

12043 June 3,2012
2 John 1-13
Walking in the Truth

I. What Jesus says about himself is so astounding that it shakes people loose. You either let go or hold on tight. The Bread of Life Discourse forced a choice. **John 6:60-69**

- A. Relationship with me is eternal life. 22-59
 - 1. Jesus is the Manna (What?)
- B. My words convey that life directly into your soul. 63
 - 1. You cannot figure ultimate truth or life out on your own
- C. You can come to really know life and truth. 69
 - 1. You are the holy one of God—Messiah fulfillment of the OT
- D. There is a struggle involved. 60 (2 Cor.3-5)
 - 1. An internal struggle for our minds, whether we will trust the Lord.

II. Context of 2 John. **False spirituality had produced a struggle for confidence in the gospel.**

- A. A group of “spiritual teachers” had broken off and started a philosophy/religion that did not center on who Jesus is and what he did. (Proto-Gnosticism)
 - 1. Denying the incarnation
 - 2. Denying the atonement, need for and truth of forgiveness of sins.
 - 3. Emphasizing human potential for self-realization without Christ.
- B. This religion was:
 - 1. Culturally more fashionable because it fit the reigning Greek worldview.
 - a) Greek dualism was at the root of it.
 - b) Matter was evil and spirit was good
 - 2. Spiritually less challenging, because it did not require:
 - a) Repentance from sin.
 - (1) Admitting we have done evil.
 - b) Reliance on grace.
 - (1) Atonement is humiliating
 - c) Relationship with a real Lord.
 - (1) Loyalty to Christ.
 - 3. *It was basically loyalty to Self in a very “spiritual” way.*
- C. Problem was—it just wasn’t true.
 - 1. *It’s not whether the gospel is culturally acceptable, or meets our perceived needs—but whether it is true.*

So John writes his Christian friends about the Truth and how to stay in it.

III. **Four movements in this short letter.**

- A. He loves them in the truth of the Gospel. 1-4
 - 1. Profound, transcendent spiritual love based on the Lord’s presence in and among them through the gospel.
 - 2. Rejoicing that they are living in the gospel reality.
 - 3. *Is it possible to “love” outside of Truth? Yes and no.*
 - a) *Yes, in the sense that we may have fulfilled desires we call love that are diametrically opposed to God’s word, the expression of his mind and will.*
 - b) *No in the ultimate sense of true love, the oneness we have in God’s love through the gospel. In the ultimate sense there is no eternal and true love without Truth in the Spirit.*
- B. He encourages them to stay in the Truth by loving. 5-6
 - 1. Love with each other—the great commandment as the New Commandment. Jn.13:34; Mk.12:28-34
 - 2. Stay shaped by the Lord’s word.
 - a) Live according to what he says, his precepts/commands.
 - b) Precepts = ways of understanding reality. More than an idea or concept, carries the weight of authority, reality.
 - (1) To know the Lord is to love him.
 - (2) To love him is to be loyal to him, do what he says.
 - (3) The first thing he says is to love others.
 - 3. *There is a deep connection between who you love and what you know. This is why we must love the Lord first and then each other.*
 - a) *We cannot expect to receive true knowledge of God without loving him. And we cannot truly love him without accurate knowledge of him—gospel.*
 - b) *Truth is known, experienced. So is love. Loving is a sort of knowing and knowing is an integral part of loving.*
 - 4. *If we allow bitterness to separate us from real Christian sharing (koinonia) then it gives the enemy a foothold to draw us away from the truth of the gospel. Eph.4:25-32*

- C. He warns them not to walk beyond the real Truth. 7-9
1. There is much deception about ultimate truth in the world.
 - a) All that is non-Christian
 - b) Much that claims to be Christian but isn't.
 2. Watch yourselves. 8
 - a) Because you can lose ground as a church if you do not actually preach Christ.
 - b) Because "going past" the gospel means you don't have God at all.
 3. The deception is easily identified by what it says about Jesus Christ.
 - a) Does it affirm that God has become human, in the flesh, in Jesus Christ?
 - b) Does it see this fact as the beginning of the reality of the gospel, the whole gospel?
 - c) Does it trace back to the original, apostolic witness.
 - (1) From the beginning. 5
 - d) *If not, it is anti-Christ = replacement Christ.*
 4. Denying the incarnation, which denies everything else.
 - a) Anti-Christ is replacement Christ.
- D. He explains that supporting the false message is wickedness. 10-11
1. This is about supporting and vouching for false teachers.
 2. There are realities we must not bend on.
 3. Who Jesus is, What Jesus did.

Main point: keep your head in the game.

IV. How to keep your head in the game. Realize:

- A. That there is only one ultimate truth in the universe.
1. It can be known. 1
 - a) The current idea that ultimate truth cannot be known is utterly false by its own logic.
 - b) If ultimate truth cannot be known, then that statement, which is a dogmatic assertion about the unknowability of ultimate truth—*cannot be known!*
 2. It is exclusive. 7-10
 - a) Philosophical pluralism is nonsense, simply the latest claim to exclusive truth.
 - b) All philosophies and religions are claiming to be True—especially Pluralism.
- B. That Truth is a Person. Jesus Christ. Jn.14:6
1. So knowledge and love are two sides of the same coin.
 2. Incarnation, atonement, resurrection, ascension, return
 3. God has rescued the universe and he's waiting for you to repent and trust him as the Lord.
 4. This is not simply an abstract academic theory, but a personal covenant.
- C. That Person calls you to walk in his reality, the expression of his mind—the Gospel.
1. The teachings of Christ = the truth about him and the words he himself speaks, through his apostles.
 2. That is what "keep his commands" means.
 3. *Stay in vibrant relationship with Him through his Word.*
- D. Because that Person loves you and has changed the destiny of the universe in order to redeem you and it.
1. The Lord loves you more than you can possibly imagine. **1 Jn.4:9-10.**
 - a) 1 John 4:19. We love because he first loved us.
 2. *Only by walking in this reality of God's love for you will you experience forever the love you are trying to get here.*