

1.31.21 ~ 3John, Christian Hospitality: Part Two...

Read 3John:1-4... John, the aged apostle, continues to write as a spiritual father figure to those in the Church, expecting his readers/hearers to accept his teaching as being from God.

We don't know who Gaius is, but it would seem that John considers him to be a son in the faith, one who is walking in the truth; this is apparently testified to by those who know Gaius and have witnessed his obedience to Christ.

John prays for Gaius's physical health to be equal to that of his spiritual health. Here is a man whose walk matches his talk; and his reputation is well known among the believers, this brings great joy to John.

Many believers profess one thing with their lips, but their life expresses something else; not so with Gaius, his genuine belief in Christ is exhibited in and through his example as a servant of God.

Read 3John 5-8... Gaius is evidently showing hospitality to some brothers in the faith who are traveling about teaching the Word of God and encouraging the believers and followers of Christ.

Gaius is an example of those who do the good works God has prepared for us to do (see **James 2:14-17; Ephesians 2:8-10**).

The actions of Gaius showing Christian hospitality had evidently gotten back to John, who now commends him and then exhorts him to continue helping these brothers "in a manner worthy of God," i.e., as God would want him to treat them. **Matthew 25:35-40**, "For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You *something* to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.'"

These itinerate missionary teachers, according to **3John 7a**, are serving, "for the sake of the Name." What does that mean exactly?

Philippians 2:9-11, "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,"

Colossians 3:17, "Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

1John 3:23, "This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us."

1John 5:13, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

These traveling teachers are proclaiming the message of Christ, "the Name which is above every name," and they are depending upon God's people to help provide for them (**3John 7b**), they received "no help from the Gentiles [unbelievers]."

John encourages Gaius (and the Church) to continue showing hospitality to these men (**3John 8**), "so that we may be fellow workers with the truth."

Showing hospitality to God's servants is just as important as denying hospitality to those who aren't serving God, as we studied last week (**2John 7**), "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist," (**2John 10-11**), "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds."

We are to do good to all people, but we must discriminate to whom we show Christian hospitality, for it is the Holy God of Creation we serve. John is not talking about those with whom we have minor disagreements, but with those who teach falsely about the divinity and the humanity of Christ. With such deceivers we are not to associate; and we are not to welcome them into our homes, for in so doing we actually help the cause of the enemies of God.

Read 3John 9-10... John had evidently written an earlier letter to the church about showing hospitality to these men who boldly taught the truth of God and trusted in God to provide for their needs through His people.

It would seem, this man Diotrephes (a leader in the church) who "loves to be first," had kept the letter from being read, for he rejects John's authority and is bad mouthing John and the other Apostles (**3John 9**), "Diotrephes, who loves to be first... does not accept what we say [Lit *us, meaning, the Apostles*]."

Diotrephes is acting just the opposite of Gaius, whom John has commended for his Christian hospitality to traveling teachers and for living out his faith according to the truth; whereas, Diotrephes has withheld John's teaching from the church because it goes against Diotrephes' own bad behavior and teaching.

Diotrephes did not display Christian hospitality to those who were bringing the truth; but instead, he was promoting only himself and his own authority, while

slandering John and putting out of the church anyone who was helping these itinerant teachers of the truth.

Diotrephes will have to answer to John for his godless leadership, teaching, and behavior; but he will also, more importantly, have to answer to God.

Read 3John 11... John exhorts Gaius (and the rest of the believers) to continue doing what is right and not to imitate Diotrephes, who is doing what is evil and whose actions prove that he is not a Christian, for Christians cling to that which is right (**Romans 12:9**), "Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good."

See 1John 3:7, 10... God's children will seek to do what pleases God; unsaved people are under the control and influence of Satan, so they do what pleases their flesh, for their heart is evil.

Jesus, speaking to the religious scribes and Pharisees, in **John 8:44** said, "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

1Peter 1:14-16, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

1Peter 2:11-17, Beloved, I urge you as foreigners and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God on the day of visitation. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God, that by doing right you silence the ignorance of foolish people. Act as free people, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bond-servants of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king."

The world we live in is rapidly throwing off behavioral and belief restraints and putting away what it calls old fashioned, out-of-date, archaic traditional values, especially those morals or values that are rooted in the Word of God.

Why is that?

1Corinthians 1:18, "The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

1Corinthians 2:14, "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Christians are new creations in Christ, indwelt by God's Spirit: purchased, purposed, and eternally protected by Almighty God, that we might, each one of us, seek to honor, and serve Him with our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Jesus Christ is our example, and we must expose and turn away from all that offends God; no matter how politically correct, culturally acceptable, and lawfully protected SIN may become, we are to honor and obey God! We must fortify our hearts and minds, in order to live in accordance to the authority of God's Word. God is the ultimate judge, not the Pope, not the Supreme Court, not the President, and therefore God's people will live to please God above all other authorities.

Read 3John 12... Just as John has exhorted Gaius not to imitate Diotrephes who is doing what is evil; John now encourages Gaius to imitate a man named Demetrius, who is well spoken of among the believers and commended by John and the rest of the Apostles.

Concerning Gaius and Demetrius, we know nothing apart from what is written here, but it is clear that both of these men are known for their devotion to God, God's Word, and God's people.

It is very possible that Demetrius is the one delivering John's letter to Gaius, so that Gaius can read it to the church for their instruction, encouragement and exhortation. Perhaps the combined presence and strength of Gaius and Demetrius is necessary to rebuke the teaching and self-imposed authority of Diotrephes (who it would seem, is a strong and perhaps intimidating personality).

Read 3John 13-14... John closes this letter with similar language to that of **2John 12**, that he has more to say, and will do so in person [face to face].

John desires to confront Diotrephes face to face; while at the same time commending both Gaius and Demetrius for their obedience to the truth of God, their love for the brethren, and their examples of Christian hospitality.

1Peter 4:7-9, "The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint."

And all God's people said, Amen!