

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 2ND, 2019 // BOOK OF 2 JOHN

As we grow into people who look like Christ, we're called to know truth, to walk in truth, and to protect the truth—all while displaying unconditional, radical, Christ-like love.

KNOWING THE TRUTH (VV. 1-3)

John (the "elder") writes this letter to the "elect lady and her children"—most likely this is a letter written to a sister church of the church in Ephesus.

- John states his love for this lady, and also states that every person who loves truth loves her (vs. 1).
- The relationship John has with this church and its members is founded on truth that "abides in us and will be with us forever" (vs. 2).

There is a unique, sacred love and bond that Christians share that's unlike any friendships we may have with anyone else in the world.

- What we have in common is the same Holy Spirit that lives in each of us who have born again through our faith in Jesus.
- Not only does truth abide in us forever— "grace, mercy, and peace will be with us" (vs. 3) as well.

These 3 terms summarize the progression of the plan of salvation— God's grace caused Him to grant mercy, which results in us experiencing peace.

- These things only come from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, in "truth and love" (vs. 3).
- Truth and love are the foundational elements to our faith— we must learn to walk in both.

In these 3 short verses, the word "truth" gets repeated 4 times.

- John is emphasizing to these readers the importance of knowing truth, walking in truth, and protecting the truth in our everyday lives.
- We have to be committed to truth because we exist in a world which is in the realm of Satan (1 John 5:19) who is the "father of lies" and has blinded the minds of the unbelieving.

HOW DO WE KNOW TRUTH?

- We must know the nature of truth— thoughts, ideas, or statements are only true if they correspond to reality.
- We must be willing to search for truth and accept whatever it says (even if that means we might be wrong).
- We must have a standard for absolute truth, and we must be committed to knowing what it says.
- We can only know what is true when we personally know the One who claimed to be the very standard of truth.

WALKING IN TRUTH (VV. 4-6)

John writes to this sister church telling them how happy he is to see so many of them "walking in the truth".

- Walking is a frequent New Testament metaphor for the Christian life— "walking" is how we live Monday-Saturday.
- What our faith means to us outside the walls of the church building may matter more than how we express it inside the church building.

John is a true pastor— when those he's mentored and disciplined are "walking in the truth" as God has commanded, he's filled with joy and pleasure.

- The command John reminds us of that we've had from the beginning is that, "we love one another" (vs. 5).
- This is how we practice the truth of Jesus— we demonstrate we know the truth by how we love.

What is love? Love plays itself out in the real world in obedience to God's commandments (vs. 6).

- Obedience glorifies God, it's best for others, and it's best for us.
- Everything God asks of us is intended to give something good to us or keep us from harm.
- We show our love for God (and for others) by how we obey the commands of God— if there's not much obedience, there might not be much love.

HOW DO WE WALK IN TRUTH?

- We believe the truth of who we truly are in Christ and reject anything else that's said about us.
- We believe the truth about God's commands and His Word— they're not

burdensome and they're the path to the life we truly want to live.

- We commit to loving God and others through obedience— with or without any accompanying emotions.
- We get truthful and vulnerable about the distance between who we are and who we want to be in Christ— and we let God's unconditional love and Holy Spirit grow and change us into people of truth and love.

PROTECTING THE TRUTH (VV. 7-11)

Just as John warned the Ephesian church in his 1st letter, he now warns this sister church of deceivers who "don't confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh" (vs. 7).

- Someone who can't pass the first part of the 3 part "heresy test" John gave in his first letter (1. Jesus was fully man, 2. Jesus was fully God, 3. under the authority of the witness of the apostles) is called "the antichrist" and a deceiver.

John warns this church to "watch yourselves", so that "you may not lose what we have worked for" (vs. 8).

- Like every faithful pastor, John was concerned that those under his care would lose ground spiritually and undo all the hard work he'd put into them as a teacher of truth.
- They might lose any spiritual rewards if they departed from the truth (vs. 8).

John then talks about teachers who, "go on ahead" or "go too far" in their teaching.

- This is referring to any doctrine that goes beyond the established bounds of teaching & instruction given to us by Scripture.
- It's a warning against teachers who add to God's Word things that aren't consistent with Scripture.
- Such people who don't abide in the teaching of Christ, "don't have God" (vs. 9).

How are we to respond to a teacher who doesn't teach the true "teaching of Christ"?

- John sounds a little harsh when he says, "don't receive him into your house or give him any greeting" (vs. 10).
- In the 1st century, traveling was difficult and traveling teachers or missionaries had to depend on others to house or feed them.

John is urging his readers not to "fund" these false teachers by housing or feeding them.

- To do so would be to "take part in his wicked works" and aid in the spread of false teaching.
- This is NOT saying we can't talk to those caught in error in an attempt to share truth with them. This could be a believer refusing to attend a Christian conference where one of the speakers is known for teaching false doctrine.

HOW DO WE PROTECT TRUTH?

- We acknowledge the differences between major & minor doctrinal issues— we major on the majors & we minor on the minors.
- We recognize that not every teaching that claims to be "Christian" is actually Christian— and we know how to spot the difference and stay away.
- In love, patience, and humility we prayerfully have the tough conversations with open Bibles IN PERSON.

TALKING FACE TO FACE (VV. 12-13)

John had so much more he wanted to write to them, but he tells he'd rather not write it on paper and ink— he'd rather talk with them face to face.

- This maturity speaks of John's heart for them as a pastor and spiritual father.
- In our modern age of technology, it can be so easy to push aside actual, physical human interaction in favor of electronic communication.

A text message, an e-mail, or a social media comment is no substitute for face-to-face human interaction.

- Often people hide behind a cell phone or a keyboard and type things in a message that they'd NEVER say in person.
- Often comments and messages get misconstrued and misinterpreted when they aren't face to face because so much communication is nonverbal.

The point is this— actual, physical, face-to-face human interaction is the best way in which to have real conversations about faith, God, and life with those that you care about.

- In this way, our "joy may be complete"— we were created for intimacy with God and each other, and it's a shame that we've lost that value in our culture.

Am I committed to learning, studying, and knowing the absolute truth of God's Word?

Am I committed to walking in truth by showing my love for God and others through obedience Monday-Saturday, regardless of my feelings or emotions?

Am I committed to protecting the truth and prayerfully correcting falsehood in humility and gentleness?