

TRUTH THAT ABIDES IN US!

(Scripture: 2 John 1-4)

Introduction:

First John is a great book! We picked up lot of important doctrines like forgiveness, God is love, and He has given His own Son as the propitiation for our sins, that we have eternal life through Him, that we must abide in His Spirit always, and finally, love one another as the ultimate, superior commandment.

Probably, the books of second John and third John were also written by the same author, and both those churches have their own problems! It is amazing! Every church is very unique, and they all face their own problems. There is no church that is perfect on the face of the earth. If you really stumble into one of those perfect churches, you are probably in the wrong church!

Let us see how faithful and truthful this church is. We are not too sure if this letter addressed to a church or a personal letter to a large Christian family! Probably it was a house church that was held in an honored lady's house.

2 John 1,2.

1The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth,

2for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:

Please note: the author refers to himself as an elder, not as a pastor, nor as a senior pastor, nor as a bishop, nor as an apostle. Does he call himself as elder because he was indeed elderly, or he was an elder of a local church, but had the apostolic authority over other churches? Looks like this elder had apostolic authority over other churches also.

This letter was addressed to a chosen lady, and her children? Was she a real woman or a symbolic language for a church?

Elect lady! It may refer to the church because V10 suggests that it is a house church, probably the house belongs to this prominent Christian lady. V13 also lets us know that a sister church sending greeting to this church. Also verses 4, 8, 10, 12 address "you" as plural.

But according to verse 5, John speaks directly to this lady which suggests that this lady was a person? Either way, the interpretation of this letter will not change much.

Whom I love in Truth! The Truth here stands for Jesus. He said clearly, I am the way, the truth, and the life. It also refers to the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit. The truth is spoken of as a person. The truth which abides in us and will be with us forever. The Scripture here does not say we abide in truth, but the truth clings to us and abides in us forever, probably the Holy Spirit! The Truth abides in us and constrains us. Also, the Word of God is called as Truth! Jesus prays in

John 17:17

"Sanctify them through thy Truth: Thy Word is Truth!"

When we receive Christ, the Truth dwells in us in the form of the Word, the Spirit, and the love of God through Christ we just cannot shake out this Truth from us and walk in lie.

2 John 3,4.

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

4I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father.

In verse 3, we come across usual Christian salutation, Grace, mercy, and peace be with us!

What is the difference between grace, and mercy? Grace is the undeserved favor extended toward another person unconditionally. Grace is offered unexpectedly when we least expect, and it cannot be earned. Receiving blessing from someone unexpectedly is grace. But mercy is the spirit of compassion extended toward someone who is suffering. Three best blessings are offered to this church. Grace, mercy, and peace of God that surpasses all our understanding!

We also come across the usual reference to God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Here there is a special emphasis of Jesus Christ as Son! The Son of the God, the Father! Bible always points to Father as God. But Trinitarian doctrine lines up Father, Son, Holy Spirit in the same straight line so that all can be made coequal, and then that one God behind all those three persons. But when I read the Scripture, there seems to be no one beyond God, the Father. He Himself is that one God!

When I was a young Christian, one of my friends, took me to a prophetess house in Baltimore. She was one of those famous radio announcer at that time. Her husband took the Bible study, and for some reason, he started explaining about Trinity doctrine. He lined up all three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, while he explained about Father, he talked about God that was behind the Father. He called that one behind God, the Father as the Grand Father to make us understand. I just chuckled in my heart. God, the Father, and God, the Grand Father? If there was an Atheist among our midst, he would have probably raised the question, can the real God stand up please? The Bible is very simple and straight forward. There is none beyond God, the Father! Period! Sometimes, we make simple explanation of God so complicated, that no one can comprehend it anymore!

John loves the word, Truth! In truth and love! Christianity is all about truth and love!

Speak the truth in love!

John commends some of her children walking in Truth. That means not all of them were walking in the path of truth! There are always some rebellious ones in any church who refuse to walk in truth.

1 John 5,6.

5Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6And this is love that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.

The message here in this passage is a repeat of what we talked about in detail in first John. The only proof of our love for God is our love for the brethren. We must keep the only commandment of Jesus, love one another as I have loved you. Since you have heard about in detail, let me move to verse 7 and 8.

2 John 7,8

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

8 Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.

I had already talked about the Gnostics who believed that Jesus Christ did not come in flesh. For them, anything fleshly or material was evil! But Jesus was indeed human in flesh, He slept, ate, drank, weary, and of course He shed His blood also for our sins. According to them, he was all spirit. The whole John's mission was to tell the whole world, who Jesus was and His purpose of coming to this world. He always insisted that Jesus was fully divine, and fully human. It is a tough doctrine to promote, but we must strive hard to insist both sides of Jesus always! As a theologian would say, not a low Christology, or a High Christology, but the right Christology! I know it is difficult, but keep sharpening your understanding of Jesus, our Lord, our rock of our salvation.

2 John 9-11.

9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting.

11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

Be careful about the doctrine of Christ. Don't go too far right or left, pay attention to the teaching of Christ. The same person who said I and the Father are one, said that His Father is greater than He is! Yes, He is fully divine as well as fully human! He that has the teaching of Christ has both the Father and the Son!

Anyone who goes too far right or left, does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Right teaching of Jesus is essential.

Vs 10, and 11 is a tough one for me to swallow. It seems to contradict Jesus' teaching and His walk. John says that we should not allow a heretic into our house, and do not give a greeting also. Jesus never did that. He never turned down anyone who came to Him! He tells us to love our enemies. I understand, we should not allow the heretic to preach or say anything in the church, but we should not greet them even?

2 John 12,13

12 Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full.

13 The children of your chosen sister greet you.

John did not want to write. He would rather speak to them face to face. It is not actually face to face in Hebrew or Greek, but mouth to mouth. In Numbers:12:8 God says of Moses "With him I speak mouth to mouth!"

I am also like that. I would rather speak face to face than write

Writing can easily lead to misunderstanding!

Conclusion:

Let us be controlled by Truth and Love.

Let the Word of Christ, and His Spirit dwell in our heart, and let us abide in Him.

Love one another as Christ loved us.

Follow the right doctrine of Christ's teaching.

Beware of the false doctrines and do not give even an inch to false prophets.

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