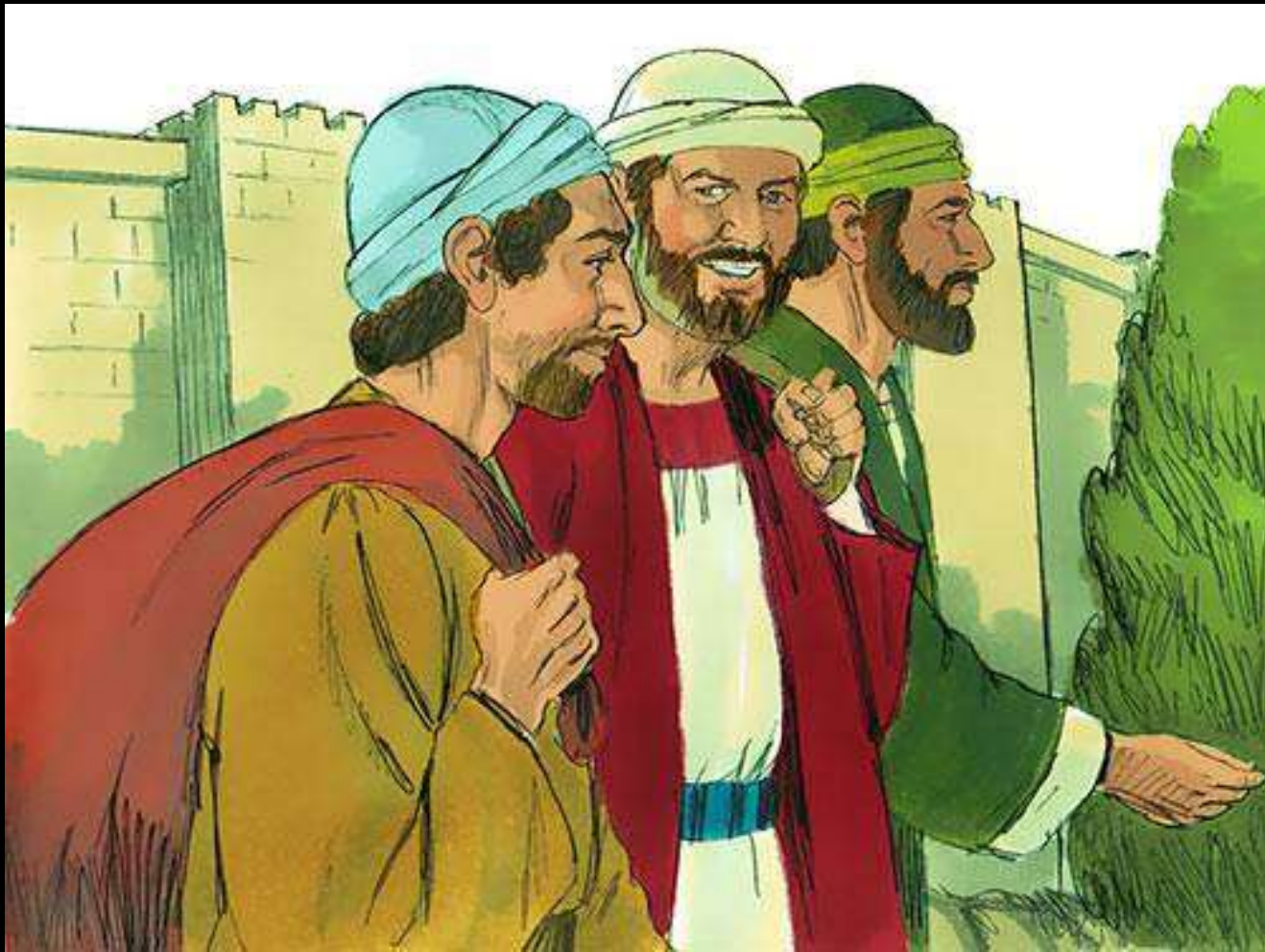


In 3 John we see itinerant teachers who traveled from church to church to both strengthen the believers and take the gospel where it had not gone before...



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In 3 John we see a man named Gaius who lived this out to serve and support the itinerant teachers...



John's 3rd letter spotlights three people, and Gaius in particular. Last week we saw John's joy in his consistent walk in truth; today, his commendation:

Here's the outline we're using for 3 John...

- 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

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8
You didn't just go get a motel back in the 1st century...
“In the ancient world inns were notoriously unsatisfactory. The Greek had an instinctive dislike of taking money for the giving of hospitality; and, therefore, the profession of innkeeper ranked very low. Inns were notoriously dirty and flea-infested. Innkeepers were notoriously rapacious, so that Plato compared them to pirates who hold their guests to ransom, before they allow them to escape.” ~ William Barclay

And so, traveling teachers (and false teachers) would stay (or try to stay) with the families of believers.

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

So—here's what looks like had taken place: some itinerant teachers had traveled to the churches near Ephesus (where John lived late in the 1st century)...

- ...they visited the churches and encouraged the believers,
- ...and at some point in their travels stayed for a while with Gaius, who had not met them before.
- ...they came back to Ephesus and met with the church there, and told the gathered believers of the unique love Gaius had shown.
- ...and that filled John's heart with joy (v. 3-4). It delighted him to see that evidence of genuine faith in them.

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

Here's what we see in these verses:

- We see Gaius serving the brothers in v. 5-6a
- We see him sending the brothers in v. 6b-7
- We see him supporting the brothers in v. 8

Ok—so we've talked some about Gaius last week, and we see a little more this week. This is the only place he is mentioned in Scripture, but think about what you see of him in v. 1-8—

- Who/what is Gaius? What do you see? What do you think?
- Notice in v. 5 that this is now the 3rd time John has called Gaius "Beloved."

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

So some guys showed up at Gaius' church one day unannounced (probably), because there was very limited cell service there...

- ...and John says these guys were “strangers.”
- ...and he says that what Gaius did for them was “a faithful thing.”

What did he mean by that—“a faithful thing”?

- It means that when Gaius showed hospitality to these strangers, he was acting consistently with the truth he believed. He was “walking in the truth,” he was living out the gospel.
- What are some other ways we do this?

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

It's worth noting this point again: contrast the attitude of Diotrephes in v. 9, "who likes to put himself first," with Gaius—the brothers showed up back in Ephesus and "testified to your love before the church."

- It's like this: "Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." – Phil. 2:3
- And btw, when Paul writes that in Phil. 2, he is giving counsel on how to do relationships in a manner consistent with the gospel. *So—do that in your marriages.* That is "walking in the truth."

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

I think Matthew Henry, Gaius, and the brothers John mentions would have gotten along really well:

“Faithful souls can hear their own praises without being puffed up; the commendation of what is good in them lays them at the foot of the cross of Christ.”

“Good men will rejoice in the soul prosperity of others; and they are glad to hear of the grace and goodness of others.”

We are not nearly as important as we think we are... let's let the Word of God shape our thinking:

- Prov. 25:27, 27:2; Jeremiah 9:23-24; 2 Corinthians 10:18.

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

Ok—what Gaius was doing for these brothers, these traveling teachers of the sound doctrine of God's word, that he had never met before was simply *hospitality*.

Let's take a quick run through hospitality in Scripture, and see what it looks like –

First, hospitality in the OT—what do we see? This is the foundation, or background, that the commands to show hospitality in the NT are built upon.

Let's start with the first picture we see of it in Gen. 18:2-8. Notice the role that Abraham takes here.

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

Hospitality in the OT –

And now see Deut. 8:1-5. Why read this passage?
What's going on here?

- This is God Himself, acting out of His own nature: doing, showing, hospitality.

And now back to Lev. 19:33-34, and then Deut. 10:18-22. What do you notice here?

- Hospitality is patterned on the love of God for Israel; picture God saying this: “I made a home for you in Egypt when you were strangers there—do the same.”
- cf. Psalm 39:12, 146:9.

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

Hospitality in the OT –

So—hospitality in the OT does this:

- It displays the perfect and beautiful nature of God, and magnifies and points to His glory.

“Grace is the hospitality of God to welcome sinners not because of their goodness but because of His glory. If God chose not to magnify the glory of His own self-sufficiency, and instead to enrich Himself by looking for talented and virtuous housemates, there would be no grace in the world, and no hospitality, and no salvation.

We owe our eternal life to grace, and grace is God's disposition to glorify His freedom and power and wealth by showing hospitality to sinners.” – John Piper

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

Hospitality in the NT –

In the OT, God came to the oppressed aliens in Egypt—the children of Israel—and saved them: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” –Ex. 20:2.

- And from that, from His nature, He told Israel: love the stranger as yourself; that's what He did.
- Here is what happened to us Gentiles—God did exactly the same thing: see Eph. 2:11-12.

Let's take a look at a few more passages in the NT and see how hospitality is presented –

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

Hospitality in the NT –

Romans 12:13—notice the word “seek.”

- In other words, actively look for opportunities to bring glory to God through reflecting His character in hospitality.
- v. 13 is one of the ways we do v. 9.

Hebrews 13:2—what's the angels thing about?

- Keep it simple: the point is that we may never know the far-reaching importance or impact of a simple act of hospitality.
- Don't neglect it—a life full of self will have no room left for hospitality.

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

Hospitality in the NT –

- 1 Peter 4:9 – Notice the reason Peter gives here.
- Because the end is near (v. 7), we must love one another earnestly (v. 8). That kind of earnest love shows I am living in the light of eternity.
 - Do it without grumbling: in other words, find a way to like it. Do the extra dishes with joy. Be ok with a dirty floor.
 - And notice this: this is a command to be a certain kind of *person*, not just to legalistically open your doors whenever someone shows up.

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

Hospitality in the NT –

So the NT calls us to a strategic hospitality:

- a readiness to welcome people into your home,
- And a hospitality that promotes the gospel and contributes to the maturing of the saints.

And think about this too: don't just come to church.

- Practice hospitality here too: you have a few strategic moments before church. Come a little early, greet people, welcome them warmly. Show new families to the children's check-in area, find someone sitting by themselves and say hi.
- Again, after the service, turn your hospitality radar back on and connect with someone.

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

So John tells Gaius in v. 7 to continue to support these itinerant missionary/teachers—but he qualifies or defines that support: “send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God.” What is that?

- The way Gaius treated these traveling teachers would reflect on the name and character of God.
- If he gave them little, treated them like beggars, it would bring discredit on the name of God: better to err on the side of generosity than otherwise.
- This is a very high standard: give to them generously...like God does.
- Notice the same thought in Col. 1:10, 1 Thess. 2:12. What are the implications?

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

And now John gives the reason why these brothers should be supported with such a high standard, in a manner worthy of God: “For *they have gone out for the sake of the name...*” (v. 7). Which means what?

The concept of “name” in Scripture—and in ancient civilizations—was reflective of the entire person.

Take a look through these OT references—note what each says about the name of the Lord:

- Psalm 20:7
- Psalm 102:15, 21
- Psalm 135:1
- Prov. 18:10
- Joel 2:32
- Zephaniah 3:12

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

Ok—now take a look in the NT: notice what takes place “for the sake of the name” in each –

- Acts 5:41, 9:16, 21:13
- Romans 1:5
- Philippians 2:9

The work that these traveling teachers were doing was the same work—done for the same reason—as God was doing in the world. See Col. 3:17.

John Stott: “Jealousy for the Name of Christ is the most compelling of all missionary motives.”

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8
In v. 8 John brings his encouragement to Gaius to a conclusion, "Therefore..."

Not every Christian can go "out for the sake of the name," but every Christian can "support people like these," and stand alongside them as "fellow workers for the truth."

We can serve them, we can send them, we can support them. But be discerning. Why do I say that? "...we ought to support *people like these*." People like what?

- The ones who "have gone out for the sake of the name." Be discerning about how you give.

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

John mentions in v. 7 that these traveling, itinerant teacher/missionaries had accepted “nothing from the Gentiles.”

- Why not? Is there a problem with, say, a missionary receiving financial support from non-believers? Should a missionary refuse any offer of support from non-believers? Why? Or why not?
- The particular teacher/missionaries John writes about had refused offers of support from Gentiles...are Christians obligated to support all who call themselves missionaries? Is v. 8 a call to financially support any person or organization with the name Christian? What criteria do you use?

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8
Take a look at Matt. 10:41...

John MacArthur, commenting on that verse, says this: "Thus, He promised eternal reward, as if the one caring for a prophet was himself a prophet. In His limitless grace God not only rewards a true prophet, preacher, or missionary for his faithfulness, but also rewards anyone else who receives him. Receiving a prophet refers to embracing his ministry—affirming his call and supporting his work. Receiving a righteous man is that same principle, extended to every believer who is accepted for Christ's sake..."

John's commendation of Gaius' love for the brothers – v. 5-8

Take a look at Matt. 10:41...

...In an incomprehensible sharing of blessing, God showers His rewards on every person who receives His people because they are His people. Whenever we become the source of blessing for others, we are blessed; and whenever other believers become a source of blessing to us, they are blessed. In God's magnificent economy of grace, the least believer can share the blessings of the greatest, and no one's good work will go unrewarded."