

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 7.28.2024

PROMINENT TRUTH: LOYAL TO THE TRUTH

3 John 1-8

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

2 Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. **3** For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. **4** I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

5 Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, **6** who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. **7** For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. **8** Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

9 I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. **10** So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.

11 Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God. **12** Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

13 I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. **14** I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

15 Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name.

I. LOVES THE TRUTH

Gaius is beloved by John

- The first thing we know is that he was loved by John. We have the “beloved” used here. A term of strong affection.
- Verse 1 *“The elder to the beloved Gaius”*. But why stop there, John uses this “beloved” term 3 more times for him!
- Verse 2 *“Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you”*
- Verse 5 *“Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers”*
- Verse 11 *“Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good”*

- John has a deep and strong love and affection for this dear brother in Christ.
- And similar to 2nd John 1 when he writes to the Elect Lady, the church, his first statement here is to remind Gaius that he is *“whom I love in truth”*.
- We looked at that term “Love in truth” several weeks ago. Not that he’s saying “I truly love you” but rather he is expressing his love for them in the context of gospel truth.
- A love which reflects the love of God, agape love, which he can show to fellow believers in Christ only because of the gospel truth which they share.
- Gaius is beloved by John because of the truth which is in him, and will be with him forever as we saw in 2nd John. Love expressed in the context of truth.
- And John, having this love for his brother Gaius, what does he convey to his dear friend?

John prays for Gaius

- Verse 2: *“Beloved Gaius, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.”*
- First, he prays that all may go well with him; asking the Lord that his brother Gaius may prosper; that his journey through life may be a good one.
- We pray the same for our brothers and sisters we love, don’t we. We pray that the Lord will bless them. We pray that things will go well for them as they go through this life here on earth.
- This prayer that John offers up isn’t a one-time prayer, but the connotation here is that of continual prayer. He is continually praying for his brother in Christ and we should do the same.
- We need to be continuing without fail to lift up our brothers and sisters in Christ to the Lord.
- I am encouraged when many of you express that you’re praying for me, I’m greatly encouraged!
- And also be praying for one another, and let your brother or sister know that you’re praying for them, and what you’re praying for them. They will be encouraged!
- He then prays, “and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.”
- Now if he just prayed “That you may be in good health” and left it there, we’d understand. It’s good and necessary to pray for someone’s health.
- When our brothers and sisters are sick, we commend them to the Lord in prayer and petition him for healing.
- Not in a “name it and claim it” type of way, but casting them upon his mercy, petitioning him for his blessing and power, and trusting them to his sovereignty.
- Maybe Gaius had an infirmity that John was considering.
- But notice what he prays, “That you may be in good health, **as it goes well with your soul.**”
- What’s he saying here? **He’s praying that Gaius’ health would be good, just as the health of his soul is good.**
- What is the condition of Gaius’ soul? What is his spiritual condition? **Like the old hymn he could say “It is well with my soul!”**
- Gaius was walking in truth as we’ll see in verse 3. He is abiding in the truth. He’s acting out the truth in his life!
- **And so John prays “May your physical health be good, just like your spiritual health is good!”**
- That’s astounding! His spiritual health was in such a good state that John could pray that his physical health would be to the same level.
- Take a moment to reflect on that. What if God answered that prayer for you, what would your health be?

- **This is a convicting passage for us! What is our spiritual health? What is the condition of our soul?**
- **If your spiritual health is good, praise God! Press in to him, press in to the truth even more, and remain faithful day in and day out.**
- **And if your spiritual health isn't ideal, if it's lacking or weak, look to Christ! Throw yourself on his grace and mercy! Repent, and look to him and ground yourself in the gospel truth!**
- Humble yourself before him, and experience what 1 Peter 5:5 reminds us of that, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Grace!
- There is grace available in endless measure! Given to us on account of Christ. Cling to him!
- And so Gaius serves as a shining example to us. He was loyal to the truth, and exemplifies what it means to walk in the truth.

II. LIVES IN THE TRUTH

Gaius Lived Out the Truth He Knew

- John had also heard of Gaius' example to his brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Verse 3 *"For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth."*
- Verse 4 *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth."*
- The healthy soul that Gaius had in verse 3 translates to his walking in truth in verse 4. There's a connection there, they aren't mutually exclusive.
- The truth was in his soul. And his life was lived in harmony, in agreement with that. His actions aligned with what he believed - Gaius was walking in truth.
- He wasn't hypocritical when it came to the truth. He didn't believe one thing and act another.
- But Gaius' faith and his actions were in alignment. To the point that the brothers came and testified to John about how this man was walking in truth. Living it out faithfully every day.
- What do people testify about us? What do they perceive about how we are walking in truth?
- If other than Sundays we live like the rest of the world around us blending in and going with the flow, are we walking in truth?
- If we don't stand out in a culture that is morally corrupt and which places value on living for self and self pleasure, is the testimony that others give of us going to say that we're walking in the truth?
- Gaius wasn't an apostle, he wasn't one of the twelve disciples, he wasn't an evangelist that we know of. But his example of walking in the truth is absolutely one we can follow.

No greater Joy Than Children Walking in Truth

- And for John, hearing how Gaius was walking in truth, it caused him to rejoice greatly. He was full of rejoicing to hear indeed that Gaius was walking in truth.
- His walking in truth was apparent, it was impactful. To the point that it was apparent to his brothers in Christ, who came and testified to John how Gaius was walking in truth!
- That's amazing! Can you imagine that? His life, exemplifying the truth being lived out, was on display, so that his brothers in Christ testified to John of it!
- We don't walk in the truth for man's praise. That's not our goal nor our motivation. We walk in the truth, and abide in the truth because the truth is

in us and will be with us forever.

- Our desire should be that every aspect of our lives, every action we take, every word we speak, be in line with the truth that is in us because we want our lives to bring glory to God.
- And when we do this, it will be evident and clear to others. And it brings encouragement and rejoicing to them.
- In verse 4 John says ***“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”***
- No greater joy! We’ve all experienced various joys in this life. The joy of marriage, the joy of welcoming a child into the world, the joy of accomplishing something long and challenging.
- But for John as a pastor, he says for him there is no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.
- This reminds us of John’s rejoicing in 2nd John where he rejoiced greatly to find some of the children, the believers in that church, walking in the truth.
- But in 2nd John, he calls them “your children”. Here in 3rd John, he calls them “my children”.
- Maybe Gaius came to Christ when John shared the gospel with him. But John clearly paints a picture of his relationship with Gaius as that of a spiritual father and Gaius as a spiritual son.
- And as a pastor, John’s chief desire for Gaius and his spiritual children is to see them walking in truth! To see them following the Lord!
- This is why a pastor pours into the saints! This is why a pastor labors in prayer and in teaching and ministering to the flock of God entrusted to them because the greatest reward, the greatest joy for a pastor is to see the saints walking in truth!
- This is the fruit of their labor! **To see the body of Christ built up and conformed to His image.**
- **And so the fruits of this labor, leaving that spiritual legacy, and as a spiritual father seeing these spiritual children walking in the truth, this brings the greatest joy to John.**
- This exertion, this same work of ministering, teaching, training, and encouraging is not just for spiritual children, but also for our biological ones.
- As parents, our children bring us joy, don’t they? Apparently gray hairs too, but we delight in them.
- And so it brings us joy when we see them exemplifying the behaviors and actions and accomplishments we wish to see in and from them.
- But if as parents you are simply content with them doing well in life, even if they aren’t walking in truth, or if their accomplishments and achievements bring you the ultimate joy and satisfaction for them, then there is a need for a heart check.
- Just like John had no greater joy than to see his spiritual children walking in the truth, as a parent there should be no greater joy for our children than to see them walking in the truth!
- This should be our utmost priority for them! Our greatest desire for them! Our daily prayer for them!
- **For pastors and parents, there is no greater joy than to see our spiritual children, our biological children, walking in the truth and taking action on the truth.**

III. ACTS ON THE TRUTH

Gaius acted in faithfulness on the truth

- Gaius acted on the truth. He acted faithfully on the truth. And John gives a practical example of that in verses 5 and 6:

- *“5 Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, 6 who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God.”*
- Paul commends Gaius for his hospitality towards traveling missionaries.
- These brothers who testified to John of how Gaius was walking in truth in verse 3 experienced his love for them, experienced his hospitality, saw him walking in the truth.
- And John says they testified of his love before all the church! That’s incredible.
- It is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers John says.
- They were strangers to Gaius, he’d never met them before apparently, but they were brothers in Christ.
- And so he showed them love and hospitality, which was a faithful example of walking in truth.
- This is a faithful example of the action of walking in truth which accompanies knowing the truth, and abiding in the truth.
- Showing hospitality to strangers, but not strangers because they are brothers in Christ. A simple, practical way of walking out the truth.
- Gaius honored the Lord in his hospitality. It was right, it was good. It was evidence of walking in the truth.
- And while we won’t get into the passage today, John speaks of Diotrephes in verses 9 and 10 who refused to welcome the brothers and wanted to kick those out of the church who wanted to welcome them.
- That’s a clear failure to provide the right welcome.
- Or think back to 2nd John where John had to warn the church about the wrong welcome. “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, (that is the gospel), do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting.”
- There’s a right welcome and wrong one, and Gaius faithfully and lovingly gave the right one.
- Let’s follow his example. Why, though? Why is it such a big deal regarding hospitality and support of missionaries, to the extent that Gaius’ example is so impactful to John?

IV. SUPPORTS THE TRUTH

- Verses 7 and 8 give us 3 reasons we need to support those whom God has called to work full time for the gospel:

For the Sake of His Name

- First, verse 7: “For they have gone out for the sake of the name,”
- They aren’t going out and toiling, working, striving to preach and teach the gospel to the lost on their own account, it’s all on account of Jesus!
- It’s his name they are bringing to the lost and broken! It’s on account of his name that they are martyred and abused!
- It’s on account of his name that they forgo the fleeting pleasures of this world, forgoing time with family and friends, taking on hardship and loss all for the sake of His name!
- The name of Jesus! The name which brings salvation to sinners, hope to the broken, healing to the sick, light in the darkness - that is why they have gone out, for the sake of his name!
- Many New Testament writers refer to Jesus just by the term “his name” or “the name”.

- John writes in 1 John 2:12 “I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name’s sake.”
- Your sins are forgiven for his name’s sake. What a name!
- After Peter and John healed the lame man in Acts chapter 3, the one who went walking and leaping and praising God, they testified before all the people of the name of Jesus who made such a miracle possible:
 - Acts 3:16 “And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.”
 - Not by faith in man, not in Peter or John, but by faith in HIS NAME was this man healed.
 - In Acts 5:40, after deliberations by the council regarding what to do with these apostles who were preaching Jesus all over the city it says:
 - Acts 5:40-41 “and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.”
 - Missionaries, laboring for the gospel, to this day as they proclaim the name of Jesus, find themselves worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.
 - But if you're not supporting someone in missions I would encourage you - Do it for the sake of the name of Jesus! It's not an expense.
 - It's an act of gratitude, to give to the Lord's work from that which he's entrusted to us. It's stewarding funds with a perspective that building the kingdom of God is to be our priority!
 - That seeing lost sinners come to Christ that he may be glorified is a priority for us!
 - A perspective that this world and all the paper dollars in it will all someday burn up and so we sacrifice them, give them back to the Lord, and support those who have gone out for the sake of his name!
 - And we should do it with hearts that desire to see his name high and lifted up among the nations!
 - Do you desire this church? Is there action on that desire? Saying I desire this, but never sending the money is a disconnect between knowing the truth, and walking in the truth.

Accepting Nothing From the Gentiles

- The second reason we support them is this: for they have gone out “accepting nothing from the gentiles.”
- That is, they aren’t going under the financing of unbelievers. They aren’t taking the gospel to the lost based on funding from secular institutions.
- That’s the meaning of the term ‘gentiles’. It refers to unbelievers, both Jewish and otherwise.
- It’s important that Christians who take the gospel to the lost are funded by other Christians.
- It means they're not working for personal gain, not trying to make a buck off of those they are going to, and in doing so they are avoiding altogether any appearance of trying to take advantage of people.
- Instead, they depend on the gifts of the church. Depending on gifts from other believers and relying on their generosity.
- Relying on their reciprocation of the generosity of the Lord shown likewise to them.
- And for those who are fully engaged in the great commission from Matthew 28:19 “19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...”
- For them, it is right and good that they rely on the gifts and generosity of the saints. To rely on us who share that same commission here in our neighborhoods, our workplaces, the grocery store, wherever we are, we share that same call to bring the gospel to those around us.

- We should share that same burden for the lost as they do, we should be aligned, and given how generous the Lord has been with us, we can reflect that same generosity on them, right?
- But sometimes what we know to be true, and what we act on are different. We can be stingy. Sometimes that money lingers in our pockets.
- Sometimes we say things like “I’ll start supporting missionaries after I get out of debt”, or “after I save up for this expense or purchase”, or “I will once I have a job that pays just a little more”.
- We’re prone to think this way. Don’t pretend. It can be hard, especially when finances seem tight.
- I’d challenge you to prayerfully read 1 Corinthians chapter 9 sometime where Paul calls out the churches who weren’t sufficiently supporting those who were ministering among them.
- He doesn’t mince words there.
- 7 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?
- 11 If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?
- 13 Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? 14 In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.
- Now Paul goes on to say “That’s what is right and commanded, to give support to those engaged in gospel work. However, I’m not even saying this to try and receive gifts from you. I just want the gospel to go forth, that’s my only goal here!”
- So for us, as fellow believers and heirs of Christ, knit together in him in the family of God, it is right that those who are laboring for the gospel are supported by fellow recipients of that gospel.

We Ought to Support People Like These That we May be Fellow Workers For The Truth

- And third, vs 8: “Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.”
- We ought to support those engaged in missions and gospel labor so that we are a part of the work being done to advance and grow the kingdom of heaven.
- There is one work being done here, kingdom work. Taking the gospel to the nations. Preaching the gospel to the lost. Baptizing them who come to Christ in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
- But there are two types of workers. They are fellow workers: Those who give to the work, which is to be all. And those who are sent out to do the work, which is some.
- All of us here are called to be fellow workers for the truth through our giving. I pray some of us here are called to be sent out to nations.
- Therefore, we ought to support people like this, those who are sent out with the good news of Jesus Christ.
- And in our support of them, we are partaking in that gospel work, we are fellow laborers, for the truth.
- The gospel is that that great and glorious message that for us who were dead in sin, lost, and hopeless, God, in his great love for us, sent his son Jesus to die, to pay for those sins with his own blood, for without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins, but he paid for them all. What a sacrifice that was!
- And now he offers us salvation and eternal life! And so *if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

- That is the truth of the gospel. That is the truth in which John could love Gaius so dearly.
- That is the truth that Gaius knew to be true, which he walked in, and acted out faithfully.
- And because of that truth, he showed hospitality, and did well, to support these ministers of the truth, and in doing so was counted as a fellow worker for the truth.
- Reflect on this wonderful example of what it means to be loyal to the truth, to practically and lovingly live it out.
- And then let us go and do the same, living our lives according to the truth which is in us, in a way in which our actions match our profession, so that our lives bring him all the glory and honor of which he is worth forever.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?