

Abiding in Love and Faith

2 John 5-8

As we begin our study today, it is important to remember the context of John's second epistle. The Gospel was being shared throughout the world and people were responding to the Lord as they heard and received the Gospel. Much of the appeal for the Gospel could be attributed to the faithful witness of believers. They had received Christ by faith, and their lives had been transformed. They did not possess a mere religion or some new philosophy, they had been born again in Christ, becoming new creatures in Him. Such a change was noticed by others, creating a desire in unbelievers to know more about Christianity.

However, opposition was experienced by those committed to sharing the Gospel. All did not believe, and some sought to hinder the furtherance of the Gospel. Others had heard portions of the Gospel but did not rightly understand the true Gospel. These sought to add the Gospel to other faiths or religious practices, while some taught a false gospel entirely.

This is the environment in which the early believers found themselves. They had received the Gospel, having a desire to share the truth and love others as Christ commanded, and yet they were forced to deal with those who sought to pervert or dilute the Gospel. This created the need for a critical balance – loving others as they should while having the courage to stand for truth and confront error. Such a balance required a close relationship with the Lord.

While our culture is vastly different, there are many similarities. The challenge to find that balance remains for us today. Like the elect lady and her children, we too must possess the ability to love others while standing for truth and confronting error. As we discuss the [admonitions](#) within the text, I want us to consider: [Abiding in Love and Faith](#).

I. The Priority of Love (5-6) – [And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.](#) ^[6] [And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.](#) As John began to counsel the elect lady, he reminded her of the significance of love within her life and the lives of all believers. Consider:

A. The Necessity (5a) – [And now I beseech thee, lady.](#) John offered a strong word regarding her love for others. The word beseech has the idea of “*urging or entreating*.” It speaks of urgency and necessity. Love for others was not optional. John knew if they were to be effective in ministry, love would have to be present in their lives and shown to others. (The same is true for our lives as well.)

B. The Authority (5) – *And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning.* John affirmed that his command to love had not originated with him. In fact, he had given nothing new. This had been commanded from the beginning. John offered the same foundational instruction Jesus had given. He was there when Jesus was questioned about the great commandment, hearing Jesus command the scribe to love his neighbor as himself. Jesus actually referred to the commandment given of God to Moses. *Lev.19:18 – Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*

- We live in a culture that often lacks tolerance and genuine love for others, especially those who hold a viewpoint different than our own. However, this commandment is not negotiable. If we are to honor the Lord by keeping His commandments, living in a way that pleases Him, we must heed His Word and love our neighbors as we do ourselves!

C. The Consistency (5) – *And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.* John was aware of the struggles the elect lady faced. In fact, he will instruct her in dealing with those who taught false doctrine. However, she was expected to love others, revealing the great love she had received in Christ to all, even those with whom she disagreed. This was not an easy task to complete. Loving those willing to return her love was easy, but what about those who were not her friends, actually her enemies? She had to love those who were good and those who were bad. She had not been called to reserve her love for those within the church, but also show love for the sinful. She was expected to love those who had wronged or mistreated her, the gracious along with the abusive.

- This is quite convicting when we pause to consider its implication. It is easy to love certain people, but others are often difficult. We love those who agree with our position, but we tend to dislike those with whom we disagree. We must model the love of Christ, even to those apart from the faith. We cannot forget His cry for forgiveness for those who had wronged Him at the cross. There is no greater proof of our faith in Christ than the ability to love others. *John 13:35 – By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

D. The Accountability (6) – *And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.* Her love for others was not dictated nor expected by the world, but it was commanded by the Lord. She and all believers were expected to walk in love according to His command. Her love for all may be ignored by others, but it would be noticed by Christ. On the other hand, her lack of love for others may be tolerated by society, but it would not be acceptable to Christ. If she was to please Him, she had to love others according to His command.

- The world in which we live has a skewed perception of love. We must walk in love in order to please our Lord. We cannot be the Christian He would have us be apart from real love for others. We will never reach spiritual maturity if we lack the ability to love. This world may not see, and it may not care, but Christ does and we are accountable to Him!

II. The Presence of Deception (7) – [For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.](#) Along with the need for godly love, John revealed the need for an awareness of the deception prevalent in their day. As they showed the love of God, there was also a need to stand firm in the faith. Consider:

A. The Declaration (7a) – [For many deceivers are entered into the world.](#) The elect lady had dealt with those who opposed her and the faith. John reminded her that this should come as no surprise. Deceivers were present and always had been. There have always been those who denied the truth of God, seeking another way. The enemy always seeks to present a counterfeit to the truth.

- We must be aware and prepared for deceivers as well. Their presence has not diminished; in fact, they are gaining momentum. We live in an age where people seek something with a semblance of truth, but that also appeals to their personal desires as well.

B. The Denial (7b) – [For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.](#) These are always known by their stand regarding Jesus Christ. John warned these deceivers deny that Christ had come in the flesh. They denied the atoning work of Christ for the salvation of mankind. In rejecting the coming of Christ, they deny the sole means of salvation.

- This has and will continue to be the denial put forth by those who seek to deceive. Some may admit that Jesus lived upon earth, but they stop woefully short of embracing His atoning work for salvation. They utterly deny that Jesus is the sole means of salvation.

C. The Danger (7c) – [This is a deceiver and an antichrist.](#) John also revealed the great danger in these deceivers – they were antichrist. These not only denied that Jesus had come, but that He was the Son of God. They denied His atonement, His deity, His sinless life, His resurrection, His ascension, and His intercession for believers. While John does not specifically mention these, those who deny Christ also deny His divine character and righteous attributes. Had He not come, we would be without hope, yet in our sin!

III. The Preservation of Faith (8) – [Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward](#). John went on to challenge her to protect and preserve the faith upon which she stood. Consider:

A. The Examination (8a) – [Look to yourselves](#). John challenged the elect lady and her children to look within themselves regarding their faith in Christ. Although they shared a common faith, John knew faith and salvation were personal. They had a personal responsibility to believe in Christ unto salvation, and they were responsible to abide in the faith. (The same is true today!)

B. The Devotion (8b) – [Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought](#). Faith was personal, and maintaining faith required commitment and resolve. They must remain devoted to the Lord, walking daily with Him, if their faith was to endure. John reminded her that they had worked too hard to obtain what they currently possessed to walk away and abandon the faith. They had to endure steadfastly if they were to maintain the faith.

- I am saddened to see those who labored diligently in the faith walk away when faced with adversity or opposition. The Lord never promised a life of ease, but He promised He would walk with us. We have come too far to turn back now. We must examine our hearts so we can walk with the Lord and maintain that which He has begun in us!

C. The Reception (8c) – [Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward](#). John knew walking with the Lord was not easy in the midst of continual opposition, but he also knew that faith would one day end in sight. He urged the elect lady and her children to abide faithful so they could receive a full reward in eternity.

- It is easy to become discouraged if we only focus on our present situation. Life is difficult at best, but we must remember that eternity awaits the saved by grace. We will one day enter the eternal presence of our Lord. I want to abide faithful here so I can honor my Lord there! We can't focus on this life only; we must look through the lens of faith with an eternal perspective!

Conclusion: This is a needed and relevant passage for today. We must love others according to the command of our Lord. We will never be an effective witness apart from genuine love. However, in the presence of current deception and opposition, we too must abide faithful to the Lord and eternal doctrines of the faith. Are there needs in your life? Do you love as you should? Are you committed to the truth of Christ regardless of the attitude of the world? Do you know Christ as your personal Savior? If there are needs, come to Christ today!