

"Upon this rock I will build my church"

## Matthew 16:18

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### JOHN THE APOSTLE

#### INTRODUCTION:

- A. The purpose of this lesson is to see how the apostle John was a valiant man.
- B. We are concerned with his moral courage as seen in his duty, determination, courage, and areas of growth.
- C. We will study to see that:
  - 1. John did his duty.
  - 2. He was determined to follow Jesus.
  - 3. He was courageous.
  - 4. John also grew in patience and love.

#### DISCUSSION:

##### I. JOHN THE APOSTLE DID HIS DUTY.

- A. Jesus had made it plain what He wanted His disciples to do.
  - 1. Texts.
    - a. Matthew 28:19,20.
    - b. Mark 16:15,16.
    - c. Luke 24:46,47.
    - d. Acts 1:8.
  - 2. John was on the forefront of the spiritual battles.
    - a. He was one of the eleven standing up with Peter on the day of Pentecost after our Lord's resurrection (Acts 2:14 ff).
    - b. In Acts 3, he was with Peter going to the temple (lame man healed). As a result, both were jailed and brought before the Jewish rulers (Acts 4:5).
  - 3. John was sent with Peter to Samaria after Philip's evangelism.
    - a. Acts 8:17 - They laid hands on Samaritan brethren.
    - b. John's work apparently continued in this way, as he was recognized with Cephas (Peter) and James, as "they who were reputed to be pillars" in the church in Jerusalem (Galatians 2:9).
- B. We also see his duty in his inspired writings.
  - 1. Texts.
    - a. I John 2:15-17.
    - b. I John 2:26.
    - c. I John 5:21.
    - d. Revelation 1:1,4,9; 21:2 (KJV); 22:8.
  - 2. John showed his commitment to duty by taking care of Mary the mother of Jesus (John 19:26,27).

##### II. JOHN THE APOSTLE WAS DETERMINED TO FOLLOW JESUS.

A. He did his duty as did the other eleven.

1. Likely, they could not fully imagine what they would face for the cause of Christ.

a. How many times would John face rejection from hearers of the word? Face persecution and jail for preaching Jesus?

b. It would take strength of character to overcome as he served the Lord. From all indications, John had what it took.

2. After the initial confrontation with Jewish rulers in Acts 4, a second clash took place.

a. Acts 5:12,17,18.

b. The Bible says an angel of the Lord freed the apostles and told them to teach again in the temple, which they did the next morning.

3. Upon bringing them before the council, we find a statement of determination to follow Jesus.

a. Acts 5:28.

b. Irony - see Matthew 27:25.

c. Acts 5:29,32.

4. John was one who was determined not to stop.

a. Acts 5:40b.

b. "They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that

they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name...they ceased not

to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ."

B. We see John's determination in his inspired writings.

1. He was protective of faithful brethren against false teachers.

2. I John 2:18,19.

3. In I John 4:1-6, he warns brethren to check out "the spirits, whether they are of God." He took a clear stand for the truth.

C. A characteristic of unbelievers is fickleness.

1. They are unable to be consistent in spiritual things.

2. It is a major problem in the Lord's church today.

3. Growing in Christ is largely measurable in terms of progress toward determination

and dependability.

4. Faithfulness is rarely demonstrated in martyrdom. It is usually in the little jobs that

tend to wear us down.

5. Basic elements of trust in God's promises and obedience to His will still go hand in hand.

6. John was an individual who put his actions in line with his words.

### III. JOHN THE APOSTLE WAS COURAGEOUS.

A. John exhibited courage in following Jesus.

1. Matthew 4:21,22 - He left his nets.

2. He was even courageous at the wrong time occasionally.

a. Mark 10:35-41 - He wanted a special place by Jesus.

b. It gave Jesus opportunity to teach, "and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant (slave of all" (Mark 10:44).

3. John was at the cross.

- a. He had earlier been witness to the trial of Jesus before the high priest  
(John 18:15).
- b. Discounting the risk of public exposure as one of Jesus' disciples, John courageously was there in difficult situations.
- B. We see John's courage in his inspired writing.
  - 1. He was involved in the spiritual training of others.
    - a. I John 1:1-10.
    - b. II John 7-11.
  - 2. He was not afraid of using harsh language when appropriate.
    - a. "Liar" (I John 2:4,22; 4:20).
    - b. I John 2:9.
    - c. I John 3:8 - "He who does sin is of the devil."
  - 3. An excellent example of John's courage (as well as his duty and determination) is found in III John 9-11.
    - a. This deals with Diotrephes who loved to have the preeminence. This wayward brother would not receive John.
    - b. The apostle apparently recognizes his duty. His character is such that he is determined to do what is right, no matter what.
    - c. Anytime someone must do this, it requires courage.
    - d. "Therefore, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he does" (III John 10a).
- IV. JOHN THE APOSTLE GREW IN PATIENCE AND LOVE.
  - A. Before the crucifixion, John had some weak moments.
    - 1. In Luke 9:49, he reported contact with a man who was driving out demons in the Master's name.
      - a. "And we forbade him, because he does not follow with us." Some consider this a characteristic statement from John at this time.
      - b. The Lord rebuked him (Luke 9:50).
    - 2. Apparently, John did not get the message.
      - a. Luke 9:54 - Make them "crispy critters."
      - b. The Lord rebuked again. At this point, John and his brother had short fuses.
    - 3. We can see the earnestness, zeal, enthusiasm, and even intolerance of John.
      - a. The undesirable tendencies were not encouraged.
      - b. Jesus named James and John, "Boanerges, which is sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17).
    - 4. How out of character and strange to us!
      - a. John is the apostle of love. And he was not always patient and loving.
      - b. It must be that God changed him to the point that it is unusual for us to remember him for wanting to call down fire from heaven.
  - B. John was "the disciple whom Jesus loved."
    - 1. He was so designated five times in the Gospel of John (13:23; 19:26;

20:2; 21:7,20).

2. He was the kind of man who profited by the rebuke.

C. We can see John's growth in patience and love in his inspired writings.

1. Patience texts.

a. John 21:23 - Correcting misinformation.

b. "Little children" (I John 2:1,12,13,18,28; 3:7,18; 4:4; 5:21).

2. Love texts.

a. I John 3:11,14, 16-24 (various references).

b. I John 4:7-5:3.

c. II John 9-11 (tough love).

#### CONCLUSION:

A. John the apostle did his duty and was determined to follow Jesus.

B. He was courageous and grew in patience and love.

"Though gentle and kind he was not a weakling and his positive convictions gave him constancy and courage to face up to any situation confronting him. He was a 'son of thunder' in teaching the truth, in opposing error, in challenging the enemies of the Lord -qualities and characteristics the Lord approved and appreciated. John was the disciple Jesus loved because he was Boanerges, not in spite of it!"

(Guy N. Woods, The Gospel According to John, Gospel Advocate Commentary, p. 14).

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