

2 John 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth,
as we have received a commandment from the Father.

Analysis

I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. John expresses profound joy (Greek *echarēn lian*, ἐχάρην λίαν, "I rejoiced greatly") at discovering "some of thy children walking in truth." The verb "walking" (Greek *peripatountas*, περιπατοῦντας) is a present participle indicating continuous, habitual action—not occasional truth-telling but a lifestyle characterized by truth. This Hebraic idiom (*halakah*) denotes one's entire manner of life, including thoughts, words, actions, and relationships.

The phrase "as we have received a commandment from the Father" (Greek *kathōs entolēn elabomen para tou patros*, καθὼς ἐντολὴν ἐλάβομεν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς) reveals that walking in truth is not optional or merely advisable—it is a divine command. The verb *elabomen* (ἐλάβομεν) is aorist tense, pointing to a specific, completed reception of this command, likely referring to Christ's teaching during His earthly ministry or the apostles' reception of divine revelation.

John's joy is qualified: he found "some" of her children walking in truth, implying others were not. This hints at the epistle's occasion—false teachers had infiltrated the community, leading some astray while others remained faithful. The apostle's pastoral heart rejoices over the faithful remnant even while concerned about those deceived. His joy is not in numerical success but in spiritual fidelity—some believers maintaining doctrinal and moral integrity despite surrounding deception.

This reflects God's own joy over His people's faithfulness (Zephaniah 3:17, Luke 15:7).

Historical Context

By the late first century, false teachers were actively proselytizing within Christian communities, claiming to offer superior knowledge or more enlightened interpretations of the gospel. These deceivers likely presented themselves as progressive thinkers who had moved beyond the "primitive" teachings of the apostles. They may have mocked believers who clung to apostolic doctrine as narrow-minded or unspiritual.

In this context, those "walking in truth" demonstrated courage and discernment. Maintaining apostolic teaching required resisting social pressure, intellectual intimidation, and perhaps even threats of exclusion from certain segments of the Christian community. The faithful faced the difficult task of distinguishing between genuine development of understanding and heretical innovation.

John's commendation of these faithful believers would have encouraged them to persevere. As the last surviving apostle, his approval carried tremendous weight. His joy over their faithfulness assured them that clinging to original apostolic teaching—however unfashionable or intellectually unsophisticated it might seem—pleased God. The phrase "commandment from the Father" elevated their commitment above mere tradition or preference to the level of divine imperative. This would steel their resolve to continue walking in truth regardless of opposition or enticement to compromise.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What specific areas of biblical teaching face the most intense cultural pressure to revise or abandon in our current context?
2. How can we distinguish between legitimate growth in understanding Scripture and dangerous doctrinal compromise?
3. What would it look like in your specific circumstances to "walk in truth" even when costly or unpopular?

Interlinear Text

Ἐχάρην λίαν ὅτι εὑρηκα ἐκ τῶν τέκνων σου
I rejoiced greatly that I found of children thy
G5463 G3029 G3754 G2147 G1537 G3588 G5043 G4675

περιπατοῦντας ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καθὼς ἐντολὴν
walking in truth as a commandment
G4043 G1722 G225 G2531 G1785

ἐλάβομεν παρὰ τοῦ πατρός
we have received from the Father
G2983 G3844 G3588 G3962

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 5:8 (Parallel theme): For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Ephesians 5:2 (Parallel theme): And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

1 John 2:6 (Parallel theme): He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Hosea 14:9 (Parallel theme): Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

Malachi 2:6 (Word): The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

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