

## Sermon Notes

# WORSHIP SERVICE - 7.14.2024

## PROMINENT TRUTH: 2 John 4-6

### LIVING THE TRUTH

*Main Point: Our belief of the truth is not expressed by simply knowing it, but through loving obedience and action upon it.*

### I. BELIEVE THE TRUTH (4)

- After his introduction and greeting to these believers, and his declaration of Grace, Mercy, and Peace for them who are walking in the truth, John begins to get to the point of his writing, which he opens with thanksgiving. With rejoicing.

#### **I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in truth**

- “I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in truth” he says.
- Maybe he had visited them and seen them, or maybe someone visited him and told all about how saints in this church were walking in truth.
- And he wants them to know it! It brings great joy and excitement, a gladness to his heart knowing that these Christians are walking in the truth!
- We do the same, or should do the same, when we see fellow believers walking in the truth.
- He’s letting them know that their faithful walking in truth is an encouragement and a joy to him.
- Now unfortunately though, as we see referenced here by John, it’s only partially true of this church. He says “I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in truth”.
- Not all of your children, meaning not all the saints. Just some of them. He was rejoicing greatly over those who were walking in truth.
- So his rejoicing, his joy is really in part because some of these saints were not walking in truth.
- 5 times truth is referenced just in the first 4 verses of 2nd John - that’s significant.
- Are we children walking in truth, or are we walking according to something else?
- There is opportunity here for prayerful examination of our own hearts when it comes to the truth.
- The ESV uses the term “walking in truth” but if you have another version it might say “following the truth” or “living by the truth”.
- It’s not a literal “one step in front of the other” walking, but it does seem to give the picture of truth being like a path.
- And so walking in truth or following the truth is both knowing the truth and adhering to the truth.

- It's living it out and sticking to the path of truth.
- And for us to be walking in the truth, we must first have the truth abiding with us. We must know the truth.
- Do you know this truth? Does this truth abide in you? Are you searching the scriptures to know more and more the truth?
- Are we like Timothy, who Paul admonished in 2 Timothy 2:15 to "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."
- Do we know the truth in a way that we are rightly handling the word of truth, able to discern truth from error?
- But if it's not truth forever, it's not true. We need to know what is true.
- And we can't live out the truth if we don't know the truth.
- But likewise, and this is where it gets hard honestly, we can't just know the truth, we have to live it! We have to live the truth!
- And John is making a point that not all the christians he's writing to, not all christians he's writing to who know the truth, are acting on it consistently.
- Knowing the truth, and walking in the truth are different.
- We must know the truth in order to walk in the truth. And our walking in the truth is evidence of the truth that abides in us.
- As James says in James chapter 2 *"14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."*
- James isn't saying that we're saved by our works. And our works aren't to be performed as an obligatory function. To do them as a legalistic practice.
- Our works are evidence of our faith, of the truth that is in us, the outworking of that truth.
- Why do we walk in the truth? Why is it important to act on what we know to be true?

### **Just as we were commanded by the Father**

- Because we're commanded by the Father. Because it's his commands we're obeying, the truth that comes from Him, the source of all truth.
- The truth of God holds weight and is effective for all! It's more like the company policy - its governing authority is supreme and applicable to all.
- The truths that come from God aren't nice to have options! They don't come as mere suggestions, as practical advice or general etiquette.
- They come from God the Father and as such, they come as commands. As imperatives.
- What we know to be true, we are commanded to adhere to.
- If we know them to be true, we know our responsibility is to follow them.
- But as we read and study and learn the truth of all scripture, then embrace walking in that truth!
- Incline your heart to the truth - walking in truth is a response of the heart towards the truth we have received from the Father.
- His truth, the truth of the Father, is imperative. There is an accountability in knowing the truth because there is then an expectation of walking in that truth.
- It was the same for Israel. God revealed himself to Israel specially, in a way he didn't reveal himself to the other nations.
- He gave them truth, the 10 commandments and many others, but with that truth came an expectation of adherence, and judgment for when it was not.
- In Amos 3:2 God says to Israel: *"You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."*

- The same expectation is there for us who know the truth to walk in the truth. But remember our motivation - it's not fear of judgment.
- We walk in the truth because we love the Father who first loved us, and freely gave us his son.
- We walk in the truth because that is the example we have from our savior. He lived His entire life according to the truth, walking in it every day.
- We walk in the truth because out of love we desire to please our Father.
- And we walk in the truth because, brothers and sisters, the truth is in us.
- It abides in us and will remain with us, and to walk in truth is to walk in a consistent manner with what we know and believe and in which we are commanded to walk.

## II. ACT ON THE TRUTH (5–6)

- 2 John 5-6 *“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.”*
- If we believe the truth, and are walking in the truth, then there are four actions which should accompany that belief, four actions we should have:
  - Have love for one another
  - Have love for the truth
  - Have belief in the truth
  - Have action on the truth

### Have Love For One Another

- Let's start with that first one - have love for one another. Now, we said there is another command, but this one isn't being commanded. It's being asked.
- John says now *I ask you dear lady*, speaking to the church, I ask you to follow the command which we've had from the beginning - that we love one another.
- Notice he's including himself in this - *that we love one another*. This wasn't being given from a place of aloof authority. He's not asking them to do something which he is exempt from.
- This ask is based on a command which has been from the beginning and applies to all believers.
- This is from the beginning of their faith. From the moment they came to Christ, and entered into the body of Christ. From that moment they were now connected to the entire body of Christ.
- And John is reminding them that we need to follow this command we have! We are to show love to one another.
- Back in John 13:34-35 Jesus told his disciples *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.”*
- Jesus lays it out in plain terms here; doesn't he? Love one another like I have loved you!
- Stop and think about that for a second, how has Jesus loved you? To what extent has Jesus loved you?
- When something is repeated in scripture, it's because it's important for us!
- John 15:12 This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

- John 15:17 These things I command you, so that you will love one another.
- Romans 13:8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.
- 1 Peter 1:22 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,
- 1 Peter 4:8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.
- 1 John 3:11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.
- 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.
- 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
- John isn't writing them something new here at all! They already have this command!
- He says I ask you dear church, follow the command to love one another which has already been given - over and over!
- Why? Because we're prone not to. Because it can be hard. Some of us are easier to love than others.
- So what are we to do? Look to Christ. Look at the love he has for us.
- Reflect on the love he has shown to us, be eternally grateful for the sacrificial love you and I have been shown.
- And then show that same love to your brother. To your sister in Christ. It's not a new command, it's from the beginning of our faith.
- The example of Christ's love we have isn't a passive love is it. It's not him staying in heaven, looking down in a loving gaze towards us.
- His love is an action. It's shown, it's not passive. It's also how our love is to be.
- And so when John reminds these believers to love one another, it's a reminder, not to just passively "love" your brothers and sisters in Christ, but show them love! Take action through love.

### **Have love for the truth**

- John writes in 1 John 3:23 *And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.*
- We have the command to love one another. On the flip side, we are to have a love for his commands.
- John says here in 2nd John 6 *"And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments;"*
- What is love? Living the truth. Embracing the truth. Walking according to the truth, according to the commands we have in God's word.
- John gives this wonderful reciprocal viewpoint here - from the first lens, there is a command to love one another.
- And from the second lens, love the commands. Love the truth. Delight in the truth.
- David delighted in God's commands, his precepts, his laws, and his commandments. He extolled them, and desired them.
- If you think back to early on in our series in Psalms when we looked at Psalm 19, you'll recall what David wrote about the sweetness of God's commandments:
- Psalm 19:7-11
- David desired God's commands. He saw them as pure, and right, and more desirable than Gold, or riches, sweeter than honey to the taste.
- But is this our view of the truth? Are the commands of the Lord a burden to you, legalistically trying to execute each one, or are they a delight?
- Is there a love we have for the truth which brings joy and freedom that comes from walking in the truth daily?

- This is love, that we walk according to his commandments. Walk them, live them, have a love and a desire for the commands of the Lord. For the truth.

### Have belief in the truth

- These commands aren't new. We've heard them from the beginning. The truth of God's word. We heard, and believed the truth, so now we are to hold on to that belief!
- False teaching is not the commands, the truth, which these believers heard in the beginning. They didn't come to Christ through a false gospel.
- Their eyes were opened when they heard and received the truth! The gospel of Jesus Christ!
- And having come to know the truth in the beginning, it's imperative that they adhere to and cling to the truth until the end.
- These truths are from the beginning and they will be true until the end. It's why the psalmist in Psalm 119 can declare:
- *Psalm 119:111-112 Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart. 112 I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end.*
- The truth is our heritage forever, since the beginning. And believing the truth brings joy to the heart.
- But we must also act on the truth. Verse 112: "I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end."
- John here echoes that very same thing - "Just as you have heard from the beginning, **so that you should walk in it.**"

### Have action on the truth

- We, who have heard the truth, and believed the truth, must also walk in the truth. As we saw in verse 4, that's not a given. John wrote that he saw only some walking in the truth.
- But here, John is providing a meaningful progression of love, truth, and action.
- Follow the command to love.
- Love the commands of God.
- Believe the Truth which you've heard from the beginning.
- Walk in the truth you believe.
- Act out what you believe! Walk in it, live it, incline your heart to perform God's statutes forever to the end.
- Remember that Paul's admonition to rejoice always came when he was chained to a guard in a roman jail.
- He was preaching, teaching, writing, encouraging even when it was hard, and so should we.
- Believe the truth which you've heard from the beginning, and walk in the truth which you believe in.
- John gives us no option here to keep these two separated, they are linked as one.
- For some of you, taking action in this way might be challenging. Might be uncomfortable. But we who know the truth are also to walk out that truth.
- That's the main point here: Our belief of the truth is not expressed by simply knowing it, but through loving obedience and action upon it.
- It's what John is asking the church to walk in. It's what we've been commanded to do since the beginning. And it's the example we have to follow from Christ.
- He knew the truth because he is the truth. And he acted out the truth, in loving obedience to His Father.
- Not by just knowing the truth, and not just teaching it as theoretical or as knowledge, but acting on the truth perfectly, in every moment.

- And now, we who know the truth, and have the truth in us, having been shown his great love, having this command since the beginning to love one another;
- We now take action on our faith, through loving obedience, showing love to one another, walking in truth until he comes, that our lives would bring him the honor and glory he fully deserves.

## **APPLICATION AND REFLECTION**

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?