

# Open in prayer

## Read 2 John

<sup>1</sup> The elder: *To the elect lady and her children*, whom I love in *the truth* – and not only I, but also all who know the truth – <sup>2</sup> because of the truth that remains in us and will be with us for ever. <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, in keeping with a command we have received from the Father. <sup>5</sup> So now I ask you, *dear lady* – not as *if I were writing* you a new command, but one we have had from the beginning – that we should love one another. <sup>6</sup> This is love: that we should walk according to his commands. This is the command as you have heard it from the beginning: that you should walk in it.

<sup>7</sup> Many deceivers have gone out into the world; they do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in *the flesh*. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. <sup>8</sup> Watch yourselves so that you don't lose what we have worked for, but that you may receive a full reward. <sup>9</sup> Anyone who does not remain in Christ's teaching but goes beyond it does not have God. The one who remains in that teaching, this one 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 home*, and do not greet him; <sup>11</sup> for the one who greets him shares in his evil works.

<sup>12</sup> Though I have many things to write to you, I don't want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come to you and talk face to face so that our joy may be complete. <sup>13</sup> The children of your elect sister send you greetings.

# Introduction

Q Why are there no T.D. Jakes books on our church library shelves? • Nor any Joel Osteen books? No Benny Hinn books? And no Joyce Meyers books? Why did we remove all the Bethel and Hillsong songs from our Sunday set list? ●●

R I'll admit it's a provocative question. • Because some of you noticed. • And some of you have questions. • And some of you wondered. • And some of you disagreed. • And that's fine. ●●

^ The decisions to remove them weren't made lightly. But these authors and artists, in different ways, and to different degrees, drifted from the confession of the person and work of Jesus Christ. • They blur the line enough to deceive. • And a church that loves truth and each other refuses hospitality to deceivers. ●●

P Here's what I want you to get this morning. • Curated shelves and trimmed set lists are not about preference. • They are for the sake of love. For the love of the flock. For the love of the gospel. For the love of the real Jesus. ●●

^ Here is my argument. • True love demands gospel fidelity. Faithfulness to the Jesus who actually came in flesh, actually died, actually rose. ●●

R We will see this in 2 John. • Four movements. The ground of true love. The walk of true love. The test of true love. The goal of true love. • By the end, you will understand why guarding the church library and the Sunday worship set is an act of pastoral love. ●●

R Let me show you the ground first. ●●

## 1) The ground of true love (2 John 1-3)

P My dad kept the first letter I ever wrote him. I was in Sub B or Standard 1. • *Dear Dad, Thank you for the card you sent me.* • *I saw a film on weasels, minks, otters, and skunks last night.* • *Lots of love, Mark.* • • *Not a masterpiece.* • Here's why I read it. Letters have structure. Mine has an introduction, body, and conclusion. • **2 John** is a letter. It has an introduction, body, and conclusion. ••

R The first three verses are our introduction. • The author is <sup>1</sup> The elder. The apostle John. The last living eyewitness of Jesus. • He does not need to name himself. Everyone knows who he is. ••

R *To the elect lady and her children.* • This is a little tricky. • John's is not writing to a single woman. • The pronoun, translated you, for her in verses 6, 8, 10, 12 is plural. She's not a single woman, she a collection of people. John is writing to a local church. The elect lady is a congregation. Her children are her members. • And the apostle loves this church in the truth. Not sentimental affection. Not mushy loyalty. Love rooted in shared conviction. • And not only John. All who know the truth love those that are in the truth too. Truth unites us all. • Why do believers have a common love for one another? • <sup>2</sup> because of the truth that remains in us. • Truth abides in us all. And truth will be with us for ever. We are unified by the Spirit of truth in common bond with one another. ••

P Then he conveys a blessing. • <sup>3</sup> Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father. • Three gifts. Grace. God giving what we do not deserve. • Mercy, unlike Paul who partners grace and peace, John add mercy to his introductory prayer. • Mercy, God withholding what we do deserve. • And peace. The wonderful result of grace and mercy in our lives is that we have peace with God and man. • And notice how these gifts travel. In truth and love. Truth and love are not opposites. They are twin sisters walking down the road hand in hand. They cannot be separated. ••

R Here is the main idea of **2 John 1-3**. • The elder writes to a local church in truth and love. • And here is how it contributes to the whole letter. Because truth and love are inseparable, a church cannot claim to love while abandoning truth. •

R That is the ground. Now we need to see the walk. •

## 2) The walk of true love (2 John 4-6)

John has laid the ground. Truth and love. Twin sisters. Inseparable. • Now he notes how this church is walking. ••

Å He writes, <sup>4</sup> I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, in keeping with a command we have received from the Father. • Did you catch the shadow fall across the text? Some of your children. Not all. Some walk in truth. Others do not. • That is the pastor's heart. Joy mixed with grief. Gladness tempered by concern. The truth is proclaimed. The command is expounded. But not everyone walks in it. Not all of you live it. It grieved John. It grieves me. ••

So John exhorts. <sup>5</sup> So now I ask you, dear lady – not as if I were writing you a new command, but one we have had from the beginning – that we should love one another. • Not a new command. The world loves novelty. False teachers love to peddle fresh ideas. But John will not innovate. He returns to the beginning. The words of Christ to His disciples, Love God. And love one another. This is not sentiment. Vague kindness. This is our Lord's command. Received. Fixed. Binding. ••

R Then John defines love. <sup>6</sup> This is love: that we should walk according to his commands. This is the command as you have heard it from the beginning: that you should walk in it. • Here is the shape of love. Not feeling. Not mere affection. Obedience. • To love God is to obey God. To walk according to his commands. ••

P My son Thomas is learning maths. Perimeter, they tell him, is the outside of a shape. The measure of the boundary. • The Greek word here is peripateō. Peri. Around. The word means to walk. • Walking is not about a single step. Walking is a habitual way of life. And love marks the walked perimeter of the Christian life. Everything happens inside the shape of love. • Love is defined by walking according to his commands. ••

R So here is the main idea of 2 John 4-6. John rejoices that some walk in truth. Then he exhorts the whole church to practise the command to love. Obedient love is the path truth travels. • And here is how it contributes to his argument. A church that loves truth walks in love with God and with one another. ••

R That is the walk. Now we need to see the test. ••

### 3) The test of true love (2 John 7-11)

∂ John has laid the ground. He has shown the walk. Now he gives us the test. ●●

∅<sup>7</sup> Many deceivers have gone out into the world; they do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. ● Do not miss the weight. These false teachers undermine the person of Jesus. They deny the incarnation. They attack His person. And they attack His work. ● The coming in the flesh is not merely a birth. It is the whole mission. Life. Death. Resurrection. ● No incarnation, no salvation. ● So John names them. Deceivers. Antichrists. ●●

∂ Then the imperative.<sup>8</sup> Watch yourselves. ● Stand guard. ● Why? So that you don't lose what we have worked for, but that you may receive a full reward. ● The fruit of gospel ministry. ● A full reward is at stake. Not salvation. Reward. ● John had sowed. Others planted. Now these false teachers threaten to steal their harvest. ●●

R Here is the doctrinal line.<sup>9</sup> Anyone who does not remain in Christ's teaching but goes beyond it does not have God. The one who remains in that teaching, this one has both the Father and the Son. ● To go beyond what is written is to depart. To remain in what is written is to abide. There is no third option. You cannot add to Christ. You cannot subtract from Christ. You either have Him fully, or you do not have Him at all. ●●

∅ Then the hardest command.<sup>10</sup> If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your home, and do not greet him; <sup>11</sup> for the one who greets him shares in his evil works. ● This is not rudeness. It is protection. ● Hospitality was the engine of early church mission. To receive a teacher was to endorse him. To fund him. To say, This man speaks for God. And John says, Do not do that for deceivers. Love for the flock requires a closed door to wolves. ●●

~ So here is the main idea of 2 John 7-11. John warns the church to guard their reward and refuse hospitality to false teachers. ● And here is how it contributes to his argument. A church that loves truth and each other refuses hospitality to deceivers. Because true love protects. True love tests. True love shuts the door on those who would destroy. ●●

R That is the test. Now we need to see the goal. ●●

#### 4) The goal of true love (2 John 12-13)

P John has given the ground. The walk. The test. Now he shows the goal. ●●

P He writes, <sup>12</sup> Though I have many things to write to you, I don't want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come to you and talk face to face so that our joy may be complete. ●  
Paper and ink are poor substitutes for presence. John could write more. He could fill pages. But he longs for something better. Face to face. Eye to eye. ●  
The goal of all his truth-telling and love-commanding is not distance. It is joy. Complete joy. Shared joy. Joy that only comes when a shepherd stands among the sheep. ●●

P Then the final line. <sup>13</sup> The children of your elect sister send you greetings. ● A sister church. Same election. Same truth. Same love. They send greetings. ● This is not small talk. It is solidarity. You are not alone. Another congregation stands with you. Same battle. Same confession. Same hope. ●●

o I saw in the news Christopher Nolan is bringing out a new version of the Odyssey. The story of the Trojan War. ● In that war, the Greeks built a giant wooden horse. They left it at the gates of Troy. Then they sailed away. ●● The Trojans looked at the horse. It looked like a fancy gift. A symbol of peace. ● So they opened the gates. Dragged the horse inside. ● That night, Greek soldiers climbed out. Opened the city gates. And Troy fell. Not because the enemy was strong outside. Because the enemy was welcomed inside. ●●

John says, Do not drag the deceiver into your church. ● Not because you are unwelcoming. Because you love your city. And church that loves truth and each other refuses hospitality to deceivers. ● Our closed door to heresy is not hate. It is loving protection of our flock. ●●

R So here is the main idea of 2 John 12-13. John expresses his desire to come personally, and he relays greetings from a local church. ● And here is how it contributes to his argument. A church that loves truth and each other refuses hospitality to deceivers. But refusal is not isolation. The door closes to wolves. It stays wide open to faithful brothers. The goal is not a fortress. It is a family. Face to face. Joy complete. Greetings exchanged. That is the goal. ●●

R Now we need to connect this to the gospel. ●●

## Connect to the gospel

~ We have seen the ground. Truth and love, twin sisters, inseparable. • We have seen the walk. Obedient love, the perimeter of the Christian life. • We have seen the test. Shut the door to deceivers who deny Jesus came in the flesh. • We have seen the goal. Face to face joy, wide open to faithful brothers. • All of this rises to one claim. A church that loves truth and each other refuses hospitality to deceivers. ••

∂ But why? Why such a hard line? Because the deceivers deny the front door of the gospel itself. ••

~ Look at verse 7. They do not confess Jesus Christ come in the flesh. • That is heresy. • God's Word teaches that the eternal Son of God actually took on human flesh. • Real body. Real blood. Real death. Real resurrection. ••

~ Without the incarnation, there is no salvation. ••

R The gospel does not merely support John's command. It supplies the content of the test. • You cannot know who is a deceiver unless you know what the gospel is. Loving the church means protecting the gospel itself. • False teachers do not have a different opinion. They deny Jesus. Hospitality to them is not kindness. It is consorting with the enemy. ••

P Here is the wonder. The same Jesus who came in flesh died for flesh. Your flesh. My flesh. He took our sin. He bore our judgment. He rose from the grave. That is not a metaphor. That is history. That is the gospel. ••

~ So the closed door is not hate. It is love for the true sheep. It is fidelity to the true Saviour. • And that is my argument. True love demands gospel fidelity. ••

R Now let's talk about what that looks like on your Monday morning. ••

## Application for believers

R True love demands gospel fidelity. • So let me ask you. What are you feeding your soul? ●●

R Audit your inputs. • The books on your shelf. The podcasts in your ears. The teachers you fund with your attention and your wallet. • Every click, every subscription, every share either builds gospel fidelity or undermines it. • Love for the church means turning off teachers who deny the incarnation. Not because you are narrow. Because you love the sheep. ●●

R Test before you welcome. • Before you share a podcast, recommend a book, or invite a teacher into your home or small group, ask one question. Does this person confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh? • True love demands truth testing. ●●

^ Anchor love in the Word. • You cannot love what you do not know. You cannot protect what you have not treasured. • Daily study. Open the book. Learn to recognise the true Jesus. His voice. His shape. His gospel. Only then can you love Him faithfully. Only then can you love His church well. ●●

## Application for unbelievers

^ True love demands gospel fidelity. • So I am asking you directly. Stop chasing a false Christ. ●●

□ The cultural Christ is a dream. • All affirmation. No incarnation. No cross. No blood. No judgment. That Christ cannot save you. He is not real. He is a mirror reflecting your own wishes. And a mirror cannot die for your sins. ●●

P Look to the real Saviour. • Jesus actually came in flesh. He actually lived a perfect life. He actually died under the weight of your rebellion. He actually rose from the dead. ●● That is not myth. That is history. That is the gospel. • And the love that demands fidelity to this Jesus is the only love that will not fail you. ●●

^ So come. • Come to the one who is true. Stop floating in sentimentality. • Bow your knee to Him today. He will not turn you away. He came in flesh to save flesh. Yours. Believe upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. ●●

## Conclusion

Those books on our library shelf. Those songs we used to sing. We did not remove them because we are petty. • T.D. Jakes teaches denies the Trinity, and therefore the eternal Son who became flesh. Joel Osteen preaches self-help, not the cross, denying the work of Christ. Benny Hinn has preached modalism and denied a finished atonement. Joyce Meyer denies penal substitution, saying God did not punish Jesus. Bethel practices grave-sucking and teaches that Jesus' work was incomplete. Hillsong harbours wolves and blurs the line. • We removed them because true love demands gospel fidelity. ••

R We saw the ground. Truth and love, twin sisters, inseparable. • We saw the walk. Obedient love, the perimeter of the Christian life. • We saw the test. Shut the door to deceivers who deny Jesus came in the flesh. • We saw the goal. Face to face joy, wide open to faithful brothers. ••

R In light of this text, believers, audit your inputs, test before you welcome, anchor your love in the Word. • Unbelievers, stop chasing a false Christ. Look to the real Saviour. Bow your knee to Him today. ••

Let's keep wolves out and welcomes shepherds in. Let's protect the flock for love's sake. • True love demands gospel fidelity. And that fidelity leads to joy. Joyful and loving unity. ••

P Now go. Love the truth. Love each other. Shut the door to deceivers. Open your homes to the faithful. And keep your eyes on the Jesus who came in flesh, died for your sins, and rose for your life. ••

P Amen. •••

Close in prayer

Benediction

2 John 3, <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.

## Homiletic indicators

- The operative word in the sentence is underlined.
- R – Instruction
  - **Body:** Natural, one hand gestures.
  - **Voice:** measured, firm.
- ^ – Uncion
  - **Body:** Forward, expressive.
  - **Voice:** Raised, faster.
- ð – Fear
  - **Body:** Narrow eyes, still shoulders, lift your chin slightly (exposed posture).
  - **Voice:** Breathly, higher pitch, quick shallow breaths. Speak into the back of the throat.
- O' – Anger
  - **Body:** Jaw forward, stable feet (no shifting weight), sharp hand strikes (karate chop motion).
  - **Voice:** Hard attack on consonants. Drop pitch slightly, but increase volume on key syllables. Staccato.
- P – Happiness
  - **Body:** Relax shoulders, soften the brow. Open palms, wider stance.
  - **Voice:** Rise in melody at the end of phrases. Bright, forward resonance (smile while speaking).
- Å – Sadness
  - **Body:** Heavy eyelids, slight forward slump, hands still or clasped low.
  - **Voice:** Lower volume, monotone descent (each phrase ends lower than it started). Use mostly single-syllable words.
- □ – Disgust
  - **Body:** Wrinkle nose, pull back your head, sharp turning away from the pulpit.
  - **Voice:** Nasal, sharp, with a "negation cadence" (rising then falling sharply on the sin's name). Hard glottal stops.
- o – Surprise
  - **Body:** Eyebrows up, slight backward step or open-mouth inhale.
  - **Voice:** Bright, high onset. Use a sudden upward interval (a leap in pitch on the unexpected word).
- • – Pause
  - **What it does:** Allows the last sentence to land, convict, or heal.
  - **Length:** 1 second (colon), 2 seconds (period), 3+ seconds (after a weighty statement or call to worship).
  - **Body:** Stop moving. Hold eye contact. Do not smile or nod. Let the silence be uncomfortable.
  - **Delivery note:** A pause feels longer to you than to them. Trust it. Hold one more beat than you think is comfortable.

1) *The elder writes to a local church in truth and love.*

i) *The letter is written from the elder.*

1.)<sup>1</sup> **The elder** [Ὁ πρεσβύτερο, see 3 John 1]:

ii) *The elder writes to a local church whom he loves in truth.*

2.) 1.) *To the elect lady* [ἐκλεκτῆ κυρία, adj not noun, 2 John 6, 8, 10, 12 you is plural, local church]

2.) [S] **and her children** [τοῖς τέκνοις],

1.) whom I **love** [ΠΑΙ, ἀγαπῶ] [in *the truth* [ἀληθεία, theological orthodoxy in opposition]] –

2.) [S] **and** a.) not only I,

b.) [A] **but** also all who **know** [ΡΑΡ] **the truth** [τὴν ἀλήθειαν, believers] –

[<sup>2</sup> **because of the truth** [τὴν ἀλήθειαν, MMS]] 1.) that **remains** [ΡΑΡ] [in us] [John 14:16-17]

2.) [S] **and will be** [ΕΜΙ] [with us] [for ever].

iii) *He conveys grace, mercy, and peace from the Father and the Son in truth and love.*

3.) 1.)<sup>3</sup> **Grace** [χάρις, God giving us what we don't deserve],

2.) **mercy** [ἔλεος, God withholding from us what we do deserve],

3.) **and peace** [εἰρήνη, the outcome of grace and mercy] **will be** [ΕΜΙ] [with us]

1.) [from **God the Father** [Θεοῦ Πατρός]]

2.) [S] **and** [from **Jesus Christ** [Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ]], **the Son of the Father** [τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Πατρός],

[in 1.) **truth** [ἀληθεία]

2.) [S] **and love** [ἀγάπη]].

2) *He rejoices they are walking in truth and exhorts them to practice the command to love.*

i) *He is glad to hear the lady's children are walking in received truth.*

[C] <sup>4</sup> **I was very glad** [ΑΡ]

[E] **to find** [ΡΑΙ] [some of your **children** [τῶν τέκνων]] **walking** [ΡΑΡ, περιπατοῦντας] [in **truth** [ἀληθεία]],

in keeping with **a command** [ἐντολὴν] **we have received** [ΑΑΙ] [from **the Father** [τοῦ Πατρός]].

ii) *He exhorts them to love, according to the command received in the beginning.*

[P] <sup>5</sup> **So** [C] now [adversarial force] **I ask** [ΠΑΙ] you, *dear lady* [κυρία] –

a.) not as *if I were writing* [ΡΑΡ] you **a new command** [ἐντολὴν, John 13:34-35],

b.) [A] **but one we have had** [ΙΑΙ] [from *the beginning* [ἀρχῆς]] –

[E] **that we [should] love** [ΡΑΣ, ἀγαπῶμεν] **one another** [ἀλλήλους].

iii) *To love is to walk according to Christ's command, and Christ's command is to walk in love.*

1.) <sup>6</sup> **This is** [ΠΑΙ] **love** [ἡ ἀγάπη]:

that **we [should] walk** [ΡΑΣ, περιπατῶμεν, live] [according to his **commands**].

2.) **This is** [ΠΑΙ] **the command** as **you have heard** [ΑΑΙ] it [from **the beginning**]:

that **you [should] walk** [ΡΑΣ, περιπατῆτε] [in *love*/it [love or obedience]].

3) He warns them to guard against losing their reward, and to refuse hospitality to false teachers.

i) False teachers undermine the person and work of Jesus Christ.

[G] <sup>7</sup> Many deceivers [πλάνοι] have gone out [AAI] [into the world [τὸν κόσμον]]; they do not confess [PAP, ὁμολογοῦντες] the coming [PMP] of Jesus Christ [in the flesh [σαρκί]].

1.) This is [PAI] the deceiver [ὁ πλάνος, wandering stars, used of Satan]

2.) [S] and the antichrist [ὁ ἀντίχριστος, they are doing Satan's work].

ii) Stand guard against them because reward is at stake.

[C] <sup>8</sup> Watch [PAM] yourselves

[E] so that [-] you don't lose [AAS] what we have worked for [AMI, new converts],

[+] but that you may receive [AAS] a full reward.

iii) To go beyond what Christ's teaching is to depart from His, but to remain in them is to abide in Him.

a.) <sup>9</sup> 1.) Anyone who does not remain [PAP] [in Christ's teaching [τῆ διδαχῇ]]

2.) [S] but goes beyond it [PAP]

does not have [PAI] God [relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit].

b.) [A] The one who remains [PAP] [in that teaching [τῆ διδαχῇ]],

this one has [PAI] both 1.) the Father [τὸν Πατέρα] 2.) [S] and the Son [τὸν Υἱόν].

iv) Do not recognise or show hospitality to false teachers or you share in their evil works.

[C?] <sup>10</sup> If 1.) anyone comes [PMI] [to you]

2.) [S] and does not bring [PAI] this teaching [ταύτην τὴν διδαχὴν],

[E] 1.) do not receive [PAM, recognise as believer] him [into your home [οἰκίαν]],

2.) [S] and do not greet [PAM, show hospitality] him;

[G] <sup>11</sup> for the one who greets [PAP/PAN] him shares [PAI, κοινωνεῖ] in his evil works.

4) He expresses desire to come to them and talk to them, and sends greetings from his local church.

i) He intends to visit personally rather than use paper and ink so that their joy may be complete.

1.) a.) a.) <sup>12</sup> Though I have [PAP] many things to write [PAN] to you,

b.) I don't want [API] to use [1.] paper 2.) [S] and ink].

b.) [A] Instead, [C] 1.) I hope [PAI] to come [AMN] [to you]

2.) [S] and talk [AAN] face [to face]

[E] so that our joy [χαρὰ] may be [PAS] complete [RMP, πεπληρωμένη].

ii) He relays greetings from a sister church to highlight their shared identity as God's elect.

2.) <sup>13</sup> The children [τὰ τέκνα] of your elect sister [ἀδελφῆς ἐκλεκτῆς] send you greetings [PMI].

### **This is how I indicate the function of conjunctions:**

- I put a letter in square brackets before a clause to indicate a logical relationship.
  - [S] - SERIES, Each proposition makes an independent contribution to the whole (and, moreover, furthermore).
  - [P] - PROGRESSION, Each proposition is a further step toward a climax (then, and, moreover, furthermore).
  - [A] - ALTERNATIVE, Each proposition expresses an opposite possibility arising from a situation (or, but while...).
  - [W] [Ed] - WAY-END (ACTION-MANNER), Statement of an action and one which tells more explicitly what is involved in carrying out this action (in that, by).
  - [I] [I] - COMPARISON, Statement that clarifies an action or idea by showing what it is like (even as, as...so).
  - [-] [+ ] - NEGATIVE-POSITIVE, The relationship between two alternatives in which one is denied so the other is enforced, implicit in contrasting statements (not...but).
  - [Gn] [Sp] - GENERAL-SPECIFIC, Statement of a whole and one or more statements which set forth parts of the whole.
  - [Ft] [In] - FACT-INTERPRETATION, Statement and clarifying statement; does not set forth a distinguishable part of the preceding whole.
  - [G] - GROUND, Statement followed by the argument or reason on which it stands; supporting proposition follows the supported proposition (for, since, because).
  - [I' ] - INFERENCE, Supporting statement followed by the conclusion drawn from it; supporting proposition precedes the supported proposition (therefore, wherefore, consequently).
  - [C] [E] - CAUSE-EFFECT (ACTION-RESULT), One action and another action which results from the first as an automatic consequence (that, so that, with the result that).
  - [C?] [E] - CONDITIONAL, Like cause-effect except existence of the cause is only potential (if...then, if, except...).
  - [M] [Ed] - MEANS-END (ACTION-PURPOSE), One action and another that is intended as the goal or purpose of the first (in order that, that, lest, to the end that).
  - [T] - TEMPORAL, Proposition and the occasion when it occurs (when, after, before).
  - [L] - LOCATIVE, Proposition and the place where it can be true (where, wherever).
  - [Adv] - ADVERSATIVE, Main clause that stands despite a contrary statement (although, yet, but, nevertheless).
  - [Q] [A] - QUESTION-ANSWER, Statement of question and answer to that question (question mark ?).
  - [S] [R] - SITUATION-RESPONSE, The relationship between a situation in one clause and a response in another.
  - [B] [L] - BILATERAL, A proposition which supports propositions in both directions, rarely used.

### **This is how I use colour highlighting:**

- **Orange**: structure indicator, conjunctions, and prepositions.
- **Yellow**: verbs, Greek, and Scripture reference.
- **Green**: keywords.
- **Red**: repeated words.
- **Pink**: imperatives.
- **Blue**: main idea.

# Sermon preparation worksheet

**Passage:** 2 John

**1. How has the author organised this passage?** a) *An outline*, b) *Tools*, c) *The emphasis*.

- a) 1) The greeting (2 John 1-3).
  - 2) The exhortation to truth and love (2 John 4-6).
  - 3) The warning against false teachers (2 John 7-11).
  - 4) The farewell (2 John 12-13).
- b) John 2 is discourse. I paid attention to verbs, conjunctions, and prepositions. I identified logical relationships (such as Series [S], Cause-Effect [C] [E], and Ground [G]), noting shifts in the author's rhetorical focus.
- c) Truth tests love. To safeguard truth you must test teacher's doctrine for love's sake.

**2. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage?** a) *Literary*, b) *Historical*, c) *Cultural*, d) *Biblical*.

- a) 2 John answers the practical question, How does a local church live out truth in love when false teachers show up at their Sunday service? This matters because guarding the truth by testing doctrine is not a cold, academic exercise. A local church cannot claim to walk in Christian love for one another if it tolerates heresies which dismantle the person and work of Christ. Protecting the flock requires truth to test love.
- b) John writes late in the first century from the region of Ephesus. The letter confronts the many deceivers that have gone out into the world. Traveling heretics were propagating an early form of Gnosticism, denying Jesus Christ come in human flesh, going beyond the faith delivered once for all. This matters because the church must look past the flashy facade of progressive ideas and ruthlessly test doctrine against the apostolic deposit. To allow false teaching in leads to the gospel's destruction and the body's fracturing. Truth tests love.
- c) In the Roman world missionaries relied entirely on the hospitality of local homes because public inns were notoriously expensive, dangerous, and hotbeds of immorality. To receive someone into your house went beyond politeness. It meant providing room and board, financing their onward journey, and granting them an official public endorsement. A stamp of ecclesiastical legitimacy. This matters because guarding the truth requires testing a teacher's doctrine which overrules cultural expectations of hospitality. Truth tests love. Refusing to endorse or subsidise heretics is how we protect the church for love's sake. Drawing a sharp line might look culturally offensive, but it is the highest expression of love for God's truth and love for God's people.
- d) 2 John 5-6 alludes to John 13:34-35. In John 13:34-35, Christ stated, A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. John tethers the definition of Christian love to unswerving obedience to the Command received from Christ. This matters because if we are to guard the truth for love's sake, our standard for testing a teacher's doctrine cannot be subjective. It must be completely anchored to the objective Word. True Christian love and true Christian doctrine do not change with the winds of cultural. They are permanently fixed in God's Word. Truth tests love by measuring teacher's against the Biblical baseline, because true love cannot exist outside of God's revealed truth.

**3. What is the main point the author is arguing to his audience?**

A church that loves truth and each other refuses hospitality to deceivers.

**4. How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?**

This passage connects directly to the gospel through the test of the incarnation in 2 John 7. John says anyone who does not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh is a deceiver. The gospel stands or falls on this truth. The eternal Son actually took on human flesh. No incarnation, no salvation. This gospel connection functions as the non-negotiable boundary for John's command. He argues that a church which loves truth and each other refuses hospitality to deceivers. But why? Because the deceivers deny the incarnation, which is the gospel's front door. The gospel does not merely support John's command, it supplies the content of the test. You cannot know who is a deceiver unless you know what the gospel is. Loving the church means protecting the gospel itself. False teachers don't just have a different opinion. They deny Jesus. So, hospitality to them is not kindness, it is consorting with the enemy. This matters because we face the same pressure to be inclusive at the expense of truth. Truth tests love. The gospel frees us to draw lines for love's sake.

**5. What is the main point you will argue to your audience?**

True love demands gospel fidelity.

**6. What applications will you make?** a) *To believers*, b) *To unbelievers*.

- a) Audit your inputs. What you read, watch, and support financially either builds or undermines gospel fidelity. Love for the church means turning off teachers who deny the incarnation. Test before you welcome. Before you share a podcast, recommend a book, or invite a teacher into your home or small group, ask, Does this person confess gospel fidelity? True love demands truth testing. Anchor your love in the Word. You cannot love what you do not know. Daily study of Scripture learning to recognise the true Jesus so you can love Him and His church faithfully.
- b) Stop chasing a false Christ. The cultural Christ, all affirmation, with no incarnation, and no cross, cannot save you. He is not real. Look to the real Saviour. Jesus actually came in flesh. He actually died. He actually rose. That is the gospel. True love, the love that demands fidelity to this Jesus, is the only love that will not fail you. Come to the one who is true. Stop floating in sentimentality. Bow your knee to Him today.

**7. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline?** a) *Sermon outline*, b) *Sermon title*.

b) The true love test.

- a) 1) The ground of true love (2 John 1-3)
- 2) The walk of true love (2 John 4-6)
- 3) The test of true love (2 John 7-11)
- 4) The goal of true love (2 John 12-13)

**On my sermon preparation sheet, these are the questions and an explanation:**

**1. How has the author organised this passage?**

- a) An outline: The author's organization (or structure) is a way of talking about the shape or form of a biblical passage. Beneath the surface of each passage is an underlying arrangement of material and a logic that the author has used to organize the passage. And each part of the passage has a role to play in that structure.
- b) Tools: Identify the text type, and any grammatical tools used to identify the structure.
- c) The emphasis: The structure will reveal an emphasis that the author is making.

**2. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage?**

- a) Literary context: How do the passage that comes before and the passage that comes after relate to your passage?
- b) Historical context: The historical situation or circumstances experienced by the first audience at the time when the book was written.
- c) Cultural context: The setting in the daily life of the people/characters in the book and how that will have been understood by the first audience. This is distinct from historical context in that it does not relate to a particular audience in a particular place at a particular time, but the details of life that the people/characters in the text had in common. Anything that requires extra-biblical knowledge should be treated skeptically.
- d) Biblical context: Is the author citing or alluding to some previously written Biblical passage? What connections could the author have reasonably expected his first audience to make.

**3. What is the main point the author is arguing to his audience?**

The author's main point is a way of talking about the aim of a passage as a whole. It can be descriptive or prescriptive. It is not simply a summary statement. But rather, it is the idea of which the author is trying to persuade his audience. As you work on articulating the author's argument, please keep in mind that it needs to be specific enough to the passage that it clearly comes from the particular passage (and not any other passage), it is for the first audience, it should be one single sentence that is both short and clear, and captures the argument of the passage.

**4. How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?**

What part of the gospel (the death and resurrection of Christ) is in view? Every part of the Bible, every passage of Scripture, in some way relates to the gospel of Jesus Christ. What parts of the passage connect to the gospel? The connection must be legitimate and textually driven.

**5. What is the main point you will argue to your audience?**

**6. What applications will you make? a) To believers, b) To unbelievers.**

The main point of a sermon is the fundamental statement of what you, as a speaker today, are trying to convince your audience today. It will certainly be intimately related to the author's main point for his original audience and it will consider the gospel connection. It should be well reasoned and, perhaps, articulated as the result of proof (so depending on premises and building arguments).

**7. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? a) Sermon outline, b) Sermon title.**

**On my sermon preparation sheet, this is how questions relate to one another:**

- o 1 a) should be driven by the text.
- o 1 c) should be driven from the outline in 1 a).
- o 2) should be directly relevant to 1 c).
- o 3) cannot be disconnected from 1 c), and should be clarified by 2).
- o 4) must be found in the text.
- o 5) cannot be disconnected from 3), and should be driven by 4).
- o 6) should flow from 5).
- o 7) should structurally relate to 1 a), and make the argument in 5).