

3 John

4-7-10

“3 Men & a Church!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. *2nd John* was written to *warn against* showing hospitality to **false** teachers.
3rd John was written to *encourage proper* hospitality to **Christian** teachers.
- B. **3 Men & a Church** - John confronts *a church problem* encouraging **Gaius & Demetrius**, discussing the problems caused by **Diotrephes**. *3 men all professing Christians*.
1. What a great glimpse we get into a 1st century church & into the lives of 3 of its members.
 2. Churches run into **problems**, & will, as long as *saved sinners* inhabit them.

II. **3 MEN & A CHURCH!**

- A. **GAIUS THE PROSPEROUS CHRISTIAN!** (1-8)
- B. **Gaius** appears to be a leading member of a local church.
1. Exactly where he lives was unknown.
 2. Probably around Ephesus where John continued to live & write these 2 letters.
- C. **Gaius excelled in truth.**
1. The truth was **in** Gaius, & Gaius **walked in** the truth. *Spurgeon*
 - a) If the **1st** was not the case, the **2nd** would not have occurred.
 - b) And if the **2nd** could not be said of him, the **1st** would have been a mere pretense.
 2. Truth must enter into the soul, penetrate & saturate it, or else it is of no value.
 3. **Illus #1: Hold bread in the hand** - no nourishment to your body (like holding doctrine as a matter of creed)
 But when you **digest** the bread your body is able to assimilate it, resulting in the *sustaining & building up* of the body. (same, when doctrine is accepted into the heart!)
 4. **Illus #2:** As a rule of nature, the *inward* affects the *outward*.
Light shines from the center of the **lantern**, through the glass (when truth is kindled **within**, its brightness soon beams forth in the **outward life & conversation**)

5. **Illus #3:** The **silkworm** is really not a worm at all, **but** a caterpillar/moth.
 - a) 1 cocoon is made of a thread of raw silk from 1000-3000' long.
 - b) About 2,000 to 3,000 cocoons are required to make **1 pound** of silk.
 - c) Based on 1,100 yards per cocoon, 10 unraveled cocoons could theoretically extend vertically to the height of *Mount Everest*.
 - d) At least **70 million pounds** of raw silk are produced **each year**. A distance well over **300** round trips **to the sun**. [Amazing!]
 6. **It is the food** of silk worms that **color** their silk thread.
 - a) It eats mostly leaves from the **Mulberry tree**, **but** to get different colors some are fed different leaves.
 - (1) So, the **spiritual food** on which we feed, will **tint every word** that proceeds from our mouth, **and color**(or discolor) **every step** of our Christian walk!
 7. The truth was **in Gaius**, & Gaius **walked in** the truth.
- D. (2) **Prosper** - The bible has little to say about “*prosperity*”, though both the Heb & Gk indicate *progress*, “*having a good journey*”.
- E. This is a beautiful **prayer** of blessing upon a friend.
- F. Gaius may not have been in **good health** **or** maybe was just recovering from an **illness**.
1. But this we know...he had a healthy **spiritual** life!
 2. **May you have as much bodily strength as you have spiritual power!** (not vice-versa)
 3. Whatever the condition of the **outer man**, the **inner man** was **prospering**.
- G. **But note**...the apostle was concerned for the **temporal** well-being of Gaius, & **not only** for his **spiritual** welfare.
1. He must surely have learned this from **Jesus** whose concern for people’s **physical troubles** is attested in all 4 Gospels.
 2. Certainly this is a biblical warrant for Christians today to **pray for** the **temporal** needs of others.
- H. (4) Every Christian **parent** can echo vs.4 & even make it a **prayer!**
- I. (5) **You do faithfully** whatever you do - *We have nothing to do with how much ability we’ve got, or how little, but with what we do with what we have!*
1. The man with **great talent** is apt to be **puffed up**, & the man with **little talent** to **belittle** the little.
 2. God gives it, much or little. Our part is to be **faithful**, doing the best with every bit and scrap.

J. *Hospitality* -

1. *Benjamin Franklin* said, "Fish & visitors **smell** in 3 days"
 - a) **Not** the *Christian perspective* on Hospitality!
2. *Jewish Proverb*, "Hospitality is 1 form of **worship**."
3. *A Danish Proverb* says, "When there is room in the **heart** there is room in the **house**."
 - a) At Christmas, why do we blame **the Innkeeper** for having a full Inn & putting the family out in the stable. **Why not** the 1000's of homes in Bethlehem at the time, which were **not full** of guests?
 - b) Singer John Charles Thomas, at age 66 wrote to syndicated columnist Abigail Van Buren: "I am presently completing the 2nd year of a 3-year survey on the **hospitality or lack of it** in churches. To date, of the 195 churches I have visited, I was spoken to in only 1 by someone other than an official greeter **and** that was to ask me to **move my feet**."
 - (1) Hospitality must be revived today!

K. (5-8) *The brethren* - probably the evangelists & missionaries.

1. Gaius faithfully tried to help the Christian's workers who came his way.
2. **No hotels & the Inn's** were *uncomfortable & often dangerous*.

L. *Why did Gaius help the saints?* [1] He loved them [2] He wanted to share in their ministries [3] He wanted to further the truth.

1. *A man might not be a preacher himself but he can help others to preach* (Wiersbe)

M. This is *Missionary Care* at its finest!

1. **I don't know what to do at the church?** Care for a missionary!
 - a) Email, call them, stay in touch; find out their needs (not to meet all, but at least to pray for, or to share needs with others); go visit them; send care packages; be part of a missionary's *Care Team*; do their taxes; newsletters (edit, stuff, lick envelopes, send); help them on furloughs (see Judy Terry); pick them up at airport (to take to); talk to Larry Hansen for other ideas (oversees Missions Care).

N. **These** are the believers that make the church *healthy*!O. **DIOTREPES THE PROUD CHRISTIAN!** (9-11)P. Gaius **excelled** in truth. Diotrephes was an **egotist**.Q. This was a problem **not w/doctrinal defection**, but **proud ambition!**R. Diotrephes wanted to be the **Boss** of the church! (To John - *Your not the boss of me!*)

1. **Preeminence** - fond of the 1st position; to be 1st in everything, always.
 - a) Col.1:18 **And He(Christ) is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.**
- S. Diotrephes had **not welcomed** the itinerant Christian teachers with the proper hospitality, & had **discouraged others** from doing so also.
- T. John **indicted** Diotrephes on 6 counts:
1. **He loves the preeminence** (his demand to occupy the leading place)
 2. **He does not receive us** (his refusal to receive John himself)
 - a) **Imagine rejecting (& talking others into rejecting) a message from the apostle John?**
 3. **He prated**(talk nonsense) **against us w/malicious words**(his slander of the other apostles)
 4. **He does not receive the brethren** (his unwillingness to entertain missionaries)
 5. **He tries to put them out** (his attempt to excommunicate other believers)
 6. **He is evil** (his utter wicked character)
- U. **A. T. Robertson** wrote a **magazine article** in which he **rebuked leaders** who follow in the footsteps of **Diotrephes**. After it was published, he received letters from at least 25 different church leaders, demanding that their subscriptions to the magazine be canceled. Although Robertson had never met any of them, they all said in effect, **“You have personally attacked me!”** :)
- V. (11) Don’t let this bad example influence you.
1. **Verse 11 acts as a toggle switch from the *Catastrophes of Diotrephes*, to the *Virtuous Demetrius!***
- W. **DEMETRIUS THE PLEASANT CHRISTIAN!** (12)
- X. Gaius **excelled** in truth. Diotrephes was an **egotist**. **Now**, Demetrius was an **example**.
- Y. **His witness shines with 3 rays of sunshine:** **[1]** Everyone speaks well of him. **[2]** Truth speaks well of him. **[3]** John & the boys speak well of him.
1. **The church needs more *Demetrious'***.
 2. This will make the local church **healthy** (vs2).
- Z. **Leopold V** of Austria was called **“Leopold the Virtuous”** - **The last of** Leopold's family to rule was **Frederich II**, who was called **“Frederich the Quarrelsome”!**
1. **Q: What would you be called if we were given nicknames based on your conduct or character?**

2. Q: Would we be called *the Virtuous* or *the Quarrelsome*?
3. Q: What would you be called based on this last week, or yesterday?
 - a) “*Brian the Bodacious*” (blend of *bold* & *audacious* {recklessly bold}) or “*Brian the Bozo*”?

AA. **FAREWELL GREETING!** (13,14)

BB. **Pen** – a reed used for writing. **Ink** – black ink [chief ingredient “soot” or “black carbon”]

1. It was also mixed w/gum or oil for use on **parchments** (sheep or goat skins).
2. Or, it was mixed w/a metallic substance for use on **papyrus**.

CC. Churches today need more members like **Gaius & Demetrius**.

1. Saints who love the **bible**; the **church family**; & **lost souls**.