

2 John 1-13

“Accept The Truth, Reject The Lie”

Truth and love; like 2 equal weights placed on a scale they create perfect balance. with out love truth quickly resolves to rigid *legalism*, yet with out truth love translates into tolerance and out of control *liberalism*; we need both. We need the truth of God rooted deeply *in* us and the love of God coursing fervently *through* us; that’s the emphasis that John seeks to highlight in this his brief but 2nd epistle.

Now if while we’re working our way through it, it sounds strangely familiar that’s because having just come out 1st John you’re going to discover that much of what he wrote to them there has been summarized and re-emphasized here. But let me just encourage you not to grow weary of hearing some of these things over and over and over again because repetition is very valuable tool when it comes to our learning something. It helps to ingrain a concept, a principle or a precept into us, it has a way of embedding it into us. Peter was all about repetition, remember that? He wanted to make sure that those to whom he ministered were readily rooted in the things that would make for them an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God. So he said, “...*I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.*” 2 Peter 1:12-15 Peter says, “you’ve been told before, you know it and are even established (anchored) in it, but I’m telling you again now and as a matter of fact I’m going to write it down so that after I’m gone you’ll have it then to.” I think that we should be careful to deduct from that that reminders are important! Paul said something similar in Phil 3:1 when he said, “*For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.*” So be it Peter, be it Paul, or be it John these guys knew the importance of reemphasizing the point. So rather than kick against it, or be offended by it or bored with it, we do well to humbly receive it. I suppose the day that you’ve been perfected in truth and in love you know longer need the reminder, but as for the rest of us, we can use it ☺.

Something else I want to quickly address here is this. How is it that we know that the apostle John wrote this letter? After all he doesn't name himself anywhere in it; well there are a few things that point to that fact; early church tradition credits John for the writing (for 1). Also I think you'll discover that as you make a study of the word of God, you begin to learn the personality's of those who penned it. Though we believe that every word of every sentence of the word of God is inerrant and infallible equally true is the fact that God utilized the unique personality of each person penning it to express His heart, His will and His word to us.

God didn't make these guys robotic and dictate to them in mechanical fashion but rather the Spirit of God inspired them to write the word of God for the people of God and in that He utilized the expression of their own unique personality. When you hear a quote from a certain passage you might think, "Oh, that sounds like Isaiah, that sounds like the person of the apostle Paul." You become familiar with the personality of the one who penned it. This letter has the very distinct personality of the apostle John, stressing truth and love.

Ultimately it doesn't matter who wrote it instrumentally, what matters is that it's the word of God, inspired of His Spirit personally therefore we receive it. So we read beginning in Vs 1-2

Few things here; undoubtedly you're beginning to see this emphasis of truth instantly emerge as John mentions it 3x's in these 1st 2 verses and he'll mention it twice more in the next 2.

But he references himself here as "The Elder" and he writes to this "elect lady and her children." Of course the questions come up, why did he refer to himself as "the elder" and who is this "elect lady"? Well, as it pertains to the title I think that we need to realize that by the time John wrote this letter he was the last living apostle, he himself approaching 100 yrs of age. So I don't think he writes this as though he *outranks* any of the other apostles therefore he's "The Elder" but rather that he *outlived* all of the other apostles, he was the last apostolic authority in the church, he was "The elder." So was the title used in the sense of office or the sense of age? I would say, "Yes" probably both.

Next question, “Who is this ‘elect lady and her children’ whom he writes to?” Again I’m not sure if it’s worth majoring on, it’s a minor point, if you think it’s a literal lady who held a prominent position, that’s great. If you think John was personifying a church and its congregation, that’s great, you’re in great company either way. Perhaps the balance is that it was a lady in whose house the church met, so that he was speaking to her personally along with the body collectively who assembled there; we don’t really know.

What we do know is that whoever she was she was loved by those who were of the truth. John says, “I love you in truth as do all those who know the truth, because of the truth which abides *in us*, and will be *with us* forever.” So once again we note the overwhelming emphasis on truth right out of the shoot. What we’ll discover is that there were deceivers/liars in their midst so John is stressing the truth so as to shine light on deceivers.

But what’s he talking about here when he stresses *truth*? Basically it’s a word that means, “reality” as opposed to something that *appears* one way initially but in fact is quite different ultimately.

We know that as it pertains to truth we can make application to Christ who *is* “the truth” (Jhn 14:6) of course God’s word is “truth” (Jhn 17:17) and He’s given us the “Spirit of truth” (Jhn 14:17) to teach us and bring illumination/revelation of the truth to us.

But we also need to realize that truth isn’t simply an objective revelation from the Father generally but in reality it’s also a subjective experience for our lives personally. Meaning that’s it much more than simply an acknowledgment or mental assent to a set of doctrines (though that’s certainly important) but that your life/my life as a believer is literally *controlled* by a love for truth and a desire to see truth magnified.

Certainly we can see this passion in John's writing here as he underscores the importance of truth over and over and over again right here in the opening of his letter. What that does for us is create a stark contrast when he begins to expose (with a certain ferocity) the deceivers. You would *never* find John saying all religions were true in one way or another and that we shouldn't be critical as long as people were *sincere*. Listen, the difference between truth and error is the difference between life and death. Now you can tolerate the error and "love" someone straight to hell, or you can risk the offense by sharing with them and showing to them the truth. *Not* condescendingly or in a way that brings them to a position of inferiority, but in love out of concern and compassion for their soul.

Something else I want to point out before we pick up the pace is the eternal nature of truth. Notice, "it lives (or abides) in us and will be with us *forever*." Truth is not a relative substance, "Well it may be true for you, it's not true for me" as though truth can wax and wane, or change from circumstance to circumstance. Not so, truth remains constant and carries through eternity; heaven and earth will pass away but the word of God will never by no means pass away.

Truth is that which binds us together as believers, it's not social compatibility, political compatibility or anything else, we're brought together by a common truth (which of course is found in Christ). Lies/deception draw a line of separation, truth binds us together.

Vs3

So in one respect John issues a typical greeting, but in another respect he expands on it just a bit by adding "mercy" to "grace and peace" and he adds certainty to it when he says that these things "*will be*" with you. But notice the condition that's attached to it, where is it that the grace, the mercy and the peace of God will be with you? They're found in the arena of "truth and love." God's grace isn't real prevalent in the arena of lies and deception, His mercy doesn't extend to far into the realm of judgmental criticism and His peace doesn't really wash over those who are filled with hatred and bitterness.

However as it pertains to the sphere of truth and love...there you'll find the grace and the mercy and the peace of God abounding in an above and beyond measure kind of way. Grace being given that which I don't deserve (everlasting life, forgiveness of sin, blessing and goodness), mercy being not given what I do deserve (judgment, eternal separation from God, and to be void of any symptom of goodness and/or compassion toward me). Peace being that which comes *to* me once God's grace and mercy have been dispensed *upon* me. I've made peace *with God* through the blood of Jesus Christ having received by faith the work of His sacrifice on my behalf, now I have the peace *of* God that guards my heart and my mind through Christ.

Of course by issuing this blessing both from the Father and from the Son, John places Jesus on par with the Father and makes a case for His deity. Jesus was fully God, and fully Man; you guys the Christian faith stands or falls on the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ. If He's God alone He can't die in the place of man, but if He's Man alone that makes Him a sinner therefore unqualified to save us no matter how unique or gifted He may've been. He *must be* God come in human flesh or the Christian faith is all lies and billions of people throughout history have wasted and thrown away their lives for nothing and we're on the same boat. It's critical that we understand that Jesus is 100% God, and He's 100% Man.

Vs3-4

Here we see the shepherd's heart, the pastor's heart in the apostle John, rejoicing to see people walking in truth. That is, they're leading their lives, conducting their affairs in a manner that accords with the word of God; with integrity and uprightness of heart. Walking in truth; which is synonymous with walking with the Lord, cultivating and keeping intimacy with the Lord: conversely when you see a believer rebelling against God's word, refusing to submit to God's word, it's heart breaking.

The fact of the matter is that we really don't have the right to exercise a choice in the matter as believers, we simply impose our own will over that of the Father. Because the Father (notice) has *commanded* that we walk in the truth; that is obediently, submissively to His word. John is stoked to find some folks doing that, so the commendation goes out before the exhortation (always a good rule of thumb by the way).

As a general rule if you need to issue forth an exhortation (especially if it's a corrective exhortation) it's a good idea if possible to bring out a commendation 1st. Why? Because you want people to know that you really do think the best of them, you really are for and not against them and your interest in them is for their benefit. John says, "Hey you guys haven't only learned it, you've lived it." What a great word of encouragement, often times because we sit here and learn it we think we've got it. In reality when we learn it, but then don't allow that to translate to living it we only bring ourselves into a greater accountability because to whom much is given much more is required...

A lot of people know it from here (their head) but they're not living it from here (their heart), and it's tragic. We're not to just learn truth; we're to live it, that is to walk in it.

Vs5-6

Really we're simply underscoring here that which I already stated; the evidence of my love for God will be my ready obedience to the *word* of God. Jesus said it like this, "*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.*" John 14:21

John says, "I'm not saying anything new here, it's the same thing we've been learning from the moment the gospel was given to man, we're to love one another; and that love will be demonstrated in non self seeking sacrificial works toward the people of God and willing (that is non reluctant) obedience to the word of God. and Notice it's a *one another* command, there needs be reciprocity happening here, a mutual exchange of love (if you will) between the body of Christ; of course the best way I can serve you is through being obedient to the word of God, taking up my cross, sacrificing myself, speaking with grace, sharing the truth, serving as unto the Lord... You see true love will walk in obedience to the word of God.

Vs7-9

Notice John realizes that there (even in his day) were no small amount of people out there who would readily lead you astray if given the chance. He says, "Many" deceivers have gone out into the world. There are all kinds of people who would point you to either an alternate Christ or something other than Christ altogether.

John says, “Listen, don’t tolerate it or put up with it.” The mentality of “If I really love them I should accept them regardless of their beliefs” is hogwash, it’s nonsense, what kind of love lets someone believe a lie that will ultimately destroy them? That’s not love, it’s indifference which is the total opposite of love; if you love someone you’ll be truthful with them, not tolerant of them. Now when I say that we’re not to be tolerant that doesn’t mean we’re not to be kind and/or courteous, of course we are. But courtesy and compromise are two totally different things; I can be cordial toward your person and in no way condone your position.

The bottom line here is what’s a person’s perspective of Jesus Christ? If He doesn’t hold to a biblical perspective, than everything else he/she has to say goes right out the window with their false perspective and they’re a deceiver. Now I’m not saying that we can’t agree to disagree on certain biblical elements. You want to hold to post trib or something that’s up to you, that doesn’t make you a heretic. You want to debate sovereignty Vs freewill that’s your prerogative, what I want to know is what do you think of the virgin birth of Christ, the sinless life of Christ, the deity of Christ, the atoning work of His death and the reality of His bodily resurrection?

Because those aren’t things we can’t have a difference of opinion in and still be considered brothers or sisters.

Now where it says, “Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh” it’s in the present tense meaning that it’s not only saying that He came in the flesh, but that He’ll come *again* in the flesh. That Jesus will return bodily to this earth. Someone says to you that Jesus wasn’t God come in the flesh, and that He’s not God who will come again in the flesh (Such as J.W.s, Mormons, Muslims etc) they’re deceived, and/or deceivers and as such an antichrist. Meaning either against Christ, or they offer an alternate Christ as opposed to the Christ of the bible. Some people don’t seem to have hostility toward Christ, they simply offer a different Jesus, a substitute Jesus who was Michael the arch angel, or the brother of Lucifer, or simply a prophet of some kind. Don’t tolerate it in “love” separate yourself from it in truth.

“Don’t lose the things we’ve worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.” Be aware of what’s going on around you and take heed, don’t lose ground by being deceived, you’ve worked hard up to this point to safeguard and walk in the truth, keep forward momentum. You know it’s easy to lose all that you’ve gained by simply making friends with the wrong people. The bible says, “*The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.*” Prov 12:26 Believe me when I tell you that as it pertains to eternity you want all that God has for you, safeguard the truth; don’t be so open minded that you become empty headed... false doctrine will destroy the spiritual ground you’ve gained.

Vs9

The word “transgresses” here speaks of “going beyond” or “passing beyond the assigned limits” we cannot go beyond the teaching of Christ concerning who He is and what He’s done for us. There is nothing noble, nothing admirable about a *false* Jesus. If you deny the biblical Jesus, you deny both the Father and the Son, if you don’t have the Jesus of the bible, you don’t have the God of the bible; period. They’re a package deal, and should one go beyond what the bible plainly teaches about Jesus they transgress.

Often times they’ll do so under the guise of being progressive thinkers, getting outside of the dark ages of ancient mentalities. “God’s not limited to the bible, He’s free to do what He wants.” And professing to be wise they become fools, God will never move or minister in a way that goes against the grain of His word. Anyone who claims otherwise is either deceived or a deceiver.

Vs10-11

To the Ephesians Paul said it like this, “*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*” Ephesians 5:11 Couple things here before we move into our close. 1st of all John isn’t saying that we should have nothing to do with those who’ve been caught in the web of a cult. He’s specifically referencing teachers or those who advocate a false doctrine.

If you work with a J.W. pray for them, show the love of Christ to them. But these folks that come to your door on Saturday, believe me when I tell you they have an agenda and they've been trained and their intent is to propel this unbiblical doctrine. Don't buy their magazines, don't say, "Well have a great day" or "God bless ya see ya later" don't in anyway send the signal that you're ok with what they're doing. Again tell them you'll pray for them if you like but don't in anyway support them. You can be kind, you should be kind, but don't condone them.

Again in this context the idea was probably that of giving someone a voice in the home fellowship who propelled a false doctrine. But nonetheless we're not to entertain people who promote a false Jesus. We're too readily accept the truth, but you should just readily reject the lie.

Vs12-13

If it be a congregation that he was writing to I think it's important that we realize through this word of encouragement that the body of Christ isn't limited to our church, or our denomination or whatever. We've got family that fellowship in other places and we're all in this thing together. So though we don't greet the deceiver, we will greet the believer no matter what church they call "home."

Learn the truth, live the truth, defend the truth, and walk in love. Amen? Amen.

Prayer Points:

Father we thank You for Your word. May we abide in truth and in love, we thank You for the assurance that as we do Your grace, Your mercy, and Your peace will abound to us and be at rest upon us. Help us to love one another and in so doing to glorify You, teach us to love Your word, that we might know the truth so as to recognize and reject the lie. Have *Your* way in *our* lives.

If while we've been searching the heart of God through the word of God today He's been dealing with your heart. Wanting to draw you into the truth of who He is, what His Son has done on your behalf, how He's laid down His life that you might have eternal life and you're done with the deception of this world and are ready to walk in the truth of Jesus Christ Than you can give your heart to Jesus right here, and right now.