

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Truth to Love

Speaker:

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Date:

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Scriptures:

1 John 4:1-6

Theme: Love Jesus truthfully or you will not love him at all.

Introduction: False antitheses pit things against each other that are not actually opposed to one another in God's world. In our day, many false antitheses revolve around issues of justice, whether it's social justice, gender equity, or issues of abuse. Often, popular responses to these problems end up producing more injustice for one reason: they abandon the Lord and his standards, and wind up inserting worldly wisdom in his place. But in God's world, truth and love are never opposed.

Here are 2 ways that truth and love work together:

1. Test to confess (1-3)

John calls the church to not believe every spirit but to test the spirits to see whether they are from God.

This reminds us that we have spiritual enemies who aim to deceive us from their selfish motives. Christians must not be spiritually naïve.

We must also beware of how the spirit of our age influences and corrupts us. In John's day, the corruption came about through denying the humanity of Jesus.

Especially since the material world was often seen as bad, denying his humanity seemed to make Jesus more spiritual.

But John makes clear that the denial of Jesus' humanity is a denial of the gospel. Anyone who teaches that is not from God and must not be believed.

2. Rest in what you confess (4-6)

John then comforts and reassures the church with the truth that God has sustained them through their trial. He kept them from the false teachers. Our growth as Christians is grounded in that truth: it is the Lord who has overcome and who provides the grace we need. We pursue growth in and by the grace he supplies.

John also helps the church to discern false teachers by examining their source of authority and their standards. They are appealing to the world because they have worldly standards and live by worldly values.

Questions:

1. Are you spiritually naïve? How do you validate spiritual claims?
2. How is the Lord calling you to grow in spiritual maturity and discernment? What are you doing to pursue that growth?
3. Do you understand justice biblically?