

## Sunday Morning Message

June 20, 2021

*2 John – Love That's Rooted in the Truth*

Text – 2 John

Congregational Reading – 2 John

### Introduction

Love and Truth – Sometimes the two seem to be contrary or opposite one to the other. Some Christians believe that love is all that matters – “all you need is love.” Others would claim that Truth is supreme. Some churches sometimes emphasize Truth over love and others place the priority on love. The fact is, love and truth are not mutually exclusive. In fact, true Biblical love needs to be rooted, or grounded in Truth. This little thirteen verse letter was written by the Apostle John nearly two thousand years ago to emphasize the co-dependence that love and truth have with each other. Biblical love is a *Love That Is Rooted in the Truth*.

Both 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John seem to be postscripts to 1<sup>st</sup> John. No new subject are introduced. 2<sup>nd</sup> John is written to an unidentified person known only as “the elect lady,” and her children. While this letter could have been written to an particular person and her children, it is also possible that “the elect lady” refers to a particular local church; or, perhaps it could be that it was written to a family that also had a church that was meeting in their house.

John really does not present any new truth in this second letter as he repeats or re-emphasizes some of the same themes that he discussed in his first epistle. He does, however strongly admonish his readers regarding their adherence to the Truth and their strong opposition to false doctrine. John’s concern in this letter was that no heresies be allowed to enter into the house (or church). It is important to understand that while the Bible teaches hospitality, it also limits that hospitality to those who love and obey the truth.

*"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 1:10-11)*

Paul addressed this same issue:

*"For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, **who subvert whole houses**, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." (Titus 1:10-11)*

*"For of this sort are they which **creep into houses**, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts," (2 Timothy 3:6)*

In 1<sup>st</sup> John, one of the great emphasis’s was loving one another; but in 2<sup>nd</sup> John, there is somewhat of a clarification that the love that we have for each other needs to be firmly rooted

in the Truth. Truth needs to be at the very center of our love. John was very concerned about doctrinal purity:

*"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."* (3 John 1:4)

Truth always needs to be connected with love. Paul said in his letter to the Ephesians that we are to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

This does not mean that we should not love all people at some level. Jesus said that we were to love our enemies, even those who are heretics regarding the Truth. What John is teaching here is that our fellowship with people; the people that we are close to, intimate with, need to believe what we believe about the Lord and about the Bible.

### **I. The Connection Between Love and Truth (vs. 1 – 6)**

These verses connect love with truth over and over again.

**Verse One** – John is an “elder” (πρεσβύτερος - *presbyteros*). That term was used to refer to a person who was older in age, or to a person who was given a position of authority within a local congregation. It is believed that the Apostle John was a leader and perhaps the pastor of the Church at Ephesus. He may here be writing to another local church (see v. 13).

Pastors were given the responsibility of teaching the Truth – the Word of God - within the local church:

*"(11) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (14) That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: (16) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (17) This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, (18) Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: (19) Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (20) But ye have not so learned Christ; (21) If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: (22) That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; (23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; (24) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."* (Ephesians 4:11-24)

**Verse Two** – Notice that John states that the Truth will be around forever. Jesus said:

*"(35) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24:35)*

Peter wrote:

*"(22) Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: (23) Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter 1:22-23)*

**Verses Three and Four** – John will later state in 3 John:

*"(3) For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. (4) I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." (3 John 1:3-4)*

**Verses Five and Six** – John clarifies somewhat a repeated theme that was written in his first epistle, which was that believers were commanded to love one another (1 John 2:10 – 11; 3:10 – 12, 14 – 15; 4:7 – 8, 11 – 12, 20 – 21; 5:1).

Here we must re-clarify that the love referred to here is the love that should be expressed between brothers and sisters in Christ. We should love everyone in a general way, including even our enemies. But, there should be a special connection – and intimacy – between those that belong to Jesus. This is especially true when believers are facing persecution and are under attack from the world. This kind of love was immediately apparent within the Church at Jerusalem after the Holy Spirit filled them:

*"(42) And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. (43) And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. (44) And all that believed were together, and had all things common; (45) And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. (46) And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, (47) Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:42-47)*

Notice here again that the Biblical concept of love is always more than just mere feeling. Biblical love will always be manifested or expressed in tangible action. *"For God so loved ... that He gave."*

The love that believers had to each other caused them to protect and provide for one another.

## **II. The Concern That Love Would Overshadow Truth (That Love Would Be Disconnected from the Truth – vs. 7 – 13)**

Notice here that John is warning the believers at this particular church to be Biblically discerning in their expression of love. He wanted to make sure that this church was not intimately associated with those who did not believe and teach the doctrine of Christ. Primarily, the focus here would be on those who were false teachers, but the same principle could apply to those

who were abusing the doctrine of grace by living their lives apart from the Truth. In other words, they believed that because they were saved, they could live as they pleased, ignoring the clear moral teachings of Scripture.

**Verse Eight** - Notice the clear warning given here regarding the loss of reward. True believers are secure in Christ – they cannot lose their salvation. However, they can lose their eternal rewards. Rewards are sometimes referred to as crowns.

**The Bible speaks specifically of five “crowns” that are awarded to faithful believers:**

1 **Striver’s Crown / Incorruptible Crown** (I Corinthians 9:24, 25)

*"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." (1 Corinthians 9:24-25)*

2 **Soulwinner’s Crown / Crown of Rejoicing** (I Thessalonians 2:19; II Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 4:1; Luke 15:7, 10)

*"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (1 Thessalonians 2:19)*

3 **Soldier’s Crown / Crown of Righteousness** (II Timothy 4:6-8)

*"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Timothy 4:6-8)*

4 **Sufferer’s Crown / Crown of Life** (James. 1:12; Revelation 2:10)

*"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1:12)*

5 **Shepherd’s Crown / Crown of Glory** (I Peter 5:4)

*"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Peter 5:1-4)*

Jesus warned the Church at Philadelphia:

*"(11) Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."  
(Revelation 3:11)*

Believers will someday have to give an account to the Lord for their lives at the Judgment Seat (or Bema Seat) of Christ (Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10):

*"(11) For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (12) Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; (13) Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. (14) If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. (15) If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."* (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

**Verses Nine thru Eleven** – John makes it very clear that we as a church, and as individual believers, are only supposed to be close to and support people who believe and promote the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

### **Conclusion – Practical Thoughts**

#### **1. Immerse Yourself in the Truth and Separate from Falsehood –**

*"(1) Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. (2) But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (3) And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (4) The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. (5) Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. (6) For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."* (Psalm 1:1-6)

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Avoid the Philosophies of this World

#### **2. Keep Truth As the Center of Your Home and Family**

Make sure that your children are learning the Truth

Illustrate – Dad's need to take the lead in the area of teaching the Truth. Do Family devotions.

Guard your home against any kind of doctrinal heresy or worldly philosophy that goes against the Truth.

Illustrate – much of what we are entertained with on television espouses philosophies contrary to God's Truth.

Live the Truth in front of your family. Be the right example. Be real. Make church a priority.

There should not be a great gulf fixed between love and Truth. Truth and love must be merged together if your children are going to survive in these very dark, last days that we are living in.