

21S14 3rd John

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. So, get comfortable, get your coffee or tea or water and settle in for our talk.

I hope everyone is doing well.

Today I'd like to take a look at 3rd John. We have been studying 1st & 2nd John for some time now and I want to complete our study of the epistles of John with 3rd John.

Remember before we start reading the bible we need to remember the background of 3rd John. The author is the Apostle John. We are not sure which of John's letters was written first. In fact, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John are ordered by length not by when they were written. Most scholars believe it was written sometime in AD85-90. The main themes in 3rd John is Who's Will?

Who is in charge of you? This is actually a very complicated question if you think about it. Most of us want to think we are in control of our life. But, all of us have many people telling us what to do, how to do it, when to do it. Government, Jobs, Schools, Family, Friends. There are a lot of voices trying to influence us.

3rd John is more like a postcard than a letter. Short and to the point. John is reminding his readers that we need to be focused on God's agenda first. We must allow God to be in control, so He can guide us and order our steps every day

This short little letter is a special one. John words makes it clear, if we want peace in our life we have to surrender control to Jesus.

Think about this as we read 3rd John. I'm reading from the International Children's Bible (ICB) today, I like the plain English in this translation. *¹ From the Elder. To my dear friend Gaius whom I love in the truth: ² My dear friend, I know your soul is doing well. I pray that you are doing fine in every way and that your health is good. ³ Some brothers in Christ came and told me about the truth in your life. They said that you are following the way of truth. This made me very happy. ⁴ It always gives me the greatest joy when I hear that my children are following the way of truth.*

⁵ My dear friend, it is good that you continue to help the brothers. You are helping those that you do not even know! ⁶ These brothers told the church about the love you have. Please help them to continue their trip. Help them in a way that will please God. ⁷ They started out on their trip to serve Christ. They did not accept any help from those who are not believers. ⁸ So we should help these brothers. And when we do, we share in their work for the truth.

⁹ I wrote a letter to the church. But Diotrephes will not listen to what we say. He always wants to be their leader. ¹⁰ When I come, I will talk about what Diotrephes is doing. He lies and says evil things about us. But that is not all he does. He refuses to help those

who are working to serve Christ. He also stops those who want to help the brothers and puts them out of the church.

¹¹ My dear friend, do not follow what is bad; follow what is good. He who does what is good is from God. But he who does evil has never known God.

¹² Everyone says good things about Demetrius. And the truth agrees with what they say. Also, we say good about him. And you know that what we say is true.

¹³ I have many things I want to tell you, but I do not want to use pen and ink. ¹⁴ I hope to visit you soon. Then we can be together and talk. ¹⁵ Peace to you. The friends here with me send their love. Please give our love to each one of the friends there.

Before we start let's be clear of a couple of things. "The Elder" is John who was very likely the last of the apostles when this letter was written.

Gaius and Diotrephes are real people. This is a personal letter to Gaius to encourage him

John praises Gaius, a church elder, for demonstrating hospitality and generosity to traveling Christian workers. He condemns Diotrephes for being obstinate and controlling.

If a group of Christians reported on your life (as some apparently did on Gaius's) what do you think they'd say? Well I'd probably be a little embarrassed by what they'd say. The bad things I've said and done. This is a great reminder that the world is watching us. It's up to us what they see. Our actions and words matter more than we think. We can be light in the fallen dark world or we can be ugly like everyone else. Me, I want to be more like Jesus. So I work to be. Show the world the Light of Jesus with your words and actions in everything you do.

How would you define hospitality? Well hospitality is defined as "friendly and generous reception, entertainment of guest, visitors or strangers." Do you make people feel welcome. Are you the person people want to be around.

Why is hospitality such an important quality for Christians to possess? We are the ambassadors of Jesus. We are supposed to be representing Jesus. So, we can't do that if we don't welcome people, just like Jesus did.

So what about Diotrephes? Have you known people like this. They are not fun to be around. John is right to confront his behavior. Are you willing to speak up when someone like this is causing problems? We should.

I recommend reading the following passages about hospitality in your personal study this week,

- Mark 9:41
- Luke 10:38-42
- Romans 12:13, 16:23
- 2 Timothy 1:16-18
- 1 Peter 4:9-11
- James 2:15-16

I do want to point one of these out specifically Romans 16:23. Paul is also complementing a man named “Gaius” for his hospitality. We have no way of knowing if this is the same Gaius or not but think about how hospitality is received as you read these scriptures

One last thing I want to share with you. Hospitality or being friendly is a skill we need to practice to get good at it. It’s not natural but it is very satisfying.

Let’s Pray.

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