

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 7.21.2024

PROMINENT TRUTH: 2 John 7-13

LOOKING OUT FOR THE TRUTH

Main Point: Be on guard against various attacks on the truth so that we aren't moved from it, and joyfully delight together in the truth as the family of God.

2 John 1-13

I. DECEIVERS OF THE TRUTH

- John now gives a warning of someone entirely different from the believers who are walking in truth and love.
- The deceivers. The antichrist. And what is their deception? They don't proclaim the truth. They aren't sharing the good news of the gospel, and in fact, they are confessing the opposite.
- Islam believes Jesus was a great prophet, that he did great miracles. And muslims will even say that he was born of a virgin. But they reject that he was incarnated, that he, being God, took the form of man in coming to earth.
- Mormons will tell you that Jesus was distinct from God, and while on earth he was simply a man with godlike powers. They won't tell you he was the incarnate son of God, and though being God, he humbled himself and took on the form of a man.
- What does John say here in verse 7? *'For many deceivers have gone out!'* Jesus prophesied they would come; in fact he specifically warned his disciples in Mark 13:22 saying *"For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect."*
- Who is the deceiver and the antichrist? Who are the false christs and false prophets? Those who *'do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh'* John says.
- And what is their aim? To deceive. To lead astray. To derail our faith.
- Just as Jesus went into the world to proclaim the gospel, these deceivers have also gone out into the world, but their aim is to deceive with a heresy, with a message that is not for Christ, but against who he is.
- Our christological understanding, our view of who Jesus Christ is - that is central to our faith.
- The good news of who Christ is and what he has done is the very core of the gospel.
- And if someone can sway our persuasion of who Christ is, if that can move that conviction, it shifts the very core of the truth we hold on to.
- We look to his word to understand what is truth. To know what God says about who He is, who Christ is, his purpose, his person, his love, and his sacrifice for us.
- There were deceivers then and there are still deceivers to this day. So, what do we do? Well, what did Jesus say to do? Mark 13:23 *But be on*

guard; I have told you all things beforehand.

- Be on guard! Jesus says false christs will come, false prophets, they'll want to lead you astray, so be on guard! Don't be surprised when false teachers come. Don't be shocked! Jesus has already told us it will happen beforehand.

II. DEPARTURE FROM THE TRUTH

- Watch yourselves! Be on guard! Lookout! This is put in the present tense, and it's also an imperative, a command. Watch yourselves! Do it now!
- Don't get comfortable with the truth. Don't get lax and let your guard down in what you are receiving. Instead, watch yourselves! Be on guard against falsehood being promoted as truth.
- Why? John says *"So that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward."*
- There are two reasons John gives as to why it's important to be on guard, a negative one and positive one:
 - First: that you may not lose what you have worked for
 - Second: But that you may win a full reward
- We are to be engaged in Christian labor. Not to earn our salvation, but on account of it.
- It's the same labor Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 15:58 where he says *"58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."*
- On account of the salvation we've been given, we then labor to extend kindness to others, to share with those in need. To evangelize the lost, living generously, showing hospitality, encouraging one another, and so on.
- These are labors which have eternal rewards, heavenly rewards awaiting us when we enter into glory. We are all to be busy and engaged in working for the kingdom of heaven!
- In this passage we just read, Paul is addressing this command to be abounding in the work of the Lord to his brothers in Christ! To the church! To you and I!
- So what exactly is the connection that John is making here between watching out for false teachers, and kingdom work?
- We who are abiding in the truth know the truth. However, false teachers will come with a false truth, trying to deceive and draw us away from the truth.
- And if we're drawn away from the truth, if our lives and our actions begin to be lived according to a false truth then we're no longer walking in truth but according to something else.
- So we need to watch out. We need to be on guard. And in doing so, we will not fall prey to the deceivers and the anti christs when they come with their deceptions.
- Instead we'll continue to abide in the truth, and walk in the truth. And as we saw last week the need to act on the truth, our actions stemming from the truth will produce heavenly rewards
- We are to be on the lookout for twisted truths or misrepresentations of the truth which are brought by the deceivers and the antichrists so that we do not lose out on the rewards for the christian labors in which we endeavor.
- And we are to be on guard not just so that we don't lose rewards for our labor, but conversely in a positive way so that we will win the full rewards for our labors.
- So that when we enter glory, having clung to the truth, and having worked according to the truth which dwells in us and will be with us

forever, we will on that day hear those words “well done, good and faithful servant”.

- This is what the apostle Paul looked forward to as he came to the end of his life.
- Having labored, and in keeping the faith, sticking to the truth he writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:7-8: “*7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*”
- In order to look back on our lives, and be able to say this like Paul, we need to be engaged in our christian labor and in keeping the faith.
- Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what you’ve worked for, and so that you may win a full reward.
- There are some who have been and will be deceived, and will be drawn away into falsehood, myths, mischaracterizations of Christ and the gospel truth.
- On the one hand, those who were truly in Christ and have been reborn as sons and daughters of God will hold fast to the truth, and they won’t be deceived.
- On the other hand, those of us who have been reborn as sons and daughters of God and have faith in Jesus Christ must also watch ourselves and hold fast to the truth and be on guard against deceivers.
- 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.
- They are *‘going on ahead’*, notice that here. They are taking the teaching of Christ and going on ahead of it, adding to it.
- They are going on ahead and adding their own opinions, interpretations, agendas, on top of the gospel. But adding to the truth doesn’t make it more truthful, it makes it no longer true.
- It could be adding, it could be subtracting, multiplying, or dividing the truth, but all those actions change the truth to a deception.
- And as you can see, any deviation from the truth doesn’t change into a better truth. It changes it into a lie, and a deception, and those who peddle these are deceivers and do not have God.
- However, whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.
- This ‘whoever’ is a group of uncompromising christians, who believe the truth, are abiding in the truth, teaching the truth which they have had from the beginning which we looked at last week in verse 5.
- And these uncompromising believers have the Father and the Son. This is a stark contrast to the previous group who do not abide in the teachings of Christ and do not have God.
- *1 John 2:22-23 “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. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”*
- John is saying the same thing here isn’t he. You can’t have God the Father without Christ the Son! And if you have Christ the Son, then you have God the Father!
- Whoever is abiding in this teaching has the Father and the Son. Whoever is abiding in this teaching adheres only to the cross of Christ.
- Those who believe this aren’t progressive in their faith. They aren’t mixing failing cultural values with scripture. They abide in and stay true to the truth of the gospel.

III. DANGER TO THE TRUTH

- And we who sit under the teaching of the Word of God, hearing the truth and learning the truth, we have an obligation here to recognize the danger these false teachers present and take action.
- Verses 10-11: *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.*
- This is a comprehensive statement, applying to anyone, who comes to you promoting a teaching that is not the teaching of Christ from verse 9.
- This is someone showing up asking for permission to teach authoritatively on scripture but is bringing a deception.
- So if someone was traveling about bringing a different teaching, they'd be looking to stay a while.
- And if members of the Christian community were to agree to host them, put them up, give them opportunity for an extended stay, that then provided an opportunity for their false teaching to be propagated.
- But, if they didn't get a reception, if their false message was rejected by believers who know the truth and they were not extended the hospitality to stay and teach, their message wouldn't get very far. It'd serve to help shut them down.
- And so John is warning them that they need to recognize the danger these false teachers presented and he gives them prudent guidance on how to act and respond.
- We too, in our modern day, need to be aware and alert to the danger that false teachers pose.
- They can cripple a church. They can sway the flock away from the truth. They can bring shipwreck to someone's faith.
- Acts 20:28-30 *"28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.*
- *29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;*
- *30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them."*
- Paul's exhortation to them is to pay careful attention. To yourselves. To all the flock. They are precious because they have been obtained with the blood of Christ!
- And he says after I leave, fierce wolves will come! That is Paul's depiction of false teachers, fierce wolves! Ravenous! Devouring! If they get in, they won't spare the flock! If you let their false teaching in the church, it's like wolves in the sheep pen - not good!
- The best way to be able to detect this danger is to know the truth! Walk and abide in the truth! Live out the truth!
- Those who peddle and promote false teaching have no place here. And those who enable them, welcoming them in, inviting others to come listen to their heresy, they are taking part in their wicked works.
- Those who want to authoritatively come and teach or preach something other than the gospel we've received, we need to pay careful attention to the message they are bringing and send them on their way if it doesn't align with the truth.

IV. DELIGHT TOGETHER IN THE TRUTH

- And John, having greeted these believers, encouraging and commanding them to walk in truth, to love one another, and to be on

guard against those who would deceive them of the truth - John now puts down his closing thoughts.

- Verse 12 *“Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink.”* Why’s that?
- Well, *“Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete”*
- John has written to them concerning the things which the Holy Spirit has laid on his heart. He’s said what needs to be said.
- And now, having said what needed to be said, he says “there’s still more I have to say”. “I have so much to write to you about”. But he doesn’t want to write it down. He’s written the things which needed to be clearly stated and now John hopes to come to them, and talk, face to face.
- Sometimes there is no substitute for just being able to put an arm around someone, or sit down over a coffee, and just converse, face to face. Or literally in the greek: mouth to mouth. I’m speaking to you and you’re speaking to me.
- Because when those in Christ meet face to face, gathering in the name of Jesus, then joy is complete. There is a fullness of joy that comes with meeting together with our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Fellowship brings joy! When we gather together on a Sunday morning as the family of God, fellowshiping and worshiping together, it’s a joyful time!
- When we gather for community group and share in a meal and fellowship around the table, having been apart most of the week but now taking time to be together, those are joyful and precious times together!
- And John desires this, he looks forward to this with these believers!
- This is similar to what he wrote in 1 John 1 starting in verse 3:
- *“3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.”*
- The truth is the foundation of our fellowship, one with another. And our fellowship is not just with one another, it’s also with the Father! And with the Son!
- The Son and the Father are in perfect fellowship, and our fellowship is both with God the Father and God the Son and also with each other. And John proclaims the truth to those who are in fellowship with one another and with the Lord that, again, their joy may be complete!
- And when we know the truth, abide in the truth, walk in the truth, love in truth, then joy comes from joining together with the family of God who also know the truth and are abiding in the truth!
- Our world doesn’t get that. They aren’t going to promote that, it doesn’t make sense to them.
- Hebrews 10:23-25 *23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*
- Not neglecting to meet together! That’s not the same as abandoning... it’s a failure to take care to prioritize the meeting together of the saints.
- So don’t fall into the lure of neglecting this fellowship, but instead lean into it, prioritize it, encouraging one another.
- And however often you do it, keep doing it all the more as you see Christ’s return getting closer! Why? That your JOY may be complete.
- And then finally, in verse 13, John concludes this letter by saying “The children of your elect sister greet you.”
- That would be the saints from the sister church where John is at sending their greetings to these believers he’s writing to.
- That’s it, a final simple expression of greeting because of the truth and love that the saints at these two churches share and have for one another.

- We need to be on guard against various attacks on the truth so that we aren't moved from it, and then let's be encouraged to joyfully delight together in the truth as the family of God.
- We share this truth which abides in us and so let us continue to encourage one another to walk in the truth. To live out the truth. To defend the truth.

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?