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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**February 27, 2022**

**You Have Been Anointed by the Holy One**

**1 John 2:20-21**

**Prayer:** *Father, I just again, I thank you and praise you for gathering us together as you have, for giving us that opportunity for this place, this building that we can still gather in and I thank you for it. I thank you for the gift of your word. And again each time, Lord, I pray and plead for the presence of your Holy Spirit who makes this make sense, without Your Spirit it doesn't. And so I pray that you would guide us, accompany us and make this of permanent value. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

A few years ago at a Golden Globes award ceremony, Oprah Winfrey coined a phrase that has become common parlance in our culture today. This is what she said, she said, "What I know for sure is that speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have." Now she did nothing more than substitute a possessive pronoun for an article, I mean instead of saying "the truth," she said, she made it personal by saying "your truth," as if each of us has the right or the opportunity or the ability to create our own truth.

Well the phrase was apt, it was timely, hit a nerve. It captured the spirit of this age which sees truth as shapeable, moldable and subject to individual interpretation. And the reaction from the conservative corner was swift, I mean, Ben Shapiro rightly said, "There's no such thing as 'your truth.' There is the truth and your opinion." Well the problem is in our culture today that truth is now seen as an opinion. And the simplest and probably the best definition I've ever heard of what truth is is "that which lines up with reality."

I mean truth quite simply is that which is real, and never in our history has that concept been more under assault than it is today. I mean today we no longer say that truth is what is real without adding to that question "real for whom"? As Oprah sees it, what may be real and what may be truth to you might not be for me or for someone else, because in this view of reality everyone gets to shape and determine what is true, what is real. And the problems come when the truth that we attempt to create so clashes with the truth that is real that everyone knows it but no one knows what to do about it.

I mean there's a reason why something as obscure as an ivy league swimming competition is in the news constantly. It's because the University of Pennsylvania's lead swimmer on their women's team,

their champion, so to speak, is an individual who goes by the name Lia Thomas. Lia is a man who last year decided that his new truth was that he was in fact a woman. Now if he had just made that declaration among his peers, among his friends, nobody really would have cared, not a feather would have been ruffled. The problem is that Lia Thomas is a competitive swimmer and the reality of her old truth as a male gave her an extraordinary advantage in her new truth as a female. That which was still real in her body was the biological fact that it was a man's body with man's musculature and it gave her an extraordinary edge, an advantage over her new far less muscled fellow females. See last year while he was on the men's time competing as Will Thomas, Will ranked 462nd among all men. This year competing as a woman, she's ranked number one. So if you look at a picture of this person, you'll instantly recognize that that his body is clearly male with broad shoulders and male musculature now differentiated only by the fact that it's a body now clad in a woman's bathing suit. I mean the two things that once blocked her pathway to greatness as a male swimmer were biology and physics, they've been overcome by the fact that she competes in an entirely different category now. And when sixteen members of the University of Pennsylvania women's swimming team wrote a letter decrying the fact that a biological male had taken away from them something that they had fought for competitively for many years, for often many of them since childhood, and that's the

ability to compete against her peers, well the university's response was to tell them literally to shut up. Oprah's vision of "your truth" has become "the truth." And the reason why this particular incident has become so newsworthy is because it stands in such stark contrast with the basic assumption about truth. It has to line up with reality. I mean this one clearly does not and everyone can see it, and yet nobody who matters in this or can affect the outcome cares.

Our text this morning is all about truth. It's one of the most precious things that God has given to us through his Son who says of himself in *John 14*: *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* He said this also of his word in *John 17*, he said: *"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."* Jesus makes this bold claim that he and his word are what line up with reality, then he goes on to say that this world is run by a power that is dedicated to the exact opposite value. He says of the ruler of this world in *John 8*: *"He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe."*

Well, so today we've got these multiple claimed sources of truth, I

mean, Oprah tells us that our own personal truth is truth for us and we've certainly seen that played out in Lia Thomas and her truth. And right there we can apply the definition of truth and say does this individual situation line up with reality? Well it clearly doesn't. The University of Pennsylvania demands that its swimmers and everyone else see Lia Thomas as a woman, but everyone knows deep down that all the lies and all the posturing and the threats can't make something unreal real. Lia Thomas may identify as a woman but biologically she is still a man, and what folks are waiting to find out here is whether or not power and intimidation will win over the fact that this truth does not line up with reality.

But all of that is just one of major skirmishes that are taking place all over the place that break out constantly now between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. I mean it leaves two different truth claims that are essentially both claiming to line up with reality. Jesus makes the claim that he is in fact the truth. He also makes the claim that the ruler of this world and the world system is alive and so once again we're back to this battle between the kingdoms and the goal here is which kingdom, which kingdom really lines up on the side of reality. Jesus says the differences between his world and the kingdom of darkness are so stark and they're so pervasive that those who are thoroughly

enmeshed in the kingdom of this world have no choice but to see lies as truth and truth as lies. He said in verse 45: *"But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me."*

I mean essentially the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness have lined up across this gigantic divide known as truth and those committed to this world and the prince of this world perceive the truth of Christ and his kingdom as lies and those in the kingdom of light as not even worthy of belief. So how does one know what is what, I mean, especially when we're dealing with principalities and powers who are far more resourceful than us puny human beings. I mean Jesus knew that that was exactly what we were up against when he told his disciples that he was going to send them literally *"the Spirit of truth"* who would guide us into all truth. This is what he said shortly before he went to the cross in *John 16*. He said: *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."*

Well in 1 John now it's fifty years later and John is this old man and he's speaking as one who's been there and he's done that. In our text this week, John is laying out what the spirit of truth has

done in the community that he's part of. This is what he says in our text this morning. This is *1 John 2:20-21*. He says: *But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.* See, the Holy One's anointing is the ability to perceive truth even if you're surrounded by a sea of lies. And if you remember last week we looked at this whole idea of antichrist and we noticed that John refers in his letter to two different kinds of antichrists, there's the Antichrist, the one specific one who will represent Satan here on earth not as an incarnation of Satan himself but as an extremely powerful human being, as a world leader who's going to be given whole-heartedly over to Satan and his lies, but John also mentioned antichrists plural as those standing either opposed to our instead of Jesus Christ, and he said there would be many. He identified those antichrists as those who had -- quote -- "*gone out from us.*" We spoke about Jesus' warning about that. We spoke about the sermon that Jesus preached about the soils and that of the four different soils that the word of God is sown in, three of them produce what looks like believers. I mean the rocky soil and the thorny soil and the good soil all produce folks who look like the genuine item. Both the rocky and thorny soil produce pseudo believers. Going out from us proved that they were not of us. John explains all of this as a prelude to the scripture we're

looking at this morning. This is what he says in *John 2:18-20*. He says: *Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.*

Well we also spoke last week about Nicodemus. If you remember he had this conversation with Jesus about being born again and Jesus tells him that the wind blows wherever it wishes. Jesus was telling Nicodemus that the Holy Spirit is the one who opens up eyes and ears and hearts and minds, and when that happens it's only because God has done this miraculous spiritual heart transplant and the Spirit of Christ himself has come into us to take up residence within us. And Paul made that crystally clear in *Romans 8:9* when he said: *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*

That's incredibly important. So we ask the question, okay, so what does the anointing from the Holy Spirit consist of? Well again, you have to go backwards for that one. God says that before time



itself even began, he predestined those he had chosen in Christ so they might be to the praise of His glory. And once again these are the sheep who have heard the voice of the Shepherd and are following him. And speaking of Jesus, Paul says in *Ephesians 1:11*, he says: *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.* But then God says something spectacular about the role of the Holy Spirit in all of this. This is what he says, he says: *"In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."*

Now that word "sealed," that word means "to be stamped," "to be marked out," "to be set apart," for what? He says *for the praise of God's glory.* Well, by whom? *By the promised Holy Spirit.* Then he says who is our arrabon. "Arrabon" is a Greek word that we translate "the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it." I mean that's a word is to say something that we often refer to as "earnest money." I don't know if any of you have purchased real estate but sometimes a purchase will require a nonrefundable deposit that's designed to separate casual interest

from those who are absolutely serious about making a purchase. Well, an arrabon in those days was a nonrefundable deposit that proved a person's interest in a transaction. That's the language that God uses here. He uses the very same language to say that he sends the Holy Spirit into us as a nonrefundable deposit, a down payment, if you will, of the glory that's going to be ours in eternity. Some folks know exactly the moment that they received that nonrefundable deposit which is to say the moment they became believers in Christ. They actually could sense that arrabon, that sealing of the Holy Spirit taking place in their life. I'm one of those people. I've given my testimony a number of times so I don't want to go back to revisit the whole process, but there was something that happened the day that I got saved that proved to me that I'd been set apart and sealed by the Holy Spirit even though I didn't realize it until months later.

I got saved at a house church prayer meeting. Janice and I were moving cross country, we were staying with some friends in Michigan who happened to have a house church, and I'd been accepted to a school in San Francisco and we were moving from Vermont to California and right there in the middle of our journey is good old Michigan, a perfect stopping place. Well, the problem was I'd be staying at the house of a friend who I'd met when I went to school in Michigan who had now become, much to my dismay, a Christian. I

mean Janice and I at that time were flat-out pagans. We had some basic morality but flat-out pagans.

And so I was there at my friend's house in Michigan, I was there not only because I was visiting but I also had some mechanical issues with my car. And I distinctly remember working underneath the car as a complete pagan the very day that I got saved. I was working on the muffler and it wasn't going well, and I remember some of the choice words that I was using as I was struggling underneath the car. And at that time I was very fond of using Jesus's name blasphemously as a curse word. I mean it wasn't pretty, I mean, in fact it was profoundly ugly. I was cursing up a storm using Jesus as my primary source. Well, long story short, that same evening I'm at this prayer meeting, bored out of my mind, completely uninterested in what's taking place, just hoping politely that it would end so I can get out and get something to eat. I mean, I already mentioned that folks had gathered around, there's this small gathering, there was a parkay floor and I blocked out the tiles on the parkay floor and started counting how many nails there were in each tile so I could be staring at the floor looking respectful when I was just bored out of my mind. Well at that precise moment God spoke to me in no uncertain terms telling me not audibly but unmistakably, I am God, I am speaking to you right here and right now, and I gave my life to Christ that

night in 1973, much to the consternation of my wife Janice who was unsaved for another three or four weeks after that. That was a tough time for her.

But afterwards we went to a local diner to grab some dinner. And I distinctly remember walking up to the diner, we were waiting outside because it was crowded, and there was a couple that was leaving, they were clearly involved in an argument and as the guy walks past me, he's saying in frustration, he turned just right next to me, he says, "Jesus Christ." I felt like somebody had hit me. I felt like I got gut-punched. The very same words that I had used as a curse that very afternoon now sounded profoundly ugly and awful to me spoken that way.

Well it wasn't until months later that I learned that when you enter the kingdom of God, God's Spirit enters you. Our "arrabon," that Greek word that we translate "*the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it*" enters into us. I realized that that gut feeling that I had was the result of the Holy Spirit taking up residence in me. So when John writes in verse 20 "*but you have been anointed by the Holy Spirit,*" he's speaking of the anointing each believer in Christ receives. I mean, mine was dramatic because God knew I was a person of such little faith that I needed that drama therefore I got that drama, but you know other

folks just say you know that you know that you know. And all that means is that in your gut you sense the presence of the living God.

John says that all believers have been anointed with the Holy Spirit, and then he says, "*and you all have knowledge.*" Here John is speaking directly to those Gnostics who tried to claim that knowledge is a special privilege given only to a select few and John said, no, no, no, no, God is not stingy with this knowledge, he gives it to any and all who seek it, and you all have knowledge. He then says in *verse 21: I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.*

So again if we go back to our original definition of truth we hear John simply restating in practical terms what the definition of truth is saying. He's saying it's not like you don't know what is true and what is not because you know, you know what lines up with reality and what doesn't. I mean the gospel is one hundred percent of the essence of what reality is, and yet for most people, Christians included, it kind of reads like a fairy tale. There really was a war in heaven and there really was an evil prince who lost and was thrown down to earth and there really was a good prince who left heaven, became one of his subjects, lived the life that they were supposed to live and then offered up his life on a

cross in order to ransom and rescue his people. I mean, that is an incredible sounding circumstance where if you read it you would say, yeah, this is a fairy tale. But it's true. And for over two thousand years now God has been fulfilling his promise, the one that he spoke in Ephesians 4 which we just looked at by calling his sheep and again this is what Paul says in *Ephesians 1:11*, he says: *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.* What God is saying here is that he's been calling his sheep, Jesus has been calling his sheep for the last two thousand years so that we *might be for the praise of his glory.* I mean that means that our life work, our life goal is to glorify God and to glorify him through whatever means God gives us to do that.

I mean I don't know what it is about the sport of football that causes a significant number of players to say after winning a game, I just want to give all glory to God for such-and-such, but I tell you when I see that, I get really blessed by that. I've heard people mock that. I've heard people, Christians and non-Christians alike say how flippant they think such comments are and I'm amazed at that. Because I don't care what you do, wherever you stand up amongst your peers and glorify God for what it is you've done, for

what it is you're doing, I'm encouraged by your courage and I'm blessed. I'd be equally blessed if my plumber stood up and said, "I just want to praise God for how well it went for putting that J trap under your sink," or the electrician saying, "Glory to God, your circuit board's been upgraded." But that's kind of what God is referring to. You see, how you do that, how you glorify God is by doing what God has given you to do to the very best of your ability and then giving God the glory for it. Jesus made it crystal clear how simple and profound that reality is when he said in *Matthew 5*: *"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*

I remember once many years back in my cabinetmaking days, I built a set of cabinets for a client and installed them. She was very happy and she was going on and on about how pretty they were. I said to her, I said, "I appreciate that, ma'am, but I want you to understand that one day all of these cabinets are going to be sitting in a dumpster." She got instantly offended. She said that's an awful attitude to say about something that you just built. In a sense she was right and I apologized for how my seemingly overly pessimistic view was but I wanted to point out to her that no matter how nice something might be, it's strictly temporary. That gave me the perfect opportunity to tell her what I

thought was permanent. And she smiled and she probably thought I was a nut case but I really didn't care, because being able to explain to her the difference between something temporary and something permanent gave me a sense that I'm participating in exactly what the truth is all about. And once again I had the opportunity to line myself up with reality. My customer in turn, she had the option to accept it and believe it or not. I mean I wasn't saying it to back her into a corner and make some kind of Christian sales pitch, but simply to state what reality was to me. I think that's exactly what is pleasing to God. That's what God has raised us up for and that's what our purpose is, whether we're a housewife, a carpenter, businessman or a president.

Truth is that which lines up with reality. And God tells us precisely what that reality is. In fact it lines up perfectly with the first question of the Westminster Catechism: What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. You don't have to be a football player to put that into words. Listen to how the apostle Peter put it in *1 Peter 2:9*. He says: *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* See, proclaiming Christ's excellency should never be limited to a pastor preaching from a pulpit. I mean it should



be something you should be bursting to share with your neighbors, your friends, your associates, anyone that God brings into your life. That's what gives meaning to our lives. I mean we live so much of this life committed to searching out and securing this eighty-year bubble that we live in that Jesus himself says is not worth the commitment. In *Matthew 10* he says: *"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."* And John has already told us: *This world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever,* and that includes the world that we grasp with our senses as well as the world outside of it.

See, the physical and the spiritual world are circumscribed by the only thing that parts the curtain on what is real and what is unreal and that is the Bible. It's as if the Creator of all things has consented to reveal some but not all of his workings in this present existence in a book. And to the extent that you understand that book will be the extent that you understand what is real, what lines up with reality. I mean the most fundamental truth that undergirds all reality is not found in physics or chemistry or sociology or psychology but one simple fact that is the heart in the battle between the kingdoms, it's the center of the universe, the center of our existence, it's Jesus Christ. That's where the battle is. That's where the battle is drawn, that's where the

battle will always be. That's why John says in verse 22: *Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.*

You know, it's not by accident that Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, Unitarians and Christian Scientists, they all deny the same thing, they deny that Jesus is the Christ. John says all who deny the Son also deny the Father and all who confess the Son confess the Father as well. And the problem is not that we're in any great danger of falling into the error of these cults, they've been around for years. I mean I don't see any of us falling for those lovely people who are standing outside of our door with their briefcases, telling us about the kingdom hall. I am much more concerned about the wolves that prowl the Internet. I'm concerned about the sleight of hand and the deception and the work that goes on amongst those who are seeking to plunder God's kingdom just like those Gnostics who were seeking to do in John's day. And just like the Gnostics, the enemy relies far more on sleight of hand than he does of pure power. Very seldom do you see the enemy suggesting flat out rebellion because he knows it doesn't work. He didn't say to Adam and Eve, hey, let's go grab some of that fruit and go right up to God and defy him. No, instead he used a deception. In

*Genesis 3:1: Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"*

Richard Rohr, Richard Rohr is a master of this kind of sleight of hand. Richard Rohr is a Franciscan friar who's become the darling of evangelicals who are leaving the faith. Alisa Childers describes Rohr as the number one off ramp for evangelicals looking to deconstruct their faith. Michael McClymond, writing in *The Gospel Coalition* said this:

The 76-year-old Rohr has been a Franciscan friar and a Catholic priest for 50 years, and he founded the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Rohr's *The Universal Christ* is Amazon's number-one book in both Christology and Christian ethics, and it was blurbed by U2 singer Bono. Oprah Winfrey interviewed Rohr in 2015 and in 2019. The ex-pastor Rob Bell has been influenced by Rohr and did a 90-minute interview with him.

Raise your hand if you ever heard of Richard Rohr. Anybody here? Okay. Few. Very few. If you've never heard of Richard Rohr and someone gave you one of his books, you might think he's one of us.

He's not. In fact he'd be totally offended that he would be thought of as being included with evangelicals but this is a person who takes grotesque liberties with the scriptures. He makes stuff up as he goes along following what he has identified as "the Jesus hermeneutic."

In his book *The Divine Dance*, this is what Rohr says: "Just interpret Scripture the way that Jesus did! He ignores, denies, or openly opposes his own Scriptures whenever they are imperialistic, punitive, exclusionary, or tribal." And wouldn't you know it, any scriptures that disagree with Rohr's conclusions are imperialistic, punitive, exclusionary and tribal.

Rohr also engages in gross word theft. That's when you take a word that has a common implied meaning, a word like "resurrection," and you claim you're orthodox because you state that you believe in Christ's resurrection but actually you have a totally different understanding of what that word "resurrection" actually means. You've stolen the meaning of the word and misappropriate it for our own use. You see for Rohr, any substantive change is resurrection. To go from being a live body to being a dead corpse suitable for fertilizer is, in Rohr's opinion, resurrection.

McClymond describes Rohr's view of resurrection this way:

"resurrection [is] another word for change" (170-1). On Easter Sunday "one circumscribed body of Jesus morphed into ubiquitous Light" (176). He adds: "If a video camera had been placed in front of the tomb of Jesus, it wouldn't have filmed a lone man emerging from a grave [but] something like beams of light extending in all directions" (177). Yet Rohr cheekily affirms that "I am quite conservative and orthodox by most standards on this important issue [of Jesus's resurrection]" (172).

Rohr also draws a huge distinction between Jesus and the creative expression of God and Christ as the universal Spirit of God evidenced throughout all of creation. This is what McClymond says: "Rohr doesn't say in so many words that Jesus was or is the incarnation of God or the Son of God. Instead he writes of an 'incarnation that Christians believe happened with Jesus.' 'Incarnation' appears to be a certain way that people look at Jesus, and not an objective fact. Rohr dedicates his book to the dog Venus that 'was Christ' for him." McClymond concludes his review of Rohr's *The Universal Christ*, he quotes Dorothy Parker. He says: "This is not a book to be tossed aside lightly. It should be thrown aside with great force."

So what does Richard Rohr have to do with 1 John? Well, our next verse, verse 26 says: *I write these things to you about those who*

*are trying to deceive you.* I was at a meeting with a group of pastors a while back and one of the youth leaders there mentioned that his parents had some of Rohr's books and was really enjoying them and I almost fell out of my chair. I said you know he's a false teacher, you know he's a wolf in sheep's clothing. He said, "Well my parents sure like him." I don't get it. The only reason I'm speaking of him is because he's unbelievably popular.

I opened this message by making a categorical statement that truth is that which lines up with reality. I mean in Christ and his word we have the ultimate truth that lines up perfectly with the ultimate reality, but now more than ever that reality is under assault. I have two dear friends who are ex-evangelicals; one who is a follower of Richard Rohr, another one who's considering it. These are intelligent, educated, insightful people who have somehow lost the ability to see the treasure that God has given them in scripture and scripture alone. I mean we are back at a time well described by Paul in this letter to Timothy. This is what Paul wrote to Timothy. He said: *Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*

*For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.*

Now the part right in the middle, those were the issues that the false teachers were harping on in John's days, those who forbid marriage, require abstinence, that kind of stuff. Today we have a whole new group of forbidden topics like hell and LGBTQ issues or gender fluidity or the sanctity of life; those would be our issues. I mean if there's ever been a time when some seem to have departed from the faith and -- quote -- *"devoted themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared* -- not my words, John's, that time is now. So I want to be a good servant of Christ Jesus, so I'm putting it before the brothers and sisters of this body, declaring to you that truth is what lines up with reality. And Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. And finally John says: *Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he made to us -- eternal life.* Let's pray.

*Father, I just I thank you for the truth, I thank you for the anointing of your Holy Spirit that gives us the ability to discern truth. And Lord, I see your truth as surrounded by a sea of lies, surrounded by those who have taken to lies to spread a gospel that is full of lies. And so I pray that you would give us wisdom, that you would give us insight, that you would give us the ability to pursue your truth, to pursue it and to claim it as our own. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*