



ABUNDANT

LIFE CHURCH

SERMON BASED STUDY GUIDE

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2ND & 3RD JOHN

OPENING & PRAYER:

John's later letters crystallize a lifetime of witness: clear devotion to incarnational truth, an insistence that Christian love be truthful and challenging, and practical direction for how church life should guard doctrine and practice. Addressing a community described as "the elect lady and her children," the writing emphasizes that the truth abides within believers by the Spirit, so guidance is not merely bookish but inwardly led. The triune presence—Father, Son, and Spirit—frames both assurance and responsibility: the Spirit as the internal witness, the Son as incarnate Savior, and the Father as source of grace, mercy, and peace.

"Lord, thank You for bringing us together at this moment right now. We ask that You would stir our hearts and minds to be curious about You and kind to one another. Please reveal more of Yourself to us as we grow closer to You and one another. We thank You for this small group time we're about to have. In Jesus' name, amen."

SCRIPTURE:

The Elder (His Title), To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth, because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. **2 John 1-3**

I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father. And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. **2 John 4-5**

This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it. **2 John 6**

For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. (The Incarnation) This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. **2 John 7-8**

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds. **2 John 9-11**

Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen. **2 John 12-13**

The Elder, To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth: Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. **3 John 1-2**

For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. **3 John 3-4**

Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth. **3 John 5-8**

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. **3 John 9-10**

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. 10 So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church. **3 John 9-10 NIV**

Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God. Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true. **3 John 11-12**

I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name. **3 John 13-14**

GO DEEPER:

The incarnation acts as a test of the orthodox faith: anyone denying that Jesus came in the flesh, died, and rose is identified as a deceiver and marked by the spirit of antichrist. That doctrinal clarity drives pastoral advice about community boundaries—particularly in house-church contexts—where false teaching must not be given a platform to mislead the flock. Simultaneously, walking in truth is portrayed not as abstract assent but as whole-life conduct: speech, sexual behavior, use of time and resources, tone, entertainment, and moral decisions all reveal whether one truly walks in the light.

The letters also lift up the shape of faithful ministry: hospitality to itinerant workers, transparent integrity in giving and sending, and seeking the flourishing of others—materially, physically, and spiritually. Prosperity is taught in a balanced sense: God's desire for blessing includes bodily health and the soul's prosperity (mind, will, emotions under God's rule), yet such blessing must not become an idol. John contrasts examples of faithfulness (Gaius, Demetrius) with those who sought preeminence and control (Diotrephes), urging imitation of what is good and rejection of what is self-exalting.

Across both letters the theme returns to a single, persistent ethic: love one another, grounded in truth. Even at the end of life, that simple command is presented as

sufficient—if practiced, it fulfills the commandments and secures joy, unity, and the witness of the community.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1. Truth and love must balance. When love is divorced from truth it becomes indulgence; when truth is divorced from love it becomes cruelty. The Christian posture demands both: honesty that corrects and compassion that restores, so discipline and mercy cohere into sanctifying care. Practically, speak the truth with a heart prepared to heal rather than merely to condemn. **[09:53]**

2. Defend the incarnation always. Belief in the incarnation—Jesus born, lived, died, and risen—is nonnegotiable for the apostolic faith; to deny it is to embrace a deceiving spirit. This doctrine secures not only salvation’s history but the presence of the Spirit in believers’ lives. Guard communal teaching so that Christ’s bodily work remains central and uncorrupted. **[22:07]**

3. Walk in truth every day. Walking in truth is comprehensive conduct: words, sexuality, stewardship, entertainment, tone, and time all testify to faith. It’s less about isolated acts and more about a habitual moral grammar that honors God in ordinary decisions. Aim for consistent fidelity rather than sporadic moral heroics; the steady pattern matters most. **[18:58]**

4. Practice hospitable, faithful service. True ministry shines in sending and receiving workers without taking advantage or seeking preeminence; hospitality is a sacramental expression of the gospel. Support those who serve sacrificially, avoid exploiting ministry for power, and evaluate leaders by fruits of humility and integrity. The church’s witness rests on faithful practice more than eloquent rhetoric. **[39:39]**

LEARNING AND GROWING:

1. In 3 John 1:2, what are the three specific areas of life that the author prays will prosper for Gaius? **[33:02]**
2. The truth is described as something that "abides in us" **[07:03]**. How does having the internal witness of the Holy Spirit change the way a believer navigates daily life compared to just following a set of written rules?
3. We are warned not to give a platform to those who deny the core truths of Christ **[31:49]**. In a world full of social media and different "voices," how do you practically guard your mind and your home from teachings that pull you away from the simple gospel?
4. It is easy to have a "love meter" that is running low while our "truth meter" is high **[17:53]**. When you have to correct someone or speak a hard truth, how can you ensure you are doing it with a heart prepared to heal rather than just to be right?
5. The final command of a lifetime of ministry was simply: "Little children, love one another" **[46:02]**. If you focused entirely on this one command in your most difficult relationship this week, how would your behavior change?

CLOSING PRAYER:

"Father, thank you for the opportunities to grow in our faith. We will continue to lean on Your Word as we grow to bring people to know you. In Jesus' name we pray, amen."