

Now we could break this little letter up in really 4 different teachings but we are going to go ahead and finish up and move on to Jude next week. It is similar in context to what 2 John was written about but we can pull some really good truths out of this letter. In 2 John the Apostle John wrote that letter a lady to once again encourage and to remind her about what the real truth is. Evidently, she had been showing hospitality to some of the false teachers that have not been teaching the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. By doing so John says it can look like that you are in agreement with them and by association may be accused of the same.

I thought about that for a moment. We need to be careful as individuals what organizations or ministries that we support with our time and finances. Also as a Sunday School teacher you may want to be careful when you choose to do a study from a book that someone has written. You may want to do your due diligence to make sure this person is teaching the truth and they have not swayed from the truth.

So, in 3 John we encounter this again about this thing called truth. Can you see where John sees this as a top priority? So do we!! That is why we talk about it so much. Especially to you young people. By and large you are not hearing any truth out there. It's like this! To bring it to pretty simple terms. Either everyone and everything came from nothing therefore there is no truth. Or! Or! God created all things and therefore there is moral objective truth. And we get that moral objective truth only from the Bible which is God's word. With that said, let's look at our Scripture for tonight.

As I mentioned John wrote 2 John to this lady and her children. In 3 John he is writing to a man named Gaius and mentions two other men within this letter, Diotrephes and Demetrius. We will look at how each of these men are described in this letter and therefore the title I gave this lesson is “A Tale of Three Church Members”. I am only going read verses 1 through 4 and then we are going to jump around a lot. But we are going to look at the character of each of these men.

3 John 1-4

¹The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. ²Beloved, I pray that all may go well with your and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. ³For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. ⁴I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

So we see specifically that John is writing to a man name Gaius. Now there are four men mentioned in the Bible named Gaius.

1. In Acts 19 there is a Gaius, who was a Macedonian and probably from Thessalonica, who was a traveling companion of Paul. He was with Paul in Ephesus during the uprising that came against Paul after many had gotten saved.
2. In Acts 20, there is a Gaius who is from Derbe in the region of Galatia and travels with Paul to Troas and Phillipi.
3. In 1 Corinthians 1:14, Paul baptized a man named Gaius in Corinth—one of only two he baptized. Later, toward the end of his third missionary journey, when Paul wrote his

Epistle to the Romans, he was staying in Gaius's home, and Gaius included his greetings to the church in Rome (Romans 16:23).

4. Now, here in 3 John, a beloved friend of John's and possibly someone he led to the Lord.

I do believe that we are talking about a different person each time we meet a Gaius in the Bible. It was quite a common name for that time. We do see that John and this man had a close relationship. As you look at verses 1,2, 5 and 11 John calls him beloved. This word beloved in the Greek is a derivative of agape.

What is the premise of this relationship though and we see it in verse 1. We begin to see Gaius' character.

3 John 1-4

¹The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

This truth that once again that John is talking about is their love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Through these three letters John talked about that all truth is founded upon the fact that Jesus, who is God, left heaven and came and put on the flesh of man and that he died for our sins, was buried and rose again. We as believers that brings us in a close bond with each other. Because we are brought together with a common goal. When we are all striving side by side there is a unity and bond that brings us close together. Turn to Romans 12 right quick.

Romans 12:9-10

⁹Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

1 Peter 2:17

¹⁷Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Remember what Jesus said to his disciples.

John 13:35

By this all people will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

This obviously describes Gaius. As we look at verse 2 we see that John is praying for Gaius. He is praying for three things.

1. That things are well with him
2. That his health is good
3. That things are well with his soul

But, what is the priority here? Just like John, I do hope that things are well with you. That you prosper and that your health is good but most of all I hope everything is well with your soul. Just as we learned this past Sunday. All the health and wealth in the world does not do us any good if we are not saved. But we see that Gaius definitely is because of what is says in verse 3. Look at verse 3.

3 John Verse 3

For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth.

Can that be said about us? Can that be said about us as a congregation? Can that be said about us when we teach and preach? Can that be said about us individually?

If someone were to come up to me and say, “Does so and so go to the Church you attend?” And I say yes. Would they be able to say about you or me what is said here about Gaius? Even if they don’t agree with the truth of the Bible. Will they say, “You know I don’t agree with much about what you all believe but I will say you are living it and you do it in a loving way.”

That brings us to that famous verse here at MPBC.

3 John 4

⁴I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth.

We always hear it in context in relation to our own personal children. But here we see it as John is speaking about Gaius and anyone else that he has led to the Lord or the people that may have been part of any of the Churches John has eldered. I will have to admit. It does our hearts good when we hear people say good things about you all.

What I like about the next few verses is we see an example of what it means to be walking in the truth.

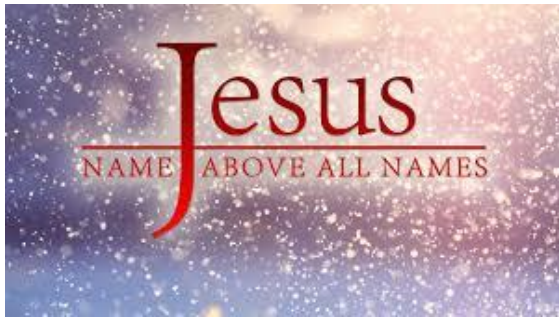
3 John 5-8

⁵Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, ⁶who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. ⁷For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. ⁸Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

We just read in verse 3 how these men had come back to John and testified of this very thing about Gaius. What we have here are these traveling evangelists that have been sent out to proclaim the Gospel to primarily the Gentiles. They would come into this area of where Gaius was either a leader within a Church or just a willing servant of the Lord. The Church may have even met in his house. But the traveling evangelist would stay at Gaius’ home. They didn’t put them up in some Hotel or anything like that. Especially in the those in these areas ruled by the Romans.

I remember when I was a boy and we would have an evangelist come to speak at the Church my family attended and sometimes the speaker would stay at our house. Back then when you had a revival it went on for two weeks. It wasn’t this Sunday to Wednesday or Thursday stuff.

But once again showing the love for the brotherhood and showing honor to those that have as it says in verse 7, “Have gone out for the sake of the name”! What name is that people? Jesus! That precious name that is above all names, Jesus, that one name by which any person can be saved, Jesus!



Here John says to even send them back out with a gift of money and some provisions so they can make it to their next destination. Many of you here are like Gaius. You can't go on the trips that we go on. Or it may not be your desire to do so and that is alright. But you support in working the fundraisers or buying cake or buying chicken. You are a big a part in those trips as anyone going. If I did my numbers correctly this past Chicken-Que we profited the most we have in a long time. Because people would buy one box of chicken for \$7 and give us a \$10. A few bought four boxes for \$28 and gave us \$40. There was one person that bought one box and gave us \$100. There is one business who bought I think twenty boxes, $20 \times \$7 = \140 and wrote a check for \$300. God is faithful isn't he! Amen!

If we can't go then we support those that can. That is why we try to keep our Missions budget increasing each year. That way we are partnering with those that are proclaiming the truth, the Gospel to wherever they have been called to do so.

But as you know when dealing with people there are going to be those that just cause trouble. You know. There is that one or even maybe a few at work, on your team or even in your family. Here we see it within this Church.

3 John 9-10

⁹ I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. ¹⁰ So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.

Here is this man Diotrephes and the way this is written it appears is part of the church Gaius is part of. Diotrephes thinks a lot about himself. As we have learned looking at the Greek sometimes one word is used for a phrase in English.

In verse 9 it says, that Diotrephes likes to put himself first. The Greek work here is:

Philoproteuo – Phi-lo-pro-teuo – to aspire to pre-eminence, to desire to be first.

Whether he was a leader in the Church we don't know but I think we can surmise he had some leadership role. And it was going to his head. Diotrephes was full of himself. What was his problem? Pride! You know that can happen to any of us. It can happen to a Pastor, anyone leading in any of our outreaches and anyone up here playing an instrument or singing.

Now we know there is a hierarchy within the Church. You have Elders, Deacons and then the lay people. But you know what we all are? It starts with an "S"! Servants!

John has had enough. Diotrephes evidently destroyed a letter that John had written, he is making disparaging remarks about the Apostles and about John. John says, "And if that is not enough, all those people you are showing hospitality to!" He refuses to welcome them and stops other people that want to and he puts them out of the Church. Diotrephes had no authority to do any of this.

Now if you were to ask Diotrephes if he was a follower of Jesus Christ. What do you think he would say? Sure! But what are his actions showing us. What did John write back in 1 John 2:9? Turn over there, "Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness."

John ends this letter with these words.

3 John 11-15

¹¹ Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God. ¹² Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true. ¹³ I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. ¹⁴ I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. ¹⁵ Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name.

Gaius, don't act like Diotrephes! Don't get in that mess with him. Do what you are doing by walking in the truth. And we see this last man, Demetrius. Either Demetrius delivered this letter or is on his way to the church Gaius serves. Greet him like you do the rest of those that have gone out for the sake of the name. Demetrius was an example for all the believers to follow. The tense of this writing shows us that Demetrius had a good testimony in the past and continues to do so. That he was proclaiming the truth

So, there we have it. A Tale of Three Church Members!

Gaius, the layperson that is walking in the truth and making sure the truth is being proclaimed within the church he attends and throughout the region by showing hospitality to those that are taking the Gospel to the world by letting them stay in his home and providing provisions and finances for them.

Diotrephes, the trouble maker. Prideful, arrogant! Always wanting to cause a stir.

Demetrius, an evangelist going out and proclaiming the Gospel.

We see once again how important it is to know and understand the truth and that we teach it, preach it and live it so there will be unity in this body of believers and so that we can take it outside these walls.