

**Sermon Series: New Testament Postcards—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—1/13/2008**

**Title: “Tolerance, Love, and Truth”**

**Intro.: Ills.: Mississippi bane and blessing**

**Text: 2 John (Print verse 1-2)**

**Theme:** When we are properly balanced in our relationship to God’s will in Jesus Christ, we keep love within safe boundaries by building into our lives two solid river banks—grace and truth.

***Balancing love and truth in our Christian witness***

- *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. Ephes. 4:15*
- Truth without love is devoid of Christ (**Print and read vss. 4-6**)
  1. *If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. 1 Cor 13: 1-3*
  2. We can be all wrong when we are right when we are more interested in our position than our relationship
    - a. John was warning off acetic and puritanical Christianity with its grace-killing legalism
  3. Love is the mark of our discipleship to Christ
    - a. *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35*
    - b. Love’s goal is to point people to Jesus so that he can transform lives (family member social ills of society, etc.)
    - c. Love is the true test of actions and motives given by Jesus (*Love God. . .love neighbor as self. Mat 22:37f*)
    - d. **Ills.:***The height of our love for God will never exceed the depth of our love for one another. Patrick Morley*
- Love without truth is not loving at all (**Print and read vss. 7-11**)
  1. John was warning against toleration of unbiblical teaching and ungodly life-styles masked as love
    - a. Gnostics teaching that Jesus was not truly human – destroying the teaching of substitutionary atonement (**vs.7**)
    - b. Antinomian (anti-rules) who cheapen grace by saying “*we are freed to sin because of grace*”
    - c. Toleration of evil is self-idolatry, needing acceptance of others to feel worth, and actually using them (**10,11**)
    - d. **“In the world but not of the world”** (*You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. Matt 5:13*)
  2. Unconditional love comes in all form – But is always balanced by the truth
    - a. intimacy (eros), friendship (philos), affection (agape)
    - b. Mercy, tough love, sacrifice
- Where Christ is, truth and love exist in perfect balance
  1. Jesus is The Truth (*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6*)
  2. Jesus is Love-par exulans (*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3: 16*)
  3. **Ills.: the story of the woman caught in sin John 8**

***Directing our love between the guideposts of grace and truth***

· **Ills.: Keep it between the white line**

· *And the Word (Christ) became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only*

*begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14*

- The first test of our actions should be, “Does it lead others to the grace and love of Jesus?”
  1. *Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. vs. 3*
  2. Led by the Spirit, not self-centered and manipulative but Christ-focused, other-centered, and grace commanded (6)
    - a. *However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him . . . For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. Rom 8: 9, 14*
- The second test of our actions is by the boundary of the truth
  1. *Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. vs. 9*
  2. Not compromising the truth of the faith in order to be liked and calling it love
  3. Submitting your thought process and actions to the accountability of fellow believers
    - a. **Illus.: The Hard Work of Being Accountable**

### **Mississippi Bane and Blessing**

From its headwaters in northern Minnesota, the Mississippi River meanders southward to the Gulf of Mexico, spawning and sustaining life along its nearly 2,400 mile journey. To those who know it well, the river is a gentle giant, an untiring bestower of good. It is a bountiful, self-replenishing storehouse of nutrients for farmland. It is a refreshing aviary for birds. A busy highway for barges. However, let it leave its boundaries and this gentle giant becomes an unwieldy, unforgiving beast. The floods of 1993 testify to the widespread damage this river can cause: prime bottomland became lakes, entire towns were destroyed, and levees in eight states were wiped out. In many ways, love is like the Mississippi River. It flows with life-giving power, but without control, without boundaries, it can do great harm. In the name of loving sinners, we can go too far, to the point that we tolerate, accept and even justify sin. This kind of love calmly sets others adrift in dangerous waters rather than moving them from death to life. The little postcard of 2 John shows us how to keep love within safe boundaries by building in our lives two solid river banks—*truth* and *discernment*. **Charles Swindol, *New Testament Postcards, Insight for Living*, © 1996, p.10**

### **The Hard Work of Being Accountable**

When Katie Couric took over as anchor of the *CBS Evening News* in 2006, various personalities gave her advice as to what to do and what not to do. Condoleezza Rice, U.S. secretary of state, contributed this: "There is nothing wrong with holding an opinion and holding it passionately. But at those times when you're absolutely sure that you are right, go find somebody who disagrees. Don't allow yourself the easy course of the constant 'amen' to everything that you say." **Jane Bianchi and Amanda Prischak, "Life Lessons for Katie," *Good Housekeeping* (November 2006), p. 135**

## 2 John 1:1-13

<sup>1</sup>The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth, <sup>2</sup>for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever: <sup>3</sup>Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

<sup>4</sup>I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father. <sup>5</sup>Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another. <sup>6</sup>And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.

<sup>7</sup>For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. <sup>8</sup>Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. <sup>9</sup>Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

<sup>10</sup>If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; <sup>11</sup>for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

<sup>12</sup>Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full.

<sup>13</sup>The children of your chosen sister greet you. [NASB]