

SOUL FOOD

DECEMBER 7, 2016

2 JOHN 1 WATCH YOURSELF

When we are in the midst of various struggles, challenges, and sufferings, it is especially important that we always go back to basics. In Romans 5, Paul reminds his readers that they have entrance into the grace in which they STAND by faith and then discusses the nature of suffering and the attitude that we should have toward it. While we must remember that God is at work transforming us in the midst of our suffering we must do so in the light of the grace of God that informs us of our standing and identity before Almighty God. In the midst of suffering go back to the basic truths.

It has been written of Vince Lombardi, the former coach of the Green Bay Packers, that he would often begin summer training camps by holding up a football and saying, "This is a football..." No matter what we must always go back to the basics and the fundamentals. John is encouraging us to do the same. John is encouraged by encountering many believers from a particular church, whom he refers to as the "elect lady." He is edified by the fact that many of them were walking in the TRUTH. It is essential for us to maintain the focus of truth as opposed to values. Values are very subjective, whereas the truth is completely objective. All truth is God's truth and it is true even if not one single person agrees with God. It does not matter whether one believes in the scientific truth of gravity or not. He/she must still submit to it. To walk with Jesus is to walk in the truth. Jesus is THE truth and we are people of the truth.

However, there are some who have been exposed to the truth and have experienced some of the benefits of the presence of the Kingdom of God expressed in the Church who do not persevere in the truth. If someone does not abide in the teaching of Christ, he/she does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. Those who depart from the faith can have a damaging effect even on those who are truly faithful to Christ. This is why John tells even the faithful to watch themselves so that they will not depart from the faith. An aspect of this watchfulness is to avoid succumbing to the words of false teachers. In John's day some of these deceivers and false teachers were itinerant and would go from home to home spreading their deceptive lies. John tells us to not even give hospitality to them so as to not take part in their deceptive and wicked works. Though secure in Christ we must persevere in trust and faith so as to receive the crown of life. Be on the alert!