

3 John

another personal letter written about 90 AD by the Apostle John to an individual in the church at Ephesus...perhaps in the same sitting

this also was most likely the last book of the Bible written
(post-exile; Rev was written during the exile to Patmos)

v1 The elder
 a humble servant of the Almighty God

unto the well-beloved Gaius:

other Gaius' in the Bible

- from Macedonia, a traveling companion of Paul during his 3rd missionary journey (Acts 19:29, Acts 20:4)

Originally from Derbe?

Heard Paul on his 1st missionary journey, witnessed his stoning and rising again?

- Paul's host in Corinth (Rom 16:23), one of two Paul baptized in Corinth (1 Cor 1:14)

No reason to believe this man is either of those men...because he is fruit of John's labor in Ephesus

whom I love in the truth:

a beloved brother in Jesus Christ, The Truth

...like the "elect lady" of 2 John 1 was a beloved sister in the Lord

v2 Beloved, I wish above all things...prosper and be in health:
“I pray always for your physical well-being as well as your spiritual well-being.”

comfort and health (uncorrupt physical body) are physical blessings for which we should intercede for each other...our 3 dimensions are intertwined

Q: What is prosperity?

A: Contentment

1 Tim 6:6-11

Phil 4:11-13

an avarice-driven collection of material things is not prosperity...
it is a cruel task-master from whom Jesus died to free us

so I will NEVER pray that you win the Lottery!
Or the Publisher's Clearinghouse Sweepstakes

(it ruins lives! 80% declare bankruptcy within a few years!)

v3 I rejoiced greatly...testified...in thee...walkest in the truth:
the word is out...Gaius is a true brother

- a humble servant
- a fruitful steward (Gal 5:22-25)...
- a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led child of God

because

- he is not just a hearer of the word, but a doer (James 1:22)
- his faith is not just words he says...

it is a lifestyle...the person he is

it is a world-view...how he thinks and reacts to the world around him

a glorious testimony of a person's character!

v4 I have no greater joy...my children walk in truth:
 Gaius is not John's biological son, he is a son in the spirit as Timothy was
 to Paul

The Apostle John, earlier the pastor of the church in Ephesus, is pouring
out his heart

a pastor's greatest joy is...NOT a church building
[update]
the church is NOT the shell...it is God's children inside the shell

a pastor's greatest joy is to see God's children live the truth of God...
when brothers and sisters in the Lord

1. walk by faith: hear the Word of God...believe it...obey it...
waiting patiently for the promises of God
2. live humble, surrendered lives to the Lord who has purchased
us with His blood...
"Not my will be done, but Yours, Lord!"
3. live victorious, Spirit-filled and Spirit-led lives
 - knowing how much God loves them...
and sharing it with others
 - knowing there is no condemnation for those in Christ
Jesus
 - walking in the Spirit and, therefore, not fulfilling the
lusts of the flesh
 - laying aside every weight and running to win the race
set before us, looking to Jesus, the Finish Line
4. find rest in the arms of Jesus Christ...having their burdens
lifted and left there with the Lord

a pastor's greatest burden is when God's children

- walk by sight...trusting their own eyes and their own plans
- hear the Word...but don't believe it/obey it
- hurt their brothers/sisters with their words
- do not love others as they love themselves...
do not love others as God loves them
- chose to be fearful and miserable...not faithful and joyful
- live defeated and frustrated lives...ravaged by pride and
self-righteousness

a pastor's joy is...faith in action...

v5-7 doest to the brethren and to strangers:

a living faith involves doing the Lord's work of seeking and saving
the lost...and helping others doing that same work

there were

- itinerant preachers and missionaries sent by the Lord
(as was John in Matt 10:5-16...to the Jew 1st, then Gentile)
with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of God's Grace...
to teach all the nations and baptize new believers desiring to
die to self and follow Jesus
- visitors passing thru our communities...both brothers and
sisters in the Lord and unbelievers

we are to

- receive them...
- love them...
nourish and refresh them (physically with food, water,
clothes; emotionally with peace/rest; spiritually with the
Word)
- send them...edified and encouraged
- faithfully and freely give as we have faithfully and freely
received from the Lord...being a good steward

the requirement of a steward is to be found faithful (1 Cor 4:2)

Gaius has been found faithful of that which the Lord has entrusted to him

- time
- talent
- resources
- The Truth

And he invested those things in the kingdom of God (Matt 6:33)

Gaius is

- a man of action...
- a humble servant, obeying the will of his Master for the glory
of his Master
- silent, not boastful...not interested in the praises of men
- a man after God's heart, walking in God's love
- constrained by the love of Christ (2 Cor 5:14)
for both the brethren and the lost

can you be described in any of these ways?

What do your actions say about you?

Active, selfless love is proof of a genuine faith in Jesus Christ

v8 we therefore ought to receive...be fellow helpers:
 in this community we are to do the same...be co-laborers in Christ with
 those called by the Lord to go out into the world

 if you participate in the work
 (spiritually by prayer, materially by your resources, self by going)
 you will participate in the harvest

 CCA will share in the fruit of the Lord's work in

- Mexico
- Philippines
- Israel
- Russia
- ...and right here in Phoenix

 our first ministry is right here in our community...our Jerusalem

 whom we reach by

- personally surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and
 walking in the truth every day...people are watching
- getting The Word out
 by speaking it in love...
 by living it everywhere we go...
 by inviting our friends and neighbors to come hear the
 Word of God

 (most people come to church because they were
 invited by a friend or loved one who cared enough
 to invite them)

v9

Diotrephes:

a stark contrast to Gaius...is Diotrephes

- NOT loving others...but loving himself
- NOT humble...but prideful
- NOT walking in the spirit...but walking in the flesh
- NOT walking in the truth...but opposed to the truth
- NOT a faithful steward...but selfishly lording over others
- An anti-christ...
behaving in an un-Christ-like manner and
seeking that which belongs only to the Lord Jesus Christ...
preeminence (Col 1:9-19)

he is a corrupt leader...driven by self-glory rather than God's glory
perhaps "it" went to his head and he got puffed up

"Pastor"

"Assistant Pastor"

"Elder"

"Deacon"

"Youth Pastor"

"Worship Leader"

"Teacher"

he does not have the very most important qualifications of a leader

- humility...the heart of a servant
- love...the selfless love of God

as a result, as an unfaithful ambassador, he is misrepresenting God to
God's people...a very serious error

James 3:1

v10 I will remember his deeds:

“If I am able to come to town, I will bring into the people’s remembrance what this man has done...

- berating us with hurtful, slanderous words
(building himself up by tearing others down...
as if Christianity were a competition)
- being a malcontent (v2)
- being inhospitable (a cultural more) and chasing away those sent by the Lord to seek and save the lost...
resisting the work of the Lord
- coercing others in the church to do so also...
being hateful, not loving
- “or else!”...threatening the children of God with excommunication...as if he were the head of the Church!

The Church belongs to no man...

Jesus Christ alone is the Head of the Body!

This is NOT my church...it is Jesus’

He leads...we follow

He is exalted...we are humbled

He must increase...we must decrease

Diotrephes is a stern warning to all of us

- To not be a control freak, a spiritual tyrant in our spheres of influence
- To flee religion and cling to an intimate relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

“Religion”...even the Christian religion...is man controlling man with spiritual-sounding dogmas

- “Do not read the Bible; you cannot understand it.
Only the trained and the qualified can understand it...
they will tell you what it means.”
- “Read only the portions of the Bible we tell you to read.”
- “Go to another church and we will excommunicate you as a heretic.” (extreme: in Mecca, convert and lose your head)
- “You must be baptized in this church in order to be saved.”
- “The church saves you. Your salvation depends upon your being a member of good-standing in this church.”
(the chains of social and economic and spiritual bondage)

v11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good:
it is not God's will for His children to be subjected to the tyranny of such
corrupt and false shepherds...but to follow good

what is "good"?

- Good Master (Matt 19:16-17)...and "obey...love"
- Good Shepherd (John 10:11)
 - gives his life selflessly for the benefit of others...
 - does not beat or fleece the flock...
 - does not lord over them like the Gentiles do
- That which passes the "Word of God" test (1 Thes 5:21)

He that does good is of God...evil has not seen God:

He that lives according to the Word of God (the Law of Love), belongs to
God

He that lives contrary to the Word of God...

but lives according to the Law of Seagulls: "Mine. Mine. Mine"...
has not discerned

- God
- the spiritual truths of God
- the grace of God

a heavy indictment against Diotrephes and all corrupt leaders

v12 Demetrius hath good report:

by two or three witness shall the truth be established

1. of all men
2. the "Word of God" test
3. John himself

v13-14 not with ink and pen...face to face:
same ending as 2 John

“It is better we speak face to face than with letters so we can communicate more fully.”

Until then...

- Peace (John 14:27)
- Salute and greet (embrace) each other...**by name**

Biblical Christianity is a face-to-face faith...

another heartache for pastors: brothers and sisters plagued by

- inconsistency
- complacency
- wandering

Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers

Heb 10:25 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some, but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching

we need to consistently gather together...embrace each other...
and names are important!

How to Win Friends and Influence People

Your name is important to you, isn't it?

Suppose it is to your brothers and sisters?

All of us should know each other's name.

If you don't, go be face-to-face and learn it...and your
brother/sister