but if you show them that you speak Christ's words, not your own, they endeavor all they can to convict you of speaking your own words, not Christ's: if however it is manifest that you speak Christ's words, they go even against Christ, they begin to find fault with Christ: How, say they, and why did He make us such as we are? Do not persons say this every day, when they are convicted of their deeds? Perverted by a depraved will, they accuse their Maker. Their Maker cries to them from heaven, (for the same made us, who new-made us:) What made I you? I made man, not avarice; I made man, not robbery; I made man, not adultery. You have heard that my works praise me. Out of the mouth of the Three Children, it was the hymn itself that kept them from the fires. The works of the Lord praise the Lord, the heaven, the earth, the sea, praise Him; praise Him all things that are in the heaven, praise Him angels, praise Him stars, praise Him lights, praise Him whatever swims, whatever flies, whatever walks, whatever creeps; all these praise the Lord. Have you heard there that avarice praises the Lord? Have you heard that drunkenness praises the Lord? That luxury praises, that frivolity praises Him? Whatever you hear not in that hymn give praise to the Lord, the Lord made not that thing. Correct what you have made, that what God made in you may be saved. But if you will not, and lovest and embracest your sins, you are contrary to Christ. Be thou within, be thou without, you are an antichrist; be thou within, be thou without, you are chaff. But why are you not without? Because you have not fallen in with a wind to carry you away.

10. These things are now manifest, my brethren. Let no man say, I do not worship Christ, but I worship God His Father. Every one that denies the Son, has neither the Son nor the Father; and he that confesses the Son, has both the Son and the Father. He speaks to you that are grain: and let those who were chaff,

hear, and become grain. Let each one, looking well to his own conscience, if he be a lover of the world, be changed; let him become a lover of Christ, that he be not an antichrist. If one shall tell him that he is an antichrist, he is angry, he thinks it a wrong done to him; perchance, if he is told by him that strives with him that he is an antichrist, he threatens an action at law. Christ says to him, Be patient; if you have been falsely spoken of, rejoice with me, because I also am falsely spoken of by the antichrists: but if you are truly spoken of, come to an understanding with your own conscience; and if you fear to be called this, fear more to be it.

11. Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning. If that which you have heard from the beginning shall abide in you, you also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us. 1 John 2:24-25 For haply you might ask about the wages, and say, Behold, that which I have heard from the beginning I keep safe in me, I comply therewith; perils, labors, temptations, for the sake of this continuance, I bear up against them all: with what fruit? What wages? What will He hereafter give me, since in this world I see that I labor among temptations? I see not here that there is any rest: mere mortality weighs down the soul, and the corruptible body presses it down to lower things: but I bear all things, that that which I have heard from the beginning Wisdom 9:15 may remain in me; and that I may say to my God, Because of the words of Your lips have I kept hard ways. Unto what wages then? Hear, and faint not. If you were fainting in the labors, upon the promised wages be strong. Where is the man that shall work in a vineyard, and shall let slip out of his heart the reward he is to receive? Suppose him to have forgotten, his hands fail. The remembrance of the promised wages makes him persevering in the work: and yet he that promised it is a man who can deceive your expectation. How much more strong ought you to be in God's field, when He that promised is the Truth, Who can neither have any successor, nor die, nor deceive him to whom the promise was made! And what is the promise? Let us see what He has promised. Is it gold which men here love much, or silver? Or possessions, for which men lavish gold, however much they love gold? Or pleasant lands, spacious houses, many slaves, numerous beasts? Not these are the wages, so to say, for which he exhorts us to endure in labor. What are these wages called? eternal life. You have heard, and in your joy you have cried out: love that which you have heard, and you are delivered from your labors into the rest of eternal life. Lo, this is what God promises; eternal life. Matthew 25:34 Lo, this what God threatens; eternal fire. What to those set on the right hand? Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Matthew 25:41 To those on the left, what? Go into eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Thou dost not yet love that: at least fear this.

12. Remember then, my brethren, that Christ has promised us eternal life: This, says he, is the promise which He has promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written to you concerning them which seduce you. 1 John 2:25-26 Let none seduce you unto death: desire the promise of eternal life. What can the world promise? Let it promise what you will, it makes the promise perchance to one that tomorrow shall die. And with what face will you go hence to Him that abides for ever? But a powerful man threatens me, so that I must do some evil. What does he threaten? Prisons, chains, fires, torments, wild beasts: aye, but not eternal fire? Dread that which One Almighty threatens; love that which One Almighty promises; and all the world becomes vile in our regard, whether it promise or terrify. These things have I written unto you concerning them which seduce you; that you may know that you have an unction, and the unction which we have received from Him may abide in you. In the unction we have the sacramental sign [of a thing unseen], the virtue itself is invisible; the invisible unction is the Holy Ghost; the invisible unction is that charity, which, in whomsoever it be, shall be as a root to him: however burning the sun, he cannot wither. All that is rooted is nourished by the sun's warmth, not withered.

13. And you have no need that any man teach you, because His unction teaches you concerning all things. 1 John 2:27 Then to what purpose is it that we, my brethren, teach you? If His unction teaches you concerning all things, it seems we labor without a cause. And what mean we, to cry out as we do? Let us leave you to His unction, and let His unction teach you. But this is putting the question only to myself: I put it also to that same apostle: let him deign to hear a babe that asks of him: to John himself I say, Had those the unction to whom you were speaking? You have said, His unction teaches you concerning all things. To what purpose have you written an Epistle like this? What teaching did you give them? What instruction? What edification? See here now, brethren, see a mighty mystery. The sound of our words strikes the ears, the Master is within. Do not suppose that any man learns ought from man. We can admonish by the sound of our voice; if there be not One within that shall teach, vain is the noise we make. Aye, brethren, have ye a mind to know it? Have ye not all heard this present discourse? And yet how many will go from this place untaught! I, for my part, have spoken to all; but they to whom that Unction within speaks not, they whom the Holy Ghost within teaches not, those go back untaught. The teachings of the master from without are a sort of aids and admonitions. He that teaches the hearts, has His chair in heaven. Therefore says He also Himself in the Gospel: Call no man your master upon earth; One is your Master, even Christ. Matthew 23:8-9 Let Him therefore Himself speak to you within, when not one of mankind is there: for though there be some one at your side, there is none in your heart. Yet let there not be none in your heart: let Christ be in your heart: let His unction be in the heart, lest it be a heart thirsting in the wilderness, and having no fountains to be watered withal. There is then, I say, a Master within that teaches: Christ teaches; His inspiration teaches. Where His inspiration and His unction is not, in vain do words make a noise from without. So are the words, brethren, which we speak from without, as is the husbandman to the tree: from without he works, applies water and diligence of culture; let him from without apply what he will, does he form the apples? Does he clothe the nakedness of the wood with a shady covering of leaves? Does he do any thing like this from within? But whose doing is this? Hear the husbandman, the apostle: both see what we are, and hear the Master within: I have planted, Apollos has watered; but God gave the increase: neither he that plants is any thing, neither he that waters, but He that gives the increase, even God. 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 This then we say to you: whether we plant, or whether we water, by speaking we are not any thing; but He that gives the increase, even God: that is, His unction which teaches you concerning all things.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-augustine/homily-3-1-john-218-27/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**