

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth, and not only I but also all who know the truth, because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us for ever: Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, in truth and love. I was overjoyed to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we have been commanded by the Father. But now, dear lady, I ask you, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning, let us love one another. And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment just as you have heard it from the beginning—you must walk in it. Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist! Be on your guard, so that you do not lose what we have worked for, but may receive a full reward. Everyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God; whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. Do not receive into the house or welcome anyone who comes to you and does not bring this teaching; for to welcome is to participate in the evil deeds of such a person. Although I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink; instead I hope to come to you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete. The children of your elect sister send you their greetings.

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

2 John is the John's letter to one congregation, referred to as "the elect lady." John urges them not to let the influence of false teachers shake the foundations of the truth on which they were built. His greeting ties his love for them to the truth that they share, implying that the two cannot be separated: "*whom I love in the truth, because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever*" **How do truth and love connect in your life? How does our love for others cause us to want to seek truth both for them and with them?**

We value and seek **truth** in all aspects of our lives. In this "post-truth" world, our personal opinions are at risk of being shaped more by **appeals** to our opinions or beliefs than by **objective facts**. As Christians, we proclaim that Jesus testifies to the truth and that He himself **is** truth. Christian community enables us to discern truth together and speak the truth in love to one another. **What has it been like for you to seek the truth over this past year? How are you encouraged to think about the truth theologically with others in your life?**

John emphasizes the **truth** that we bear witness to the person of Jesus, with whom we can have a relationship. Jesus' incarnation meant that He left the divine world to live among us. We now have the opportunity to incarnate the gospel as we bear the truth of Jesus to hurting world. **How can the central truth of Jesus guard us against false teachings or bearing false witness to others? How can we hold fast to the truth of scripture in a way that does not sacrifice love?**

Dear God, thank you for the truth of Jesus. Help us to see the truth clearly, bearing witness to it in love to others. Amen.