



BOOK OF THIRD JOHN

Author: John
Theme: Acting Faithfully
Date of Writing: A.D. 85-95

Outline

Christian Greeting

1. **Commendation of Gaius (2-8)**
 - A. For his Spiritual health (2)
 - B. For his walking in the truth (3-4)
 - C. For His Hospitality to Traveling Brothers (5-8)
2. **Council to Gaius (9-12)**
 - A. Concerning the Bad Example of Diotrephes (9-11)
 - B. Concerning the Good example of Demetrius (12)
3. **Conclusion (13-14)**

Background

John, the beloved apostle, again identifies himself by the title of the "elder". This personal letter is addressed to a loyal believer named Gaius (v.1), probably in one of the church communities in Asia Minor. As with John's other letters, 3rd John was most likely written from Ephesus in the late 80's or early 90's.

Toward the end of the first century, itinerant ministers who traveled from city to city were commonly supported by believers who received them into their homes and helped them on their way (v.5-8, 2nd John 10). Gaius was one of many faithful Christians who graciously hosted and supported trustworthy traveling ministers (v. 1-8) However, a leader named Diotrephes arrogantly resisted John's authority and refused to receive traveling brothers whom John had sent.

Purpose

John wrote (1) to commend Gaius for his faithful hospitality and support of trustworthy traveling ministers, (2) to indirectly warn the rebellious leader Diotrephes, and (3) to prepare the way for his own personal visit.

3 John 1 (King James Version)

1The elder unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

2Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

3For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

4I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

5Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;

6Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:

7Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

8We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

9I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

10Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

11Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

12Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

13I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

14But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

In this month's teaching in the School of Ministry we will discuss the 3rd Epistle of John. He (John) was the longest survivor of all of the original disciples of Jesus. It is believed that he lived to be about 90 years old, John was also called the apostle of love. John is also the one that wrote the Revelation of Jesus Christ concerning future events that would happen on the earth in the last days.

In the book of 3rd John he is addressing a personal letter to one of his disciples - Gaius (see *earlier notes*). In the theme of this short but powerful letter John is commending Gaius for his hospitality that he showed toward those that were traveling around spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was teaching the same doctrine that Jesus had taught him some 50 to 60 years earlier. (St. Matthew 25:31-40) As John addressed Gaius he taught him that it is God's provision and intention that we as believers be healthy and our lives be accomplished by His blessing. He wants all to be well with us, that our work, plans, purposes, ministry, families, ect are established and progress according to God's will and direction. Thus God's blessings through redemption in Christ are intended to meet both physical and spiritual needs. The Greek word for prosper is (yoo-od-o-o) which means to help on the road, i.e., succeed in reaching; as to have a prosperous journey. As we study this book and put that which John writes in proper context, we learn that God is speaking to believers and we should trust in him, live for him that we might have great success on our Christian journey. Now let's see what David has to say about this in the first division of Psalms.

Psalm 1 (King James Version)

1Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish

John was also rejoicing to see that his children in the Lord walking in truth, it is a great blessing to see those that you have labored with and taught the Word of God through ministry - walking in the flow of the anointing of God and see blessings flowing in their life. When God prospers us He expects us to reach out and help someone that has not reached that level of maturity and prosperity in Christ. We are to be agents of change not of status quo.

In this book John finds that there is one in the church who has been taught to open his doors to those that are strangers but he refused. Diotrephes loved to have the preeminence or to have the chief place; instead of recognizing John as spiritual father he instead rejected him in his capacity because he wanted to be looked upon himself by the people. Unfortunately this same spirit is still in the church today, this form of pride leads to deception, presumption and malicious talk. This man's sin was so great that John states that he will remember the deeds that he did with his malicious words, causing others to go into error.

As leaders you need to be aware at all times of someone attempting to take you in another direction rather than following the lead of the Holy Spirit. Just as John commends Demetrius for his good report among the saints as well as walking in the truth; this is what is expected of all of you.