

“Children of the Truth” (2 John)(5.21.23)

2 John Amplified Bible

¹ The elder [of the church addresses this letter] to the elect (chosen) [a] lady and her children, whom I love in truth—and not only I, but also all who know *and* understand the truth— ² because of the truth which lives in our hearts and will be with us forever: ³ Grace, mercy, and peace (inner calm, a sense of spiritual well-being) will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father’s Son, in truth and love.

⁴ I was greatly delighted to find *some* of your children walking in truth, just as we have been commanded by the Father. ⁵ Now I ask you, lady, not as if *I were* writing to you a new commandment, but [simply reminding you of] the one which we have had from the beginning, that we [b] love *and* unselfishly seek the best for one another. ⁶ And this is love: that we walk in accordance with His commandments *and* are guided continually by His precepts. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should [always] walk in love.

⁷ For many deceivers [heretics, posing as Christians] have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge *and* confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh (bodily form). This

[person, the kind who does this] is the deceiver and the [c]antichrist [that is, the antagonist of Christ]. ⁸ Watch yourselves, so that you do not lose what we have accomplished together, but that you may receive a full *and* perfect reward [when He grants rewards to faithful believers]. ⁹ Anyone who runs on ahead and does not remain in the doctrine of Christ [that is, one who is not content with what He taught], does not have God; but the one who *continues* to remain in the teaching [of Christ does have God], he has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching [but diminishes or adds to the doctrine of Christ], do not receive *or* welcome him into your house, and do not give him a greeting *or* any encouragement; ¹¹ for the one who gives him a greeting [who encourages him or wishes him success, unwittingly] participates in his evil deeds. ¹² I have many things to write to you, but I prefer not to do so with paper (papyrus) and black (ink); but I hope to come to you and speak with you [d]face to face, so that [e]your joy may be complete.

¹³ The children of your elect (chosen) sister greet you.

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: "Children of the Truth"

INTRODUCTION:

What do you know? What do you really know? First, I will demonstrate through the scriptures that we can KNOW that we are God's children. Second, we will explore the concept of truth and its many facets related to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You must know these things because you CANNOT truly experience the Christian life without them.

BODY:

We begin with the teachings of Jesus. John 8:31–32 (NIV84) in a section titled "*The Children of Abraham*"³¹ To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

The train of thought goes like this: By following and adhering to the what the Bible records, we demonstrate that we are disciples of Jesus. Through this knowledge put into action through obedience we can know the truth. Living into that truth is freedom. Jesus would go on to explain, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin...So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

A few verses later, the section is titled *The Children of the Devil*. John 8:42–47 (NIV84)

⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.

⁴³ Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵

Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!

⁴⁶ Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? ⁴⁷ He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”

Jesus establishes two possibilities. The Devil is opposed to truth on all levels. Because the Devil is an enemy of God and God’s people, this makes sense. Those who do not belong to God are UNABLE TO HEAR Jesus truth. That makes them children of the Devil. Those who do understand Jesus’ truth are able because they belong to their Heavenly Creator.

This is a basic premise of Christianity. In the first chapter of the Gospel of John: John 1:12–13 (NIV84)

¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

And in the Apostle John's first letter: 1 John 3:1–2 (NIV84)

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

I will only give you one more verse to prove this truth, demonstrated in the scripture AND in your very essence: Romans 8:16 (NIV84) The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Do you KNOW this truth? It is critically important that you assimilate it.

That means,

1. to take into the mind and thoroughly understand; to take in and utilize as nourishment : to absorb into the system
2. to absorb into the cultural tradition of a population or group; to make similar

The Christian faith is a culture of truth; truth from God Himself. Before we explore the implications, let us look at why having a Biblical Worldview, a Christian Worldview is so crucial.

Here are two paragraphs from the article [Doctrine and Experience: Closer than We Think — Firebrand Magazine](#) – by Stephen Rankin 5/16/23

“What is much less clear is how background beliefs shape our experience, and this lack of awareness causes no small amount of difficulty for growing to maturity in Christ. Too many Methodists are still too impatient with the process of forming beliefs through engaging **the rich intellectual content of our faith**. It seems too heady, too abstract and disconnected from life. But, if we want our experience of God to deepen and grow ever richer, we need to grasp more fully the constitutive role doctrine plays in experience.

In a recent “[For the Life of the World](#)” podcast (Yale Center for Faith & Culture), psychologist Justin Barrett explained the integral role of

concepts or theory in experience by offering the example of how he reacts to smelling hazelnuts. His wife is deathly allergic to them. The smell of hazelnuts repulses him because they evoke the concept "danger" for someone he loves. His conceptual framework – "Hazelnuts are dangerous to my wife" – governs his experience of hazelnuts. Barrett says that ample empirical evidence exists to suggest that our concepts unavoidably shape our experiences."

Rankin concludes, "**Christian experience therefore relies on Christian doctrine.**" Maybe you are confused by this word doctrine: It means, "The body of teachings of the Christian faith concerning its central beliefs. Doctrine is grounded in Scripture and aims to maintain the integrity of Christianity by distinguishing it from non-Christian beliefs. Doctrine is of central importance in Christian preaching and teaching in that it equips the people of God for effective and faithful service in His world."

You see my friends, we are in a battle over the Truth. The Apostle John is writing to this beloved sister in Christ. A sister in the Truth. There were yet to be quote church buildings end quote. The Church was the Body of Christ that met in people's home. This elect lady was hosting a church

gathering in her home. The children were part of that particular Body of Christ that she nourished.

In the very early days of the church, there were false prophets and false teachers. Therefore, it should not surprise us that the same is true for today. Some of these deceivers were simply preying on the hospitality of Christian communities. Others were children of the Devil trying to derail the truth and hope of the Lord Jesus. John calls them heretics and antagonists against Christ.

There is an old saying with a few variations: "If you don't know what you stand for, then you will fall for anything." The Apostle John is warning this chosen lady and her children, "If anyone comes to you and diminishes or adds to the doctrine of Christ, do not receive or welcome them." He adamantly says, "Have nothing to do with them." Avoid them like the plague.

Hear what Charles Lindbergh says about truth:

"In my youth, science was more important to me than either man or God. I worshipped science. Its advance had surpassed man's wildest dreams. It took many years for me to discover that science, with all its brilliance, lights only a middle chapter of creation.

I saw the aircraft I love destroying the civilization I expected it to save. Now I understand that spiritual truth is more essential to a nation than the mortar in its cities' walls. For when the actions of a people are undergirded by **spiritual truths**, there is safety. When **spiritual truths** are rejected, it is only a matter of time before civilization will collapse.

We must **understand spiritual truths** and apply them to our modern life. We must draw strength from the almost forgotten virtues of simplicity, humility, contemplation and prayer. It requires a dedication beyond science, beyond self, but the rewards are great and it is our only hope."

John says we are to love in the truth; know the truth; walk in the truth; the truth lives within us – AND God the Father and God the Son will be with us in truth and love. Clearly, truth is not merely being factually correct.

In John 14:6 (NIV84) Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Will live in a time when naysayers proclaim that there is no absolute truth. No wonder our culture struggles to find a foundation upon which we can build a future. The question that Pontius Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" echoes across the empty courtyard of our

day. Jesus answered Pilate, "In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

So what was Jesus saying? "I am The Truth." My Lexham Theological Wordbook defines truth: **Truth refers to what is real, trustworthy, dependable, genuine, or valid. It carries the sense of real-world dependability and genuine disclosure—showing things as they really are.**

"Truth or the desire for truth is often presented as the basis for all righteous behavior. In this religious sense, truth exists as an external standard for behavior, modeled after the reality of God's innate truthfulness or faithfulness. The New Testament concept of truth is partially informed by its overlap with the Old Testament concept of reliability and trustworthiness. Truth in the New Testament can be an external norm for behavior, a general label for honesty, or a statement of the absolute revealed truth of the gospel."

With all that explanation, I don't think we have captured all that Jesus being the truth means. John 1:14 (NIV84) The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the

glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:17 (NIV84) For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. In John 17:3 (NIV84) Jesus say, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, **the only true God**, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

You and I, as children of the truth, have often used this next verse for a call to worship: John 4:23 (NIV84) "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks." And near the very end of our Bibles, we read Revelation 19:9 (NIV84) Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' " And he added, "**These are the true words of God.**" And in this case, true means, IT IS A FACT.

So, how can we know the truth? How can we be set free by truth? How can we live in truth? How can we be confident that God is with us and will never leave us or forsake us? You can know by trusting in the Word of God. As you live out, as you experience life, through the lens of God's truth, you will learn, your faith will be reinforced.

This begins with being taught the things of God. In our 9th and 10th verses, teaching is mentioned

three times. We all know that what we learn in the early years of life is crucial to forming us into whom we will become. Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

This is **Ascension Sunday**, when Jesus ascended to the right hand of His Father and our Father. There Jesus reigns and is our Advocate. His parting words have been called the Great Commission. We are to go to all the people of the world; to make disciples who make disciples; and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus finishes that commission, that command, "and TEACHING them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Often, the culture tries to discredit Christianity. We are considered simple minded, believers of myths and superstition. Our intellect is doubted. We can see from my teaching today that scripture does not support culture's theory. Paul tells us not to be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Truth is essential to the Christian faith. It is essential because Christ is the way and the life and the Truth. We are Christians, because Christianity is True. We are Christians, because we are children of the truth.

CONCLUSION:

What we believe informs our experience. What we experience informs what we believe. Being a follower of Jesus Christ happens on a physical level, an intellectual level, on an emotional level, and on a spiritual level. It is a growth process. We are being transformed into the likeness of our Savior Jesus Christ. Do you KNOW this truth? Do you BELIEVE this truth? If yes, then you are a child of truth? Therefore, the possibilities are endless.

Here is an illustration to demonstrate the power of belief:

Roger Bannister ran a mile in a world record 3 minutes and 59 seconds on May 6th, 1954. Never before had anyone run a mile under four minutes. In fact, it was generally known in the track world as the four minute barrier. The history books tell us that runners seriously began chasing that goal in 1886. As the decades rolled on, it had become a psychological barrier as much as a physical one.

It had become "the Holy Grail" of athletic achievement. Bannister did not go along with the crowd and conventional thinking. He had his own particular training method, which drew criticism from the experts who called him a "lone wolf."

“The experts believed they knew the precise conditions under which the mark would fall. It would have to be in perfect weather — 68 degrees and no wind. On a particular kind of track — hard, dry clay — and in front of a huge, boisterous crowd urging the runner on to his best-ever performance. But Bannister did it on a cold day, on a wet track, at a small meet in Oxford, England, before a crowd of just a few thousand people.”

After Bannister broke the barrier, six weeks later John Landy ran it one second faster than him. The next year, three runners in the same race broke the four minute barrier. It was no longer a barrier, but rather a threshold. Two Wharton School professors dedicated a whole chapter to the Roger Bannister story in their book, *The Power of Impossible Thinking*.

I have posted a video called The THINQ Vision by Pastor Gabe Lyons on Facebook. If you don't use Facebook, you can go to our website, open up this sermon text and click on the link: [THINQ Vision Video Page \(thinqmedia.com\)](http://thinqmedia.com).

In this video, he emphasizes how important it is to TEACH people how to think biblically. Of course, this leads to living biblically. Pastor Gabe also addresses how to engage people in today's culture in conversations that lead to wisdom. The

introduction to the video asks an important question: So, in a noisy, negative world constantly competing for your attention, how can you clear your mind, sift through the daily rabble of the modern media engine, and discern God's truth in this cultural moment?

Please invest the 18 minutes to watch this video. As children of the truth, we need to learn how to engage all people. They too need the Truth, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.