



The Agape

Class 9 • 3rd John

• 3rd John

- 1) The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.
- 2) Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.
- 3) For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.
- 4) I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.
- 5) Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;
- 6) Which 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:
- 7) Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.
- 8) We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.
- 9) I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.
- 10) Wherefore, 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.
- 11) Beloved, 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.
- 12) Demetrius 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.
- 13) I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:
- 14) But 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.

• Last week you looked at the Second Letter of John

• A steady maintaining of the encouragement that he gave them in the first letter

- Keep on remembering the Love Feast
 - Keep on showing God's Love to each other
- 8) Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.
- The same simple warning should stick with us today
 - John calls the belief in this False Doctrine to be Sin
 - If you think that Jesus is God, then you don't even have God
 - If you understand the Truth, then you have both God and Jesus
 - John calls them what they are - Anti-Christ, and warns the Brethren not to have anything to do with them
 - The problem seems so intense, that he really can't express it well enough in writing, and is going to make a personal visit
 - Don't try to resolve sticky things by email! Take the time to get face to face and work things out - That your joy may be full...
-
- We don't know the characters involved in this letter - Gaius, Diotrephes and Demetrius
 - But, we can tell a lot about them by how John addresses them
- 1) The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.
- "wellbeloved" doesn't imply that it was unique to John
 - Gaius was known and well-loved by his Brothers and Sisters
 - What greater report do we need?
- 2) Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.
- Did you notice how John segregates his well wishes?
 - The "soul" refers to the human man - The nephesh - whether man or beast
 - So, FIRSTLY, we wish above all things for Gaius to prosper and be in health

- So, the implication is, by talking about his soul later, that he is referring to his spiritual health
- John sets his spiritual health and well-being as “above all things”
- 3) For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.
- Gaius was of good report and “walkest in the truth”
- 4) I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.
- 5) Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;
- Apparently, they were losing many to apostasy already, and it was so depressing that John was really encouraged to hear of those who were not falling away
- 6) Which 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:
- 7) Because that for his name’s sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

NLT

- 6) They have told the church here of your friendship and your loving deeds. You do well to send them on their way in a manner that pleases God.
- 7) For they are traveling for the Lord and accept nothing from those who are not Christians.
- He was caring for those who were travelling around to care for the early church
- Notice that the preachers didn’t receive anything from those they preached to
- Notice who they did receive from?
- 8) We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.
- Support the Missionaries!
- The differences between Foreign Missionaries and Local Missionaries causes us to forget them
- Out of sight, out of mind
- These things shouldn’t be
- We should be “fellowhelpers to the truth”

- Now, he gets on to the real problem

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

- Such loving words were spoken of Gaius - but not Diotrephes

- Picture this series of events:

- 1) He writes his first epistle to the whole Ecclesia, openly encouraging them to resist the Judaisers

- 2) He writes his second epistle to “the Lady” - Almost discreetly sending his encouragement to the Ecclesia

- 3) By the time he writes his third letter, it’s addressed to a single individual who is standing firm

- What does this tell us about what has happened to the Ecclesia?

- Diotrephes seems to be the Recording Brother

- He wrote to the Ecclesia, but Diotrephes wouldn’t read it

- Why?

- He loves being in charge

- He loves putting himself first

- What lesson can we learn from the opposites of those?

- Put the Ecclesia first!

10) Wherefore, 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.

- Look at this list of things Diotrephes does, and learn from it:

- 1) “prating against us” implies a good deal of irresponsible talk - The same word is also translated “tattlers” and “babbling” - So, you get the sense that it is a lot of “behind the back” talking

- 2) “malicious words” - literally “evil words” obviously spoken regarding John and his work
- 3) “neither doth he himself receive the brethren” - We have already talked about what this meant - and Gaius’ opposite record of righteousness
- 4) “he forbiddeth them that would offer hospitality” - This kind of bullying and forcing others to do things the same way that you do. He must have felt confident of the power he had over people to forbid them to take in a travelling preacher. He was the opposite of “Christian”
- 5) “and casteth them out of the church” - We see the first real clear picture of what went wrong. Once the wrong people got control of the Ecclesia, then any good people left were cast out - FOR DOING GOOD THINGS!

- Look at the interesting connection to our Ecclesia life today - The wrong thing that Diotrephes was doing was regarding another Brother as “contaminated by association” for receiving in fellowship a Brother that Diotrephes doesn’t agree with

- Is this EVER right?

11) Beloved, 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.

- Beloved... He focuses on those good people that he can help

- The advice is simple: “Focus on that which is good”

- Don’t get lead astray by those who are evil

12) Demetrius 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.

- Another bright spot in a dark Ecclesial world

- Demetrius delivered John’s letters, but he was obviously so much more

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

14) But 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.

- He really wants to talk in person

- What’s missing? God and Jesus - Maybe things were so tough, that he didn’t want to mention them, in case the letter falls into the wrong hands