

Chapter Five: the Apostle of Love

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.
- John 13:23

- I. Some general observations about John:
 - a. One of the most _____ disciples to us because he wrote such a large portion of the New Testament. What five books did he write?
_____, _____, _____, _____, _____
 - b. He was the younger brother of James and shared his _____. His _____ and _____ mirrored that of his elder brother.
 - c. In light of this it is remarkable that John is often called the "apostle of _____." But love was a quality he _____ from Christ, not something that came naturally to him.
- II. He learned the _____ of love and truth.
 - a. John's love of _____ is evident in all his writings. He uses the Greek word for *truth* twenty-five times in his Gospel and twenty more times in his epistles.
 - b. But when he was younger, his zeal for truth was lacking in _____ and compassion for people. The incident in Mark 9 where John forbade a man to cast out demons in Jesus name is a good illustration of this (note the context).
 - c. The truly godly person must _____ both virtues in equal proportions (Eph. 4:13). As a mature apostle, John learned the lesson well. His second epistle offers vivid proof of this.
- III. He learned the balance of _____ and _____.
 - a. It's not inherently wrong to aspire to have influence or to desire _____. But it is wrong to have _____ motives, as John apparently did. And it is especially wrong to be ambitious without also being _____.

b. In Mark 10:35-37 (one chapter after the incident where John rebuked the man casting out demons) we find Mark's description of how James and John asked for _____ of greatness in the kingdom.

c. What had Jesus just reminded them of in verse 31?

d. Jesus was referring to His words in Mark 9:35:

e. Coming as it did on the heels of these admonitions from Jesus about _____, the brothers' request shows amazing audacity.

f. John did eventually learn the balance between ambition and humility. In fact, humility is one of the great virtues that comes through in his _____ (never uses his name in his gospel, only gospel to include the foot-washing incident, gentle admonitions and terms of endearment in his epistles and Revelation). P. 110.

IV. He learned the balance of _____ and _____.

a. John had a natural _____ for glory and a natural _____ for suffering. It is normal to desire God's blessing on your future, and only a madman enjoys suffering

b. But if we desire to participate in _____ glory, we must also be willing to partake of _____ sufferings. The teachings of Christ in the _____ and of His apostles in their _____ make this condition abundantly clear.

c. John experienced his share of suffering: the loss of his brother as the first martyr, the loss of all the rest of his fellow apostles as they were martyred one by one, his exile to a prison colony on the island of Patmos, where he lived out most of his years as an elderly man in a cave. P. 114.

d. What is the relationship between these three lessons and how can we apply this to our lives?

John died, by most accounts, around A.D. 98, during the reign of Emperor Trajan. Jerome says in his commentary on Galatians that the aged apostle John was so frail in his final days at Ephesus that he had to be carried into the church.

One phrase was constantly on his lips: "My little children, love one another." Asked why he always said this, he replied, "It is the Lord's command, and if this alone be done, it is enough."

Thus the fishermen of Galilee – Peter, Andrew, James, and John – became fishers of men on a tremendous scale, gathering souls into the church. In a sense, they are still casting their nets into the sea of the world by their testimony in the Gospels and their epistles. They are still bringing multitudes of people to Christ. Although they were common men, theirs was an uncommon calling.