

May 7, 2023

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "I Love You in Truth"

—The Relationship of the Saints—

Text: 2 John 1:1~3

1:1 The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth,

1:2 because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

1:3 Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love.

Introduction

Good morning, everyone.

Last time we finished the message from The First Epistle of John. Today we will begin with the Second Epistle of John. John probably wrote this epistle in Ephesus around the end of the first century.

The recipients are described in verse 1, **the elect lady and her children**. There has been much debate about who the recipients were. However, their specific names were not identified. Nevertheless, we can learn from the letter that the sender's feelings of love flowed from the text.

We can connect with many different people through letters and books. It is a wonderful experience. Even if we cannot personally meet a noble person, even if he or she is deceased, what they wrote remains. And we can understand the experiences and thoughts of these people.

As the old saying goes, "The style reflects the person," we can learn a lot about a person through his or her writings. We can also enjoy the blessings of communicating with the person, even if it is indirectly.

On top of that, John lived with Jesus Christ for more than three years of His public life and listened to and spoke directly at His side and walked with Him in the land of Israel. He was a disciple who offered his life to his beloved Lord Jesus. It is amazing to read the writings that he left behind for future generations.

What a blessing it would be if we could feel such a strong impression when we open the Bible. Let us experience John's feelings through his second epistle according to the following two points.

Main Points

1. **Calling of Love**

1) **A Blessed Human Relationship**

By the way, John's opening words of the epistle were "**whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth**" (1:1)

My dear friends, a person who frankly say, "I truly love you" has the courage and honesty of his or her heart. It is often said that "**love is a verb, not a noun.**" Love is the power to speak to others, and it is an action.

Love is also the basis for bringing people together.

Colossians 3:14 ...love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Love works on the will as well as on the emotions. Unfortunately, emotions do not last. If love is influenced only by feelings, it cannot be called **eternal love**. Such love cannot be expected to last.

Love is not a feeling. We should know that the power of **willed love** is important.

The Bible teaches as below,

1 Corinthians 13:13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

The love that lasts forever is the real one. True love is the first and most precious thing above anything else.

It is very interesting that this epistle begins with a **calling of love**. Healthy relationships between people can be established because the most blessed human relationship is built on the foundation of love.

2) A Saint's Relationship to Each Other

Now, let me tell you a hypothetical story. Suppose you are living in a foreign country and there is no telephone or social networking service. The only thing you can do is to write letters. What kind of letter do you write to your brothers and sisters of Kitahama Church?

How would you call your brothers and sisters of Kitahama Church at the beginning of your letter? It depends on your relationship with Kitahama Church. Your calling depends on what kind of fellowship you have.

1:1 The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth,

John does not love the recipient only himself, but he says, "**whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth.**" Here we understand the relationship of the saints in the Lord.

We are asked what kind of relationship we have in the Lord. John writes that we are in **love**. It is the saints who are saved by the love of Jesus and belong to the Church. Like John, we want to write, "... **whom I love in truth..**"

It is natural for the saints who have relationship to the Church of Jesus Christ because of the love of Christ. Therefore, **the relationship** between saints that begins with the calling of love is the most beautiful thing. If the love of Jesus is greatly revealed there, the problems become smaller.

John wrote the beginning of the epistle with **the calling of love**.

2. The Saints Live in Truth and Love

1:2 because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

1:3 Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love.

1) Living in Love

Even if you know the wonder of love, if love is not connected to the truth, it will be empty in content.

In this day and age, there are many things that are given the name of love. It is a trend that could be called a revolt of **love**. Love found in romance novels, in melodramas, in popular songs, in cases of infatuation and death, in evaporation problems, in homosexuality, and so on. There are many false words of love flying around in our society.

The love that the Bible teaches is not this kind of human love. It is **the love** that is given by God the Creator. The New Testament is written in Greek, and the word **love** is written as **agape** in Greek. It is the infinite, holy love of God the Creator that is the love that demands nothing in return. It is the love that God has given us through Jesus Christ. It is agape love. We have been given a **relationship with God** through that love.

The Bible teaches that truth and love are inseparable. This epistle is a very short one that has only one chapter and only 13 verses. The word **truth** appears five times, and the word **love** five times as well. It shows that the relationship between truth and love is very important.

2) Living in the Truth

What is the truth? According to the Kojien dictionary, it is defined as follows,

① A correct reason.

② A law or fact that is universal and valid and that no one can deny.

This is truth that is explained as a definition, but it does not mean that we know the truth itself as a practical matter. When Jesus Christ was arrested and put on trial, Pilate, the governor who was present at the trial, asked Jesus,

John 18:38 Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

There was the words of Jesus Christ behind Pilate's question as below,

John 18:37 Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

Many people in the world have sought what and where the truth is. Philosophers, religious people, and wise men have sought the truth. However, the answer that those people arrived at was, "**What is truth?**" such as Pilate.

Jesus Christ said in John Chapter 14, verse 6, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the way, the truth, and the life.**"

The Lord Jesus Himself is the truth, and He came into this world to testify about the truth. Here is a blessed message.

Truth cannot be spoken without Jesus Christ, and it is impossible to find truth without Him.

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Like this, the Second Epistle of John implies his desire that the saints, receivers walk in **love and truth**. The blessings of God's grace, mercy, and peace are waiting them.

The existence and relationship of the saints who belong to Christ's Church is reasoned that they walk in **truth and love** to one another. What do you think?

Don't you think that our Christian lives and our church lives become habitual or legalistic one without knowing? The relationship between brothers and sisters stands on the saints who live in **truth and love** with one another.

The most important thing is our relationship with the living God. If that vertical axis is firm, the horizontal axis between saints will be placed in **truth and love**. Devotions, daily fellowship with the Lord, are essential.

Let us walk in God's love (agape) so that we too may walk in a blessed Christian life.

Conclusion

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—The Relationship of the Saints—

John, the apostle, wrote in the beginning of the epistle, "**I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth.**" It is the correct **relationship** of love.

The epistle, which began with **a calling to love**, is a greeting to its recipients. It is a way of living in **truth and love**. Let us make a precious relationship that begins with the calling of love. God's grace and God's peace are awaiting us there.

* God bless you!