



Christiana, wife of Pilgrim, who, with her children, are honored guests at the house of Gaius ~ from Pilgrim's Progress, part 2.



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CHRISTIANA AT THE HOUSE OF GAIUS.

FROM THE PICTURE IN THE COLLECTION OF CHARLES FRASER, ESQ.

John Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress: "Christiana then wished for an inn for herself and her children, because they were weary. Then said Mr. Honest, There is one a little before us, where a very honourable disciple, one Gaius, dwells. So they all concluded to turn in thither; and the rather, because the old gentleman gave him so good a report. So when they came to the door, they went in, not knocking, for folks use not to knock at the door of an inn. Then they called for the master of the house, and he came to them. So they asked if they might lie there that night.

Gaius. Yes, gentlemen, if you be true men; for my house is for none but pilgrims. Then were

Christiana, Mercy, and the boys, the more glad, for that the innkeeper was a lover of pilgrims. So they called for rooms, and he showed them one for Christiana and her children and Mercy, and another for Mr. Great-heart and the old gentleman.

Great. Then said Mr. Great-heart, Good Gaius, what hast thou for supper? for these pilgrims have come far to-day, and are weary.

Gaius. It is late, said Gaius, so we cannot conveniently go out to seek food; but such as we have you shall be welcome to, if that will content.

Great. We will be content with what thou hast in the house; for as much as I have proved thee, thou art

never destitute of that which is convenient.

Then he went down and spake to the cook, whose name was Taste-that-which-is-good, to get ready supper for so many pilgrims. This done, he came up again, saying, Come, my good friends, you are welcome to me, and I am glad that I have a house to entertain you; and while supper is making ready, if you please, let us entertain one another with some good discourse; so they all said, Content.”

Bunyan has perfectly captured the heart of Gaius, one who welcomed the traveling itinerant teachers of the late 1st century into his home. I think Gaius and Philemon were a lot alike—see Philemon v. 7.

We've seen the setting of John's letters, but briefly...

- John writes (likely) from Ephesus where, toward the end of the 1st century, he lived and served and shepherded the church.
- His recipients were believers in nearby towns who were dealing with several issues revolving around itinerant teachers circulating through the area.
- Some traveling teachers were distorting the gospel, teaching that the divine Jesus and the human Jesus could not have been the same: "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh." ~ 2 John 7

CHRISTMAS AT THE HOUSE OF FAITH.

FROM THE PICTURES OF THE COLLECTION BY CHARLES WILSON, SR.

Interesting note here from the ESV Study Bible:
“It has been suggested that 2 & 3 John were originally preserved because they were part of a single packet containing all three Johannine letters. On this view, 3 John was a personal letter to Gaius commending the courier of the shipment, Demetrius (v. 12); 2 John was to be read aloud to Gaius’ church; and 1 John was a sermon for general distribution and not a letter in the strict sense. This scenario cannot be verified but is a useful hypothesis in envisioning how John’s letters could have arisen and been preserved in early Christianity.”

CHRISTIANA AT THE HOUSE OF FAITH.

FROM THE PICTURES OF THE COLLECTION BY CHARLES WILSON, 1840

Do you like outlines? I like outlines.

Here's the outline we're using for John's short letter:

- *John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth* – v. 1-4
- John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8
- John's concern over Diotrephes' pride – v. 9-10
- John's testimony of Demetrius' consistent life – v. 11-12
- John's desire to speak face to face with Gaius – v. 13-15

CHRISTIANA AT THE HOUSE OF GAIUS.

FROM THE PICTURES IN THE COLLECTION OF CHARLES WALKER, Esq.

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth ~ v. 1-4

Do you like sub-outlines? I like sub-outlines.

Here's what I did with v. 1-4...

- John's greeting to Gaius ~ v. 1
- John's prayer for Gaius ~ v. 2
- John's joy over Gaius ~ v. 3-4

John's greeting to Gaius ~ v. 1-4

So—John writes to *Gaius*. Who was he?

We can pull a few things out of the letter, but apart from what John mentions about him here, what do we know about him from the rest of Scripture?

- Answer: Zero. All we know about him is in this little letter.

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth ~ v. 1-4

John's greeting to Gaius ~ v. 1

What do we notice about Gaius in v. 1?

- This: What John thought of him.

Notice the word that is repeated in v. 1, 2, 5, 11

- John calls him *Beloved*

The word has two related ideas in it...

First, it is a unique bond between the one who gives love, and the *agapetos*, the one who is loved.

- Matt. 3:17—a unique and intimate relationship, not merely that the Son is loved.
- Mark 12:6

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth ~ v. 1-4

John's greeting to Gaius ~ v. 1

The second idea in the NT word *Beloved* focuses specifically on the one receiving the love.

- Acts 15:25
- Rom. 16:5

But notice too in this respect that the word can also refer to love for an entire church ~

- She is chosen by God and is the focus of His unique love, His dear children through Christ: Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 4:14, 15:58.
- Jesus, the Son, has a unique relationship of love with His Father...and so does His church: Eph. 5:1.

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth – v. 1-4

“But it is also said ‘as dear children.’ Read it as, ‘children beloved.’ Is not this a tender but mighty argument? How greatly has God loved us in that He permits us to be His children at all? ‘Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God.’ A ‘behold’ is placed there, as if it were a thing of wonder. Do you not wonder at it in your own case, that you should be called a child of God? Behold the love which chose you when you were dead in trespasses and sins, and quickened you into the life of God!” – Charles Spurgeon

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth ~ v. 1-4

Gaius is *Beloved* to John...

- Do we think of the saints as *beloved*?

What are beloved, dear saints to us? If they are *agapetos*, *Beloved*, to us, they will, or we will...

- ...wound ~ Prov. 27:6
- ...rescue ~ Gal. 6:1
- ...encourage ~ 1 Thess. 5:11, 14
- ...and completely re-think the whole concept of relationships ~ Philemon 16

What about the church? Is she *Beloved* to us?

- Phil. 4:1
- Jude 1

CHRISTIANA AT THE HOUSE OF GAITH.

FROM THE PICTURES IN THE COLLECTION OF CHARLES WILKINSON, Esq.

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth – v. 1-4

Gaius is *Beloved* to John...

But why?

- Because he is in Christ together with John. Gaius is a brother in Christ, and so is *beloved* as a fellow pilgrim.
- Because of his selfless love for the saints.
- Because of his faithfulness in service to Christ and His church.
- Because of his perseverance in Christ.
- Because he counts others more significant than himself.
- And because of his concern for hearts.

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth – v. 1-4

That's what it means when John says of Gaius, “..whom I love in truth.”

“Truth...is the common sphere in which genuine biblical love is shared by believers; again, love and truth are inseparably linked (v. 3, 4, 8, 12). There is a sense in which Christians are to love all people (cf. Gal. 6:10), just as God loves the world (Matt. 5:44-45). But the love John spoke of here is the unique love that believers have for those who are in Christ and faithful to the truth (John 13:34-35, 15:12, 17; Rom. 12:10, 13:8; 1 Thess. 3:12, 4:9; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Peter 1:22, 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23, 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 5).” – John MacArthur

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth ~ v. 1-4

John's prayer for Gaius ~ v. 2

So what is John praying for Gaius?

- "...that all may go well with you..."
- "...that you may be in good health..."
- "...*as it goes well* with your soul."

This was a fairly standard kind of greeting, or wish, in ancient letters—when John says, "I pray that all *may go well* with you...", he prays that Gaius will succeed, prosper, enjoy favorable circumstances in all respects (the same Gk word is used only here, and in Rom. 1:10 and 1 Cor. 16:2).

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth ~ v. 1-4

John's prayer for Gaius ~ v. 2

So this all raises a question...

We see clearly in Scripture that adversity is used—and we could even say *designed*—by God to produce much spiritual maturity in us that perhaps would not have occurred otherwise—i.e., Psalm 119:67, 71; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7.

Since that is the case—since adversity appears to be such a priceless thing in the economy of God, why would we ever pray this for someone: “...that you may be in good health”? Should we instead actually pray for *poor* health?

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth ~ v. 1-4

John's prayer for Gaius ~ v. 2

There's no hint in Scripture that we should pray for poor health simply for a greater spiritual maturity.

Again, why pray "that you may be in good health?"

- So Gaius, for example, might not be hindered in any way in his love for and service to the saints.

William Barclay: "John is interested both in the physical and the spiritual health of Gaius. John was like Jesus; he never forgot that men have bodies as well as souls; and that the physical health of men is just as much the concern of the real pastor as the spiritual health of the soul is."

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth ~ v. 1-4

John's prayer for Gaius ~ v. 2

There is speculation that Gaius may have been in poor health at the time John wrote—which would explain his request. But that's just speculation.

So now let me ask this: is there any indication in Scripture that sickness or poor health or adverse circumstances, etc., are hindrances to spiritual growth? Or this: is there any suggestion in the Bible that material success is an indication of the blessing of God on your spiritual progress?

Answers: No. Just no.

CHRISTIANA AT THE HOUSE OF FAITH.

FROM THE PICTURES OF THE COLLECTION BY CHARLES PHIPPS, SR.

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth ~ v. 1-4

John's joy over Gaius ~ v. 3-4

Yes, John wanted Gaius to be in good health to be unrestricted in any way in his service to the Lord and His church...but that wasn't the thing that John got really excited about. What was?

Some—maybe some itinerant teachers?—had visited Gaius and his church and came back with a report: Gaius was consistently “walking in the truth.”

- Notice that Gaius wasn't saying this about himself...others were. He was just trying to follow Jesus.
- It's kind of like Matt. 5:14-16.

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth ~ v. 1-4

John's joy over Gaius ~ v. 3-4

John, the elder, the shepherd of Christ's dear sheep, saw those under his pastoral care as "my children."

What is he saying?

Howard Marshall ~ "Children' is a word used especially by Paul to refer to his own converts (1 Cor. 4:14; Gal. 4:19; Phil. 2:22); in the same way the implication here may be that the elder had led Gaius to faith in Jesus Christ, but he may simply be using this phrase to refer to people under his pastoral care, to whom he adopted a fatherly attitude. In any case, the elder makes it clear that his supreme concern as a pastor is to help other people to know the truth and to live by it."

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth ~ v. 1-4

John's joy over Gaius ~ v. 3-4

John saw in Gaius a genuine faith—

- ...faith that showed itself in works (like Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:11-14, 3:8; Heb. 10:24-25; James 2:14-17).
- ...faith that showed itself in perseverance (like 1 Pet. 1:6-7).
- ...and faith that bore fruit (like Matt. 7:17; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:8-9).

So John writes that Gaius' genuine faith, lived out in humility and service, and noticed by others, is his source of greatest joy.

CHRISTIANA AT THE HOUSE OF FAITH.

John's joy that Gaius is walking in the truth ~ v. 1-4

John's joy over Gaius ~ v. 3-4

What would have been John's greatest sorrow?

- 2 Tim. 4:10. Without a doubt.
- MacArthur: "The great grief of ministry is people who are indifferent or rebellious toward the Word of God."
- Notice Paul's concern and joy in 1 Thess. 3:1-8.

Hearing from others that Gaius was still following Jesus—John said "I have *no greater joy* than to hear that my children are walking in the truth."

So ask your brethren once in a while how they are doing with the Lord. "I have no greater joy..."