

Series: BIG THINGS IN SMALL PACKAGES

Title: A summary of II John

Main Text: ¹ The elder, to the lady chosen by God and to her children, whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth— ² because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever: ³ Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love. ⁴ It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. ⁵ And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. ⁶ And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love. ⁷ I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸ Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. ⁹ Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. ¹¹ Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work. ¹² I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete. ¹³ The children of your sister, who is chosen by God, send their greetings. (II John 1-7)

Author: John the brother of James (the Sons of Zebedee/Thunder and sons of Salome)

- Last remaining Apostle

(It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. Acts 12:1-2)

94–96 A.D.: During the reign of Roman Emperor Domitian and a wave of anti-Christian persecution, John is arrested, reportedly survives being placed in boiling oil/water. Exiled to Patmos and writes the Book of Revelation while on Patmos.

Recipient: “The elect lady” ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ (from the root word kyrios (κύριος), which means "lord," "master," or "ruler". Feminine form: Kyria is the feminine equivalent, meaning a female lord or a woman of authority, nobility, and respect.)

- **Ancient views on “the elect lady”**

The early church wasn't unanimous about whether John was writing to a woman or to a church. Some Christians heard 'Elect Lady' as the name of a real woman; others heard John personifying the Church as a woman. Either way, John speaks of the Church as a household with children, a family with responsibility, relationships, truth, hospitality, boundaries and love.

We do know that throughout scripture that Israel in the OT and the church in the NT are referred to in feminine language as in the Bride of Christ or as our mother.

“But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.” — Galatians 4:26

Church isn't merely a place where Christians gather. The Church is a mother who has children to raise in truth and love.

- **The biblical picture of Church as Family:**

God = Father Church = Mother Christians = brothers and sisters

The Church is the “mother” through which the Father raises His children.

Purpose of Letter: Purity of Love and Truth

1. Purity of Love is shown in obedience

⁴It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. ⁵And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. ⁶And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love." (II John 4-6)

V4. walking in truth => V5 love one another=>V6 love means walking according to his commandments "that you heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it."

Love and obedience is a common theme in John's writings.

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." (I John 5:2-3)

I John 3:19-24 ¹⁹This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²²and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us."

John follows Jesus..

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15)

"Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me." (John 14:21)

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12)

"These things I command you, so that you will love one another." (John 15:17)

- Note: God's goal isn't that we simply obey the rules. He created us to love.
- Love requires that I trust God enough to believe His commands are good for me.
The true test of love is will I prove I believe by obeying even when I don't feel the emotion of affection/love.
- Christian obedience isn't: "I follow rules because rules are good or I follow rules to earn God's love." It is: "I live according to the truth because I love the God who revealed himself in Christ who loves me—and therefore I love those whom Christ loves."

Look again at 2 John 5:

"I am writing you a new commandment—not a new one, but one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another."

It is old because the command to love existed in Torah:

"Love your neighbor as yourself." — Leviticus 19:18

But Jesus reconstitutes the command around himself:

"Love one another as I have loved you." (John 13:34)

So when John says: "walk according to his commandments" we should hear: "Live in the way Jesus commanded his people to live which is to love like I have loved you."

John isn't commanding a feeling. He is commanding us to choose the way of Jesus- the way of love.

Love is wanting and working toward the very best of another. It is the pursuit of another's good by doing good even if you don't feel "good" about them.

Jesus commanded us in **Matthew 5:43-46**

"43 You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?"

- Note: Love is the doing of good. And in loving others we prove our love for God. We prove we are His children.
- Love isn't the opposite of obedience. Legalism is the opposite of love. Legalism says: I obey because I have to. Love says: I obey because I have been loved, and I now desire the good of another—even when obedience costs me something.
- **And it will. Real love is unconditional love.**

Thomas Merton wrote: *"The beginning of love is the will to let those we love be perfectly themselves, the resolution not to twist them to fit our own image."*

"I love you so I can control you to become the person I think you should be" isn't love.

Love says: "I will seek your good without making you become what I want as the condition of my loving you."

The Christian life is:

Christ loved me → the Spirit makes Christ's love alive in me → I learn to will the good of others → even when my natural desires resist it.

John doesn't define love by how intensely I feel toward you.

He defines love by how faithfully I walk toward you and whether I will love you enough to help you walk faithfully with Jesus because if love is working toward your best then I must believe the best version of you is the version that loves and is walking with Jesus.

Notice where John goes next in this letter. He is concerned for the purity of truth because **while love is unconditional it is not all accepting. It is not accepting of falsehood, especially when it relates to the person of Jesus.** Love is anchored in the truth.

2. Purity of truth: Protection from False teaching (Gnosticism)

- **The Gnostic problem:** "Spirit is good; matter is bad."

Some early Gnostic thinking separated the spiritual world from the physical world. If God is pure spirit and physical matter is corrupt, then God couldn't really become physical.

- Docetism: Jesus only appeared to be human (from *dokeō* = "to seem/appear.")

The idea was essentially: Jesus was divine, but the humanity was somehow an appearance or temporary shell. He didn't truly become flesh; He merely looked like flesh.

"7 I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist... 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them." **(II John 7,10)**

- A denial of the humanity of Jesus is a denial of the historical Jesus

"The Word became flesh." — John 1:14

"We have heard... we have seen... we looked upon and touched..." (1 John 1:1)

- Note: The physical body of Jesus and the physical bodily resurrection matter.

- The physical and material is good. "The Word became flesh"

God didn't save us from being human. God entered humanity to redeem it.

If God was willing to inhabit flesh, then flesh matters. Bodies matter. Meals matter. Touch matters. Community matters. Creation matters. Ordinary life matters. All of life is "Spiritual."

- Jesus didn't merely escape His physical body to return to the spiritual realm.
- Resurrection is God's declaration that creation and embodied humanity aren't inherently evil.

The Christian hope is not: "Someday we'll get rid of our bodies."

It's: "God redeems the whole person."

Jesus took on real flesh. And in that real flesh he experienced real love. He showed real love. He gave us the path of love and the command to love. So, I call us to love like Jesus...

I call us to love today. Love by doing good even when we don't feel good.

Love shows us what it looks like to follow Jesus. And John says both of them have to become flesh.

Because that's what God did. The Word became flesh so He could show us what love is.

He came to us. He touched people. He ate with people. He welcomed people. He forgave people.

He served people. He suffered for people. He gave His life for people.

Love took flesh in Jesus.

Response: "Who needs you to love them in a concrete way? Because God's love for people still needs flesh and blood to be known.

Send the text. Make the call. Forgive. Serve. Give. Listen. Welcome. Tell the truth. Do the good.

Because God isn't going to do those things without you. And without you doing it, how will someone experience God's love

"Love took flesh in Jesus. Now let His love take flesh in us."