

2 John A 2018

I'm sure that you noticed as Jeremy read through the 2nd Epistle of John that there are a number of similarities to the first epistle of John.

In fact, if you were to lay all of John's Letters side by side you couldn't help but notice the striking parallels in language, in content and in style.

- In 1 and 2nd John, the Beloved Disciple stresses the importance of Christ's command to love. That commandment which John says, **we've had from the beginning.**
- In his 2 and 3rd Epistles, John exemplifies Christian love when he addresses his Readers AS **"those whom He (personally) loves in the truth."**

Another reason for the similarities between 1 and 2 John is because both letters are dealing with the same historical situation.

- You may remember that John's main purpose for writing was to expose and denounce a Group of False Teachers; Deceivers who were assaulting the church. Let's refresh our memories.... In his first Epistle John wrote:

1 John 2:22 **Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.**

1 John 4:3 **and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.**

- And then in John's second epistle we read verse 7:

2 John Vs 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.**

Let's try to understand the connection between John's first and second epistles.

- John's First Epistle is what we would call a circular letter. It was designed to be circulated like a newspaper to all of the churches in the region.
- But John's Second Epistle is a personal letter, written to a specific individual to answer a question or a problem that had arisen out of John's first letter.

You might think of it this way. On Sunday Morning, I address the entire congregation from a portion of Scripture with the goal of instructing and edifying the entire church. All who have ears to hear.

- But then on Monday someone calls or e-mails me with a specific question that came to mind after listening to my Sunday Sermon.

You might say that 2 John is the Elder's answer to a question that came from a specific individual after she had heard the message of 1 John.

As a faithful Woman in the church, possibly a widow, this one who is called the “**Elect Lady**” had opened her home for the practice of hospitality. She provided food and shelter for visiting believers and itinerant or traveling preachers.

- Remember IN those days, there were no Red Roof Inns No Motel 6, and the Inns that did exist had a bad reputation for immorality.
- And so it was normal even expected that travelers would lodge in private homes.

Well it seems that this particular Woman, as an expression of Christian Love may have unknowingly provided hospitality to some of these False Teachers.

- Now after hearing His first epistle, She recognized the error of these heretics and asks John what she should do. And His response to her is tender and loving, but he doesn't hesitate to tell her the truth.
- Some of you may be able to relate to this woman's predicament.

Whenever a questionable teaching or erroneous doctrine arises within the church, the Body of Believers faces a difficult dilemma.

- Very often, the people who are espousing these false teachings have already made friends in the church. They may have been fellowshiping among the Believers for a period of time, And now they are found to be promoting error and living in immorality.
- What do you do? After all, you are committed to the truth of God's Word. But after examining their teaching, you're convinced that you need to challenge their errors but you really DON'T like confrontation. Nobody likes confrontation.
- SO let me ask you; Would it be Loving for You to just let them slide and hope that somehow, some way the Spirit of God would eventually correct them?
- In your heart you know YOU need to confront them. But YOU wait. And Then
- In your devotions, you read Ephesians 4 and Verse 15 seems to jump off the page at you.

Ephesians 4: 15 **Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,**

- If we want to grow up in the faith and navigate the winds and waves of various doctrines that seek to influence the church, we have to learn how to speak the Truth in Love.

One of the main points in John's Second Epistle is that truth and love are absolutely inseparable, as a matter of fact, that is the theme of his letter.

Within the first 6 verses John uses the word truth 5 times and love 4 times.

This is a very important Issue for the church TODAY. You see, there is a movement-taking place, especially among the Millennials in the visible church.

- Some call it “The Progressive Church Movement.”
- They promote a very low view of Scripture because they have bought into the worldly philosophy that says there is no such thing as absolute truth.
- You will hear them say things like, “**The Bible is human book.**” OR “**The creation story doesn’t really have to be literal in order to speak truth.**”
- They focus on feelings rather than facts so they might say, “**The Bible doesn’t really resonate with me.**”

Well my friends, over the next two weeks Lord willing, I plan to study this second epistle of John under these 2 headings:

- 1 We must walk in Truth by displaying Love
- 2 We must walk in Love by devoting ourselves to the Truth

Our Outline for today has 4 points

1. We are United in love by the Truth
2. We are Indwelt by the Truth
3. We are Blessed by the Truth
4. We are Living in the Truth

United in love by the Truth

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,**

- Remember friends, this is a personal letter, that John, “**The Elder**” is writing to a dear Sister in the Lord whom he calls “**The Elect Lady.**”
 - By using the adjective, “**Elect**” John affirms the sovereign grace of God by which the Father chose this woman in Christ before the foundation of the world, that she should be holy and blameless before him. (Eph. 1:4)
 - You may remember that the Apostle Peter, writing his first epistle addressed his readers as, “**Elect Exiles**”
 - Why even the Lord Jesus spoke of the church as “**the Elect.**” (Mt. 24:22)
 - BUT here in 2 John the term is used to describe an Individual, a specific woman, showing us that the sovereign election of God is personal.

As I said when I introduced the epistle of 1st John, the Beloved Disciple never used his name in the writing of his Gospel and he carries that same practice over into his Epistles.

- Here in this brief letter he calls himself “**The Elder.**” The word (PRESBUTEROS) can be used to speak of one who is advanced in years, as John certainly was when he wrote this letter. BUT the Title is Also Used for those who serve in spiritual oversight within the church.
- At the time of His writing many believe that John was serving as an elder in the church at Ephesus but his authority extended far beyond that City.

- Being the last surviving Apostle John would have been the most distinguished of all elders.

2 John 1 **The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth,**

- This phrase, “Whom I love in the truth” actually communicates both the sincerity of John’s love as well as the sphere in which that love exists.
- The love that believers share with one another is a true love an unhyprocritical love. So without any romantic overtones John is saying, “**I TRULY love you!**”
- And this love is shared by all who abide in the sphere of God’s revealed truth.

This Love is a special divine endowment of grace that transforms the Sinner’s heart resulting in a newfound ability to express benevolence and godly affection for all those who share in God’s gracious gift of faith.

- And then at the end of the verse, John includes the larger body of believers in his greeting when he says: **and not only I, but also all who know the truth**
- This salutation of Love comes from the entire body of believers whose eyes have been graciously opened to the truth of God’s Word.

Moving on to our 2nd Point: John explains that this fellowship of love exists uniquely among those who are “Indwelt by the truth.” John writes:

1 John 1: 2 **because of the truth that abides IN us and will be WITH us forever:**

- On the surface, the text appears to indicate that the truth of the Gospel has been Received and Internalized By those who believe and that truth remains in them forever, yes forever.
- Friends I actually think there is more to John’s words than the internalization of truth. As the Lord Jesus was preparing to depart, He told his disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit. Now listen to his words and see how they relate to John’s letter

John 14: 15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

- After rising from the dead and ascending into heaven, on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son to indwell every believer. He is “**The Spirit of Truth**” and He lives in believers, abiding with them forever.
- What do we know so far? As believers we are united with and indwelt by the Spirit of truth; **WITH** the result that we sincerely love one another.
- Now as we move on we will see the blessing that comes from this abiding truth.

3. Blessed by the Truth

Many of the N.T. Letters open with the words, “**Grace and Peace.**” This greeting expresses the Writer’s desire that his Readers will experience the blessing of God

(For Example) Romans 1: 7 **To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- This same prayer for grace and peace is found throughout the N.T. But here..

What we find in John's writing is a little different; He doesn't merely express a desire or a prayer that his readers would experience grace and peace. He provides a positive affirmation that Grace, Mercy and Peace WILL actually be with all those who are in Christ. If you were to read the Verse Literally IT would read this way:

“Will be with us, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in Truth and Love.”

- You see in the Greek Language the most important words are moved to the front of the sentence to give them emphasis. (*Emphatic Position*) **“With us!** Will be these glorious blessings of grace and mercy and peace.
- And the source, the fountain from which every good and perfect gift flows is none other than God himself. And the medium through which these blessings come into our lives is truth and love.

The truth of God's grace, mercy and peace are revealed to us by the H.S. through the proclamation of the Gospel. It is through what Paul called **“the foolishness of preaching”** that we are able to see and experience for ourselves the wondrous love of God that was displayed in the perfect life, the atoning death and glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- Now as we abide in God's truth we remain in his grace, as we live in that truth His mercies are new every morning. And as we remain in his love The Peace of God which surpasses all understanding, guards our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:7)

Those who have received the knowledge of the truth; who have been born of God and indwelt by the Spirit of Truth, have been baptized into one Body. Together we are made partakers of the divine nature. We rejoice with those who rejoice and we mourn with those who mourn. And here in verse 4 John rejoices with this Elect Lady that some of her children are walking in the truth. That bring us to our final point:

4. Walking in the Truth

1 John 1: 4 **I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.**

- Some of you Were here in this church when my children were young. Some of you actually taught them in Sunday School. And today you can rejoice with Sharon and I that some of our children are walking in the truth.
- When Janet Bealer reminded me that she was in my youth group – years ago, I rejoiced to find her, even now walking in the truth.

- Now when we say that someone is walking in the truth we mean that their life is continually being directed by, constantly influenced by the revelation of God's Holy Word. It doesn't mean that they are perfect, it simply means that they are growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord.

Their lifestyle, their values, the thoughts of their minds, as well as the desires of their hearts are constantly being sifted, Internally evaluated by the Word of God that abides in them.

The writer of Hebrews likens the power of God's Word to a double-edged sword that Thrusts Deep into the Heart of a Believer.

Hebrews 4: 12 **For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

- When the Word of God is Read, when Truth is Taught it Plunges like a Sword into Our innermost being, Uncovering Our thoughts, Discerning our Motives.
- It challenges us asking the question, "Are we truly living a life of love, are we abiding in the Word of Truth?"
- If we were honest we would have to answer NO. At least not consistently.
- Our flesh is weak and WE don't always walk in obedience to God's Word. We don't always Love as we Should!
- WE hear the Command of Christ when he says:

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."**

- Now the command of Christ plunges deep into the soul, evaluating our thoughts, assessing our words, judging our actions. DO WE really love as Jesus Loved?
- The Holy Spirit reminds us of cutting words that we have spoken against a brother, gossip we have passed on without thinking. Harsh words we have spoken to our children and fits of anger that seem to come out of nowhere.
- Opportunities to express benevolence that we selfishly avoided, frankly because we chose to love ourselves more than our brother.
- Very often our family members, who should be the primary beneficiaries of our love, are the last to receive it.

What should we do when the sword of God's Word brings deep conviction to our soul?
When the weight of our Conscience bears down on us?

- My Friends We need to do what the Apostle John taught us to do:

1 John 1:9 **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** 10 **If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**

1 **My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**

2 **He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.**

Though our sins may be many, Jesus Christ is the Propitiation for all of them!

My friends this is one of the most glorious truths in all of the Bible.

- Let me remind you that Propitiation is the full and complete satisfaction of divine justice and the appeasing of God's Holy anger aimed at sin.
- On the Cross, Jesus Christ absorbed in himself the wrath of God for the sins of those who would believe. He drank the cup of God's wrath down to the dregs.
- The Propitiation of Christ allows God to be gracious to sinners Without offending his perfect justice.
- And so it is that through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ God is satisfied.

Let me leave you with an Illustration that I heard last weekend:

If you bought a new car, a brand new car and within the first 3 months you had it at the shop 6 times. Would you be satisfied with that Car?

- You spent \$30,000 to buy a brand new car and it runs some of the time. My question is this: "Are you satisfied?"

Think about this, according to Genesis 1:27 **God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.**

- Remember when God first created man HE expressed his satisfaction through the words: **God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good**
- For a brief time man walked with God in holiness, living in perfect love and truth.

BUT sin ravaged mankind, radically distorting the image of God in which he was created. SIN brought the wrath of God upon the whole of humanity.

- And Just as God warned, the day that Man ate the forbidden fruit He died spiritually and He began to die physically.
- Thankfully that is not the end of the Story.

Jesus Christ put on human flesh and dwelt among us, living a sinless life. and God the Father Declared his Satisfaction with Christ in the words;

Matthew 3:17 **"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."**

- Now here's the Good News:

- Through the propitiation that is in Christ, God's satisfaction with his beloved SON is Credited, it is imputed to ALL those who believe.
- On the cross He took our sin and gave us the gift of his perfect righteousness.

2Corinthians 5: 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- If you are in Christ, this morning, God is satisfied. By the redeeming work of Christ, you stand before the Father in the perfect righteousness of Christ.
- You are free from condemnation, you are loved with an everlasting love .

- Have you repented of your sin and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. IF you have by the authority of God's Word, I tell you: **God is satisfied.**