

## The Second Epistle of John

*...And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. (2 John 1:6)*

### 2 John 2-4

Someone read 2John 1:1-7

Someone read vv 8-13

Someone read v2:

for (6) the sake of the truth which abides (7) in us and will be (8) with us forever:  
(2 John 1:2)

The truth. It is not simply a static and objective entity or set of beliefs. We tend to think of truth as a number of abstract propositions that we are to comprehend and believe. But for the Elder, truth is a vital force that can be personified as living in us and being with us.

And where does truth come from?

God – Jesus – Spirit

Truth is one of the Apostle's favorite words, particularly in his Gospel (no less than 21 occasions).

How many of them can you remember?

Jesus is full of truth: Jn 1:14; 1:17

The Father wants to be worshipped in truth: 4:24

The truth make us free: 8:32

The Son speaks the truth: 8:45; He testifies to the truth: 18:37

The Son IS the truth: 14:6

The Spirit is called what in Jn 14:17 15:26; 16:13?

God's word is called what in Jn 17:17, and we are made holy by it

How did we define “truth” last time? (it occurs 4 times in the first 4 verses of this brief letter)

## The Gospel

Because it comes from the living God, truth is a dynamic power that abides with believers, enabling them to know what is true. And because truth comes from God, it exists forever and remains with the faithful, just as God exists eternally and remains in relationship with the faithful.

If we could capture John's view of truth as a force that, because it is the work of God's own Spirit, shapes and empowers us, we might be less prone to think of truth as something that depends upon us to preserve it. In reality, we depend upon the truth to guard us--and not vice versa--because we depend upon God. Only as the truth abides in us do we abide in the truth. But we are somewhat too quick to reverse that relationship, and put human beings in the place where God's activity and power belong.

The truth is the common bond between fellow believers. We are commanded to love our neighbors and even our enemies. But as Christians, we have a special tie to the truth; it is the basis of reciprocal Christian love. How do non-Christians behave?

Someone read 1Jn 2:19

Heretics may leave us and go out into the world

But in Christian society, truth shall remain secure. As long as the truth endures, in us and within us, so long our love for one another will also endure.

If this is so, and Christian love is founded on Christian truth, we shall never increase the love which exists between us by diminishing the truth we hold in common. In the desire for unity, we must beware of compromising the very truth on which true love and unity depend.

Let's move on to v3:

(9) Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. (2 John 1:3)

Notice how skillfully John makes the traditional salutation into a ringing declaration of assurance. Literally in the Greek it reads: “There will be with us grace, mercy, peace.” What grammatical tense is the verb “will be?”

Future

What does that signify?

It underlines that these blessings will continue with us - for how long?

Forever – “Into the Age” (literal translation of *eis ton aionion*), the eternal age to come.

This is the only time a salutation in the entire NT is constructed as an assurance.

1Cor 1:3 - “Grace to you and peace”

This greeting is duplicated in each of the other 8 letters Paul writes to churches.

Compare to 1Tim 1:2 – “Grace, mercy, peace”

This is precisely the same Greek as 2John 1:3. It is repeated in 2Tim 1:2 and Titus 1:4.

What is the difference between Timothy and Titus as the recipients of Paul’s letters as opposed to the other 9 letters.

Adds to the evidence that 2John was written to an individual.

What is “grace?”

Unmerited favor – bestowed upon guilty and unworthy individuals in and through Jesus Christ. Getting what you don’t deserve.

What is “mercy?”

Denotes God’s pity and compassion for all of us who are in the world of sin and darkness. Not getting what you deserve.

What is “peace?”

The inner sense of tranquility and well-being which results when we truly understand how much God has done for us. Ultimately, who do we have peace with?

Westcott puts it this way: “The succession ‘grace, mercy, peace’ marks the order from the first motion of God to the final satisfaction of man.”

And who does John say this triple blessing comes from?

“From God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ”

Note the double occurrence of the word “from.” Why do you think John did not write: “From God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ?”

This usage signifies that they are two persons.

And why does he add “the Son of the Father?”

Further solidifies that the unity with the Father and underlines the Son’s nature as the true Son of God.

IH Marshall notes: “God is given the title which had taken on a new significance for Christians in the light of the revelation of Jesus as his Son; ‘father’ was a word already used in the OT and in Judaism to describe God, but only in Christianity was the thought of God’s personal, loving relationship to the individual developed.”

“in truth and love.”

For a vital Christian life, these two must remain in balance. If you have truth without love, you can become rigid and inflexible in your faith. Examples?

If you have love without truth, you can become libertarian, which may lead to un-doctrinal errors. Examples?

FF Bruce comments: “Where truth and love co-exist harmoniously, we have a well-balanced Christian character.”

Truth and love must also be kept in balance for a vital Christian fellowship to flourish in a Christian community. Adherence to revealed truth is essential when facing heretical teaching or when encountering an unbelieving world. Active love unites us spiritually and demonstrates to the world that we are indeed one in Christ.

And these words also prepare us for the central theme of the letter in vv4-11, which we will cover the next few weeks.

In closing, someone read Eph 4:14-15.

What similarities do these verses have with 2John?