

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 9TH, 2019 // BOOK OF 3 JOHN

Are we willing to sacrifice and open up our lives to support those who need our help? Are we willing to support, encourage, fund and celebrate other Christian ministries outside of our church that spread the gospel? Are we willing to live out our faith- especially when it might inconvenience us or we might not get noticed?

WELL WITH YOUR SOUL (VV. 1-4)

The elder, the apostle John, penned this letter to Gaius, his close friend that he loved.

- He writes that he loved him, "in the truth"- meaning not only did he truly love him as a friend, but that he loved him as a fellow believer who also believed truth and was committed to it.
- His prayer for his friend was that, "all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul" (vs. 2).

What he's saying is that Gaius's physical health was important to him, and he wanted it to be as good as his spiritual health.

- God has concern for the physical health of His people!
- The O.T. dietary laws & hygiene regulations were for the health of Israel.
- In the N.T. Paul advised Timothy to take care of his ailments and even commends exercise (1 Tim. 4:8).

However, his friend's healthy soul brought far more delight to John.

- John knew he had a vibrant spiritual life, and Gaius's spiritual health had been confirmed by the testimony of those who had recently been with him (vs. 3).
- John was overjoyed to hear that his children were "walking in truth"- that not only had they professed truth, they were living it out.

What's our soul? The Bible isn't perfectly clear as to the exact nature of our soul, but simply put our soul could be understood as the part of selves that isn't physical.

- The soul is created by God (Jer. 38:16), it can be strong or unsteady (2 Pet. 2:14), it can be lost or saved (James 1:21).
- It's Jesus that's the Shepherd of souls (1 Pet. 2:25), and He gives us rest for our souls (Matt. 11:29).

"HOW'S YOUR SOUL?"

- The health of your soul is the ultimate test of your true state of being.
- It's entirely possible to be healthy on the outside, but falling apart on the inside.
- It's entirely possible to "gain the whole world, and lose your own soul" (Mark 8:36).
- Your soul is eternal, your body is not- the health of your soul matters a great deal.

SOUL HEALTH

- **Good nutrition:** What are feeding your soul? Junk food or living water & the bread of life?
- **Rest:** Are you letting Jesus provide rest for your soul? Are you constantly tired because of worry, anxiety, or doubt?
- **Exercise:** Do you have private spiritual disciplines? Or are you letting spiritual inactivity make your soul fat and lazy?

A FAITHFUL THING YOU DO (VV. 5-8)

The "faithful thing" that John commends Gaius for doing is that he showed hospitality towards other believers, even if they were strangers (vs. 5).

- He was showing traveling ministers Christian love, and his reputation was well known.
- His hospitality, sacrifice, and love towards others was no doubt a reflection of God's kindness and an expression of his own love for God.

John's instruction to Gaius was to send these traveling ministers on their journey "in a manner worthy of God" (vs. 6).

- He was to send them on their way refreshed and fully supplied for the next stage of their journey, and to give to them generously as God would give.
- John provides three reasons for why faithful servants of God should be supported.

The 1st reason is because "they went out for the sake of the name" (vs. 7)- their work was not for the sake of building their fame or reputation, but all for the glory of God's name.

- The 2nd reason is because preachers of the truth "accepted nothing from the Gentiles"- in other words, unbelievers aren't the ones to support those who preach the gospel.
- If Christians don't, no-one will!

Finally, we should support those like these, "that we may be fellow workers for the truth" (vs. 8).

- We're called to ministry as "workers for the truth"- but not all of our roles look the same.
- Some have very public preaching or teaching roles, some travel to foreign lands, and some work behind the scenes to give, support, pray for, and send those who are able to go physically- but we're all fellow workers!

Are we willing to sacrifice and open up our lives to support those who need our help?

- Financial support or the gifting of other resources we may have.
- Opening our homes and our calendar for those who might need our time, love, and support.
- Being willing to volunteer and give of ourselves for the work of ministry.

"...HE LIKES TO PUT HIMSELF FIRST." (VV. 9-11)

Apparently, John had sent an earlier letter to this church, but there was a certain individual in the church that refused to acknowledge John's authority & instruction.

- John's earlier letter most likely contained instruction in it that encouraged people within the church to be hospitable towards traveling missionaries.

A man named Diotrephes resisted this message because of his pride- he "likes to put himself first" (vs. 9).

- There's a sharp contrast between Gaius's selfless, faithful service to others, and Diotrephes's selfish, prideful refusal to help anyone outside of his church.
- Gaius loved the truth and everyone humbly, Diotrephes refused the truth & loved himself.

Diotrephes was apparently guilty of 3 things-

- First, he was "talking wicked nonsense against us" (vs. 10)- he was gossiping and spreading false charges against other believers.
- Gossip is a serious sin in the church that God will not tolerate.
- Secondly, "he refused to welcome the brothers"- he refused to show any hospitality to any traveling Christian ministers.

Thirdly, he "stops those who want to and puts them out of the church"- anyone in his church that tried to show hospitality, he'd kick them out!

- Why would someone act this way? We don't know all of his motives, but we do know that he "liked to put himself first" and didn't want to be under authority.
- John tells Gaius, "don't imitate this evil" (vs. 11)- this was a prideful and ungodly man.

"HE LIKES TO PUT HIMSELF FIRST..."

- If you've grown fond of "putting yourself first", you won't be able to celebrate all that God is doing in the lives of and through the ministries of other people.
- You'll see the good things, endeavors, and successes of others as a threat to your own legacy.

A GOOD TESTIMONY (VV. 12-14)

In contrast to John's strong rebuke of Diotrephes, he warmly praises a man named Demetrius.

- We don't know anything about him other than he went to church with Gaius & Diotrephes.
- But he was a man of noble character because of 3 reasons John gives us.
- The first is that he has a "good testimony from everyone"- his reputation within the Christian community speaks for itself.

Secondly, "the truth itself" had given him a good testimony- in other words, he was committed to professing the truth and living out the truth.

- And lastly, John added his own testimony that this man Demetrius was of good character.
- What our leaders say about our character (especially our Christian leaders) matters greatly- if those whom we have to submit under don't have anything good to say about us, there's an issue.

How do we know someone is of godly Christian character?

- This example of Demetrius shows that it can be seen by 1) someone's reputation in Christian community, 2) their faithfulness to living out the truth of Scripture, and 3) their willingness to be under the authority of and humbly honor and respect their leaders.
- Giftedness is no substitute for character.

John closes this letter in a very similar manner to how he ended 2 John- there's so much he wants and needs to say to them face-to-face.

- Again, we see the importance and necessity of face-to-face, human, physical interaction- especially when it comes to critical conversations or confrontations.
- "Peace be to you" is appropriate for this congregation in the midst of controversy.

Are we willing to actually do something, or are we just talk?

Are we willing to celebrate and support all that God is doing, even if it's not "our" thing?

Are we willing to live out our faith- especially when it might inconvenience us or we might not get noticed?