

Walking in the Light – Part 14

Truth for a New Year – 2 & 3 John

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Dec. 29th, 2024

Intro:

- For our last sermon of the year, we will be completing our series in the letters of John by taking on not just one book but two books with one message. The good news is that both of these letters are extremely short, with the first one coming in with 13 verses and the second with a whopping 14.
- These two letters should be read and perhaps taught together because they have similar themes and they complement one another. Picture the older Apostle John writing to his beloved children and friends who live away from him, reminding them to continue to walk in the truth and love and instructing them to support biblical teaching and to follow good examples. I see this as a beloved spiritual Father writing to his spiritual children.
- I would encourage you to see these through this lens and take to heart what our beloved spiritual father is saying to you, and we move forward into this new year. We are going to focus on four things from these letters, and we will start at the beginning of 2 John, which will be on the screens. You can find it on page 1058 in your pew bible as well. The first encouragement John provides for us is to continue walking in the truth. And as we read, notice how many times John mentions the truth in these opening verses.

Continue walking in the truth

2 John 1-4 NIV

The elder,

To the lady chosen by God and to her children, whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth— 2 because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever:

3 Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father’s Son, will be with us in truth and love.

4 It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us.

- As a point of reference, the “lady” in this passage is the church and the “children” are the people of the church. The church is always referenced in the Bible as female and the people as children. Also, in verse 13, John says, “The children of your sister, who is chosen by God, send their greetings.” This is the church that John is locally connected to.
- This “lady” is “chosen by God,” meaning God chooses the church and calls them out of the world to himself. The term “church” literally means “called out ones.” We are to love each other in and because of the truth that we believe; this is the commonality that we all have together.
- We are to “know the truth,” and the truth “lives in us” and “will be with us forever.” Knowing the truth, not “a truth” or “truth” genetically this is the truth that is revealed by God in His Word (John 17:17), embodied by Jesus, who is the truth (John 14:6), and is living in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who is the “Spirit of Truth” (John 14:15-17) and will be with us forever.

- Keep in the truth, and keep the truth in you. This is done by reading, meditating, and singing the words of God that are recorded in Scripture. They are living and active, they are eternal, they are foundational, they are authoritative, and they are life. You must give yourself to them, having them shape your mind and treasure in your heart. Hear the heart of your pastor. This is not optional but essential for your Christian life, for you to grow and make it for the long haul. If there is one thing you should make sure you do, make sure you are in the Word of God and that the Word is in you. Get into a daily routine to do so. Nothing is more vital than this.
- Not only know the truth but walk in the truth. Put into practice what it says. Live the truth by choosing to walk according to it. Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey. The power of the word is when it is acted upon; you have to know it to do it, and in doing it, you know it. Put into practice what you read, and walk according to it. This is truly the best way to live unless you think your way is better than God's way. Do you trust that He has the best in mind for you? Do you trust that He is good, wise, and loving? Then, we prove this by trusting and living in the truth. This is God's advice to you, through the apostle John, to us as children, to continue to walk in the truth.
- The next thing John addresses and encourages us to do is to continue to walk in love with one another.

Continue walking in love

2 John 5-6 NIV

And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. 6 And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

- None of us should be surprised by this encouragement and command because John writes about this over and over again in the gospel and his letters, and here it is again. Loving one another is important. This is where the power of the Christian community lies. This is not optional but a command.
- This means that church participation is not something that you can take it or leave it for a Christian. We must be in relationships with other brothers and sisters. This is what the joy is. This is where the strength is. This is where Christianity is best demonstrated and lived out. This is where we show our love of God by obeying His command, and His command is to love one another, that is, to “walk in love” and show this love by living it out.
- This means making yourself available, giving of yourself for others, expressing love in acts of service, or words of encouragement, or a listening ear, or practical help, or financial gifts, or bearing a burning or sharing a laugh. All of these things is the “gold” and the “good stuff” of life. They are meaningful, and they make a difference.
- Ask God in this new year to fill your heart with love for others and make it your goal to love others well. This is a great “New Year” resolution and prayer. It will cost you something, but the reward and satisfaction will be greater than the investment because God's love will expand you and propel you, and you will be satisfied in Him greater than you have ever been.
- Continue walking in love, to an inventory of your heart, and gauge the level of love that you have. Is it growing and expanding over the years, or is it sticking and shriveling up? As God for His continued flow of love to you so that it can flow through you. And if there is a blockage, ask God to heal you, mend and remake your heart. Make it your goal to continue to love other believers this year. God will answer that request and help you on this quest.

- Now the next point has its start in this letter and its contrast in 3rd John, so we will continue in 2nd John and then jump over to 3rd John.

Support biblical teaching and teachers

2 John 7-10 NIV

I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.

9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. 11 Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.

- There are many preachers and teachers in the world, and not all of them are of the truth and are of God, regardless of their degrees and the size of their following. There are many deceivers teaching and preaching things that do not align with the word of God. Do not be connected to these people and do not support them in any way because if you do, you share in their wicked work.
- Make sure you are always checking what is being taught and proclaimed against the word of God. If it aligns with the Word, then embrace it, if what is being taught does not align with the Word, then do not receive it and do not support the one(s) who teach it, including anything you hear at this church. Make sure you are connected to and being taught from and what is in the Bible. Things that align with good biblical teaching. The Word of God will remain, and everything is measured against it for truthfulness or falsehood and never support, pass along or be connected to unbiblical teaching and teachers.
- Now, this is where we turn to 3rd John, where John is writing to his friend Gaius and the church, and he then instructs and encourages them to support teachers who teach the truth.

3 John 5-8 NIV

Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. 8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

- John is commending Gaius for helping brothers and sisters who are working for the truth by supporting and aiding their ministry. These are people who have gone out to teach the truth of Jesus, and the church should partner with such people.
- We should be encouraging and partnering with people and teaching that is sound and biblical. We should help in this ministry and work together with them and be connected in doing the same as they are doing. This is a joy and a privilege and honors God, and you also will be honored and rewarded for doing so.
- This is why we work to vet anyone that we support as a church and anyone that we recommend to you, we don't always do this perfectly, but we pay attention to what they teach and who they

are. We are to resist those who are teaching things that are contrary to the Word of God and sound biblical teaching and support and get behind people that teach the word of God, and get behind good teaching.

- The last thing I am going to highlight is the last thing John encourages and instructs us to do from his third letter, which is to follow good examples.

Follow good examples

3 John 11-12 NIV

Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. 12 Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

- Follow good examples. Imitate them. We know well enough about “copycat” crimes, people doing the same evil as others do, don’t do that, but “copycat” what is good and imitate good people.
- John goes on to point out someone by name, Demetrius. Do you have a Demetrius? Do you have people in your life that you know by name, that people speak well of, and whose lives are lived according to the truth of the word? Know them, invest in them, observe them, imitate them, and follow their examples. You need people in your life like this. Get around good people who are living out the word of God. We all need concrete examples of people living out the truth in our lives. This is another strong reason why it is important to be connected to a local congregation of people who are striving to follow after, learn from, and live out the words of Scripture. Be connected to people and places like that.
- If you don’t have a Demetrius, ask God for one, look for one, and then also be one for others. We all need people to follow, people to partner with, and people who we are bringing along in the faith. This is a life well lived, and this is where you will find meaning and satisfaction.

Conclusion

- In conclusion, if you are going to resolve to do anything this year, do what the word of God tells us to do, though the pen of our faithful father in the faith, the one who is beloved by Jesus, the Apostle John.
 - *Continue walking in the truth* – get on a regular bible reading program
 - *Continue walking in love* – look to get involved in the lives of other believers
 - *Support biblical teaching and teachers* – connect, partner, and promote biblical teaching and teachers. Test those you listen to against the word of God and disconnect with those who do not teach or align with the truth of God’s Word.
 - *Follow good examples* – be around and get to know some people who you can imitate. Know them by name and also read some from history. Let them be a guide and template for you to pattern your life after.
- Closing Prayer

Benediction

As we leave this place and step into the new year, may you walk in truth and love, guided by God’s Word, May His grace, mercy, and peace be with you always, empowering you to follow good examples and be a light in the world.

Questions for Growth Groups

- **Walking in Truth:** How do you currently prioritize time in God's Word? What specific steps can you take to make reading and meditating on Scripture a regular part of your daily routine in the coming year?
- **Walking in Love:** In what ways have you shown love to other believers recently? How can you expand or deepen your expressions of love within your church community?
- **Supporting Biblical Teaching:** What criteria do you use to evaluate whether a teacher or teaching aligns with God's Word? How can you better discern and support sound biblical teaching in your life and church?
- **Avoiding False Teachers:** How do you guard yourself and your family from the influence of false or unbiblical teaching? What practical safeguards can you put in place to ensure you remain rooted in truth?
- **Following Good Examples:** Who are the "Demetriuses" in your life—people who model a life lived in truth and love? How can you intentionally learn from their example and follow in their footsteps?
- **Becoming an Example:** In what areas of your life do you feel you could grow to become a better example for others? What might God be calling you to do to lead others by your actions and faith?
- **Living Out the Message:** Reflecting on the sermon's four main points (walking in truth, walking in love, supporting biblical teaching, and following good examples), which one resonates most with where you are spiritually right now? What will you do this week to act on it?