



# 2 John

## Living in Truth!

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Message #1 of 1 – S721

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Sunday Morning Service

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### Opening Comments

- Turn to **2 John**
- Today, we are going to look at this little letter written by the Apostle John
- At the time of this writing he was the last living of the original Twelve disciples of Christ – about 85 years old
- This letter as well as 3 John were written about the same time
- A standard papyrus was about 10 x 8 inches
- Each of these letters would have filled one page almost exactly
- Like sending a text, John said as much as he could in one text block
- As we look at these two letters today and next Sunday, you will notice a lot of similarity with each other, and to 1 John
- In fact, John introduces nothing new as far as doctrine is concerned
- Instead the focus is on application
- If you recall our study through 1 John, remember John was dealing with false teachers, who said Jesus did not actually come in the flesh
- Here in 2 John these same teachers come into view and John instructs his readers to avoid them
- Then in 3 John he gives instruction about receiving true teachers
- Let's pray now and then get into our text
- **Pray**

### Teaching

- **Living in Truth!**
- John opens this letter with a greeting
- **2 John 1-3**
- In both 2 and 3 John, John identifies himself not by name, but as 'The Elder'
- While this is one of the titles of leaders in the church, probably not what he means
- Could also apply to his great age – John the Elder – the old dude

- Might also apply to his distinction as the last of the twelve direct disciples of Christ
- He is writing to ‘the elect lady’ – he doesn’t name her
- In 3 John letter is addressed to Gaius
- The elect lady could be a woman whom he chooses not to name, but many commentators also believe that he is addressing a church
- Peter uses a similar term in chapter five of his first letter
- After studying, it doesn’t really appear to matter which is right, the truth applies to both equally
- I tend to lean toward the view that he is addressing a church in Asia Minor, but won’t be dogmatic about it
- John then expresses his affection for this church
- four times in the first three verses John refers to truth
- Truth and love are inseparable
- For love to exist, truth must be present
- Where truth is lacking, so also is love
- Anyone who has been lied to or betrayed can attest to the reality of that
- It is difficult to believe that someone loves you if they are lying to you
- In the rest of the letter John is going to make three general appeals to encourage them to live in the truth
- First Appeal – **Continue to love fellow Christians**
- **2 John 4**
- This verse is one of the reasons I tend toward the thought that this letter was written to a church rather than to a person
- The phrase ‘some of your children’ implies that John encountered some of these people outside of the church, while he was separated from them
- What John witnessed was that they were ‘walking in truth’
- John is saying that he was blessed to see these ‘children’ obeying God’s commandments as he had taught them
- As a father I can relate to that – love to see my kids ‘walking in truth’
- Same is true as a pastor – awesome to see people growing in their faith and ‘getting it’

- He then reminds them of something he taught extensively in his first letter
- **2 John 5-6**
- You cannot say honestly that you love God and then live in disobedience to Him
- Loving other Christians is one of the ways we prove that we are Living in the Truth **1 John 4:20-21**

**If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.**

- John’s second appeal to these people he loves – **Guard against false teachers**
- This was a primary focus of 1 John
- So he reminds them what to look for
- **2 John 7**
- We have to keep in mind as we read things like this that the church was not what it is today
- They did not have the New Testament yet
- They had some letters like this one
- I have a library of a couple hundred books
- My Bible software contains thousands of resources
- Thankfully I can spend dozens of hours every week studying God’s Word
- Most churches in that day were being led by men that had little or no training in the Word
- And so it was not uncommon that they would have itinerant preachers come in and teach the congregation
- That opened the door to unscrupulous men seeing an opportunity to take advantage of the generosity of Christians
- Some were doing it for financial gain, others to satisfy some unholy need to fame or glory
- A common trait of the false teachers at this time was a denial of the incarnation of Jesus

- As Christians we believe that Jesus, God the Son existed from eternity past with God **John 1:1-2**

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.**

- When the time was right in God’s plan of redemption, He sent Jesus to be born of the virgin Mary **John 1:14**

**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**

- This is one of the key doctrines of the faith
- Jesus became what we are so that He could make us like He is
- Without that, there is no true hope of salvation
- That is why John and the other Bible writers speak so aggressively against this false teaching
- Jude, who we will get to in a couple of weeks wrote this about these false teachers **Jude 12-13**

**These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving *only* themselves. *They are* clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.**

- John warns his friends to watch out for these guys
- **2 John 8**
- John doesn’t want to lose what they have been working for
- And that is good spiritual fruit in the lives of those they have ministered to
- Notice he mentions that they are looking forward to a ‘full reward’
- John is not referring to temporal benefits – not about financial gain
- The Bible teaches that faithful service to God will earn us some kind of rewards in heaven **1 Corinthians 3:14-15**

**If anyone’s work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.**

- The reward is not heaven – that is promised to all true believers of Christ
- The Bible doesn’t tell us what the rewards are, but if they are given to us in the perfection of heaven, they will be perfect
- We have to guard ourselves against false doctrines and teaching

- **2 John 9**

- The word ‘transgresses’ there has the idea of ‘to go on ahead’
- These are the progressives
- Watch out for anyone telling you that we need to change the gospel to be relevant to our culture
- The gospel message was perfect, exactly the way Jesus spoke it
- I’ll be relevant in my relationships but not in the message
- John’s third appeal – **Reject the False Teachers**
- **2 John 10-11**
- Hospitality was an important aspect of the culture in that part of the world
- Taking in and caring for strangers and travelers was what people did in polite society
- As the Apostles and Prophets traveled about sharing the gospel message, there weren’t any Holiday Inns or Embassy Suites to stay at
- They depended upon the hospitality of those they were ministering to
- We see an example of that in Acts 16 when Lydia asks Paul and his companions to come and stay at her house
- John here, tells them to do the opposite of hospitality, to reject the false teachers, don’t even say hello to them - That sounds rude
- His point is if you do, you are sharing in his evil deeds
- This would have been counter-cultural
- A modern example of false teaching is the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses
- As Christians, we should have nothing to do with either group
- They both teach that Jesus was not God in the flesh, just like the false teachers that John is talking about
- The next time people from either of these groups knocks on your door
- Don’t hide from – don’t invite them in and talk to them
- Instead tell them – I can’t talk to you – you are false teachers who teach that Jesus, God the Son did not come in the flesh
- And if you don’t repent of that sin and escape the false religion you are a part of you will die in your sins and go to hell where your punishment will be severe because you have led others astray from the truth

- If you invite them in and talk to them, even if you are trying to share truth with them – they will go to your neighbors and tell them about the wonderful conversation they had with you – you are sharing in their evil
- Don't yell at them, or sic your dog on them, or turn your sprinklers on them – but don't do anything that will enable them to continue their evil work
- John wraps up this letter quickly
- **2 John 12-13**
- John was going to making a visit to them, but the matter was so urgent that he sent this letter ahead
- John is looking forward to seeing them
- Doesn't want to come there and find false teachers being invited into people's homes and into the church
- The key for us today is a phrase in verse 8 – 'look to yourselves'
- God doesn't want us to blissfully ignorant of the dangers around us

**Ephesians 4:14**

**...we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting...**

- To live in the truth we need to avoid the lie, that which is false
- Paul said 'Examine yourself' – do you know the truth, do you know God's Word well enough to know when someone is telling you something false
- And if you are tempted to say 'yes, how do you know that for sure?'
- Our best defense is to saturate our heart, mind, and soul with the Word of God
- And then to humble ourselves before God and ask the Holy Spirit to lead us along the narrow path of truth
- 'look to yourselves' means you have to do your part
- But once you have done your part, God does the hard parts
- God starts the work, does the work, and finishes the work in your life
- But He won't do it apart from your cooperation with Him
- And as John started this letter, do it by loving God by loving one another - Amen