

My Favorite Thing About 2nd and 3rd JOHN and JUDE

2 John v. 1-6

February 26, 2022

Today we are combining 2nd and 3rd JOHN and JUDE. Partly because they are short letters, but also because they share a common thread – All three congregations were facing a crisis. The believers were in danger from other “Christians”, whose only goal was to, deceive, corrupt and divide.

2nd John

- **7-11** - 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 you 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 him into your house or welcome him. ¹¹ Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

3rd John

- **9-11** - I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. ¹⁰ So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church. ¹¹ Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.

Jude

- **4, 10, 12-13, 16-19** - For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.... ¹⁰ These men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals -- these are the very things that destroy them. Woes to them! ¹² These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm -- shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted -- twice dead. ¹³ They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.... ¹⁶ These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.... ¹⁷ But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. ¹⁸ They said to you, " In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." {2nd Peter 3:3} ¹⁹ These are the men who divide you....

It is especially devastating to have to come to the realization that there are “Christians” who claim to be “born again”, but who actually have completely different intentions and follow a different leader.

Peter said the way to combat these attacks is:

- To know they are coming – that there IS a Villain in the story –
- Grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus.

John, in his 1st letter, counseled not to just buy what someone is selling but to TEST everything.

Which brings us to My Favorite Thing About 2nd JOHN, 3rd JOHN and JUDE ---- the emphasis of WALKING in the Truth and love.

2nd John

- **1-6** - The elder, to the chosen lady and 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.

3rd John

- **1-4** - The elder, to my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. ² Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. ³ It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. ⁴ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Jude

- **20-21** - But you, dear friends, ***build yourselves up*** in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. ²¹ ***Keep yourselves in God's love as you*** wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Jude is phrased slightly differently, but the idea is the same – keep growing – keep strengthening your truth and love muscles, which echoes Peter’s counsel in his 2nd letter.

Just like Peter’s instruction to ***“grow in Grace and the Knowledge of Jesus”*** indicates intentional activity, John’s instruction to keep ***“Walking in THE Truth and Love”*** and Jude’s instruction to ***“Build Yourselves Up”*** indicate forward progress – going in a specific direction - building spiritual muscle. They describe the entirety of a person’s life ---- continual movement forward in a Love of The Truth {Jesus} which leads to Love as a lifestyle.

Neither John nor Jude was talking about walking in or adhering to a set of doctrines – something we would call truth. They are talking about a Person. They are talking about walking in **THE** truth that **IS** Jesus and the love of God as found **IN** Jesus.

- **Psalm 26:2-3** - Test me, O LORD, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; ³ for your love is ever before me, and ***I walk continually in your truth.***
- **Psalm 85:11** - Love and ***truth*** will meet; justice and peace will kiss.
- **Psalm 86:11** - Teach me, LORD, your way that I may walk in your ***truth***, single-hearted and revering your name.
- **Psalm 119:90** - Through all generations ***your truth*** endures; fixed to stand firm like the earth.
- **John 1:14-17** - And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and ***truth***.... ¹⁷ because while the law was given through Moses, grace and ***truth*** came through Jesus Christ.
- **John 14:6** - Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the ***truth*** and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- **1 John 3:1** - How great is the ***love*** the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!
- **1 John 3:16** – This is how we know what ***love*** is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.
- **1 John 4:9-10** – This is how God showed his ***love*** among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

So, when we put Peter, John and Jude all together they read like this:

Know that there is a Villain and that he has followers ---- even if they look like sheep.

AND

Grow in Grace and the Knowledge of Jesus.

AND

Don’t just buy what someone is selling – **TEST** everything.

AND

Walk in **THE** Truth that **IS** Jesus and the love of God found **IN** Jesus.

AND

Build your spiritual muscles.

Jude 24-25 - To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy -- to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.