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## Second and Third John

Alright let's open our Bibles tonight Second John, right after First John right before Third John you can't miss it. Tonight we'd like to look at these last couple of little letters of John, the Second and Third John and then after we get back from Israel we'll start Jude. It looks like we're going to spend five weeks in the Book of Jude. Awesome Book.

Tonight we're going to look at this Second and Third Letter that John wrote about the same time as he wrote First John, the same time as he wrote the Gospel of John about the same time that he wrote the Book of Revelation. Towards the end of the first century the last Books to be written of the New Testament, John a young man in his 90's but he writes these little letters personally to some fellowships and some individuals about life in the church. Although I think sometimes people skip over them I think they hold a tremendously significant place if you will because you get to have first hand personal communication between an experienced older pastor and other leadership within the local body. That's always an issue, how does the church function in terms of the world, in terms of its interaction with one another, in terms of ministry and outreach and certainly the enemy seems to do its greatest work. Not amongst those who stand on the corner and deny that God is God but amongst those who infiltrate the church and agree with you but they don't. Who take the banner of being believers and aren't. I mean the greatest of the enemy is done in the looking like an angel of light. Both of these little letters have as the backdrops the involvement with and the support of local itinerant preachers who were very prevalent in the first century church. In fact there was much of this on the road kind of ministry going on early on. To encourage the body, to teach those, you see it with Paul's ministry as he traveled to the churches that they had planted, to the men that were sent back and forth to help out and all. Not having hotels or rest stops to stay in these preachers were often hosted by church families with tremendous hospitality and great expense sometimes even to the poor. We went to the Philippines years ago, we took I think 16 or 17 folks from church and we

stayed in homes where the average income for the people in the **vercis** where we were, was about \$800 a year. So to feed an American and the way Americans eat would have cost them plenty. So we had everyone chipping in everyday to help feed themselves but these folks went beyond. They brought out sacks. Debbie and I were at this family's house and they brought out three sacks of food and I said, what is that? She said oh we don't want you to go hungry and they looked at how big I was and figured I needed to eat a tree or something. No I can't eat all that but they went out of their way. In the early church and as well as here in the body I think that the love of God has us going off in times out of our way. Now the difficulty is what happens when these folks on the road begin to be less than honest? They see a great harvest for themselves and the generosity and in the kindness and in the love and the support of the local church. So they begin to take advantage of that and they begin to travel for their own benefit and with the blessings of God's love amongst the saints. Also, always comes the abuse, the guy that tells you God has anointed him to save you, thus saith the Lord, make me a steak dinner with garlic mash potatoes and take up an offering for me in Jesus name. Unfortunately the first century church like today finds amongst the good work of God the crooks sneaking in as well. Not much has changed and there are charlatans today that travel the globe with their dog and pony show but they are taking advantage of the saints. They are imposing themselves on the love of God in the midst of the people and they are making the message up as they go. They are using Jesus' name but they are hardly out there for His glory. Nearing the end of the first century when John wrote this, the Disciples sought to provide some guidelines to protect the church from these abuses especially from those who were hospitable but yet were being taken advantage of. They published an early church document known as the **didakhe**. The word itself means to teach. It is a little short book, it has 16 chapters, and it is still around today. You can find it in Christian bookstores certainly you can find it in seminary book stores and sometimes in used old book stores and all. But they addressed really life in the church and some of it talks about communion and some of it talks about baptism but in chapters 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 you have to believe it was a problem, they spent five chapters talking about dealing with traveling prophets. Some of the things that the church and the local young fellowships could do to discern

between someone whom God might have sent and someone who God might not have sent. Here's a couple of quotes from the book I'll read them to you some of the guidelines. One of them was if he comes to serve then you can receive him if not he is a false prophet. They weren't beating around the bush, no political correctness here, this was the first century. If he stays beyond two days with you he is a false prophet, throw him out. If in the Spirit he commands food and then he eats it then he is a false prophet. If in the Spirit he asks for silver or gold he is a false prophet. I'm thinking we need this guide for televangelism today. You can get your TV guide and then your didakhe. Here's what you can watch out for. But both Second John and Third John are written to local churches. Second John here this little letter is written to a local church and the type of an elect woman and her children. Third John is written to a Godly man about his church family. The lady is warned of false teachers from without while the man is warned about false prophets and dictatorial leaders from within. The false teachers in Second John would appeal to your love while denying the truth. The false teachers of Third John would call upon the truth while setting love aside and John will address them both. In fact Paul wrote to the Ephesians, speak the truth in love. You really can't separate them Biblically if you walk in love then you've got to live in truth. If you preach the truth it has to be done in love or else it becomes brutal. So you need both and both letters end as John declares that he's looking forward to seeing them in person soon. He fully anticipated though he was an old guy to travel to these what would have to have been local home fellowships which is where all of the churches literally met for the first 150-200 years before there was a building. Both letters in their length would have fit very nicely on an eight by ten inch parchment which they were still using in John's day.

Tonight we'll take both of the little letters together but you get a kind of a feel for what the early church fellowships were dealing with and facing and needing encouragement in and John was the old timer. He was the resident Apostle. He was the only one left writing to the second and third generation saints. So the Elder,

### Verse 1

To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth.

### Verse 2

Because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever.

### Verse 3

Grace, mercy and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and in love.

False teachers unfortunately often influence churches by seeking access to the homes of its members. If you go through the Scriptures even you'll find that much of the work of the enemy seems to be done on the local level. In your home life, in the home church and in that place of where God begins to work at the nucleus of the family. When Paul wrote to Titus he talked to him about needing to be a man or who could watch over his house well if he were to be a bishop. That you were to be a good steward of God not self willed not quick tempered and all he goes through holding fast the word and then he says, there are many who are insubordinate. They are idol talkers; they are deceivers from the circumcision whose mouths must be stopped. They subvert whole households teaching things they ought not for the sake of dishonest gain. One of them even a prophet of theirs said that cretins are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons and their testimony is true. So rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith. When Paul wrote to Timothy, his other trainee if you will, his other Disciples the last letter from prison. He said in the last days perilous times will come. There will be those who have a form of Godliness but deny that power. Stay away from them because of this sort are those who creep into households. They take captive gullible women loaded down with sin led away by lust they are always learning but they are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. So often as the home goes the church goes as the home goes the

nation goes which is why Satan is so relentless in his attack on the home. Did you know that the last census which came out back in 2000 at least the last one that came with all of the facts and figures determined that only 63% of the nearly, at that time 74 million children under 18 still have both biological parents home. So there is already this tremendous upheaval it's the lowest percentage by the way in the western world, America. When it comes to two parent homes, biological parents, we have the lowest percentage in the western world, imagine that. So children are becoming the casualty and then the society suffers. So the enemy loves to attack the family that it is what God established first. If the family is alright than the church just becomes a big family, doesn't it? It is a reflection of that smallest unit of God's work. But destroy the family and eventually you destroy the society. So John here as the elder and he uses the word **presbuteros**, it's a reference to his office as a pastor. It is one of those common words for pastor. We translate it usually **presbutery**, it is the word for elder. It is sometimes used of the office of an overseer elder. It could certainly in this case have been used for John's age; he could have just said the old guy, the old guys writing to the church. To the elect lady and her children, now there has been disagreement among scholars for years whether this is a person or this is a church. You can't be positive from the wording but let me just say that there is no convert in the Scriptures ever referred to as a child of the church. So it does seem more likely in most I think commentators believe that this address is to a local church and to the fruit of that ministry in the local church. A home study if you will and John commends the local church for the raising of her children in the faith. For the work of the ministry and John writes I love them in the truth and not just me everyone who knows the truth, sees the work of God in this fellowship's life. John uses this word truth here and throughout his letters to speak about the word of God, the message of Jesus, the Gospel God's saving grace. Four times in Verses 3 and 4 he uses that word to say, look we're bound together as saints by the love of God and we're held together by the truth of God, we need both. He says that those who have known the truth, Verse 2, now have God's word firmly in mind and in life it abides in us and will be with us forever. It's good to know that the Book you're studying will still be in force after you're gone. In fact when you show up in Heaven it will still be the Book that the Lord is

going to use. It's still going to stand strong it'll be forever with us, we can love it now because we're going to love it later. It's one of those permanent works. It's going to stay on the top sellers, best sellers list forever. It's etched out its place. John offers to them the typical greeting in this little letter, grace, mercy and peace. Usually in the New Testament Epistles you only find grace and peace. But in all of the Pastoral Epistles where Paul is writing in here, John as well, writing to churches, church leaders, church oversight or just to the church from the standpoint of writing to the pastor or the elders they add this word mercy and God knows the pastors needed it. It is the life blood of their ministries, the mercy of God. Mercy is not getting what you deserve. That's what the Bible defines mercy to be. Thank the Lord we're not getting what we deserve but we're getting what God wants to give us, His grace, that's getting what you don't deserve. You don't get what you do deserve but you get what you don't deserve. Mercy and grace and peace. So in truth and in love he says in Verse 3, God will give you these things in truth and in love. Like I said Christian love, I don't think you can exist without the truth. We hear appeals all the time from people and maybe you've heard them as well. Can't we just love one another? Can't we just lay aside our doctrinal differences? Can't we just look the other way? Can't we just find the agreeable point but how can you do that if there is only one way to Heaven? Is it love to say to someone, hey is that what you want to believe? Good we can get along. Knowing where they are headed with that kind of an understanding, of course not. If you love someone you're going to tell them there is a Hell. You're going to tell them the truth. Truth driven by love and love has to then reach for the truth. If I know the truth and don't tell you but keep it from you, that's not love. So in truth and in love John wants the church to be in unity and it amazes me how even now 60 years after the death and the resurrection of Jesus that the single greatest struggle in the church is already that unity in love and truth. I suspect that that is still the problem today, don't you? It is the lack of truth and the lack of love that so often tears churches apart. So John writes as the elder to a lady in her children it's a great metaphor for the church and those who have come to know the Lord. He will end Verse 13 by saying the children of your elect sister greet you. So the fellowship here wants to say hello to the fellowship there and we love you in truth.

#### Verse 4

John said, I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in the truth, as we have received commandment from the Father.

#### Verse 5

I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning; that we love one another.

#### Verse 6

This is love that we walk according to His commandments. This is His commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

John was pleased as an older pastor to run in to some of the saints from this local fellowship. John was pastoring the church at Ephesus, that Timothy had once pastored and just to meet these guys from the fellowship and say man, these guys love the Lord and he hadn't met everybody who had attended but those who he had, John was blessed. They were walking in the truth they were living their lives obedient to God's word. The word walk, every place in the New Testament when it talks about your daily habits a relationship with God, the word walk means that which you spend your energy on or that which wears you out if you will. What is your daily pursuit in life? Are they governed by the things of God? It is certainly much easier to study the truth or to argue the truth than to walk in the truth, wouldn't you agree? It is easy to argue, you know what I think. You're going to have to change just what you think and you can be very good at arguing or not but when you begin to walk in the truth, when your life is guided by the things of God then the love of God begins to flow from your life. This is the commandment that you believe on the name of Jesus and that you love one another as He gave the commandment. John wrote that in his first letter. He writes that again to this church. Can you command love? Well, you can if it isn't a feeling. We relate to the word love so often by how we feel. I love hot fudge sundaes so I use the word, I love them. I thank God for them. I have a hard time praying over them, but no problem eating them. We use it kind of a glib word and if we don't like someone, do you love them? No. I don't like them. I have a tremendous dislike

for them. I can't say I hate them, that's not Biblical but I don't like them very much at all. Yet, the love of God is an act of the will, it is an obedient action. It isn't an emotion it can have an emotion, it isn't a feeling though it can have feeling but it is predominantly a choice. So John writes to the church, hey walk in the ways of the Lord and keep walking in love. I'm so glad to have met some of your people that are walking in the Lord, they are walking in the commandments of God, they are lovely people, so great to see the church blossoming and growing. When we were in Japan here a couple of four or five months ago, a little church, Japan is a tough place to minister because they look at Christianity as a western religion and so you have a lot of culture to fight let alone the spiritual warfare that comes with it. But the people in the church that love the Lord were the most gracious people. The kindest and you just oh it's so nice to be in church. You just felt at home. No matter where you go where Christians are, you just feel at home don't you? It doesn't really matter where you are if the saints are there you just go, oh this is home. I love how John running into some of these church folks was just blessed to hear how things were going. Yet there was a problem and John wanted to write to them about being careful and so he tells them to walk in love. He encourages them to that end and I'm amazed like I said at how often that same message is repeated by John. End of the first century, love one another, walk with God and love one another. It's repeated constantly. I don't think we could, we should probably just do a year on the same topic till we get it. Then he says,

Verse 7

For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

So from encouraging truth and walking in love John turns to opposing error. He said there are a lot of deceivers, plural, in the world who have gone out in to the world who have gone out from the church. They went out from us he would have written in that first letter. They were not of us, had they been of us, they would have no doubt continued with us. Paul in meeting with these same Ephesians elders in Acts Chapter 20 said to them there is going to be folks amongst

yourselves arising up and seeking to draw Disciples out from them through perverse teaching. Paul warned the Ephesians church where John was now pastoring. John writes to this fellowship there is an awful lot of false junk being taught out there that we are going to have to stand up for. Like I said Satan's work is best founded when people are bound through religion, through false doctrine, not through the denying of God but through the perversion of what God has to say. In fact, Second Peter Chapter 2 is probably the New Testament one single chapter on false teachers and he describes them and uses them and he lays out for them how they operate. I think Mark Twain once wrote a lie can run around the world while the truth is tying its shoe laces. Lies tend to run and have such great course with them. But here the lie in the church was that Jesus didn't come in the flesh. That's that old Gnostic philosophy. So John says in Verse 8.

#### Verse 8

Look to yourselves, to the church there, that we don't lose those things we have worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

In other words there is a danger of falling back look to yourselves, beware really. For the result of listening to these false teachers, is to surrender the place that you've come to as a believer. The fruit that is developing in your life and in your heart and in the process of your sharing, you can actually by these false teachers be taken down. We've seen it happen a lot. Folks get saved and they come to church they start to grow then they get hooked up in some weird stuff. They'll either quit coming or they'll call and go, oh I'm going over here and I go don't go there. I mean I don't care if you don't come here but don't go there. What they are teaching you is a lie. Do you have to bring your Bible? Well no we don't need Bibles we have an overhead projector. No don't go there! And you can just watch them almost shrivel. God begins this work in their hearts and they begin to grow and yet it isn't long before the false teachers and the lies of the enemy begin to take them backwards and John writes to this young church and this fellowship, be careful of going backwards and losing the reward of the progress that you've made. In other words, hang on to what you have. Don't give up ground being caught up in the lies of the enemy. Look to yourself.

## Verse 9

Secondly, whoever will transgress and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. But he who abides in the doctrine of Christ will have both the Father and the Son.

So there is a danger of falling backwards but there is also a danger of getting ahead of the Lord and starting to teach things that God hasn't taught. For example, denying Jesus. They had transgressed, notice the word there transgresses it is the Greek word for and it is not used that often but it is the Greek word for overstepping or stepping over the line. In other words look around, don't go back but don't step beyond what God has taught us either. One of those doctrines that was beyond was these doctrines that Jesus wasn't God and that we don't need Him and that we don't need Him to save us that people go from hearing the Gospel to starting to make up their own gospel and we've seen people that come, they give their lives to the Lord it seems and then years later they'll tell you a whole entirely works related salvation story. What about giving your life to Christ? Well it was a good place for me to start but now I know stuff. Really? Now you know stuff. Now you've stepped across the line and these apostate teachers they might have thought they were moving up the scale instead they made it clear that they didn't know God at all. In going beyond the truth of Jesus is really one of those characteristics of the cults. They often times start with the basic truths of God but by the time that they are finished they have gone beyond. By going beyond they don't know the Lord at all. So like sin over steps the law of God, the boundary between good and evil, the apostate steps over the line of God's word. He believes things and hangs on to things and lives things that the Bible that doesn't teach. They become a make or break for them. But John says be careful of going back and don't go so far ahead don't deny the truths of God. If you have Jesus then you have Father and you have Son. You know the good thing about us as saints is we don't want to live next to that line of out of bounds, right? You want to be right in the middle of God's will. I always worry when people go, can I do this and still be in alright? How about this? How about that? Then they are like backing up. When you say don't touch your sister and you go like this I'm not touching her, I'm not touching her, I'm not touching

her, my kids used to do that kind of stuff I'm not touching him, I'm not touching him, like this close, I'm not touching him. I don't want to live like that. But people do that with the Gospel. They hear the Gospel and then they go beyond. Oh you know you need to have Jesus and you have to be baptized. Wait a minute, how does baptism save me? Well you know that's what we've always taught but that's not what my Bible teaches. The Bible teaches that you just have to believe in faith in Christ and then I'm saved. Oh I should get baptized I'm all for it. I just don't want to put it in the salvation equation. Listen to Paul in Corinthians saying I'm so glad I didn't baptize hardly any of you. That doesn't sound like an evangelist if that needed to be part of the equation. So to go beyond is careful. You have to be careful, danger of flying back, danger of going too far.

#### Verse 10

If anyone comes to you and doesn't bring this doctrine, speaking of Christ, do not receive him into your house, don't greet him.

#### Verse 11

For he who greets him, shares in his evil deeds.

Pretty heavy, if anyone comes to you in the context and in the next note, John is speaking specifically of these itinerant evangelists and these prophets who operated in the same manner as the true teachers. They moved around and all they wanted housing, they wanted support, they wanted a pulpit to speak in and a people to speak to and then a people to use. Don't invite them into your home, don't wish them well. The words greet them is the literal Greek words for God bless them. Or in other words, don't offer blessings to them. I have over the years in my own life applied that to the deceivers who knock on my door on Saturday morning. I don't invite them in to my house. I'll be happy to talk to them on the porch. I will not let them leave without telling them that I believe they are on their way to Hell without Christ. I tell them I love them but they are wrong and they are deceiving and as deceivers they are in bigger trouble with God than someone simply deceived. The Lord was so good with people deceived. He loved them He was patient with them He wasn't very patient with the

deceivers. Either was Paul and so I don't bless them I don't tell them God bless you I just confront them with the truth. I would die if they went to my neighbor's house and they would say, yes me and your neighbor pastor Abeelen, we had a lovely time, we ate pie, drank tea, talked about the things of God that I'd like to share with you now. I don't want to be associated with those guys. So I follow them to my neighbors. I do, they go to the neighbors I'll just go with you, hey how you doing, nice to see you, yeah these guys, you don't need them in the house. Then I'll go to my next door neighbor and they usually leave after a couple of people because I want them to be sure when they leave my door that they know that they are of the spirit of the antichrist and endanger of Hell and that Jesus gave His life for them. I don't give them the false impression that their false doctrine is anything short of dangerous. I don't want my neighbors to think this is the Christian I am, these guys knocking on their doors. So we've followed a few of them around. Now then you get marked they don't come any more. That doesn't mean you can't have unbelievers over for dinner, this is talking about someone who comes to you to try to sell something to you that is not of God. We're supposed to be in the world we're not supposed to be of it. We're supposed to be in the world, you leave the church, that's ministry out there, you come to church that's fellowship. You hang out with Christians that's fellowship but you go to work that's ministry. You can't look for fellowship in the world because that's ministry. You can only look for ministry there. So you can have unbelievers over for dinner set them up, invite them over, share the Gospel, that's what we're supposed to do. We pray that they get saved but look at the way Jesus dealt with the Scribes and Pharisees, woe to you, you hypocrites. You go so far to make men twice a disciple of Hell as yourself. You lay heavy burdens on the people you don't lift a finger to help them carry it. Boy, He went after them but to the woman caught in adultery He was as kind as could be because she was the deceived one the taken advantage of one. John's point is if these guys come to our fellowship, in to your homes, to you doors and they want to sell you something that isn't the doctrine of the Bible then you don't let them in. You don't welcome them and you don't bless them and you don't, oh you know, no you tell them you're not to make friends you're to make disciples. John wanted to no uncertain terms to say look what he says in Verse 11.

### Verse 11

You bless them you share in their evil deeds.

Oh man, who needs that?

### Verse 12

Having many things he said to write to you I did not wish to do so with paper and ink. But I hope to come to you and speak face to face that our joy might be full.

### Verse 13

The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen

So it could have been that this was another fellowship that was planted and this is kind of an outreach of the church. We started a church years ago out in Wisconsin and every time we have a chance to go back out there. When I was speaking in New Jersey a couple of years ago and we had a group of people coming out to minister and they just stopped by Wisconsin visited the church. They have their own building now, it's great to go back and see what the Lord is doing years later. It was great fellowship and intimacy between the churches and John was just writing this letter of teaching and all. I look forward to seeing you soon I just want you to be blessed. Joy could be full we could see each other face to face.

### Third John

The third letter of John has some of the key words are witness, testify, testimony. They are all words that speak about what we say and how we live. Or the impression that it leaves upon others. We're always or you're a witness tonight, you could be a bad one but you're a witness. Or you could be a good one but we get to meet in 14 Verses three men in quick succession. Two really good guys and one guy that was not good at all in another local fellowship. So John calls himself the elder again, the old guy the presbuteros, office or age doesn't matter.

## Third John

### Verse 1

To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

Now John begins by expressing his love in the Lord to this brother who no doubt was a convert of John's because he mentions in Verse 4 that he has no greater joy than seeing my children walk in the truth. I think if nothing else it is certainly a reference to the guy that he is writing to and that he is a disciple of John's that John was able to minister to.

To the beloved Gaius who I love in the truth;

### Verse 2

Beloved I pray that you might prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul is prospering.

### Verse 3

I rejoice greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in truth.

### Verse 4

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Now some have taken John's greeting here in Verse 2 which is really typical Greek writing. It would be like you write someone a letter and you say I hope this letter finds you well and have developed the false doctrine that God wants everyone physically well all the time and financially prospering as a measure of their spiritual growth or well being. I grew up in the name it and claim it movement. We were taught this verse almost immediately. It is, let me just say this to you, it is a ridiculous twisting of the Scriptures. It isn't supported anywhere in the Bible. The Gospel works in the poorest countries and God still blesses greatly. But, if you have a doctrine and then you have to go find verses that's usually how these things get attached. If you just go to the Bible with an empty slate and go Lord

teach me, you'll never make that conclusion. So I don't believe at all that John was promising him that as his spiritual life continued in the truth that he would prosper financially and be physically well. It could very well be that he had been ill or that John expresses the hope that he's physically well as he is spiritually. It is a nice compliment. I thought about it today what would happen if someone would pray this for you that you would be as physically well as you were spiritually strong. I thought some of us couldn't get to the car. No I'm not all that physically well because I'm spiritually weak. But in any event I see that it is just, I think a very kind and loving tender blessing from an older brother in the Lord to a younger man who has come to find the Lord and that John is so thrilled that he's been hearing that this guy has been doing well. He's walking with God. I actually got a letter on the Facebook. You know the Facebook is a lot of good ministry you guys should be on there just sharing with people. Use it while you can because it will get weird and we'll lose it. But I got a letter from a guy that I graduated junior high with this week, junior high. He told me that he'd gotten saved 11 years ago and he lives in Pennsylvania. He sent me a picture and I'm pretty sure I never went to school with this guy but the name looks familiar. But is so good to hear isn't it that God is just working and I was thrilled. So you're a pastor, I couldn't believe it, you were always and then he told me a story about me taking a ball from him. The guy's got to get over it. It's from junior high and you took the ball from me and didn't give it back, okay whatever, and I'm saved. Good. Let's not hear anymore about it then. But notice in Verse 3 and 4 that John speaks about Gaius and he says I love the testimony that I'm hearing of you that you've testified of the truth that you're walking in the truth that other people are talking about it. John says nothing can make me happier and I must say I think as a pastor the thing that you want more than anything else is to see the people in your church walking with God. Doing well where you go somewhere and people go one of your people from the church was just in here and you go, yeah? Oh they were so nice. Oh yes, they were from our fellowship. Years ago when I was an assistant pastor at Calvary Chapel in Downey some of the kids would always go down to Stox. I don't know if you guys remember where Stox restaurant but if you're old enough to remember Stox you're old. It was down there on the corner of Imperial and I think I don't know, down there. Downey? Whatever it's still

there, okay, good. But anyway the kids would go in there and they would like unscrew the salt deals and try to turn them upside down and would never leave tips and get real demanding and then this lady from Stox called our church. She said you know you can't have these kids coming over here anymore. They are trouble, they are loud, they wreck stuff and they don't leave money for the waitresses. It was horrible. So then we got all these guys together and we gave them a good talking to I think from the pulpit for just like twenty minutes, Stox behavior and it straightened out. It's great when you go places and you run into places that you've been and people say, oh pastor they're such sweet people and oh they are so kind. You stand up straight so make me proud, okay? Don't mess it up for us. But notice that John, Gaius was a witness for Jesus and John couldn't have been prouder and the old guy was just thrilled.

Verse 5

Beloved you are doing faithfully he said whatever you do for the brethren and for the strangers,

Verse 6

Who are bearing witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you do well.

So from a practical standpoint John compliments Gaius for his love and for his hospitality that he has been showing to these traveling prophets. These teachers some that he knew, notice brethren, others that he did not. The strangers but they had been arriving to his home, they had come in truth. Notice in the name of the Lord. Manner worthy of God, they'd been bearing witness of the love that he'd been showing so as these traveling folks would come to John they'd say oh we stayed at Gaius house. That guy is awesome and John said, yeah I led him to Jesus. Oh John, he is just awesome, he took good care of us, he drove us everywhere where we needed to go, whatever. John was just thrilled but notice he had housed them and fed them and contributed to bringing them on their journey and they had told John of his kindness and he had done it, Verse 6, in a

manner worthy of God. In other words, there is nothing that speaks more about being like God than your willingness to serve others. So John was blessed.

Verse 7

Because they went forth for His name's sake taking nothing from the Gentiles.

Verse 8

We ought to receive such, so that we could become fellow workers of the truth.

So John vouches to Gaius of the integrity of these folks that he had helped. But he makes an interesting comment. He said they've gone out for His name's sake, for Jesus' name. But they've taken nothing from the heathen. In other words they're reliance is totally upon the care and the support of the Godly within the fellowship. Now that should be true of our missionary's too. We support lots of missionaries here and they're support comes completely and solely from saints because God really doesn't go applying to the world for support. Now I think there is not time to do that whole study justice tonight but let me just say this to you. We should never rely upon the world to underwrite our ministry. We shouldn't be going to the world to raise money to do the work of God or standing on a street corner, could you give us some money or down at the airport with a bucket. If you're a real child of God serving God, you don't belong there. God pays His bills, God finances His organization, God takes care of His people, God has plenty of money he's got the count on a thousand hills, He'll be alright and the Lord said if I was broke, read it, would I tell you? Well you could but it wouldn't do you any good because I couldn't help you Lord. But I think the church so often looks cheap and commercial and for sale and they approach ministry more as a product of a business sense than the work of the Holy Spirit. I'm just blessed to be in a church and in a body of Christ where God just provides all that we've ever needed. I think if there is a work to be done God can do it faithfully through His people by stirring their hearts like guys like Gaius. We can support workers fellow helpers in the truth. We ought to receive such and I think we're open to if the Lord's set something before us and we can do it, we will. Maybe you want to go to the mission field but can't, there is always a way to

support people. You can tithe, you can send money, you can send letters, you can pray, you can send care packages you should know the missionaries. I hope that you write to the ones that we support. But here's what we don't do, I've gotten grief from people a couple of times, we'll do mission trips and someone will say, well can we do a car wash and the answers no. We don't need to go to the world to try to cough up a few bucks to go and do the work of God. God can do that and God will do that. We don't do rummage sales, we don't do corporate matching funds, we don't have slick ad campaigns, we don't have emotional pleas and oh if you don't give we won't go and if we can't go God won't **get His robe**. I'd quit if that ever has to happen, I'd quit. If my God is broke I'm going to change Gods. If God cannot meet the needs of His people then why should we serve Him? I love John and he almost says it in passing. He says you're doing a good job Gaius helping these guys. These are Godly men in the name of the Lord they are serving and they are not taking a dime from the Gentiles. There is no support coming from the world. The government for a while was giving these matching funds or offering them to us that we could help the poor by taking money from the government. The problem is if we take money from the government now we're under their thumb. So we said no thank you we'll just carry it on. It is the house of God and once the Lord builds the house you labor in vain that build it anyway. So God you be glorified and if there is something to be done God will give it to us and we'll give it to you but we don't want it from you. So we're not much for the raising money on the TV and your name at the bottom and fund raiser. We just won't do it, I just can't do it. You don't need to take from the world but we need to trust in the Lord. As God provides we move forward and if we can afford it and God has stirred our hearts together, we can pay for it then we'll just do it. If we can't do it then maybe that's not where we're supposed to be. But I can't say, here's what the Lord wants except we're 10 million dollars short. So I know what God wants, I know you aren't giving it. So give it so we can do what God wants. What a ridiculous deal. I still have a magic miracle wallet at home somebody once sent me. Here's a miracle wallet, you put a dollar in it and a ten comes right out. Awesome. I'll get my own TV show but it didn't work for me, I don't know. So look here's the deal before we get too far off, too late I know. Gaius was apparently in a church where the pastor was not at all so fond

of the kindness and the willingness on the part of Gaius and others to support these Godly people that were actually coming through town doing ministry and so from Verse 8.

Verse 8

We therefore ought to receive such they are fellow workers in the truth.

Then John says in Verse 9,

Verse 9

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the pre-eminence among them, does not receive us.

Verse 10

Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, I don't want to make the old guy mad. Prating against us with his malicious words, not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.

So the pastor of this church that Gaius was involved in, this fellow Diotrephes, was a fellow who loved to just lord over the flock. You couldn't approach him there was no access to him and he was not willing to hear from others. He had apparently even rejected a letter of inquiry and correspondence from of all people the venerable Apostle John himself. He wouldn't hear him and how tragic is it to see anyone seeking ministry looking for position of power driven only by self interest. How good could this church be doing when the pastor wouldn't feed the flock, he just fed himself. Yet, that was the problem, so a couple things we can learn. Pastors ought to be approachable and teachable and open and real men who depend upon God and service people well. Look out for their well being but notice this guy first of all John says to Gaius, you done the right thing, I'm blessed by your faith, I'm hearing from these traveling ministries what a Godly man you are. They are faithful men, Gaius, you've helped the right people. They are not hanging on to the world they are trusting in the church we have to receive these kinds of men we have to stand with them and by the way I wrote a letter to

your pastor and he won't even talk to us. He is just really a snob; he likes to be the big shot. If I can get there I'm going to deal with him. But for now he is going about with malicious words. This guy had gone so far as to slander John to the church. Again when you're serving yourself there is no too low that you will not go to even ripping into a 90 year old servant of God who had a glorious reputation as an Apostle. If there is somebody you couldn't have picked on it was probably him. He had to make stuff up because John was quite a guy. No matter how evil, notice there are always people who will listen. Notice he is prating against us with malicious words and so there are folks that are actually listening about this joining in. They love a good stir; gossip and slander are always alive in the body of Christ. But it is never a part of the work of God. Neither content with that not satisfied with slandering John and not listening to John, notice he is actively opposing those who aid in the furtherance of the Gospel and is even put out of the church, dis-fellowship, asked folks to leave simply for helping out these traveling evangelists and prophets who were sincerely doing the work of God. So John says to a letter that he wrote to Gaius that I'm sure Gaius was passing around the church, beloved do not imitate what is evil, do what is good. He who does good is of God but he who does evil has not seen God. So follow Gaius' example, John writes, be assured that if you're doing good it shows that you're of God. Maybe Gaius had been kicked out of the local fellowship for denying the pastor rules that he couldn't show kindness to the men who had come through town preaching Jesus. Then he writes.

#### Verse 12

Demetrius, another fellow in the church, has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness and you know that our testimony is true.

So there was another guy in the church maybe another guy got kicked out. This is like a church split now, right? He had a good reputation in the church he was well reported of in the world. John said I know this guy, faithful man and John's not unwilling to get involved. His life is a testimony of the truth itself. He practices what he preaches. It could have been that Demetrius was the one who delivered

this letter from John. So John includes this glowing recommendation of him. Demetrius would probably also have a run in with that Diotrephes but he could expect love and help from Gaius. So he adds.

#### Verse 13

I have many things to write to you but I do not wish to write to you with a pen and ink.

#### Verse 14

But I hope to see you shortly, and we can speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you. You can greet the friends by name.

So he'll hope to get there soon, or I'll get there when I get there and John traveling yet encourages these outreach fellowships that they should continue to be taught. So here's life in the body, pretty interesting picture though I think. On the one hand there is a young church that needs to walk in love and stand in the truth because there is a lot of deception and false doctrine going out and don't bless them if they come to you teaching that stuff don't get involved with them you confront them and to a couple of guys who have either been thrown out of a church or just are being persecuted by someone in authority for their love and the truth. John says you just do what God says and don't worry about the rest. I think there are some great lessons and advice to learn in both of those tonight.