3 John Friday Night Bible Study July 24, 2020

**Place of the Passage**

3 John is canonically the third epistle of John, yet was probably the first “cover letter” of these epistles. Remember, John had addressed 2 John to the “Elect Lady”, to which we attribute to a particular church, and though 1 John does not name any recipients, we take it to be addressed to a particular church or churches (probably the same church as 2 John). Here in 3 John, the Elder addresses the letter to the beloved Gaius (who probably belonged to the same church in 1 and 2 John), bringing up particular issues and commendations that he wants to highlight within his epistles.

**The Big Picture**

John writes to commend Gaius for walking in the truth which spurred him to support faithful itinerant preachers and missionaries (those who traveled from place to place) even though they were strangers to him. John then encourages Gaius to steer away from an arrogant leader of the church named Diotrephes who had opposed John and the other faithful teachers, and to not do evil by imitating his evil deeds, but by imitating good that is displayed by Demetrius, a fellow believer who has been vetted (examined to be good) by others.

**Passage: 3 John**

Look for: repetition, comparisons, contrasts, lists, and names

Identify: pronouns and individuals, unknown words, and figurative language

Connect: flows of thought, ideas, textual context, similar concepts to 2 John, and similar Biblical concepts

**1**The elder, to my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

**2**Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

**3**It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it.

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

**5**Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you.

**6**They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God.

**7**It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans.

**8**We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

**9**I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us.

**10**So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

**11**Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.

**12**Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

**13**I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink.

**14**I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

15 Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

**Truth for Today**

SUPPORT THOSE WHO PREACH THE (TRUE) GOSPEL. Maybe you have contemplated about going overseas to do a short term missions trip…or maybe you’ve wanted to go and share the gospel at a local soup kitchen. These things are good…but image doing it every single day of your life. There are those who have devoted their lives (those whom God has called to be evangelists and missionaries) to spreading the gospel as their vocation (or professional work). Through 3 John, we know that God calls us to support these people in every way, shape, and form…but only if they preach the true gospel. In 2 John, John urges the elect lady to not even greet false teachers, but here in 3 John, John urges believers to support faithful teachers. This is how we are part of the missio dei (mission of God). Just as John Piper famously have said, “Go, send, or disobey.” God calls every believer to be part of the mission of God, whether going or supporting. Doing nothing means disobeying God. For many of us, we participate in the mission of God by giving, praying, and sending. Don’t forget to be faithful to the mission of God (because God know how much time you have, how much your pay check is, and where your heart is at).

DOWN WITH DIOTREPHES. Arrogant, controlling, and always trying to start stuff…maybe you know someone like this, but image a church leader who didn’t agree with other leaders just for argument sake, always putting himself/herself first, and behaving like everything revolves around him/her. Diotrephes was probably like this. If you are a leader, or an aspiring leader, remember to not be like Diotrephes. The Scriptures remind us that pride and selfishness are not characteristics of a faithful leader, or any Christians as a matter of fact. As wrong as Diotrephes’s actions clearly are to us, we often emulate him whenever we disregard the teachings of the Scriptures to be humble, self-sacrificing, and loving toward our fellow believers.

LONG LIVE DEMETRIUS. There are only two kinds of people in the world…the Diotrephes’ of the world and the Demetrius’ of the world. “Are you a Diotrephes or a Demetrius? When people think of you, do they think of someone who is selfless, seeking to give himself on behalf of others in Christian service, or do they think of someone who is selfish, always seeking to be first and in charge?” (D. Allen). Remember that people are always looking at you. You can be a good model, like Demetrius who was validated by others to be good, or you can be a bad model, like Diotrephes who wanted to create chaos. Christians are called to imitate good, modeled through the Demetrius’ of the world, for those who do good are from God. Be a good model and follow the good models.