

“Walking in the Truth”

February 12, 2012

Text: II John 1:4-8

Last time we began to study John’s 2nd epistle, and to consider what he meant by “*the Truth*,” when he said he was writing it=> “*for the sake of the truth.*”

1st, “The Truth” is a *perspective* adopted by born-again believers.

It’s a whole unified system of Truth revealed in the Bible—
a perspective of life/reality, based on God’s Word.

The Truth explains how/why He created the world, & how
we are to live w/i that world He has created for us.

Although there are various other kinds of truth—scientific,
historical, mathematic, logical, subjective—The
Truth revealed in God’s Word is supreme and
all-important truth.

2nd, the Truth is a *practice* (the Xn’s whole way of life).

* Xns have been saved by, and live by, their faith in the
Truth.

* We speak the Truth, and worship in Spirit/truth.

* Our lives are directed/characterized-by the Truth, as we
“*walk in the truth.*”

* Most importantly, Gal 5:7 says believers obey the Truth.

Jesus described our obedience as=> “*The narrow
[way] that leads to life*” (Mt 7:14).

It’s a path from which we should not deviate, & on
which we seek to live w/i the parameters of

God's will—the way of faith, lived by those who have received eternal life.

3rd, not only is the Truth a perspective/practice, it's also a *Person*.

Jesus said=> *"I am the way, and the **truth**, and the life."*

He is the embodiment of Truth through whom we receive eternal life.

He is also the ideal pattern of Truth every Xn's life is to emulate.

Living/walking in the Truth, is living our lives as Jesus did, and as He showed us how to live in fellowship with Him.

I Jn 2:6=> *"The one who says he abides in Him **ought** himself to **walk** in the same manner as He walked."*

In today's text John will describe 4 characteristics of walking in the Truth...

Those who walk in the Truth=>

*Delight in other believers, *Love other believers,

*Obey God's commands, *Guard other believers.

*** Those who Walk in Truth Delight in Other Believers**

[2 John 1:4]=> *"I was very **glad** [echaren—I was delighted] to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father."*

Those who walk in the Truth aren't so self-centered that they cannot delight in God's sanctifying work, seen in other people's hearts/lives.

They are capable of truly loving others, and as 1 Cor 13:6 says=>
*“[Love] does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices
with the **truth.**”*

Because John himself loved & walked in the truth, he delighted
to discover that some of the people in the church to which
he was writing were also walking in the truth.

In 3 Jn 3 he'll again get excited over the godliness in other
people's lives, saying=> *“For I was **very glad** [again,
delighted] when brethren came and bore witness to
your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth.”*

Whether the word “*some*” in our text means that John knew
about others who were not walking in the truth;
Or whether he was just saying he knew some were, but he
personally unacquainted w/ the lives of others;
We don't know.

The point is, John had learned about members of this church who
were living in harmony with the truth of God's Word.
And he kept rejoicing in that fact.

**Being able to delight in others' progress/blessings is an
acquired skill.**

From birth, we are primarily concerned with ourselves.

We don't even like others prying into our affairs, which is
why privacy is so all important to many people.

But when a person becomes born again, and God's love is poured
into his heart, he becomes concerned about other people—
their joys/sorrows/welfare.

I.e., he receives power from H.S. to truly love others w/
God's agape love.

At first, his concern may extend only to those closest to him
personally—his own family and dearest friends.

But as he grows spiritually, his concern reaches out farther.

**The Apostle John had once sought a place of honor in X's
Kingdom, apparently not caring how his selfish
ambition offended the other Apostles.**

But as John had grown spiritually beyond his old self-centered
ways/perspective, he could now genuinely delight in
others' progress.

Especially Xns who were also growing spiritually, so that
God's Word had come to dominate their lives, & they
were developing godly Xn character in their hearts.

God the Father has commanded us to walk in the Truth, and
John rejoiced that they were doing exactly that,
becoming obedient to God's command.

In 2 Jn 1:1, John said he loved this church "*in truth.*"

Paul wrote that love "*rejoices with the truth.*"

Having nurtured that kind of love in his own heart, John
had become a person who delighted/rejoiced in
seeing God's Truth take over the lives of people
about whom he cared very deeply.

*** Those who Walk in Truth Love Other Believers**

[Verse 5]=> "*And now I ask you, lady, not as writing to you a*

*new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we **love** one another.”*

If you simplify this sentence, it reads=>

“And now I ask you, lady... that we love one another.”

John is pleading for love among Xns, because love is an essential key to our walking in the Truth.

There’s another word for “ask” that John could have used, but it would suggest his making a request of someone below him. John chose a different word that refers to 2 equals, one of whom is asking a favor from the other.

I.e., John doesn’t make this request in a way that would imply his being an Apostle made him superior to the Xns to whom he was writing.

And he is very humbly including himself in this request.

He doesn’t say to the church “I ask that you all love one another.”

He’s already assured them of his love, & now he asks that they love both him/one-another, as he loves them all.

In 1 Jn 3:23, John wrote that a Xn is to obey God by believing & by loving other Xns=> *“This is His commandment, that we **believe** in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and **love** one another, just as He commanded us.”*

God the Father has commanded us to both believe/love—
key aspects of walking in the Truth.

So John is telling his readers (including us)=>

“You’ve believed, now really love one another.”

Someone: “I’ve tried loving other Xns, but it’s hard to even like some of them.”

Perhaps that’s because you don’t yet understand the nature of Xn love.

- * It’s not essentially an emotion, but a commitment.
- * It is acting on the command to put others before ourselves.
- * It’s choosing to do what Jesus did=> humbly sacrificing our own rights/interests for the good of other people.
- * It is Phil 2:3-4=> *“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; / do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”*

You/I can love others, by casting out our conceit, adopting a humble attitude, & making sacrifices on their behalf.

Try it! Pick out the Xn you think you’re least likely to love & make a personal sacrifice for his/her interests.

If you see him in a restaurant, tell your waitress you want to pay his bill.

Someone: How much of a sacrifice?

Phil 2:5-7 answers that too=> *“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, / who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, / but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.”*

Now that’s real love, and that’s walking in the Truth.

It's what Jesus did, living/loving as God the Father has commanded us to, setting the example for us to follow.

Love is a commitment to the Golden Rule, that blesses others.

That's what Jesus was talking about when He said=>

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35).

How will they know? By our feelings?

No, they don't know what we feel.

They'll know we love by our sacrificial acts of kindness on one another's behalf.

In the early years of the Church, a terrible plague broke out in Alexandria, Egypt.

Touching anyone who had contracted the disease was a sure death-sentence, so the sick were sometimes driven out of their houses by family members, & left to die alone in the streets.

When they died, they weren't even buried, because no one was willing to touch their contaminated corpses.

Everyone who could afford to flee from the city, did so.

Many Xns, on the other hand, stayed/loved/cared-for their sick, knowing that their doing so would prob. cost them their own lives.

And they left none of their own dead unburied.

The word spread throughout Egypt that Xns loved each other.

They had proven that, by practical acts of care/concern for fellow Xns, even burying their dead/infected bodies. Though it was a time of Xn persecution, Xns became so well thought-of, they were allowed to worship openly afterwards.

Jesus was their model of loving other people, and He had said=> *“Love one another, even as I have loved you”* (Jn 13:34). He was calling them to walk in the Truth, just as He did. And He is still calling us to do the same today.

John adds, this is the way God has commanded His people to live from the very beginning.

It goes clear back to His telling the Israelites to love their neighbors as themselves (Lev 19:18), and to love God with their whole heart/soul/mind/being (Deut 6:5).

Although it's not a new command, it takes on a new dynamic in the lives of those who are born again.

1st, we have a new reason for obeying it=> Jesus has lovingly redeemed us with His own blood, so we feel the force of His command to love as OT saints never could have.

2nd, our love grows out of our new nature, and the fact that God's love has been poured out w/i our hearts.

We especially love others who share that new nature.

3rd, Jesus' having called us into His Kingdom, makes our love all the more necessary.

The world's hateful opposition to Xns compels us to
turn to each other for love, if we are to receive
love at all.

4th, it's easy to love Xns, whose lives manifest the fruit of
the Spirit.

It's more difficult to love non-Xns, whose lives
manifest the ugly deeds of the flesh.

5th, loving one another here/now is good practice and a
good start on the kind of life we will live in eternity.

There, we'll see God's glory in every other Xn's
face, we'll love him/her w/ unencumbered
affection, & we'll share the same delightful
occupation=>

adoring/worshiping our beloved Savior/Master.

**Why is it necessary for John to repeat this command to love,
in view of the fact that we've had it since the beginning?**

Because we tend to forget/neglect it, so we need to be reminded.

Walking in the truth, putting others before ourselves, living as

Jesus lived—none of this comes naturally to us.

It's a discipline that involves committing ourselves to it,
then following through faithfully on our commitment.

Our fallen flesh growls, Others will take advantage of you,
& you'll become a humiliated/unhappy wretch.

We have to say to it, "Keep quiet, flesh. I'm going to obey
God's commands, not your demands."

In essence, our flesh tells us not to trust the Lord, loving others selflessly as He has told us to.

Obedying Him, and doing something as counter-intuitive as putting other people's needs/welfare before our own, requires a compelling act of faith on our part.

It is trusting that our Lord knows best, that He loves us, and that He won't ask us to do anything that's not ultimately in our own best interest.

*** Those who Walk in Truth Obey God's Commandments**

[Verse 6]=> *“And 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.”*

We find statements like this several times in the Bible, and they always sound a bit strange to our ears.

E.g. Jesus said something similar (Jn 14:15)=>

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

How does love relate to our obeying God's commands?

Ans: Love for our Lord must be the motive for our obeying Him.

And when we obey Him, we express our love for Him, in recognition-of and response-to His goodness.

This is how we know we are truly walking in God's Truth.

Born again believers love the Lord, so they obey Him out of their love for Him.

They keep His commandments because they believe in them, just as they believe in Him.

They also believe that He's wise enough to know what's best, and will turn their obedience into a blessing.

The Pharisees sought to obey God w/o loving Him, and it produced only spiritual pride (which became a fleshly for outward/hypocritical obedience).

In their efforts to obey God's commandments, they actually defied/offended Him, w/ their self-reliant arrogance.

In the same way, when we obey the Lord (but do so reluctantly), that's a sure sign that our flesh is dragging our will down. We're like a man walking on 2 planks with 1 foot in the Truth, and the other foot in the world/flesh.

As the planks get farther apart, he'll have to step off of one.

John says=> *“This is love, that we walk according to His commandments.”*

He uses the plural form of “*commandments*” to indicate that our love strives to obey each of the commands God has given us in His Word.

But then John adds=> *“This is the **commandment** [singular], just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.”*

The single command that gathers up all God's commandments, & which is the ultimate expression of His will for His people, is that we walk in love=> Wholehearted love for Him, & for one another.

We obey our Lord by loving, & we obey because we love Him.

We walk in love, and in doing so, we walk in God's Truth.

*** Those Who Walk in the Truth Guard Other Believers**

John turns to a different subject: The danger of false teachers; & the Xns' need to guard one another from them.

[Verses 7-8]=> "*For [which connects this to verse 6=> we must walk in love because...] 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. / Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.*"

John makes a connection between walking in love/the-Truth (on the one hand, and the false teachers he refers to as "deceivers" (on the other).

The connection is that we are to guard each other from the danger of their spiritual deception, out of our love for one another.

In that sense, we are to become our "brothers' keepers."

When someone slips quietly away from our fellowship, we need to love/care enough to check on them, making sure they haven't become spiritually deceived/confused by some false teacher.

The peril is great, because there is a powerful spiritual dynamic taking place in the hearts of false teachers.

John says they "*have gone out into the world,*" & in 1 Jn 2:19 he explained where they came from—the Church.

You might say, “But the 19 year old Mormon who came to my door the other day had never been in the true Church.”

No, but Joseph Smith was, and it’s his teachings that this cleancut 19 y.o. wants to convince you of.

That young man represents and is being empowered by, spiritual forces which he doesn’t understand, and of which he probably isn’t even aware.

* 1 Tim 4:1=> *“The Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to **deceitful** spirits and doctrines of **demons**.”*

There are unseen spirits involved in the activities of false teachers, causing others to fall away from the faith and from the truth.

* 2 Cor 11:13-15=> *“Such men are false apostles, **deceitful** workers, **disguising** themselves as apostles of Christ. / And no wonder, for even **Satan** disguises himself as an angel of light. / Therefore it is not surprising if **his servants** also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.”*

Two themes pervade Paul’s words here=> Satan/deception.

Satan is the father of lies (Jn 8:44), and he teaches his servants to use deception as one of their tactics.

Andy Poland is a Xn, who was saved out of Mormonism.

He writes this, confirming their tendency to deceive=>

For years I withheld from my Christian friends, truths about my Mormon beliefs. I was more interested in telling my non-LDS friends what they might be ready to receive so that they would later accept all my Mormon

beliefs. There were three things that I would purposely withhold from any conversation I had with my non-LDS friends: 1) my belief that I was working to become a god someday, 2) my belief that the Bible was corrupt, and 3) my belief that the free grace taught by Christians was an abomination.

The reason I would withhold my beliefs about my personal deification was because I was taught in the Missionary Training Center (MTC) in Provo, Utah that if an “investigator” asked if we believed that we could become a God, my answer should be “No. We are trying to be perfect like God,” or “We were trying to be like God, but we were not going to become God.” The leaders at the MTC told me that if I revealed the truth of that doctrine to “investigators,” and that truth caused them not to accept Mormonism, then I would be the cause of them losing their salvation.

I.e., the end justifies the means.

Does the average young “elder/missionary” from the Mormon Church think of himself as deceiving others, listening to demon spirits, or seeking to destroy people’s souls in hell? At some level of his awareness, he must know that he is trying to deceive people.

But w/ regard to demonic involvement in his activities, or his destroying souls, the answer would prob. be No, because he has become a victim of Satan’s deception himself, as have his teachers back at the MTC.

With each little deception, however they’ve fallen deeper into Satan’s whole realm of deception.

But ultimately, these deceivers become active participants in the process, whose personal goal is to pervert God’s revealed truth.

Gal 1:7=> *“There are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort (that’s actually their desire) the gospel of Christ”*(the gospel of salvation by grace).

John says these deceivers will not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Bible presents Him—fully-God/fully-Man.

And you'll find that trait is typical of false teachers, whether they're Mormons, JW's, Unitarians, Xn Scientists, or any others.

John adds that each of these false teachers is "*the deceiver and the antichrist.*"

How can that be? Because the same demonic force that will empower the Antichrist is empowering them, even now.

They don't/can't walk in the Truth, because their spiritual source is the "father of lies."

That's why it never gets you anywhere to argue/reason w/ them, or explain the truth of God's Word to them.

You end up confused, and they end up unconvinced—always.

Why? You're not simply reasoning with an ordinary man, you're talking to someone who has been carefully trained to sidestep and suppress the truth, & someone who is under demonic influence, that he's not even aware of.

That's why 1 Jn 4:3 says=> "*Every **spirit** that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the **spirit** of the antichrist.*"

You're not just dealing with people.

You're dealing with both people/spirits.

Our love for one another is a spiritual safeguard against the lies of such powerful false teachers.

We are responsible for bringing one another back to the truth, that Jesus is God, the Son of God, whom the Father sent to earth as the Savior of His people from their sins.

And that only those who confess Him as such, can know the Father, & receive eternal life from Him.

John warned there could be 2 losers, if those to whom he was writing became victims of deceptive false-teachers=> “we” and “you” (true teachers and those they teach).

So they needed to lovingly watch/guard themselves/one-another, to prevent that from happening.

If what John & other ministers had accomplished in their lives spiritually had been lost, both would suffer from the loss.

* Not only would the Xn teachers’ efforts have been wasted, so they would miss out on the joy of presenting to X, those to whom they had ministered, as a chaste and beautifully adorned virgin (the way Paul expresses it in II Cor 11:2).

* The Xns deceived by false teachers would suffer an even more grievous loss—not receiving a full reward.

Each Xn will receive some reward, just because he’s a believer.

I Cor 4:5 says we will all receive praise from God.

Col 3:24=> we’ll receive “*the reward of the inheritance.*”

But there are individual eternal rewards to be had, in addition to that, which will be lost, by those who let false teachers deceive them.

These rewards are spoken of in Scripture as wages.

That's the basic meaning of *misthos* ("reward").

Jesus told several parables about workers who received greater/lesser wages, based on their faithfulness.

E.g. the Parable of the Talents.

John is concerned that, although his readers have eternal life, they will lose eternal rewards, for not having been watchful.

He wants them/us all to hear Jesus tell them someday=>

"Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master."

“Walking in the Truth”

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Text: II John 1:4-8

1. The Truth is a [24 perspective] adopted by born again believers.
2. The Truth is a [18 practice]—the Christian’s whole way of life.
3. The Truth is also a [14 Person].

Mt 7:14

I Jn 2:6

In today’s text John will describe four characteristics of walking in the Truth...

*** Those who Walk in Truth Delight in Other Believers**

[2 John 1:4]

I Cor 13:6

4. Because John himself loved and walked in the truth, he [22 delighted] to discover that people in the church were also walking in the truth.

III Jn 1:3; II Jn 1:1

*** Those who Walk in Truth Love Other Believers**

[Verse 5]

5. Love is an essential [8 key] to our walking in the Truth.

I Jn 3:23; Phil 2:3-4

6. You and I can love others by casting out our conceit, adopting a humble attitude, and making [22 sacrifices] on their behalf.

Phil 2:5-7

7. Love is a commitment to the Golden Rule that [16 blesses] others.

Jn 13:35, 13:34; Lev 19:18; Deut 6:5

8. Although it’s not a new command, it takes on a new [16 dynamic] in the lives of those who are born again.

*** Those who Walk in Truth Obey God’s Commandments**

[Verse 6]

Jn 14:15

9. How does love relate to our obeying God's commands? Love for our Lord must be the [14 motive] for our obeying Him.
10. When we obey the Lord reluctantly, that's a sure sign that our [12 flesh] is dragging our will down.

*** Those Who Walk in the Truth Guard Other Believers**
[Verses 7-8]

I Jn 2:19; I Tim 4:1; II Cor 11:13-15

11. Satan, the father of lies, teaches his servants to use [20 deception] as one of their tools.

Jn 8:44; Gal 1:7

12. These deceivers will not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Bible presents Him—fully [8 God] and fully man.

I Jn 4:3

13. Our love for one another is a safeguard against the [10 lies] of such false teachers.

I Cor 4:5; Col 3:24

14. John is concerned that, although his readers have eternal life, they will lose eternal [16 rewards] for not having been watchful.

Mt 25:21