

2 John: Guarding the Gospel

Week Three

Verse Three

- Grace
 - Grace is the favor we receive from God that is undeserved by us and purchased for us by Christ.
 - Grace includes all of the “spiritual blessings” obtained for by Christ (Eph. 1:3).
- Mercy
 - Mercy is the forbearance of God that withholds and the love of God that removes the punishment we deserve for our sins.
 - Were God to give us what we deserve, we would be in hell right now.
- Peace
 - Peace is restoration to wholeness primarily in relationship.
 - Peace refers to the objective truth of restoration and wholeness that results in inner tranquility. It sometimes refers to the feeling but is never separated from what produces it.
- Will be with us
 - This is a promise for now and for eternity.
 - Note that John includes himself.
- From God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son of the Father
 - Note the emphasis upon the fatherhood of God.
 - Acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Son of God is central to the gospel and a great emphasis of John’s (cf. 1 John 2:22-23; 4:15; 5:1-2; 5:20).
 - Note that John makes it clear that grace, mercy, and peace are from God the Father and the Son of the Father. This is a clear declaration of Christ’s deity.
 - This phrase and its content forms a background for discerning the kind of heresies this church would face.
- In truth and love
 - If this refers to grace, mercy, and peace it indicates the authenticity of these things as that which will be with them truly and the source of these things as from God’s love.
 - If this refers to Christ’s sonship, it declares the fact as true truth and highlights the relationship between the Father and Son as one of love.

Verse Four

- I was very glad to find *some* of your children walking in truth
 - This is a commendation of this church in reference to their faith and conduct.
 - The preposition may indicate that “some” of the children were walking in the truth but that “some” were not.
 - Again, truth and what we do with it is a theme for John.
- Just as we have received commandment from the Father
 - This must be a reference to the great commandment and its connection with the Law.
 - Orthodoxy does not disconnect the Law from the gospel but sees it fulfilled in Christ and sees it being fulfilled in us (cf. Romans 1:16-17).

Verse Five

- And now I ask you, lady, that we love one another.
 - Interesting that John does not use a command but a polite request.
 - Probably indicates both endearment and confidence.
 - The commandment from the Father is the command to love one another.
 - The command to love one another is the fulfillment of horizontal (person to person) law (cf. Romans 13:8).
 - Love for one another is what marks off Christians from the world (cf. John 13:35).
- Not as writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning.
 - Again, this is a reference to the great commandment in the Law (cf. Lev. 19:18; James 2:8).
 - The essence of God's law does not change though its applications may find different expressions in time.

Verse Six

- And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments.
 - Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15).
 - Antinomians ("against the law") disconnect obedience from grace and preach that obedience is not necessary for salvation. The "free grace" movement is at risk of this.
 - Legalists makes obedience the ground, or at least part of the ground, for salvation. Some who preach a form of "lordship salvation" are at risk of this.
 - Obedience must be connected to grace by way of regeneration and its fruit (cf. Eph. 5:7-9). There is a radical difference between saying, "You must obey God to be saved" and "You will obey God if you are saved".
 - If hatred for your brother (not loving him) proves that you are not saved (cf. 1 John 2:9; 3:15), how much more hatred for Jesus (not loving Him)?
- This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.
 - The commandment is to love one another.
 - Why such emphasis upon love in a letter about false teaching?