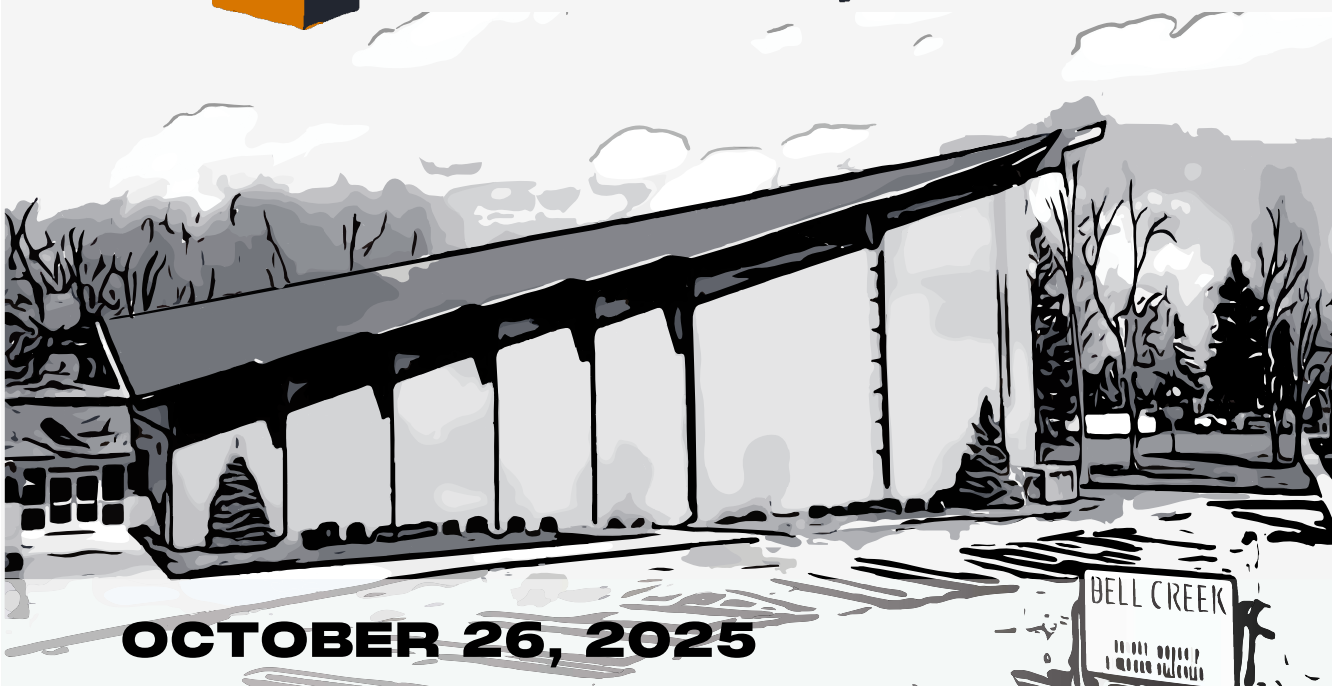


WELCOME TO



BELL CREEK

Community Church



OCTOBER 26, 2025

REJOICING IN THE TRUTH

3RD JOHN 1-4

SERMON BY: PASTOR FRED WRIGHT

CURRENT SERMON SERIES: THE SHORT LETTERS

REJOICING IN THE TRUTH

3RD JOHN 1-4

God's Truth Shapes Our Relationships

God's Truth Shines in Our Walk

God's Truth Awakens Our Joy

FOR NEXT WEEK

Read the book of 3 John as many times as you can!

DAILY CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE READING

OCTOBER 26: LUKE 12-13
OCTOBER 27: LUKE 14-15
OCTOBER 28: LUKE 16-17:10
OCTOBER 29: JOHN 11
OCTOBER 30: LUKE 17:11-18:14
OCTOBER 31: MATTHEW 19; MARK 10
NOVEMBER 1: MATTHEW 20-21

UPCOMING AT THE CREEK

ETHICS SEMINAR

Have you ever wondered what the Bible has to say about tough issues like war, abortion, sexuality, politics, and more? Are you interested in learning how to apply Scripture to our daily lives and think biblically about tough issues? Ethics touches on every aspect of our lives, and it is essential that we as Christians learn how to apply Scripture to today's world. Join Pastor Dylan for our Ethics Seminar on Sundays during the 11:00 AM service to learn more!

FALL FEST

Don't forget, our annual Fall Fest/Trunk or Treat/Chili Cook Off is today from 2:00-4:30! The event is free; please invite friends and neighbors to join us!

NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY CLASS

Pastor Dylan's New Testament Theology Class will not meet this evening due to Fall Fest. The class will resume next Sunday at 6:00 PM.

BETWEEN TWO TREES

Our Between Two Trees book study will meet Sunday, November 9 at 9:15 AM in the Prayer Room to discuss *Liberated: How the Bible Exalts and Dignifies Women* by Karen Soole. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Dylan (dylan@bellcreek.org).

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes are available for taking. If you are interested in filling a box to donate to Samaritan's Purse, you can pick one up outside of the Sanctuary or in the Kids' Creek Registration area. Boxes are due back to Bell Creek by Sunday, November 9.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

PRAYER MEETINGS

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:30 PM

FRIDAYS 12 NOON

PRE-TEEN & MIDDLE SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

2ND, 3RD & 4TH SUNDAYS

AFTER WORSHIP

AWANA

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SEPTEMBER-MAY

HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

SUNDAYS 11:00 AM

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES
AND EVENTS AT BELLCREEK.ORG

OUR MISSION

MATTHEW 22:37–40

He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and prophets depend on these two commandments.”

MATTHEW 28:19–20

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember that I am with you always to the end of the age.

STAY CONNECTED

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU HERE!

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FOLLOW US!



BELL CREEK
Community Church

30000 FIVE MILE RD.
LIVONIA, MI 48154

Sermon 10.26.2025

Sermon Title: Rejoicing in the Truth

Sermon Text: 3 John 1-4

God's Truth Shapes Our Relationships

"The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth." (3 John 1, ESV)

Gaius is "beloved" by John. That means the Apostle John loves him as a brother in Christ, wants the best for him, and has a genuine concern and affection for him.

All Godly relationships are based on love. The Scriptures teach us that "God is love." Love comes from God. He is an overflowing fountain of love. God *proves* His love for us in what Christ has done, is doing, and will do for us. We first truly experience the love of God when we place our trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins. That's when we realize that God loves us, desires to forgive us in Christ, and that He wants a relationship with us that will last for eternity.

All Godly relationships are based on truth as well. They are based on the truth of the Gospel, which reminds us that we are all sinners, saved by grace. Therefore in all my relationships, I ought to have humility. I ought not to think I am better than anyone else, because I am a sinner saved by Jesus. I must give grace to others because Jesus has given me grace. I forgive because Jesus has forgiven me. I love others because Jesus loves me.

Gospel truth *and* just plain honesty are essential in Godly relationships. A word of wisdom about honesty in Godly relationships: we live in a culture that cries out for "full disclosure" on everything and everybody. Is this healthy? Godly relationships have a mixture of vulnerability and commitment. "A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back." — Proverbs 29:11, ESV). So fools just vomit out all their "stuff." On the other hand, "The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out." (Proverbs 20:5, ESV). A wise person holds back, and waits for another wise person to draw out his heart within the safety of a friendship.

So, "full disclosure" of every dark thought or struggle, offered apart from committed relationships, can do more harm than good. When transparency isn't met with the commitment of love, wounds are opened but not tended, trust is risked but not honored, and confession becomes exposure without healing. Without an enduring presence, without a faithful voice that says, "I'll walk with you," the soul is left uncovered but alone.

On the other hand, commitment without vulnerability may be safe and stable, but shallow: we are around people but don't let them know us; we don't let ourselves enter deeper relational conversations, hindering us from getting the prayers, the help, and the real growth in Christ we need.

In a Godly relationship, the two go together: we should be both (appropriately) open and committed. Emotional honesty (transparency) should happen “within the framework of commitment to God and to others’ welfare.”

“Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.” (3 John 2, ESV)

John is a true friend, praying for Gaius both body and soul. We learn something important here. As the soul goes, so goes the body, and vice versa. To be a human being is to have both a physical body and an immaterial soul. What we do with our bodies affects our souls, and what we do with our souls affects our bodies. That’s why the Apostle Paul says, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20, ESV)

God’s Truth Shines in Our Walk

“For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth.” (3 John 3, ESV)

In the letters of 1 John, 2 John, and now 3 John, we see this phrase “walking in the truth.” Once again, we are reminded that the revealed Truth in the Scriptures about Who God is, Who made us, who we are, what we are made for, what our problem is (sin), Who came to save us (Jesus), and what our destiny will be according to the choice He has give us (eternal life or eternal separation from God in hell), is not just an intellectual curiosity or an interesting philosophy. Still, it is the Truth that we must reckon with and adjust our lives to. If we believe the Truth of the Gospel, we must walk in it. Jesus is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, and He has given His life to save us, and we *are* saved by faith in Him alone. There is nothing we can do to earn salvation. Therefore, in light of His love, this salvation, that we are children of God, and citizens of heaven, and the fact that His commands are not burdensome but are for our good, He demands that we obey Him and “walk in the truth.”

God’s Truth Awakens Our Joy

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” (3 John 4, ESV)

John “rejoiced greatly” and has “no greater joy” than to hear that his friends, fellow believers, are walking with God. What do we have our “greatest joy” in?

This is a good opportunity to talk about Godly emotions!

There is a difference between *Godly emotions* and *emotionalism*. Emotionalism is not grounded in God’s truth. It is worked up, artificially produced, lacks understanding, is characterized by excitement and excess, leaves one exhausted, and does not affect life for God’s glory. Godly emotions are based on God’s truth. They are the fruit of the Holy Spirit and under His control. This does not mean that they are flat. Godly emotions can be intense; in fact, they are *more*

intense, more authentic, more powerful, and more lasting than what gets “ginned up” inside us through “emotionalism” because the Holy Spirit produces them.

Listen to this statement on God and our emotions by C.S. Lewis. If you have been lurking around the church for awhile, you’ve probably heard this quote before, but if you have never heard this before, I envy you. And by God’s grace, it is going to hit you like a ton of bricks:

“It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” – C.S. Lewis

Look at Just Some of the Emotions of Jesus!

Compassion - Matthew 9:36; Mark 1:41; Luke 7:13

Sorrow / Grief - John 11:33, 35; Luke 19:41

Anger / Indignation - Mark 3:5; John 2:15–17

Joy/Rejoicing - Luke 10:21; John 15:11

Love - Mark 10:21; John 13:1

Zeal - John 2:17

Amazement / Marveling - Matthew 8:10; Mark 6:6

Distress / Anguish — Mark 14:33–34; Luke 22:44

Frustration / Lament over Unbelief - Mark 9:19; Matthew 23:37

Tender Affection / Friendship - John 11:5; John 15:13–15

Desire / Longing - Luke 22:15

Peace - John 14:27

His compassion was divine mercy incarnate: truth perceiving misery and moving to heal it.

His anger was holy love aroused against all that profanes the glory of God and wounds His creatures.

His grief was sorrowing over the disorder and death brought by sin.

His joy was delight in the Father’s will and in the redemption it accomplished.

His peace was the steadfast rest of perfect faith in the Father’s sovereign goodness even while He suffered.

In Christ, emotions and God’s truth are never divided. Everything He feels is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in Him. All of His emotions correspond to reality and are indescribably powerful yet

perfectly measured and controlled. In Jesus, we see the restored image of God in the emotional life of a human being. We see the ideal pattern of what it means to love God's truth with all the heart.

Here's the good news: *When we come to Christ, the Holy Spirit begins to transform every part of our being, including our emotions.* "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules." (Ezekiel 36:26-27, ESV)

The Work of the Holy Spirit in our Emotions

The Holy Spirit transforms our fear into the fear of the LORD.

The Holy Spirit transforms our worldly sorrow into Godly grief.

The Holy Spirit transforms our envy into divine jealousy.

The Holy Spirit transforms our empty or wicked rejoicing into joy in God.

The Holy Spirit transforms our selfishness into True, Godly, love rooted in truth.

The Holy Spirit transforms our false security or laziness into, peace of rest in Christ and diligence.

The Holy Spirit transforms our despair into hope in God.

The Holy Spirit transforms our lusts into longing and desire for God.

The Holy Spirit transforms our sinful anger of man into zeal for God's honor.

The Holy Spirit transforms our indifference into compassion and mercy.

The Holy Spirit transforms our ingratitude or pride into thankfulness and humility.

The Holy Spirit transforms our cynicism into wonder and astonishment.

The Holy Spirit transforms our envy into generosity.

The Holy Spirit transforms our restlessness and discontent into satisfaction in God.

The Holy Spirit transforms our anxiety and self-reliance into trust in God.

The Holy Spirit pours divine love into the heart, and this is the fountain from which all Godly emotions flow.

How!? How can we be transformed in our emotions so that we feel what Jesus feels?

The renewal of our emotions begins when we surrender to Christ and are born again.

John 3:6 (ESV): That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Our minds are renewed as God's truth reshapes our emotions.

Romans 12:2 (ESV): Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

The Holy Spirit supernaturally produces new emotional fruit within us.

Galatians 5:22–23 (ESV): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

If the Word of God dwells richly in us, it will teach us and change us.

Colossians 3:16–17 (ESV): Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

God will use our suffering to refine our emotions and give us hope and love in Him.

Romans 5:3–5 (ESV): Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance... and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Worship and fellowship with fellow believers will sustain Godly emotions.

Acts 2:46–47 (ESV): And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God.

Hebrews 10:24–25 (ESV): Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works... encouraging one another.

Prayer is where God hears our cries, and aligns our emotions with reality (His truth).

"Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah" (Psalm 62:8, ESV)

Romans 8:26–27 (ESV): The Spirit helps us in our weakness... the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Philippians 4:6–7 (ESV): Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God... will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Our final transformation: Someday our emotions will perfectly correspond to God's truth and we will burst with love and joy!

1 John 3:2 (ESV): Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Revelation 21:4 (ESV): He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more... for the former things have passed away.

Faith Works Through Love: Take a step of faith to be transformed in your emotions.

Galatians 5:6 (ESV): For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

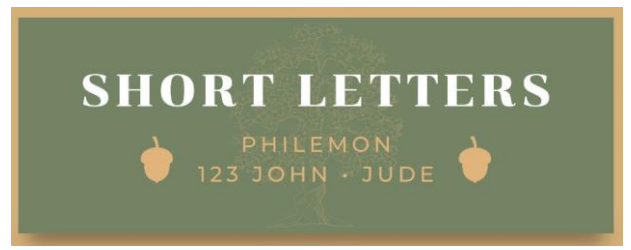
1. When you recognize that your emotions are ungodly, disordered, or out of control, come to God the Father, in the name of Jesus, and confess it to Him. Ask Him to forgive you. We can be confident that we are forgiven in Jesus!
2. Read the Scriptures that will renew your mind and help you see God's truth about fear, anger, love, envy, unforgiveness, etc. Ask God to help you, by the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells with you and in you, to transform your emotions.
3. Move forward in faith, even where fear has kept you paralyzed. Trust God to give you love for the person who's been hard to love. Trust Jesus to provide you with grace to seek forgiveness from the one you've hurt with your anger. Ask God to release you from the grudges you've held in your heart and start over.

Application:

For those of us who have surrendered our lives to Jesus, let's ask ourselves: Am I walking so closely in the truth of the Gospel that the Holy Spirit is reshaping my emotions, teaching my heart to love what God loves, grieve what He grieves, and rejoice in what brings Him glory?

For those who have not surrendered to Jesus yet, ask yourself: What is keeping me from turning to Christ today - to receive the love that bore my sin on the cross and the mercy that can make me new forever? The love that forgives my sin, heals my heart, and begins to make me new from the inside out?

For those of us who are suffering, let us ask ourselves: Will I bring my pain honestly before God, trusting that in His refuge my sorrow can be transformed (Psalm 62:8)? Trusting that He can turn fear into peace, grief into hope, and loss into deeper love for Him? Amen! Let us join together in trusting in the Lord Jesus!



Rejoicing in the Truth

1. What did you think of the sermon "Rejoicing in the Truth"?

2. John calls Gaius "beloved...whom I love in truth." How does grounding our relationships in God's truth change how we love, forgive, and speak to other people? Has this brought about more honest and meaningful relationships in your life?

3. What does "walking in the truth" mean in your daily life, at home, work, or church? What are some obstacles that make it difficult to walk in the truth, and how can you overcome them?

4. How can you tell the difference between emotions led by the Holy Spirit and those stirred by the world or the flesh? Can you think of a time when God transformed one of your emotions of the flesh into something more Godly?

5. The Holy Spirit reshapes our emotions to align with God's truth. What area of your emotional life do you most want the Holy Spirit to transform right now? How can prayer, Scripture, and fellowship help you grow in emotional maturity and joy in Christ?

