

# 11/12/23- TRUTH AND DECEPTION (#9)

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION/MESSAGE

PASTOR LEE - PASTOR ROB - JOSH WHITELOCK

We All  
Struggle!

- LEE/ROB/JOSH attend a conference in Az. This week....opportunity to visit Prescott where Pastor Lee previously pastored. Impactful visit - including rich opportunity to meet/pray over/ support a struggling waitress (Alexandra)....just symbolic of the emotional/spiritual struggles people face in our world today....and peoples' thirst for something more. Pastor Rob (kiddingly): ...'can't we just tap out- -and have Jesus come back? Pastor Lee: Yes...but.... a little like 'escapism.....people have been struggling for ages. He refers to 1 John 5: 4 - -

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**1 John 5: 4 For everyone who is born of God over comes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.**

You Can  
Overcome!

- Pastor Lee refers back to 1 John 2:15-16 and John's direction that we not love this world or what's in it (ie. desires of flesh and eyes, pride, etc.). Such love create an untenable tension with our love of God. But with faith.....you can overcome the world....and worldly desires....victory!!
- Pastor Rob refers back to the earlier verses re: love and commandments ( see V 1-3...

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**1 John 5:1-3 Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments . And His commandments are not burdensome.**

Thru  
Jesus !!

- Pastor Rob....The core of these first 4 verses is all about Jesus. He poses question.....what does it mean to be a Christian???.....simple answer (ie. Faith in Jesus) but some people struggle with it (eg. "I need to love people more... or...I need to better follow the bible's commandments). Loving people/ obedience to Commandments are great...but they are *signs* of our faith...the right direction...**BUT THE ROAD TO SALVATION IS JESUS. WE ARE A 'CHRIST-FIRST CHURCH BECAUSE, FIRST, CHRIST DIED FOR US!** Its about believing first....not doing.
- Pastor Lee: Yes....not burdensome works first.....belief.....fruits naturally follow....not a chore or unattainable standard of good-works achievements. Josh mentions Mormons who 'get it' double wrong.....whose belief embraces notion that your good works can earn you salvation.....**AND** can also dedicate works to those who already died ('extra credit')....what a burden!! Pastor Rob: that's NOT Christianity which is about God's grace and salvation through Jesus' love for us and His death on the cross. Your love

and belief in Jesus is core.....your love for others, good works, etc is a natural by-product that comes from your heart thru the Holy Spirit. No burden!!! Verse 4 is re-emphasized.

Power of  
Holy  
Spirit!

- Pastor Lee re-emphasizes the power of the Holy Spirit and God's holy providence....eg. the encounter with Alexandra in Prescott, their praying over her, her testimony, and now....Lee proposes we ALL pray for her and ask God to bless her. Only through the Holy Spirit could such a simple, seemingly random meeting of people have such powerful consequence!

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1 John 5: 9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that He has borne concerning His son.

Testimony of  
Man  
vs.  
God!

- Pastor Rob refers to V 9 above and the 'tension' we face as highlighted by this verse. (Note: skipping over preceding, confusing verses which Pastor Lee explains has caused great, not-yet-reconciled debate amongst theologians.) V9, per Rob...relates to the background of John's contemporary false teachers who said that Jesus wasn't fully man (THEY KNEW HE WAS GOD).....as opposed to some false teachers today who diametrically say that Jesus wasn't really God- JUST A MAN! Pastor Lee's bottom line 'take on V 9....if you would listen to the testimony of men....HOW COULD YOU NOT LISTEN TO THE TESTIMONY OF GOD!? Josh tells a few personal stories about friends' struggles that illustrate the tension of testimony (man vs. God) and our need, ultimately, to rely on God. The BIG LIE in our culture: that your pursuit of happiness is paramount in your life.
- Pastor Rob: so the foundation of our faith is Jesus.....not works.....not the testimony of the world.....and notwithstanding all the struggles we face in this world. Josh: Confronted with such and the natural tension arising, we should be buoyed by ASSURANCE OF SALVATION AND ASSURANCE OF HIS GREAT PROVIDENCE...Josh shares his personal experience as an example. Pastor Lee:...those are the moments when nothing else works...only faith in Jesus. " I cannot accept temporary fixes for something only God can do. GOD HEALS, GOD RESTORES, HE GIVES LIFE!!!!
- Pastor Rob: "Water and blood reference (V 8) so important because, knowing that Jesus was fully God and fully man, because He understands and has overcome the world. Through Him, we can overcome anything!

God/Faith  
In  
Jesus!!

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1 John 5: 11-12. And this is the testimony, that God gives eternal life, and this life is in His Son, Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Clear  
Testimony  
... Eternal  
Life Thru  
Jesus!!!

- This is so clear and instructive and is written in the present tense for all of us to grab onto. Pastor Rob....this is the light for us believers.....NOW AND IN THE FUTURE! Josh tells funny (taking a 'shot' at all age 60 plussers!) ghost story (ie. dead people trapped as ghosts...stuck here) .....instead, we have value and purpose right now and we will when we die. Pastor Rob: Alexandra is great example....through her struggles and as a bottom line, there's comfort to her as a believer who LOVES AND TRUSTS JESUS. Pastor Lee....our greatest testimonies are about Jesus!