

## True Love II John 1-3

When we last look at the words of John, we finished our study of his first epistle. We saw that he was encouraging the church to remain confident in their relationship with God. John didn't, and even today doesn't want anything to come our way and steal our faith away from us. It may be a tragic event, a desire for something this world has to offer, or even our own self-centeredness that will cause us to take our eyes off of God and put our confidence or even our time into something else.

But as we remain confident in our relationship with God, and as we continue to love God not only by affection but through our actions, we can be sure that He will protect us. Satan cannot touch us unless he has God's permission or is welcomed into our lives through our choices. We see a perfect example of this in the life of Job. Satan cannot touch us, hurt us, or even pull us into the eternal fire with him.

John also told us that there are two influences in this world, the influence of God and the influence of unseen powers. Today, as we look around our society we can see these two influences battling for position to impact our lives and to cause us to make certain decisions. Today, we are either allowing God to change us or we are listening to outside sources that want nothing but to lead us away from God. The choice is ours.

Finally, John told us to be confident in the fact that the God we serve is the only true living God. We are not serving a myth this morning, but we are serving the true God who sent his Son, Jesus, to die and offer forgiveness to us. And as we become sure of this fact, that our lives would be changed by its truth. That no material object, no selfish need for recognition, no need for fame or fortune, or success and comfort, would come and sway our faith.

This morning I want to continue to look at the epistles of John and begin to look at the second epistle of John. As we have looked at before, John's relationship with Jesus was so strong and full of love and compassion, that John's heart was that people wouldn't miss out on what he had experienced simply because something else stepped in the way. John's heart continues on in his second epistle this morning. In **II John 1-3** we read:

*From* <sup>1</sup> The elder, To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth- <sup>2</sup> because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever: <sup>3</sup> Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.

It is unclear to whom precisely John is writing to here. The term chosen lady here could point to two possibilities. First to a specific woman and her children, or second to a church or believers. But more importantly John begins this short book with a statement of truth for us this morning.

## **1. The Truth of God Should Causes us to Love People.**

John tells the recipient of the letter that it is because of the truth of God that he loved them, and that now all who love God love them as well. There is something about the truth and reality of how God loves us today, how he loved us in the past, and what he did on our behalf. It is difficult to be loved and yet not help but feel we need to respond. We love this morning because we have been shown love beyond our own abilities. We love because we know the truth. In **Ephesians 5:1-2** we read:

*Follow God's example in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love for others, following the example of Christ, who loved you and gave himself as a sacrifice to take away your sins. And God was pleased, because that sacrifice was like sweet perfume to him.*

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossian Church and told them that now that they have been loved by God that they needed to respond. He tells them in **Colossians 3:12-14**:

*Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. You must make allowances for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us together in perfect harmony.*

Because we have been loved by God we must then love others. How? The Apostle Paul just gave us an in-depth definition of what our love should look like.

## **2. A Definition of Love.**

### *a. Love is Merciful*

The word mercy here can be defined as sympathetic compassion or affection. It is having a heart of concern, or a sense of responsibility to help. In **James 3:17-18** we read:

*But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no partiality and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.*

*Finally, all of you should be of one mind, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds. Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate when people say unkind things about*

*you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God wants you to do, and he will bless you for it. I Peter 3:8-9*

This morning, God has shown us his mercy. He has been willing to show sympathetic compassion towards us and it would be wrong for us to not show the same to each other.

*b. Love is Kind*

Kindness here is defined as showing usefulness and goodness towards each other. In **I Thessalonians 5:15** we read:

*See that no one pay back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and everyone else.*

It is interesting that the word "always" in this verse means "at all times, in every situation, at every opportunity and with complete effort." Kindness should be our middle name. We should be known as kind people. Jesus went beyond kindness and went the extra mile for our sake. It would be wrong for us to not show the same to each other.

*c. Love is Being Humble*

The type of humility here can be defined as humility of mind or understanding. In other words love considers the reality of who we are in comparison to God and responds appropriately. In **James 3:17** we read:

*But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no partiality and is always sincere.*

In order to be willing to reach out to each other we need to be humble in how we think of ourselves. Humility causes us see ourselves on a level playing field with other believers, and even breaks the religious barrier of thinking that we are better than any non-believer. It helps us to not be partial to certain individuals. Jesus was humble and didn't think himself above sacrificing himself for our behalf. It would be wrong for us not to show the same for others.

*d. Love is Gentle*

Gentleness can be defined as mildness and tenderness towards others. It is not harsh and abrupt, disturbing, or intrusive. In other words, love only goes where it is welcomed, considerate when being considered, and honored when invited. In **I Peter 3:3-4** Peter addresses the wives and tells them where true beauty comes from. He tells them:

*Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends upon fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should be known for*

*the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.*

Jesus did not force his way into people's hearts. He still doesn't today. Yet, when he was invited in he didn't barge in and rearrange the furniture. He was gentle. It would be wrong for us not to be the same with others.

*e. Love is Patient*

The word "patient" in Colossians 3:12-14 means to be lenient or to allow a length of time before passionate hard breathing, wrath or fierceness. The question this morning is "how short is your fuse" How quick are you to lose your leniency towards other people? I remember when I use to work in the Paint Business.

One of the most dreaded days of the week for me was having to work on Saturday's because it was the day that all the homeowners and unknowledgeable people would come and buy paint. I found myself having to answer the simplest of questions over and over again. I know my attitude changed to that of anger and my patience was very short. For some of us here today we have people in our lives just like the "homeowner" I use to have to deal with on those Saturdays. In **1 Thessalonians 5:14** we read Paul's word:

*Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone.*

Patience require that we don't respond how we feel, but to respond according to God's expectations. Jesus was patient with people, and he continues to be patient with us. I would be wrong for us not to be the same with others.

*f. Love Makes Allowances of Faults.*

The word allowances here can be defined as "to bear with, to endure, to suffer, or to put up with." Who said being a Christian was going to be easy. We have to watch and bear or put up with each other, even when we blow it or have situations in our life that cause us to act irrationally. We all have our problems. We all have something that isn't pretty and true love doesn't judge but puts up with it. In **Ephesians 4:2** we read:

*Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowances for each other's faults because of your love.*

We can't write off people because they have their faults. Who doesn't? Who here does not have some type of challenge in their lives? Jesus puts up with us at times, I am sure. And if Jesus is willing to put up with us, then it would be wrong for us not to be the same way with others.

*g. Love Forgives Offenses.*

The term forgive here means “to give up our right to condemn and freely give pardon, to grant favor or to liberate another.” Have any of us here ever been offended? Love doesn’t hold a grudge but forgets about what has been done to us. In **I Corinthians 13:4** we read:

*Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged.*

What do you have in your arsenal this morning? Is it the armor of God or do you have a log of offenses against an individual this morning? I know that families and friends, even churches, have fallen apart simply because people were unwilling to pardon wrongs that they felt were done to them. Have you ever offended God this morning? Have you ever done something or said something that would cause God to cringe or to keep a record so that he could remind you of how you hurt him in the future? God doesn’t hold a grudge, and if he is willing to forgive then it would be wrong for us to not do the same for someone else.

As we can see this morning, to love someone is sure a lot of hard work. It makes us have to take our eyes off of our own needs or wants and causes us to reach out to others.

When John was writing to the woman or church in II John the type of love he was talking about is the type of love we have looked at this morning. But in II John 1 he states that everyone who knows the truth about God must love.

**3. God’s Love Motivates Us to Love**

I think it is safe this morning to say that some of us would not give certain individuals the time of day if it weren’t for the fact that we have God’s love and are called to live out the truth as John tells us in verse 2. The fact that God was willing to model love to us now hold us accountable to give away what we ourselves have received.

If you have trouble or struggle with loving people this morning, I challenge you to look at how God loves you this morning. Consider how God is willing to be merciful, kind, humble, gentle, patient, how he endures or puts up with us, and how he is willing to look past the times that we have offended him and grant us forgiveness.

Our motivation this morning is God. He is the author of true love. That’s why John then makes the statement in verse 3 and says, “May grace and mercy and peace which comes from God our Father and Jesus Christ his Son, be with us who live in truth and love.” When we are willing to live out truth and true love, we can be sure that God will grant to us the same kind of love.

And according to verse two this truth or love will be in our hearts forever. I think we better start learning to love people today, because we will be doing for quite a while.

### **Conclusion**

So, this morning we have looked at the beginning of John's second epistle. We see that the Truth of God should cause us to love people. As Jesus has shown us who he is, who God is, and who we are in light of their purity, holiness and power, we need to understand that just as God has shown us mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with our faults and forgiveness for our offenses against him, we need to do the same for each other.

For some of us loving each other will be easier than it will be for others. For some of us the only motivation we have is God. If it weren't for what God has told us to do, we would still ignore certain individuals.

This morning we need God to help us to love people. We need him to show us how to love people, or to place within us eyes of compassion. We need him to help us see people the way he sees them.

This morning John's challenge is a real and relevant for our time. May we not become like the rest of the world, who love with conditions.