

2 John B 2018

Friends, as we study through the New Testament book by book, we discover a very clear and very necessary connection between truth and love.

- 1 Timothy 1:5 tells us that Love is the goal of our instruction in the truth.
- 1 Corinthians 13:6, tells us that Love rejoices with the truth
- Ephesians 4:15, tell us that Love should shape how we speak the truth.
- 1 John 5:2 tells us that Truth Shapes how we are to demonstrate love.

As I said last week IN this second Epistle, John clearly displays the interdependence of these divine endowments of love and truth.

- Consider the words of Warren Weirsbe who said: **“Truth without love is brutality and love without truth is hypocrisy”**

I think it is safe to say that Truth is the foundation of pure Christian Love and Love is the sweet fruit of Biblical Truth. I read this week somewhere that:

- Truth is the flame of the indwelling Spirit that gives light to the mind.
- And love is the corresponding heat that radiates from that flame of truth giving warmth to the soul.
- Where the warmth of love is missing you can be sure that the truth has been extinguished.

I think it's necessary whenever we are speaking of love to provide a clear definition because every generation seems to redefine love in their own terms.

- Those of you who are my age might remember that infamous line from the 1970 movie **“Love Story.”** Where Allie McGraw said to Ryan O'Neil **“Love means never having to say you're sorry.”**
- After 38 years of married life I think I could safely say that statement is not based on truth. Because I love my wife, I frequently express remorse with the words, **“I'm sorry.”** That was the 1970's How is love defined today?

IN his commentary on 2 John, Douglas Sean O'Donnell writes:

“Today love is defined by “the cult of ‘tolerance.’” Which is the moralistic invention of the modern secular world. This cult borrows Christian language – such as love – and twists it to mean something very different from what Jesus intended and then accuses Christians of being arrogant, unloving and ironically unchristian. In this prevalent school of thought, love has even become a common excuse for immorality.”

- Sadly today it is considered unloving to hold a Biblical standard of gender and marriage. And many within the visible church, have abandoned the truth of God as revealed in the book of Genesis in order to embrace the Cultural definition of love.

In the minds of many people today:

- Love is Tolerance without truth.
- Love is..... Never challenging or refuting someone else's viewpoint.
- Love is Refusing to label anything as "Wrong."
- But let me ask you:

Would it be a loving thing for a Father to ignore his child's poor work ethic and never challenge him to change his behavior?

Would it be loving to disregard your teenage son's immoral exploits thinking, "That's just his way of expressing his affections."

IS it a loving thing to withhold the teaching of God's Word from your children because you don't want to force your opinion on them?

My friends, when Love is severed from Truth, it decomposes like a body that is severed from its head. It moves from benevolence to sentimentality and then from sentimentality it degenerates quickly into immorality.

This morning As we return to the book of 2 John we're going to see how the TRUTH of God's Word regulates and governs our expressions of Love. (Illustrate)

- GUYS, when you were a boy did you and your dad ever build a go-cart or a mini bike together? You patiently worked alongside of your dad for a few months, All the while dreaming of ripping up the pavement like a nascar driver.
- And when that go-cart was finally finished you jumped in and took it down the street to an empty parking lot. But after a few days of driving you realized that your dad put a governor on the carburetor.
- For those of you who don't know what a governor is, it is a device that limits the amount of gas going into the engine that your child doesn't kill himself in his new go-cart.
- WELL, John is trying to tell us that God's Revealed Truth is the governor that regulates our expressions of Christian Love.
- He is writing to a dear woman in the faith to tell her that she should withhold practical benevolence, displayed through hospitality from those who reject the truth and aggressively promote error in the church. In other words, Don't show hospitality to the Antichrist!

Here's our OUTLINE for this morning: It's a very simple one:

- The Command To Love
- The Concern of Love
- The Commendation for Love

1. The command to love

With warmth and fondness, John communicates both his own personal affection, and the love of the church to this elect lady in his opening words.

2 John 1 The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth,

- After his greeting, John labors to build on the theme of truth and love as he enters into the body of his letter, defining authentic love AS that which arises from God's revealed truth.

2 John 5 And now I ask you, dear lady — not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning — that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.

- John was not issuing a new commandment, in fact it was same commandment that was described by Moses in Deuteronomy 6, Leviticus 19. This is the same commandment that was confirmed by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 22.
- Although the commandment was from one prospective very old, that old commandment was made new in Christ.

1 John 2:7 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard.

8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

- Not only did the Lord Jesus model perfect love for us in his sinless life and atoning death; but He made it possible for us, through the grace of regeneration, to live a life of love.
- He delivered us from the bondage of sin, gave us a new heart. He placed His Spirit within us and empowered us to obey his commands.
- Remember this new commandment was recorded for us in John 13.

John 13: 34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

- And so, through the proclamation of the Gospel, those who believe are called into fellowship with God AND that fellowship with God produces the good fruit of Love IN those who believe, bringing them into fellowship with one another.

1 John 5:1 Everyone 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. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

- The chains of sin have been broken, the prison doors have been opened, now we who believe have been set free to love, even as we, ourselves have been loved!

- The Holy Spirit empowers us to treat others the way that WE would like to be treated. Our hearts have been changed so that WE consider others better than ourselves. Now in Christ we put on kindness and submit to one another in love.

All of this talk about the unbreakable bond between love and truth have led us to John's purpose for writing this particular letter.

- In light of the attacks that have been brought upon the Church by a group of False Teachers it is essential that all those who believe learn how to be wise and discerning in their expressions of brotherly love.
- That brings us to our second point, "The Concern of Love." (Vs 7)

2. The concern of love.

2 John 7 **For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.**

- Folks, this Wondrous Love, that is essentially connected to the Truth, does not imply a Gullible or Naïve Acceptance of Anyone and Everyone who Claims to know God OR represent Jesus Christ.

Let's examine the text first and then seek to apply the principles to our own lives.

- Remember the context, John is writing to a woman who serves the Lord through the gift of Hospitality. By the Grace of God she has been providing food and housing to traveling preachers and fellow believers who are in need.
- However, in her expression of Christian love she provided practical support to some of the False Teachers that John condemned in his First Epistle.
- NOW in this second letter He offers wisdom and guidance to this elect lady, reminding her that her expressions of love must be grounded in the truth.

From John's Words WE learn that Believers should not, in the name of love, support or promote those "Deceivers" who have gone out into the world.

- The word that John uses in Vs 7, that is translated "**Deceivers**" comes from the Greek "PLANOS" (Planets) the word literally means "Wanderer."
- And this word is used to describe those who wander off from the truth, those who seek to deceive the church by corrupting the Gospel.
- In His Epistle, Jude calls False Teachers "**Wandering Stars**" who are headed for the "**Black darkness of eternal judgment**" & Acts 20 Paul – "**Fierce Wolves**"
- With that kind of language in mind, it should come as no surprise that John instructs his friend, "**This Elect Lady**" to Turn Away those False Teachers when they come knocking at her door. (vs 10)

Remember that the Deceivers in John's day rejected Jesus' humanity, teaching that He was just a man, like any other man, upon whom the Christ Spirit descended at his baptism and departed before his crucifixion.

- Because these deceivers attack, the Biblical revelation of Christ John calls them Antichrists.

Friends, there have been many deceivers throughout church history who have sought to undermine the Gospel: ALL of them corrupt the Biblical revelation of Christ. (Some deny his humanity, others deny his Deity)

- Mormons reject the eternal divine nature of Christ teaching that he was a created being.
- Jehovah Witnesses believe that Jesus was and still is an angelic being, one of many “gods” (small G).
- Muslims believe that Jesus was merely a Prophet but certainly NOT God.

Throughout the years, I have seen a number of ecumenical movements arise within the larger church, that seek to promote love and unity at the expense of truth.

- Misguided leaders promote the error that unity can be obtained by Exalting Love and Abandoning Doctrine.
- My friends that goes completely against what John is teaching here in this Second Epistle.
- Frankly, I believe that sound doctrine is the Key to Christian Unity. *Paul said:*

Ephesians 4:1, **I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

- And how do we do that? By focusing on the revelation of God in Holy Scripture and the Call of God that has come through the Gospel.

4 There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call — 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Friends, the church possesses a legacy of truth that has been handed down through many generations. This truth Must be preserved and protected. Paul understood that need for protection when he exhorted his friend Timothy to guard the truth.

2 Timothy 6: 20 O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you.

2 Timothy 1: 13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

We’ve heard John’s command to love and we understand that our expressions of love must be grounded in the truth. Now as we move to our final point, the Beloved Apostle lifts our eyes to that great and final day, the day of Judgment when all of God’s children will receive a reward for the work that they have done.

- (This is the Commendation of Love)
- Now if you are like me you probably don't give a whole lot of thought or consideration to your eternal inheritance. Still in awe at the grace that saved you
- BUT John wants us to know that our acts of kindness and our displays of benevolence have eternal consequences.

2 John 8 **Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. 9 Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.**

- Using the gifts and talents that God has given us Wisely in the here and now will result in a rich reward when we pass on into glory. Of course the opposite is also true. Poor stewardship will affect our eternal reward.
- John issues two warnings here that we should consider.

The first warning deals with the reward that God is storing up for those who believe Colossians 3:23 **Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.**

- All of the redeemed will one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account for the stewardship of God's grace that He has so richly provided.

2 Corinthians 5:10 **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.**

- To be clear, this judgment is not speaking of Our salvation. Our Justification, our righteous standing before God IS NOT contingent upon our works but solely on the grace of God in Christ.
- But All those who are saved will receive an eternal reward for every act of love and obedience that is done in this present life. Jesus said that even **a cool glass of water given in His name would be eternally rewarded.**

Here John issues a warning, **"Watch Out"** be careful that you don't foolishly lose your reward by assisting or supporting those who promote a false Gospel, even if it is in the name of Jesus.

- As a Believer you want to make sure that your expressions of love, your acts of benevolence are governed by the truth of God's revealed Word.
- Don't be tricked into yielding the resources that God has provided for the furtherance of the Gospel to the false teachers who are seeking to fleece the flock of God for personal gain.
- You shouldn't open your home for Bible Study to those "Nice People" who dropped of a "Watchtower" magazine on Saturday morning. They may look harmless but they are deceivers who are actively promoting a False Christ.

Now listen, that doesn't mean that we have a license to be ignorant or abusive in any way to those individuals who are caught up in false religions. We still want to share the Gospel with them.

- We should simply speak the Truth of the Gospel and send them on their way.

Second Warning

2 John 9 **Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.**

- Those who go beyond the teaching of Christ, who exceed the divinely ordained boundaries of Biblical Truth.
- Those who fail to abide (to remain) in the teaching of Christ Prove that they DO NOT have God. They show themselves to be unregenerate proponents of error.
- Friends, there are numerous preachers today who lead others astray through their vain imaginations, their ecstatic dreams and extra-Biblical visions.
- Instead of abiding in the teachings of Christ, they expound on some new revelation, secret knowledge or special insight that they say came directly from God.

We believe that the Bible is the all sufficient, inspired, infallible Word of God. These 66 books are the divine curriculum for all teaching and instruction in the Church.

- We do recognize that there is no library in the world that could possibly contain all that there is to know about the eternal Son of God. In his Gospel John wrote:

John 21: 25 **Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.**

- Everything that we need for life and godliness is found in Christ. All that is necessary for salvation, God has freely provided for us in his Word.
- And we must be content with those things God has provided.
- John goes on to say:

10 **If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, 11 for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.**

With these words John calls the Elect Lady to practice discernment. He tells her to limit her expressions of brotherly love to those who proclaim the Truth of God's Word.

In order for us to walk continually in love and truth, we need discernment

- In its most simple definition, discernment is nothing more than the ability to decide between truth and error, between right and wrong.

- Discernment is the process of making careful distinctions in our thinking about truth. In other words, the ability to think with discernment is synonymous with an ability to think biblically.

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 teaches that it is the responsibility of every Christian to be discerning: **test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.**

The apostle John issues a similar warning when he says, "**Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world**" (1 John 4:1).

Discernment intersects the Christian life at every point. And God's Word provides us with the needed discernment about every issue of life. According to Peter, God "**has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence**" (2 Peter 1:3).

- You see, it is through the "true knowledge of Him," that we have been given everything we need to live for God's glory in this fallen world. And how else do we have true knowledge of God but through the pages of God's Word?
- We grow in discernment, we become trained in wisdom through the continual renewal of our minds by the Word of God.
- The writer of Hebrews tells us that constant study and reflection on the Word of God.

Hebrews 5: 14 **But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.**