

**Subject: *Walking in Truth***

**Scripture: 3 John 1:1-4**

John is known as the apostle of love, but he can also be thought of as the apostle of truth. He wrote five books of the NT (Gospel of John, 1-3 John, and Revelation) and all of them reveal the importance of truth. We see this especially in his three short epistles of 1-3 John.

The truth was obviously important to John. He begins the letter of 3 John by referring to truth in vs. 1, 3, and 4). This is the apostle John who was also a pastor who had served in that capacity for many years. He is now an older pastor reflecting on many years of ministry. A pastor has many joys in the ministry. A pastor is not to be a gloomy or sad man as he goes about his service for the Lord. Psalm 100 says, "Serve the LORD with gladness." A pastor should be a joyful person but he is also to be a serious person, and we see both in John's statement: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

On this day we call Pastor Appreciation, it is a good opportunity to consider the joy of a pastor. What brings real joy to the heart of a pastor?

*Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

*Philippians 1:3-5* <sup>3</sup> *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,* <sup>4</sup> *Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,* <sup>5</sup> *For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.*

There is one supreme joy (vs. 4), "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." John refers to his "children." They are his spiritual children who look to him as their pastor. It's a beautiful statement. As an apostle and pastor, John was a shepherd who had the privilege and responsibility to care for God's flock. God entrusted him to lead, feed, and protect His people. Notice that John says "hear" which implies that he is away from his spiritual children. But he is still concerned about their spiritual welfare. A pastor's greatest joy is to know that God's people are walking in truth. The Bible often uses the term "walk" to describe the Christian life. A walk involves a starting point, a process, and a destination. What does it mean to walk in truth? Pilate even asked the question: "What is truth?" In this message we are going to search the Scriptures and learn what it means to walk in truth.

### **1. To walk in truth is to believe the truth and be saved**

This has always been God's desire for His people to be saved and walk in the truth.

*Psalms 81:13 Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!*

**2 John 1:4** *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.*

Salvation always begins with the truth of God's Word. Nobody can be saved without knowing and believing the truth of the Gospel.

**2 Timothy 3:15** *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

**John 8:31-32** <sup>31</sup> *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;* <sup>32</sup> *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

Walking in the truth validates salvation. How can a pastor be sure that people are truly converted unless they walk in truth? God's people must learn the truth, love it, and live it.

## **2. To walk in truth is to be in fellowship with Christ and other believers**

*1 John 1:1-4* <sup>1</sup> That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; <sup>2</sup> (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) <sup>3</sup> That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

## **3. To walk in truth is to obey Scripture**

This is what Jesus prayed for. *John 17:17* Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

To walk in truth a believer must understand the truth and then obey it consistently. A pastor's greatest joy is when those under his care display lives that are informed and governed by the truth of God's Word. We have the truth and value the truth. We preach and teach the truth. We uphold and defend the truth. But all that misses the mark unless we learn it and live it.

*James 1:22* But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

## **4. To walk in truth is to have holy character**

*1 John 1:5-7* <sup>5</sup> This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Sometimes light represents truth and darkness represents lies. But here light represents moral purity and holy character and darkness represents sin.

*Ephesians 5:8* For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

## **5. To walk in truth is to be humble, patient, and loving toward others**

*Ephesians 4:1-2* <sup>1</sup> I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, <sup>2</sup> With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.

This means that we walk in a manner that reflects God's gracious work of salvation. That is a walk of humility and love toward God and others.

*Ephesians 5:1-2* <sup>1</sup> Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor.

## **6. To walk in truth is to live by godly wisdom**

*Ephesians 5:15-17 (ESV) Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

*James 3:13-17* <sup>13</sup> Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup> But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. <sup>15</sup> This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. <sup>16</sup> For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

It is one thing to live by the world's wisdom, and it is another to live by godly wisdom.

*Proverbs 13:20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*

## **7. To walk in truth is to live by faith**

*2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

*Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Living by faith is taking God at His word and trusting Him at all times. Hebrews 11 is the faith chapter of the Bible, showing us how the OT saints lived by faith and received God's blessings and His approval.

*Proverbs 3:5-6* <sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. <sup>6</sup> In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

## **8. To walk in truth is to live under the Holy Spirit's control**

*Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* This is living under the control of God's presence, power, and guidance, which is the way Christ lived.

*1 John 2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.* This is what it means to follow Christ.

*John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

All this sounds good, but can we really live that way?

We can walk in truth if we are in Christ and have a new heart.

We can walk in truth if we are reading and studying God's Word.

We can walk in truth if we yield our heart to the Holy Spirit's control.