



Mess. 6: Remaining in the Apostle's Fellowship

Scripture Reading: 1 John 2:18-26

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Offering Center

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*Word ministered by brother **Pedro Dong** and transmitted by the Life for All Institute, directly from the Pérola Auditorium, Estância Árvore da Vida, Sumaré-SP, on 8/31/2024. Text not reviewed by the author.*

*We encourage you to watch the full message on the **Life for All** YouTube channel.*

1 John 2:18

1. God wants to establish His kingdom, in which He rules through His life. That is the reason Christ came to earth, preached the gospel, and saved us through the word of life. **Today we are also introduced into the fellowship of life by the apostles.** In the church life, we receive a continual supply of life through the word.
2. The enemy, however, tries to stop the advancement of the church. He uses the world to cause harm to God's church and has even succeeded in degrading it for 19 centuries. **Yet we are at the end times and the Lord is raising up His church in Philadelphia, which keeps the word, does not deny or replace the name of the Lord, but trusts it entirely.** The world passes away, but he who does the will of God remains eternally. **Let us choose the side of life!** Let us not succumb to the lusts of the world.
3. In this context of battle, John writes: "Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18). **God's word always comes at the right time for His church. He warns us that we are in the last hour, in which the most violent battle takes place, where the enemy makes use of all his tools to try to shoot us down and defeat us. The last hour is related to the coming of the Lord; our Lord Jesus will return and take possession of His kingdom!**

Luke 19:12; Matt 25:31; Eph 1:19-23, 4:15-16, 6:11

4. Through His death and resurrection, Christ accomplished the work of redemption and begot the church, the living organism through which God rules. After accomplishing His earthly ministry, the Lord returned as the Spirit to supply us, to lead us, and to bring about His kingdom. That's why we preach the gospel of the kingdom to every inhabited earth: **we want the end to come and the Lord to return!**

5. “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. [...] Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’” (Matt 25:31,34). **Our Lord will return to take possession of His kingdom, and at the last hour a decisive battle begins.** For this, the Lord needs to strengthen us and fully head up the church, to head all things through it. **The church is the body of Christ, a living organism that needs to be governed by the word of life and the fellowship of life.**
6. “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head— Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Eph 4:15-16). Unlike the world, the church follows the truth in love, for through the truth, God can dispense His love. **The ultimate goal of this process is to build up the church.**
7. The church is also used to fight for the kingdom of God, to enthrone Christ. Therefore, she wages a fierce struggle against the devil, the principalities and powers, the rulers of the world system, the darkness and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph 6:11-12). Satan will do everything not to lose his dominion, **but through the church we will see to it that all things are headed in Christ!**

Matt 4:23; Matt 24:14; Mark 13:22; Matt 9:35-38

8. The struggle for the kingdom of God began with the Lord Jesus Himself, who came to earth to preach the gospel of the kingdom (Matt 4:23). Under the government of principalities and powers, men suffer and are sick. But we preach the gospel, bringing the word of the kingdom, justice, and peace to heal all these diseases! But let us not underestimate the tricks of the enemy, for he will use his entire arsenal to hit, deceive, and confuse us. **Let us remain in the fellowship of life so as not to be deceived!**
9. The establishment of the kingdom of God on earth begins with preaching the gospel of the kingdom. This is the reason the church goes to the streets. For this, we need workers: “Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest’” (Matt 9:37-38). Thank God we have GPC (Gospel Perfecting Center) with its various units. If you have not gone to GPC yet, we encourage you to go. And if you have already been to GPC, call someone to go! **We need a large group of workers to preach the gospel to all nations, so we will win this war.**

Matt 24:24,4-8; Dan 7:24-25, 9:27, 11:36-37; Rev 13:1-15, 12-18, 19:19-20; 2 Thess 2:3-6

10. No one is immune to the deceptions of the enemy: “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matt 24:24). Therefore, **we need to always remain in the fellowship of life, receiving the word of life, which makes us resistant to attacks.** In our day, we hear about wars, rumors of war, kingdom rising against kingdom, famine, and earthquakes (Matt 24:4-8). These are signs that the end is coming. We are in the last hour, in the final moments, but it is not yet the end. Right before the Lord's second coming, the antichrist will arise, as prophesied in Daniel chapters 7, 9, and 11.
11. At some point in the not-so-distant future, a powerful man will arise who will establish a covenant with many for seven years (Dan 9:27). In the first half of these seven years, the nations will have peace thanks to him. However, in the latter half of this period, he will break this covenant and “shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering” (Dan 9:27). This means that

the temple in Jerusalem will have been built. **Most likely, this covenant will be made to the building the temple in Jerusalem, so the sacrifices in the temple will be resumed.** This will be done until the time when the antichrist breaks the covenant, in the middle of the seven years, when he will place the abomination inside the temple, his own image.

12. The antichrist “[...] shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done” (Daniel 11:36). He will be the man of lawlessness, the son of perdition, who will change laws, blaspheme God, and deceive men (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). All this will happen, but it will come to an end: “Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. [...] And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses” (Rev. 19:11,14). **The overcomers will be with the Lord, and they will defeat the antichrist!**
13. All of this will occur in the near future, and **probably many of us will witness the rise of the antichrist.** However, **we long to be raptured!** When he breaks the covenant, the great tribulation will begin for three and a half years, but before that the male child will be raptured to the throne of God! **The male child is the strong part, the young people who have overcome the evil one by the word of God. We want to be part of it!**

Rev 12:9-12; 2 Tim 3:1-5; 1 John 2:19; 1 Cor 11:18-19; Deut 8:2; Heb 4:12

14. However, **before the emergence of the prophesied antichrist, many types of antichrists will still appear during the church era.** One of its characteristics is false spirituality, to deceive people to achieve their dark personal goals. Their search for popularity or power is used as an instrument in Satan's hands to prevent the advancement of God's kingdom.
15. **By the appearance of antichrists, we know that it is the last hour,** because the devil is full of wrath knowing that he has little time left (Rev 12:12). He has no way to control the work of God that advances throughout the earth through the word of life, which produces the fellowship of life globally. **Through the word of life, received by the saints, God's work is done.** The enemy is desperate, because there is no way to stop it. Thus, he will use all possible means to shoot us down and discourage us. Let's stay firm!
16. In the year of Paul's departure, he warned that in the last days: “Perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Tim 3:1-5). **Many of the antichrists, who are fighting against the will of the Lord and His government, will have come out of our midst, but they never were of us** (1 John 2:19). These are those who reject in the word of life and do not remain in the fellowship of life. **That is why it is so important to never leave this fellowship. Those approved, in 1 Corinthians /11:19, are those who recognize the word that comes through the channel chosen by the Lord.**
17. **The Lord can make tests, to see what is in our heart,** as he did with the people of Israel: And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not” (Deut 8:2). God has a purpose when he makes us go through humiliation or resentment. He wants to know if we love ourselves or Him more, if we preserve our ego more than the kingdom of God, if we will keep His commandments.

The whole test is to recognize that we have nothing to hold on to except the word of God (v. 3). We can't even trust our heart, because it is desperately corrupt. We can only trust the word of God, which keeps us alive.

18. Sometimes we find ourselves very pure in our service to the Lord, but only the living and effective word of God can discern what is hidden in our thoughts and in our heart. **We need the word even to get to know each other! Therefore, let us remain in the fellowship of life, because this is our greatest protection.**

Acts 20:29-30; 1 John 1:1-3; 2:20; Ex 30:23-25; Phil 1:19; John 7:37-39, 14:16-17, 16:13-15; Eph 1:13

19. Paul already knew that some who were by his side would come to revolt against him: "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:29-30). The mode of operation is always the same: Satan uses men who have ambition, want to do their own work, do not accept the word that comes from the apostles, and want to raise disciples for themselves. **Their departure proves that they were not of us, because if they were they would have remained with us, that is, with the apostles in the fellowship of the body of Christ.** They are people who, for untended reasons, did not accept the Word of life announced by the apostle John, therefore, they did not remain in the fellowship of the body. What they promote is against the interest of Christ. They are used by the Devil to deceive the unwary and cause damage to God's work.

20. We see that we are vulnerable to many attacks at this moment of the final battle. What to do, then? Thanks to God, He gave us something: **"But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things"** (1 John 2:20). The anointing that is in us warns us if we take the wrong path. The word "anointing" (*chrisma*) comes from the word "Anointed" (*Christos*), which is Christ. The anointing refers to the sacred oil of the anointing of Exodus 30:23-25, which was used to anoint all the items of the tabernacle, and by the priests to begin the functioning of their service to God. **It is necessary that we are anointed to serve God, for this He gave us the anointing that comes from the Holy One, who is Christ!**

21. By the redemptive work of Christ on the cross and by His glorification in resurrection, He became the Spirit who flows from within everyone who believes in Him, like rivers of living water (John 7:37-39), the abundant provision of the church (Phil 1:10). He is the Comforter, the Spirit of truth (John 14:16-17) who will guide us to all truth and announce to us the things that are to come (John 16:13-15).

22. **John announced the Word of life, which is Christ, as eternal life, which he introduced those who received it into the fellowship of life** (1John 1:1-3). This is the same word of truth, the gospel of salvation that Paul preached, and whoever believed received the Spirit (Eph 1:13-14). That's why John said that we have the knowledge of the truth, the word of truth that we receive from the apostles.

John 17:17; 1 John 2:20-25; John 8:44

23. The anointing that comes from the Holy One acts within us according to the truth, which is the word of God (John 17:17). **The truth that comes from the word of God guides us, sanctifies us, and fills us with the reality of God.** Every time we act and walk according to the truth, we feel the action of anointing that gives us a feeling of pleasure and peace, like when you apply a moisturizer on dry skin. On the other hand, every time we act on ourselves, or by our logic, the anointing stops acting. **It is better to stop when we no**

longer have the anointing acting on us and return. Let us learn to act by anointing and to be sensitive to it.

24. In the battle of kingdoms, one of the enemy's weapons is the lie (1 John 2:21), while we have the truth, Satan's weapon to strike us is the lie: "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44). **Currently we have the internet, which transmits the prophetic word to the whole earth and helps us preach the gospel and take care of people.** At the same time, it can be used to spread lies and slander. If we read these things we get dejected. **Thank God we are on the side of the truth.** No lie ever comes from the truth. The truth is solid and will never end, while the lie has a fixed deadline.
25. **Emotional resilience is important.** The enemy will spread thousands of lies about us. If we keep looking at this, we will be discouraged, dejected, and out of combat. **May the Lord strengthen us by His word and give us emotional resistance!** Our beloved brother Dong was an example of resilience. He suffered a lot, his ministry was slandered, but he was firm until the end doing the will of the Lord. We encourage our teenagers, who did not know him, to read the book "Resilience" to know a little more about our recent history.
26. In each era, the enemy uses different weapons, and we are not unnoticed. May the Lord make us resilient so that the enemy does not hit us. **Let us stay together helping each other, comforting each other and fighting together! We are for the truth!**
27. "Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father" (1 John 2:24). When he mentions "which you heard from the beginning," John refers to what he wrote at the beginning of his letter: **let us continue to receive the word of life that brings eternal life and that introduces us to fellowship with John, and with the Father and His Son.** We are not strong enough to fight against the liar, **but if we remain in the word of life and in the fellowship of life, we will overcome the evil one.**

1 Tim 1:3-4; Acts 2:42; 2 Cor 11:3

28. The action of the antichrist at the end of the first century, at the time of John, was the spread of the heresy of *Cerinto*, a man of Jewish descent and educated in Alexandria. He denied the miraculous conception of Jesus and taught that, after his baptism, the Christ came down on Jesus in the form of a dove and that, later, he announced the unknown Father and performed miracles. But that, near the end of his ministry, the Christ once again left Jesus, and that he suffered and rose from death, while Christ remained impassive (unable to suffer) as a spiritual being. This is a heresy.
29. When the church moved away from the principle that is in Acts 2:42, it ceased to receive the teaching of the apostles with simplicity. This opened the door to the different teachings and allowed destructive heresies to penetrate (1 Tim 1:3-4). **This heresy was a mixture of Judaism, Gnosticism and Christianity, in short, it led man to the logic of knowledge and human wisdom.** This action corrupted man's mind and made him depart from simplicity and purity with respect to Christ and the word of God (2 Cor 11:3). The church lost the reverent love for the word that came from the apostle and the degradation began. **To prevent this from happening, let us remain in the fellowship of life, so eternal life circulates in us. This is the promise of eternal life for those who believe.**

1 John 2:26

30. Satan is the father of lies who deceives us. How to resist and not be deceived? **Only by remaining in what we have heard from the beginning: we must continue in the word of life, in the eternal life that circulates among us and in the fellowship of life.** This saves us from many deceptions from the enemy, making us firm and resilient fighters to fight in the final era like last-minute workers. **Let us continue together in the battle helping each other to remain in the fellowship of life. Thus, we will win the fight and Christ will take possession of the kingdom!**