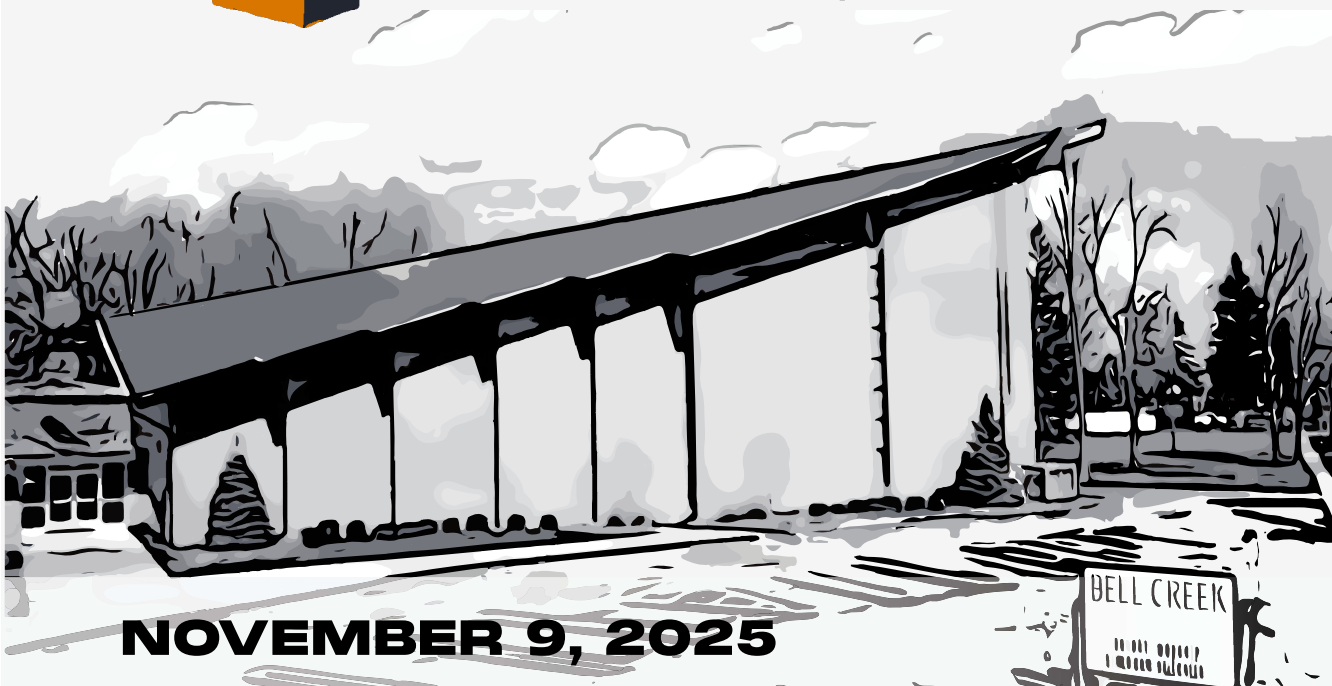


WELCOME TO



BELL CREEK

Community Church



NOVEMBER 9, 2025

THE WRECKAGE OF PROUD LEADERSHIP
3 JOHN 9-14

SERMON BY: PASTOR FRED WRIGHT

CURRENT SERMON SERIES: THE SHORT LETTERS

THE WRECKAGE OF PROUD LEADERSHIP

3 JOHN 9–14

The Corruption of Pride

The Commendation of Faithfulness

The Comfort of Fellowship

FOR NEXT WEEK

Read the Book of Jude as many times as you can!
It's only 25 verses!

DAILY CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE READING

NOVEMBER 9: MATTHEW 26; MARK 14
NOVEMBER 10: LUKE 22; JOHN 13
NOVEMBER 11: JOHN 14-17
NOVEMBER 12: MATTHEW 28; MARK 16
NOVEMBER 13: LUKE 23; JOHN 18-19
NOVEMBER 14: MATTHEW 28; MARK 16
NOVEMBER 15: LUKE 24; JOHN 20-21

UPCOMING AT THE CREEK

BOXES OF LOVE

Bell Creek will be providing boxes of ingredients, as well as certificates for turkeys for local families in need for Thanksgiving. Due to needs of the communities, we are hoping to deliver 150 boxes by Wednesday, November 19 this year. Boxes, shopping lists and instructions for returning them will be available in the back of the gym. If you have any questions, please contact Amanda Rice (amanda@bellcreek.org).

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!

NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY CLASS

Pastor Dylan's New Testament Theology Class meets on Sundays at 6:00 in the Prayer Room. We will continue our study in the book of Hebrews.

LADIES CHAT BREAKFAST

All women are invited for a CHAT Breakfast on Saturday, November 15 at 9:30 AM. This month we will meet at Livonia Town Grill (29041 Seven Mile Road Livonia 48152). If you would like to join, please RSVP to Joyce Davenport (248) 756-5672.

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, and can be returned to the cart outside of the Sanctuary.

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!

WWW.BELLCREEK.ORG/CONTACT-US

FOLLOW US!



BELL CREEK
Community Church

30000 FIVE MILE RD.
LIVONIA, MI 48154

Sermon 11.09.2025

Sermon Text: 3 John 9-14

Sermon Title: The Wreckage of Proud Leadership

Scripture Reading

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.” (Psalm 1, ESV)

The Corruption of Pride

“I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.” (3 John 9, ESV)

“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.” (3 John 10, ESV)

What is going on with Diotrephes!?

The root Diotrephes' sin is pride. The text says that he “likes to put himself first”

Next, we see he is unteachable because he is in rebellion to the Apostle John's authority – he “does not acknowledge our authority.” Here are some other biblical terms for this kind of rebellion: Self-willed, Disobedient, Rebellious, Hard-necked or Stiff-necked, and Lawless.

Diotrephes withholds the Word of God from God's people (think about that). This is treacherous behavior for a church leader. It subjects God's people to deprivation.

Diotrephes is a slanderer; he is “talking wicked nonsense” against God's appointed shepherds (the Apostle John and others).

Diotrephes is inhospitable, “he refuses to welcome the brothers,” and is therefore an obstacle to the spread of the Gospel.

Diotrephes is tyrannical, abusing his position of leadership by unjustly putting out of the church those who are obeying God. This is all ungodly behavior that is rooted in pride.

Consequences of Pride

It's another sad story of the progression of pride: Self-exaltation and blindness lead to Unteachability. This leads to Conflict and Isolation (proud people can't maintain fellowship). Next comes Hardness of Heart (Prolonged pride hardens us spiritually and emotionally. We become less

sensitive to God's voice, less compassionate toward others, and more defensive). Eventually, unchecked pride leads to some form of humbling from God, whether through natural consequences, discipline, broken relationships, or outright calamity, because "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." - James 4:6. That's a promise we can count on!

Diotrephes is heading into antichrist behavior. He is opposing the people, work, Word, and therefore, the Person, of Christ.

The issue isn't just proud leaders in the church; it's also in God's people. Too often, we not only tolerate leaders like Diotrephes in the church (and everywhere else), but we actually celebrate them. Why? Because we must admit, we sometimes genuinely like arrogance in our leaders. There's a magnetic pull toward strong, confident leaders who "don't take nothing from nobody." We become passive because they seem to know where they are going, and we get lazy, letting them make the decisions for us.

This is wrong! We need to be humble before God, and we should expect humility from all our leaders, especially leaders in the Church!

In terms of character, church leaders are to be:

Humble, submissive to the Word of God and those appointed to be in authority, teachable, faithful, providers of God's Word, protectors of the flock, hospitable, furthering the Gospel, servants of God, and servants of God's people – the people whom the Son of God has purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

What ARE Godly Leaders Responsible for?

Teaching and doctrine: Godly leaders faithfully teach sound doctrine and handle God's Word accurately (2 Timothy 2:15, 4:2; Titus 1:9). This includes both positive instruction and warning against false teaching.

Vigilant watchfulness: In Acts 20:28-31, Paul charges the Ephesian elders to "pay careful attention" to the flock and to watch for wolves. Hebrews 13:17 says leaders "keep watch over your souls" – so, they must be alert to spiritual dangers.

Warning and exhortation: Ezekiel 33:1-9 commands leaders to sound the alarm when they see danger coming. If they fail to warn the people, they bear the responsibility. But, if they do warn of danger and people don't listen, "they have delivered their soul."

Setting an example: 1 Peter 5:3 says that leaders in the church are to be "examples to the flock," not domineering. Leaders must model godliness, not just talk about it (1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8).

Prayer and ministry of the Word: Acts 6:4 shows the apostles prioritizing "prayer and the ministry of the word." Leaders are responsible for their own spiritual lives and devotion to God.

Equipping God's people for ministry: Ephesians 4:11-13 says leaders equip the saints for ministry. John 21:15-17 shows Jesus telling Peter to "feed my sheep."

Ensure things are done decently and in order: church leaders work to see things run smoothly in the church. 1 Corinthians 14:40 says "But all things should be done decently and in order."

Appropriate discipline: Godly leaders must exercise church discipline when necessary (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5), though always according to Scripture, praying and hoping for repentance and reconciliation.

What Godly Leaders are NOT Responsible For

Being the Holy Spirit: Godly leaders point people to Christ and teach Scripture, but they can't convict of sin, regenerate hearts, or sanctify. That's the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:5).

People's salvation: 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 shows Paul's perspective: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." Leaders minister faithfully, but conversion and perseverance are God's work.

People's choices: Godly leaders cannot force the heart to repent or trust Jesus.

Controlling consciences: 2 Corinthians 1:24 says, "Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy." Leaders aren't masters of people's consciences, which belong to God alone.

Perfect outcomes: Even ministry which is faithful and full-of-faith doesn't guarantee everyone will respond well. Just look at Jesus, Paul, and the prophets. They had people reject their teaching (and kill them!) Faith, and faithfulness matter more than results.

Micromanaging lives - Leaders give biblical guidance but shouldn't make detailed life decisions for people or create extra-biblical rules that bind consciences (Colossians 2:16-23).

Keeping Everyone Happy: In Galatians, Paul calls out the church, saying, "For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ."

1 Peter 5:2-3: shepherd God's flock "not under compulsion, but willingly...not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples." Leaders have real, weighty responsibility (James 3:1 - "stricter judgment"), but they shepherd God's flock, not their own. They're under-shepherds accountable to the Chief Shepherd. This balance protects both leaders (from crushing burdens) and the flock (from authoritarianism) while maintaining proper biblical accountability.

Application Question: For Those Who Do Not Yet Know Christ

We all struggle with pride. Pride not only destroys fellowship in the church; it separates us from God Himself. But in His mercy, Christ humbled Himself to rescue proud people like us. The Son of God became human and lived as one of us (yet without sin). He endured God's wrath on the cross, taking the sins that come from our desire to rule our lives apart from God. Now, He calls us to end our destructive self-rule and submit to His gentle, saving reign. Will you come to Him in faith and discover the love, forgiveness, and freedom that only His lordship can bring?

The Commendation of Faithfulness

"Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God." (3 John 11, ESV)

Having described the pride of Demetrius and its consequences, John commands Gaius to not imitate the evil of Diotrefes but to imitate good. Because, “Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.”

“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.” (3 John 12, ESV)

Demetrius has a good reputation among God’s people, including John, the other church leaders, and “from the truth itself.” In other words, it is not only the testimony of people, but also the fact that Demetrius’ life displays the truth of the Gospel and the love he has for the Lord Jesus and His people. This is who Gaius should imitate!

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (Hebrews 13:7–8, ESV)

Application: For Those Who Know Jesus

Even those of us who love Jesus drift into the spirit of Diotrefes, seeking recognition, resisting correction, or grabbing control over areas that belong to God. But the Gospel calls us out of self-exaltation and into the humility of Christ. If Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve, shouldn’t we imitate Him? The Spirit of God helps us by shaping us into humble, confident people who welcome the truth and delight in serving others.

Where might pride or self-reliance be keeping you from living under Christ’s gracious authority and receiving His truth? Are you willing to repent of those things and ask Him to help you imitate what is good by walking in the humility, teachability, and love that flow from the Gospel?

The Comfort of Fellowship

“I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.” (3 John 13–14, ESV)

It’s better (that’s an understatement) to be physically present with one another as the Body of Christ! Why? The Holy Spirit indwells us and ministers to us, through us! Being present builds Trust and Authentic Connection, it Clarifies Meaning and Emotion in communication, it Deepens Love and Fellowship, it allows Real-Time Discernment and Response, it Promotes Accountability and Authenticity, Most Communication Is Nonverbal. Being present Reflects God’s Incarnational Pattern (The Son becoming a man to dwell with us) and it echoes God’s ultimate goal for His people, which is to dwell with them forever (“I will be their God, and they will be My people” – Revelation 21:3).

Benediction

“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.” (Jude 24–25, ESV)