

Stand Firm Together

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[0 : 00] As we prepare to hear God's word to us this morning from the letter of 2 John, let me first turn to God in prayer, asking for the help of his spirit.

Father, I pray first for help from me. Lord, as I speak words of warning, words of instruction, words of protection, Lord, let me say what needs to be said, say what your spirit has proclaimed here in your word, and say no more than that.

Lord God, may what I say be in accordance with all that you teach. Let me not go beyond what scripture says. Lord God, may you guard my thoughts, and if there is more to say beyond what I've prepared, Lord, may you speak those words through me.

Lord, I pray also for those who are listening. It's one thing to speak words, it's another thing to hear them, and yet another thing to receive them. God, I know how many times that I myself have heard words preached and not understood them.

Lord, give us eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to understand. Unless your spirit is at work. As Jesus said, you know, people can't receive even a single thing.

[1 : 30] Lord, we need you to open our minds to receive and understand the truth, and I pray that you would protect and build up your church through these words, and that we would come away, resolve to stand firm together, resolve to love in truth, to love one another, with that backbone of truth, in knowing Jesus Christ our Lord, who he is, what he has done for us.

And so in his name we come to you, and we come humbly, we come in need, we come knowing that you alone are the God of grace and the God of mercy. Amen.

Amen. Now, if you were here for the sermon last week, you know that we were talking from the book of 2 John towards the end of the New Testament.

We were talking about the importance of relating to the church as a family. And that means loving the church, hoping for the church, enjoying the church, and walking in the truth on which the church was built.

To love in truth means to walk steady together. And there was a tenderness in all that. There was a gentleness that came from the pen of the apostle John.

[2 : 53] But we passed over a few verses and saved them for this week, because those verses talk about how you love the church in a different way, how you defend your family, the church.

And I feel like, in a way, I'm becoming an expert on this now that I've had a bit of experience in home defense this summer. A literal home defense, because twice now this summer, I've had to fend off bears who are trying to break into, you know, the precious resources we have, the garbage bins we have at our house.

And I'm gradually learning how to build an arsenal to defend against these earth sign invaders.

Right? I have a headlamp now in place to stun the bear with its brightness.

I have an air horn now. And hopefully my neighbors don't get too upset about that one. And I have a container of bear spray that I can unleash on that bear if it gets too aggressive.

But if all else fails, I have a copy of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Obviously, the secret weapon is there to help me win over the heart and mind of the bear.

[4 : 08] I have no doubt that the bear will be very reasonable as we debate the finer points of its destructive habits. Well, one thing is for sure. When a bear comes to your home, you don't welcome the bear in for dinner.

That is not what you do. You do not invite someone destructive into your home and into your family. That is why the Apostle John says that love must have a backbone.

Love must have a backbone of truth. That's what he tells us in the letter of 2 John. And John, he is speaking, he is writing as a loving father to the church that he is writing to.

And today, we are going to read how John calls that church and calls us to stand firm together. They and we will love in truth when they stand firm together.

So let me read this entire letter of 2 John again, the same letter we read last week. Follow along with me in your own copy of Scripture. The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth.

[5 : 22] And not only I, but also all who know the truth. Because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever. Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us.

From God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, in truth and love. I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.

And now I ask you, dear lady, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.

And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.

[6 : 29] Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ does not have God.

Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come to you and talk face to face so that our joy may be complete.

The children of your elect sister greet you. This is the word of the Lord. Now, last week we looked mostly at verses 1 through 6 to learn how to walk steady together as a faithful and committed family.

This week we're going to look at verses 7 through 11 to learn how to stand firm together as a faithful and committed family. This is how we love in the truth. This is how we can support one another with a backbone of truth.

[7 : 48] So, how do we love in truth? How do we stand firm against those who would destroy the family of God? Well, here are five ways you must stand firm together.

Five ways that you must stand firm together. And so, we're going to spend the rest of our time together going through these five ways you must stand firm together. First, stand firm together against deceptive teachings.

Stand firm together against deceptive teachings. Now, we are going to spend most of our time just on this first point and then move quickly through the final four points.

There are some people who love heresy hunting and seem to really get a kick out of that and they enjoy that just a little bit too much.

And if that's you, come back next week. I've got a few words for you from 3 John. I'll challenge you about that then. But this week, John is not addressing that kind of person.

[8 : 49] This week, John is correcting those of us who want to avoid it. Those of us who just, you know, we just all want to get along and be nice to each other.

So many of us are conflict avoiders. You know, we just want everyone in the church to be smiling at each other, just to be one big happy family. We want to sweep all our differences, all the significant deep differences in faith under the rug.

And pretend like that doesn't really matter. You know, so what if a few people are promoting some ideas among us that are not in line with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Well, you know, these people, they seem nice enough. And oh, you don't want to oppose them. You don't want to look like the bad guy, do you? Well, John is willing to look like the bad guy.

Because John is writing as a stern and protective father. A father who knows that deceptive teachings can break the backbone of the church.

[9 : 55] The backbone of the church is the person of Jesus Christ and the work that Jesus was sent from his father to do on earth.

That's why John warns us to stand firm together against deceptive teachings. In particular, deceptive teachings that affect the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

Here's what he says in 2 John verse 7. For many deceivers have gone out into the world. Those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh.

Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. Okay, so John here, he uses the loaded word antichrist to describe those who promote these deceptive teachings.

And we'll get to that in a few minutes. But first, we need to know who these deceivers are. John says these deceivers have gone out into the world.

[11:09] They've gone out into the world. And that's a phrase that John uses in his writings to describe people who they once participated in the church. They once looked like genuine Christians.

But they have now wandered away from the truth. They have now joined in with the world and its ideas of who the Christ is. Who Jesus is.

What God sent him to do. And their departure from the truth. Their departure from the true community of faith. Reveals that all along they were fake Christians.

All along they were like Judas Iscariot. That's why John says in 1 John chapter 2. They went out from us.

But they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out. That it might become plain. That they all are not of us.

[12:07] These deceptive teachers cannot remain in a true Christ-centered gospel preaching church. They cannot remain there forever. They don't belong in that church. These deceptive teachers.

Deceptive teachers should not be in that church. Because they are a virus. And the church's immune system needs to remove them. And you do that first by standing firm against their deceptive teachings.

You stand firm together against deceptive teachings. Let's talk about these deceptive teachings. In 2 John verse 7. John says that these deceivers.

These antichrists. They do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Now we actually know even more about these deceivers.

Because in 1 John. He fleshes out even more of what they're teaching. He gives us a bit of a fuller picture of what they're teaching. In that letter John says that such a deceiver. Denies that Jesus is the Christ.

[13:12] And denies the Father and the Son. Again he does not confess Jesus. Meaning that he does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

John also says in that letter. These deceivers are from the world. Therefore they speak from the world. And the point he's getting at is that. These deceivers have ideas about Christ.

And the ideas that they have about Christ. Conform to the world. They conform to the popular spirit. And ideas of the culture around us. The culture that rejects Jesus Christ as Lord.

These false teachers have fallen. Have fallen in league with the world system. And its values. And the way it perceives Jesus. And that is the problem with these deceivers.

The problem is what we could call their Christology. Their Christology. What I mean by that is the problem is. With their understanding of who the Christ is.

[14:13] And their understanding of the work. That God the Father sent him to do. Who Christ is. The work that God the Father sent him to do. That is their Christology. Along with the world.

They reject Jesus Christ. As he really is. They reject proper Christology. Here's how the commentator Colin Cruz.

Summarizes the problem with these deceivers. He says. In their own minds. They had not ceased to be Christians. But the author believed they had.

For no one could hold their Christology. And still remain a Christian. When we put all the elements together. It becomes clear. That their Christology.

Involved. A denial. That Jesus Christ. Is the Messiah. God's son. Come in the flesh. And whose death. Was real. And vicarious. Whose death was real.

[15:11] And vicarious. I'll explain that in a second. Because what's true about. Jesus of Nazareth. Is that Jesus really is. The Christ. The Messiah. He really is God's chosen king.

He really is. Fully God. And fully man. Jesus is God. In the flesh. Jesus really. Died. Jesus really. Truly. Rose again.

His death. Was not only a real. Death. But it was a vicarious. Death. What that word means. Is that Jesus died. Is a substitute.

For us. It's a death. That was a substitute. A vicarious death. Jesus took the place. Of all who believe.

In him. And in Jesus death. He paid the penalty. That we deserve. For our sin. For our rebellion. Against God. Jesus endured. Hell itself.

[16:07] So that those. Who believe. In him. Would never have to. And would be welcomed. Into the family of God. Forever. And ever. That's what we mean.

When we are talking about. The coming of Jesus Christ. In the flesh. So how do you stand firm. Against deceptive teachings. To do that.

You. Not only. You do not only. Deny false teachings. But you have to. Affirm. Three things. So here are the three things. You have to affirm. First. You affirm. That Christ has come.

You affirm. That Christ. Has come. The Jesus. That appears. In the Bible. That is the Jesus. That you. Affirm. So let me ask you this.

What. Do you believe. About Jesus. Who do you think. Jesus really is. Do you believe. That Jesus Christ. Is.

[17:06] That Jesus. Is the Christ. The son of God. And that by believing. You may have life. In his name. Do you believe. That he is Lord. Do you believe.

That Jesus is the Christ. Sent from God. The father. Do you believe. That he bears. His father's. Authority. And are you willing. To keep the commandments.

Of Jesus Christ. And to keep. All of them. Even at great. Personal cost. To yourself. Or. Are you watering.

Down. Jesus. Have you watered him down. To be something less. Than what the Bible says. That he is. Have you reduced him. To be. Nothing more than a mascot.

For your social causes. A spokesperson. Who says what you need him. To say. To get what you want. From the world. Have you reduced him. To a therapist.

[18:00] Who makes you feel better. Who resolves. Your personal problems. Or. Are you looking away.

From Jesus. Altogether. Have you started looking. Toward other human beings. Are you looking. For someone else. To be a Christ figure. In your life. Someone else.

Who can save you. From your shame. Someone else. Who can save you. From your suffering.

Someone else. Who can save you. From your loneliness. Someone else. Who can save you. From your neediness. Someone else.

Who can save you. From whatever miserable situation. You find yourself in. Do you know. That Jesus is the Christ. Are you utterly confident.

That Jesus. Is the Christ. If so. Say it. Boldly. If so. Boast in it. Affirm. That yes.

[18:56] The Christ has come. Second. You must affirm. That he has come. In the flesh. You must affirm. That he has come. In the flesh.

This is less offensive. To us. This was a ridiculous. Affirmation. In the Greek and Roman world. That John was writing to. It was laughable.

To them. The philosophers. Of John's day. They looked at the human body. And they looked at the body. And they saw only weakness. And they saw limitations. They saw something that decayed.

Something that could be controlled. And they sensed. And they felt that we are trapped. In a disgraceful body. The body's holding us back. From who we could really be.

And so the deceptive teachers. Who were of the world. They wanted a more appealing Christ. They wanted a Christ. Who was powerful. Who was entirely spiritual.

[19:56] Didn't really have a body. He just looked like it. This Christ. He was freed. From fleshly limitations. They didn't want a Christ. Who could get tired. Or sick. Or hungry. Or weak.

They didn't want a Christ. Who could get spit on. And kicked. And beaten. And crucified. And buried. They wanted. A glorious. Powerful.

Undying Christ. Christ. But the glory of Jesus. Is revealed. In his weakness. In his willingness.

To become fully human. To sympathize. With our weaknesses. To be like us. In every respect. Yet without sin. Jesus. He reduced.

His status. To a servant. The son of God. Became a servant. And then a slave. And then reduced himself. To become a crucified. Obscenity. That.

[20 : 53] Was his pathway. To glory. And the moment. That you mess. With that. The moment. That you mess. With who Jesus is. And what he came to do. Then you have broken.

The backbone. Of the Christian faith. You have broken. The backbone. Of the church. You have broken. The backbone. Of what true love. Really is. So let me ask this.

Do you glory. In the weakness. Of Christ's. Humanity. Do you celebrate. His willingness. To stoop. Down. Low.

Do you love him. So much. That you are willing. To embrace. The same pathway. Yourself. And you count it. All joy. To walk that same pathway. Of stooping. Down low.

Or. Do you long. For greatness. Do you long. For status. Do you like the Jews. Of Jesus day. Do you long. For oh man. Oh. You know what I want.

[21 : 49] I want a powerful Christ. I want a great. And powerful. Political figure. They're going to save the church. From his trouble. That's the way the Jews. In Jesus day thought. And I'm sad to say. That the evangelical church.

In North America. Is absolutely rotten. With its craving. For such a political Christ. A public figure. Who will save us.

Do you crave. The strength of a Caesar. Or do you glory. In the weakness. Of Jesus Christ. And then. Do you know. What it means.

To be human. Like Christ. Do you look. To Jesus Christ. As your model. Of what a true human being. Is. Or do you. Embrace the world's ideas.

Of what it means. To be fully human. Do you run after. What the world tells you. A human being is. Do you believe. As the world believes. That you can't. Be fully human. Unless you are. Wealthy.

[22 : 44] And successful. And well liked. And sexually fulfilled. Jesus was none. Of those things. If you believe.

That's what a human being. Is. And what it means. To be human. Then you are looking. At Jesus. And you are not seeing. A human being. Do you believe. As the world does. That the human body. Is nothing more.

Than the accidental. Product. Of mere evolutionary. Process. Jesus' body. And his humanity. Was no. Accident.

He was designed. This is the design. Of God. The father. Do you believe. As the world does. And the world.

Believes this. In so many different ways. That the human body. Is nothing but. An accessory. For the mind. The human body. Isn't anything. But an accessory. For the mind. So that.

[23 : 38] You know. We have our bodies. And that means. That we ought to do. Everything we can. To the body. To make the mind. Feel better. About itself. Your body. Is merely there. To satisfy. Your psychological needs.

And give yourself. Psychological relief. It's all about. Feeling better. About yourself. And that. For example. That's. That's the whole core. Behind. Transgender ideology. And such.

Similar teachings. In our culture. The body. Must be modified. There's something wrong. With the body. It's got to be carved up. And refashioned. To satisfy the mind. And certainly.

If the body. Is nothing more than. The raw material. Of evolution. If the body. Is no temple. Of the Holy Spirit. Then let it be so. But Jesus body.

Is just as much. A part of him. As his mind is. His body is holy. Just as his mind. Is. Is. And so. There's a sacredness. To the body.

[24 : 36] That is something. That these deceivers. Did not understand. If your understanding. Of what it means. To be human. Is warped. In any of these ways.

Then. You. Have a warped. Understanding. Of the person. Of Jesus Christ. You don't get Jesus. And so. If you begin. To not only. Affirm.

To not only. Believe these things. But then. To promote. A warped. Understanding. Of humanity. If you start. Promoting it. Then you too.

Have become. The deceiver. And the antichrist. If you claim. To be a Christian. And then promote. A warped. Understanding. Of humanity. And a warped. Understanding. Of Jesus Christ. Because the Christ.

Of our. Of your imagination. Has nothing to do. With the real Jesus. He's not. The same person. He's a figment. Of your imagination.

[25 : 31] And then. Do you recognize. That this Jesus. This Christ. He died. As a man. He died. As a human being. Just like you. He died. As a substitute. For your sin. Do you believe.

That Jesus. He fully. Identified. With you. Do you believe. That Jesus. Came. In the flesh. Do you believe. That Jesus. Received. The judgment. Of God. On your behalf.

So that you. May have. New life. Forever. And ever. You cannot. Merely. Nod your head.

And just. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Ascent. To this. Christology. To this. True. Understanding. Of who. Jesus. Christ. Is. Stand tall. And boast. And affirm. That Christ.

Has come. And affirm. That yes. He has come. In the flesh. That is our ground. For boasting. That is our confidence. That is our joy. That is our glory.

[26 : 26] And third. You affirm. Who is behind. These false teachings. You affirm. Who is behind. These false teachings. John.

Writes. In verse seven. Second. John. Verse seven. That such a one. Is the deceiver. And the. Antichrist. Antichrist. Now that word.

Antichrist. John uses that. A few times. In first. John. As well. Here's how he uses it. In first. John. Chapter four. He writes. Every spirit. That does not confess.

Jesus. Is not from God. This is the spirit. Of the Antichrist. Which you heard. Was coming. And now. Is in the world. Already. And then earlier.

In chapter two. He says. Children. It is the last hour. And as you have heard. That Antichrist. Is coming. So now. Many Antichrists.

[27 : 20] Have come. Therefore. We know. That it is. The last hour. What these verses. Tell us. Is that there is a. What John calls. A spirit. Of the Antichrist.

And this spirit. Is in the world. Already. Because we are in. And have been. For the last. Two thousand years. We have been. In the final era.

Of human history. Before the return. Of Christ. And this spirit. Here in this final era. Of history. The spirit of Antichrist. Has produced.

Many deceivers. Many Antichrists. John does say. That yes. An ultimate. Antichrist. Is coming. But. In the meantime.

We are getting. A lot of sneak. Previews of that. Because many. Antichrists. Have come. Already. And their. Deceptive. Teachings. About Jesus Christ.

[28 : 16] They have been. Given. By a deceptive. Spirit. That spirit. Is the same one. Identified in Revelation. Chapter 12. Is that ancient serpent.

Who is called. The devil. And Satan. The deceiver. The deceiver. Of the whole world. It is this deceiver. Himself. Who is the spirit. Of the Antichrist.

Who stands behind. Any Antichrist. This deceiver. Is a counterfeit. Of the Holy Spirit. Satan. Is the one. Who stirs up.

The spirits. Of deceivers. He is the one. Who feeds them. The lies. That they want. To believe already. That their itching ears. Are longing for. And he. Feeds them the lies. He turns them. Into miniature. Antichrists. As they lead people. Away from the real Christ. The real. Jesus. Jesus. And so. You must affirm. That Christ has come.

[29 : 09] You must affirm. That he has come. In the flesh. And you must affirm. Who it is. Who is behind. These false teachings. That spirit. Of the Antichrist. Satan himself. That is how you stand firm.

Together. Against deceptive teachings. That's the first way. We stand firm. Together. So. Let's now move on. More quickly. Through the remaining. Remaining. Four ways.

That we stand firm. Together. The second way. To stand firm. Together. It's this. You are to stand firm. Together. Against your own. Self-deception.

Stand firm. Together. Against your own. Self-deception. We are not immune. To deception. Are we? We are vulnerable.

To the same thing. That the Antichrists. Are. We are vulnerable. Not only to being deceived. By others. And being deceived. By the devil. But we are being.

[30 : 08] Deceived. By ourselves. We are vulnerable. To that. Haven't you ever. Someone said something. About you once. And all of a sudden.

You realize. That your whole life. You've had a wrong. And false idea. Of who you are. A wrong and false idea. Of what is true. About the world. That's why we read.

In second. John. Verse eight. Watch yourselves. Watch yourselves. So that you may not lose. What we have worked for. But may win. A full reward. John warns you.

And this is a plural. You. This is you. As in the church. Watch yourselves. Watch yourselves. That is a summons. To be standing.

On guard. Duty. For the sake. Of one another. It is one of the greatest. Failures. In warfare. For a soldier. To shirk his post.

[31 : 06] When on guard duty. To fall asleep. On the job. To walk away. From the job. It is your. Responsibility. It is especially. The responsibility. As we saw. In second.

Timothy. Is especially. The responsibility. Of your church. Leadership. To stand on guard duty. But it is also. The responsibility. Of every believer. Watch yourselves. Keep an eye out. On one another. It is not only.

Outside deceivers. Who can win you. Away from Christ. It is also possible. To deceive. Yourself. You must have brothers. Who stand firm. Together with you.

Against your own. Self-deception. You must listen to them. And you must keep. Your eye on them too. And let them keep. Their eye. On you. John says.

To do this. So that you may not lose. What we have worked for. John doesn't want you. To lose. The true person. And work of Jesus Christ. He doesn't want you.

[32 : 02] To lose. That teaching. That he has worked for. And that. Your church leadership. Your elders. Have worked. Tried to work for. In you. He doesn't want. You to let. Outside deceivers.

Or even your own. Deceptive heart. Draw you away. From Christ. That teaching. Of the true Christ. That is what we have worked for. But if you stand firm together.

Then you will. Win. A full reward. You will remain. Faithful. To the end. And you will receive. The crown of life. Which God has promised. To those. Who love him.

Yes. Stand firm together. Against your own. Self. Deception. That's the second way. To stand firm together. Third. You are to stand firm together.

With the all sufficient. Christ. You are to stand firm together. With the all sufficient. Christ. You are not merely. Standing alongside. Your brothers and sisters.

[32 : 59] In the family of God. Watching over one another. You are standing. With the true Christ. In second John. Verse nine. We are told.

Everyone who goes on ahead. And does not. Abide in the teaching. Of Christ. Does not have God. Whoever. Abides in the teaching. Has both the father.

And the son. You see. False ideas. Of Christ. False. Substitutes. For Christ. They are attractive.

To you. Only. They are only attractive. When you are. Unimpressed. With the real Christ. It is like a man.

Who. Goes after another woman. Why? Because he is no longer. Impressed. With his wife. When you are. Unimpressed. With the real Christ.

[33 : 56] You find that he. You know. He. Why are you unimpressed? Because he's not. Putting a lot of emphasis. On the agendas. And ideas. That matter to you. He's not. Emphasizing. The things you want.

He doesn't look like. How you want. He doesn't. Act the way. That you would act. When you read the stories. In the gospels. You're like. I don't know. Sometimes Jesus seems so harsh. To people. That's not right.

So what do you do? You go on ahead. You press on. Past the cross. Past the empty tomb. You leave them behind. Leave them in your rear view mirror.

As though you've moved on. To bigger and better things. The gospel got you in. But you've moved on now. Because you found. What really matters to you. Health. Wealth and prosperity.

A happy family life. A life of recreation. A just and harmonious society. And you'll believe in.

[34 : 52] And you'll follow. Whatever Christ figure. Will deliver those things to you. That's the sad story. Of Judas Iscariot. Because like the deceivers.

Judas. He looked like a real disciple. He walked with Christ. For three years. And he had everybody fooled. Except Jesus. But he found himself disappointed.

In who Jesus really was. Because Judas had a different sort of Christ. In mind. Judas wanted to move on. To something. And to someone. Better than Jesus.

Listen to me carefully. You cannot do this. You cannot go on ahead. And move on. From who Jesus is. You cannot do that.

And remain faithful to Christ. You will be unfaithful. You will be his betrayer. A betrayer of the real Christ. You are to remain fixated. On the all sufficient Christ.

[35 : 49] On the real Christ. That you read in the four gospels. On the Christ. That the apostles know. And love. That real person. Of Jesus Christ. And the work that the father.

Sent him to do. You must remain with him. You must turn your mind. To him. You must abide. In the teaching. Of Christ. That's what John says. Abide. Just remain there.

Dwell there. Put your roots down there. If you go on ahead. If you leave that Christ behind. If you've got other stuff. That's important to you. More important to you.

Than who Jesus is. Is what he came to do. Then you reveal. That you are one of those people. That John warns about. Who does not have God. Why? Because to reject.

The true son of God. Is to reject. The father. Who sent him. To reject the son of God. Is to reject the father. Who sent him. That's why John. Jesus says.

[36 : 44] Here's what Jesus himself says. In John chapter 8. If God were your father. You would love me. Not just admire. Not just appreciate. You would love me.

For I came from God. And I am here. I came not of my own accord. But he sent me. And so it is. If you abide in the teaching of Christ.

If you love the real Christ. Then you have not only the son. You have the father as well. The father who sent him. They are at home with you.

They are at peace with you. It really is that simple. Cling to the real Christ. Stand firm together. With the all sufficient Christ. That's the third way to stand firm together. And so now we come to John's fatherly warning. To a stern and practical commandment.

[37 : 44] About how you ought in practical ways. To respond to the deceiver. The fourth thing John tells us. Is to stand firm together.

By excluding deceptive teachers. Stand firm together. By excluding deceptive teachers. And I know. This rubs us the wrong way.

I mean we live in a polite. Inclusive Canadian culture. We like to be the nice guys. I do too. The reason I'm teaching this.

Is because. It's in God's word. And God knows better than we do. How we ought to stand firm together. How we ought to love. In truth. We. Might want to welcome everybody in.

Welcome. Come in. Say what you want to say. Promote what you want to promote. We'll all give you a listening ear. We'll all enjoy you. We'll all slap you in the back.

[38 : 43] And call you brother. But these teachers. These wolves. And sheep's clothing. They will break.

Our backbone. Of truth. They will carry into the church. A contagious. And deadly. Disease. That will infect. The whole body. And so John.

Is basically telling you. Practice social distancing. Practice social distancing. From these contagious. Deceptive. Teachers.

John writes. In verses 10 and 11. If anyone comes to you. And does not bring this teaching. Here he's talking about the teaching of the true Christ.

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching. Do not receive him into your house. Or give him any greeting. For whoever greets him. Takes part. In his wicked works.

[39 : 40] Now John is writing this. And to understand this. You have to understand the cultural situation. Here in this first century church. He's writing this to a church. That's accustomed.

To. That they receive in. Traveling preachers and teachers. Who claim to be Christian. And so an itinerant speaker will come in. And they'll have. They'll have. What they claim to have.

A word or a message from God. And they'll need a place to stay for the night. In the town. And in the spirit of Christian hospitality. Someone from the church will say. Hey. Hey. Come on over. Let me welcome you into my home.

Let me offer to host you during your stay in town. Hospitality was so important. In the Mediterranean world. But John tells his church. That. If anyone comes to you.

And does not bring the teaching of the true Christ. Then that person. Must be excluded. That person must be put in quarantine. Do not host him.

[40 : 36] Do not even welcome him. Don't say. Hey. Glad to see you. Because you're not glad to see him. You're not on good terms with this deceiver. John tells.

Tells us that loving the church. Even loving the enemy of the church. Means. That you do not enable the deception. You do not enable the sin. Of these false teachers. He says. Whoever greets him. Takes part. In his wicked works. You actually become. An accessory. For deception. You become.

Partnered up. With an antichrist. With anyone who promotes a substitute. For the real Christ. Christ. Now to be clear.

I am not speaking here. Of. Secular or religious teachers. Who don't claim to be Christians. Look. If they don't claim to be Christians. Then. There's no. They're.

[41 : 34] They're. They're not. They're not wolves in sheep's clothing. If they're just. Just plain wolves. You can call them what they are. You don't have to. You know. You don't have to. Quarantine them off.

You know what they are. They're up front about it. Neither am I speaking. Of. Immature Christians. Who. Are still figuring things out.

They're still. They still. Have some. Worldly mindset. Or some. Some false ideas. They just need to be corrected. And they just need to be instructed. And they're humble. And willing to listen. That's not what I'm talking about.

Don't be harsh with them. Don't. Don't cut them off. Please. What I am speaking of. Is people who claim to be Christians. And they've got deceptive teachings.

And these aren't. These aren't wrong teachings. In an area of secondary importance. These are wrong teachings. In an area that affects the person. And work of Jesus Christ. And they have not only. They not only affirm these teachings.

[42 : 29] They have doubled down on them. And they are spreading them. And they are promoting these things. In the church. Stand firm by excluding. Those deceptive teachers.

That's the fourth way. We stand firm together. And so let's conclude. With the fifth. And final way. We stand firm together. You are also called. To stand firm together.

By welcoming. Faithful. Disciples. You stand firm together. By welcoming. Faithful. Disciples. John. He's just said. That deceptive teachers. They shouldn't even receive. A greeting. But now he gives. A greeting. Of his own. In verses 12 and 13. He says. Though I have come. To write to you. I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead. I hope to come to you. And talk face to face. So that our joy. May be complete. The children.

[43 : 23] Of your elect sister. Greet you. You see. John. He is not a divisive. Warlike man. John is not.

The kind of guy. Who starts a news site. That. Details all these. Spiritual warfare. And all the. You know. Culture. You know. He's not all about. You know. The culture war. He's not all about. Constantly getting into fights. With anyone who disagrees with him. On anything. That's not the way he is. John is a father. Who is protecting. His family. He is standing guard.

For his family. And so John. Shows them. Hey. To be a good family. You've got to also welcome. Faithful disciples. Of the real Christ. And that's really important.

Because I see so many people. Who they've just got that fighting spirit. And they. And they almost always claim. By the way. They almost always claim. To hate conflict. I once sat in a.

[44 : 20] A seminar with a. Back then. They called it a discernment blogger. And it was this guy who. You know. That was pretty much. What he devoted his time to. And he always started off. As saying. Oh I don't even like this.

I don't enjoy this. I don't enjoy this. And then he spent. Hours. Just going on and on and on. About this person's a heretic. That person's a heretic. And even. Counting people as heretics. Who weren't heretics. People like this.

Always seem to be in the thick of it. They're hunting out heresy. They're speaking harshly. To young and immature Christians. Who don't know any better. Who are still learning. The way of Christ. With these little ones.

We don't. We don't respond that way. With these little ones. Be gentle. Think like the apostle Paul. Because after. Some challenging teaching. In Philippians chapter 3. Here's what Paul concludes. He says to those who are.

Struggle. Who may not be quite on the same page with him. Just yet. Paul says. Let those of us who are mature. Think this way. And. If in anything. You think otherwise. God will reveal that also to you.

[45 : 24] How patient is that? Paul gives them room. To chew on it. To sort through it. And says. Hey. God's going to reveal that to you. So like Paul.

Let's be patient. With immature believers. Who are just beginning to understand Jesus. Who are just beginning to understand. The work that he came to do. In the new way of life. That Christians are called to live. They're still learning.

Let's welcome them. And then give them correct teaching. And let's. Also. Welcome those who are mature. And walk steady together. With us.

Oh. That we would so. That we would. Look out for one another. In love. Not in a spirit of suspicion. And defensiveness. But in a spirit.

Of care. And tender concern. For one another. Like brothers in arms. Caring for each other deeply. Next week. We're going to learn. How important it is.

[46 : 21] To humble ourselves together. So that we can do this well. For now though. We know that to love in truth. Means that we must stand. Firm. Together.

God our father. We. Ourselves are. Though there are some among us. Perhaps. Who have that belligerent. And aggressive spirit. Who long to fight.

I think the vast majority of us. Really. Really shy away from. Standing up. When we ought to. I confess that. Myself at times.

Just speaking this intensely. Makes me uncomfortable. Lord. Give me that. Same heart. Of just. The heart that you have. For your son. You love him. And you honor him so much.

And ache to see him honored. And when he is dishonored. When he lies. Are spoken about him. When people are. Led away from him. It grieves you. Oh God.

[47 : 18] Give us that same heart. Let us stand firm together. Let us accept nothing less than the real Christ. The true Christ. Let us delight in him. And only him. Let us be.

Disgusted with any counterfeit. Lord God. Give us boldness. To stand firm. And to resist. Those who would draw us away from the real Christ.

Let us be wise. Shrewd as serpents. Innocent as doves. And let us do all these things. Out of love for Christ.

Because we love him. Let us do all these things. Out of love for one another. Because we care for one another. And we watch out for one another. In this family. Oh Lord.

Protect us. God our father. Lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[48 : 20] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.