

21S13 2nd John

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. So, get comfortable, get your coffee or tea or water and settle in for our talk.

I hope everyone is doing well.

Today I'd like to take a look at 2nd John. We have been studying 1st John for some time now and I want to complete our study of the epistles of John with 2nd John and next week with 3rd John.

Remember before we start reading the bible we need to remember the background of 2nd John. The author is the Apostle John. We are not sure which of John's letters was written first. In fact, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John are ordered by length not by when they were written. Most scholars believe it was written sometime in AD85-90. The main themes in 2nd John is Truth and Love.

I want you to think of all the things that you have started and never finished – projects, ideas, whatever. Why is it so easy to start something, but really hard to finish it?

2nd John is more like a postcard than a letter. Short and to the point. John is reminding his readers that God's Word and God's Spirit give us all we need to avoid the false teachings. John explains that the devil uses false teachings to distract us and confuse us, so it difficult for us to finish our "*race of faith*."

This short little letter is a special one to our PUNLA family. John words makes it clear, once we recognize false teachers, we must be avoid them completely.

Think about this as we read 2nd John. I'm reading from the International Children's Bible (ICB) today, I like the plain English in this translation. *¹From the Elder. To the chosen lady and to her children: I love all of you in the **truth**. Also, all those who know the **truth** love you. ²We love you because of the **truth**—the **truth** that lives in us and will be with us forever. ³Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from his Son, Jesus Christ. And may we have these blessings in truth and love.*

*⁴I was very happy to learn about some of your children. I am happy that they are following the way of **truth**, as the Father commanded us. ⁵And now, dear lady, I tell you: We should all love each other. This is not a new command. It is the same command we have had from the beginning. ⁶And loving means living the way he commanded us to live. And God's command is this: that you live a life of love. You have heard this command from the beginning.*

⁷Many false teachers are in the world now. They refuse to say that Jesus Christ came to earth and became a man. Anyone who refuses to say this is a false teacher and an enemy of Christ. ⁸Be careful! Do not lose the reward that you have worked for. Be careful, so that you will receive your full reward.

⁹A person must continue to follow only the teaching of Christ. If he goes beyond Christ's teaching, then he does not have God. But if he continues following the teaching of Christ, then he has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If someone comes to you, but does not bring this teaching, then do not accept him into your house. Do not welcome him. ¹¹If you accept him, you are helping him with his evil work.

¹²I have much to say to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come visit you. Then we can be together and talk. That will make us very happy. ¹³The children of your chosen sister send you their love.

Before we start let's be clear of a couple of things. "The Elder" is John who was very likely the last of the apostles when this letter was written.

The "Chosen Lady" is widely discussed but scholars argue it could be a specific person, or generally Christians. I personally think the "Church" as Jesus Bride is also very likely.

"her children" likewise is contested from some saying literally the lady's children to my personal opinion that the children are referring to all Christians.

The Lady as the Church and her children as the Christians. But I'll let you be the judge. The message is equally good no matter your opinion of the initial intended reader.

John uses the word "truth" five times in the first 4 verses. Why do you think John stresses truth?

What is your answer to those who say, "Your truth is your truth; and my truth is my truth"?

I like to say truth is truth. There is only one truth and it is not affected by opinion or position. God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He is Truth. And His words in the Bible teach us what true "truth" is.

"Live a life of love" (v.6). Easy to say... not so easy to do. What does this mean, exactly, and how might obedience to this command vary from one Christian to the next?

Love is one of the most misunderstood words used in the bible. This love is the word "agape" which means literally goodwill not our messy feelings version of love. We can live a life of love by loving our neighbors as ourselves, by loving people like Jesus loves them. Thinking of others first before ourselves, before our comfort. Just like Jesus would do.

Starting in verse 7, John address the false teaching that Jesus was not really man. Why is it so important to understand Jesus was fully God and fully man? If Jesus was not really human, then he would not have been able to die for our sins. The atonement of the cross would not be legitimate.

I really like the language the ICB uses in Verses 9-11. John says if we go beyond the teaching of Christ we are following false teaching. This is very contested and argued topic in the modern Church. We have lots and lots of “*doctrine*” which are man-made concepts. John is warning us to be very careful to receive “*deeper meanings*” of scriptures or teaching of “*ways to see beyond the text*” of the bible. I can’t say whether they are correct or not, only that John would tell us not to engage such teachings. In fact, he says in v. 11 “*If you accept him, you are helping him with his evil work.*” We are responsible for teachings we listen to and people we associate with. Once you identify teachings as false, you should completely avoid them and the people who teach them.

Based on John’s instructions here, how should Christians respond to members of cult groups? Very carefully would be my advice. John is telling us to have nothing to do with them. The reason is the world is watching us. If we do not clearly say they are false teachers, false doctrines, then we are helping the devil with his evil work. I don’t know about you, but I don’t want Jesus telling me I’m helping his enemy.

Many people see truth and love as opposites. Truth is cold and harsh, and love is warm and accepting. Do you see these qualities as being in opposition?

Jesus taught us how to love in John 13:35, “*All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other*”, we are thinking only of the more “*pleasant*” aspects of love – serving, sacrificing, helping, sharing. You can think of it like being nice to people who are mean to you, it’s doing something nice to someone who hurt you.

Jesus also said “*You must love each other as I have loved you.*” (John 13:34) This love includes some less “*pleasant*” aspects of love – confrontation and correction. Remember that loving like Christ means that we will sometimes be intolerant of sinful and dangerous actions in others. This like standing up for someone who is being bullied or picked on at school, or if your best friend does something really bad you need to tell them it’s wrong even if they won’t want to be your friends any more.

You have to love others enough to tell them hurtful truths?

I recently reconciled this like this. The most hateful thing you can do to someone is not tell them they living, acting outside of God’s plan. If you are silent you are condemning them forever to avoid conflict or risking your comfort now. The old adage says “*Love hurts*” or more correctly sometimes loving someone mean you have to hurt their feelings to save their eternity and the eternity of others watching.

I recommend reading the following passages about Love and truth in your personal study this week,

- Psalm 26:3; 86:11
- Ephesians 5:2
- 1 John 2:6
- 3 John 3

Next week we will be looking at 3rd John Who's Will?

Let's Pray.

Thank you for joining me for Students @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. If you liked the message, please select like. And Please Subscribe to our channel. Leave comments here, or our website or mail me at kip@punla.org. I appreciate your feedback. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.