

FELLOW WORKERS WITH THE TRUTH

3 John 5-8

INTRODUCTION

Last week's sermon had a strong impact on me

→ John's **testimony of joy** in vv. 3-4 is the reason for his **prayer for prosperity** in v. 2.

Reason why we can pray for the Physical

→ what joy there is when the spiritual walk is such that it emancipates us from the shackles so that we can pray freely for the physical without reservation ☺

Increasingly believe that God has something important to say to us in these little letters.

READ 3 John 5-8

2 John gave us the **limits** of hospitality.

3 John gives us the **responsibility** of hospitality.

We are to be hospitable to all.

But the context here is specifically supporting and sending qualified Christian workers.

Matt 10:40 – “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him.”

Proposition: 4 Words Guiding Our Support of Missions:

- I. **Commendation**
- II. **Charge**
- III. **Criteria**
- IV. **Consequences**

So That: Truth In Practice; A Call to Missions Support!

1st Word Guiding Our Support of Missions, ...

I. Commendation 3 John 5-6a

Point – A **Commendation** of Past Missions Support

Proof – “⁵**Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially *when they are* strangers; ⁶and they bear witness to your love before the church;”**

“**Beloved**” – this is the 3rd reference in the first 5 verses 😊

“**you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren**”

→ Profession and practice. Creed and conduct.

“**accomplish**” – the word John uses (ἐργάζομαι) implies there is effort required.

- There is sacrifice.
- We have an English word that comes from this Greek word – ergonomics - the study of people’s efficiency in their workplace
- There is toil and labor before the Lord.

This is visible proof of **Gaius**’ “walking in the truth” (v. 3)

“**and especially *when they are* strangers**” –

Gaius welcomes these missionaries into his home. He encourages them. He supports them. He gives them food and support ...even when he doesn’t personally know them.

“^{6a}**and they bear witness to your love before the church;”**

- v.3 – “bear witness to your truth”

Gaius was well known and well-loved to John. He is a model example of “Little children, let us love one another.”

Realize → if the Apostle Paul had written to **Gaius** instead of the Apostle John, this little letter would bear his name ... and you would have 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Gaius!

“the church” – ἐκκλησία (*ekklesia*) – The great majority of the usages in the New Testament are references to the local Church

- **114 times** in the New Testament
- **90+** of those times refers to the local church
- this word only 3 times in the Gospels - in **Matthew**
- 23 times in **Acts**
- we see it in the **Pauline Epistles, Hebrews, and James**
- **John** doesn't use in his **Gospel** or **1 and 2 John** → but it does appear in **3 John 6, 9-10**

Beloved, the local “church” is the active, working, visible representation of the universal “church”

“It is the church in miniature, a replica of the whole, giving visible and temporal expression to the invisible and eternal church.”

Illustration – when we first moved to the area, we heard the phrase **“The East Valley Shuffle”** → the idea of not being committed to a local church where it is understood where your commitment is and your fellowship is – this idea is totally foreign to Scripture and not limited to the East Valley

Alan Stibbs, God's Church – *“Any idea. . . of enjoying salvation or being a Christian in isolation is foreign to the New Testament writings... The necessity of membership in the local church is never questioned. It is taken for granted. Had we asked the believers of the Apostolic period whether it was essential to join a church, they would not have known what we were talking about. Every believer became a member of a church.”*

Application – Joshua Harris: When you resist commitment to a local church, everyone gets cheated out of God's best.

- 1) You cheat yourself.
- 2) You cheat the local church.

We are supposed to love what God loves, right? Well ... God loves His church. Therefore ... we are to love the church!

The commendation for stellar missions support is given in the context of the local church.

2nd Word Guiding Our Support of Missions, ...

II. Charge 3 John 6b

Point – A **Commendation** of Past Missions Support
... a **Charge** for Future Missions Support

- keep on keeping on
- excel yet more
- there was a commendation looking back
- now an exhortation looking forward

The balance between Truth and love; the balance between receiving and rejecting; ... between Spiritual and physical ... between giving and going.

John tells us **What to Do ...**

Proof – “^{6b}**and you will do well to send them on their way**”

→ Receive them in (well) and send them out (well).

These are not mere words of “Go and fare well.”

→ This is actually supplying the needs of the itinerant preachers for the next leg of their journey.

John tells us **How to Do it ...**

“^{6c}**in a manner worthy of God**” – we see this phrase elsewhere in Scripture:

Eph 4:1 – “in a manner worthy of the calling”

Phil 1:27 – “in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ”

Col 1:10 – “in a manner worthy of the Lord”

1 Thess 2:12 – “in a manner worthy of the God who calls you”

“the Name”

- It means His character.
- It means His authority.
- It means His Lordship.
- It means being under all He commands.

One author said this – *“The highest of all missionary motives is neither obedience to the Great Commission (important as that is), nor love for sinners who are alienated and perishing (strong as that incentive is, especially when we contemplate the wrath of God), but rather zeal—burning and passionate zeal—for the glory of Jesus Christ.*

Only one imperialism is Christian, and that is concern for His Imperial Majesty Jesus Christ, and for the glory of his empire or kingdom. Before this supreme goal of the Christian mission, all unworthy motives wither and die.”

Application – At a certain level, in a certain way, the Name of God is at stake in how we treat our missionaries.

2nd Qualifier ...

B. NOT for Filthy Lucre

Point – The false teachers John warns against in 1 John, the false teachers he commands us to reject in 2 John ...

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| The Unholy Trinity of False Teachers: Girls (that aren't their wives), Glory (that belongs to God), and Greed (money). |
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But not the men we are to support ...

Proof – “^{7b}**accepting nothing from the Gentiles**”

“**accepting nothing from the Gentiles**” – NIV translates as “pagans.” Interesting possibility because of audience to whom John is writing.

In **1 John**, he is writing to primarily pagan/Gentile converts in the geographical region surrounding Ephesus in Asia Minor.

In **1 John**, he doesn't give one direct quotation from the Old Testament.

→ He closes his letter with a warning against idolatry (5:21)

These qualified men aren't going to say, "Gentiles, pagans, I've got good news. Pay me and I'll tell you."

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| They are going to give to the Gentiles. They are not going to get from the Gentiles. |
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2 Cor 2:17a – “we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God”

Application – It is incumbent upon us who already believe to support missionaries to those who do not believe ... so that they might believe.

4th Word guiding our Support of Missions, ...

IV. Consequences 3 John 8

Point – A **Commendation** of the past, a **Charge** for the future, the **Criteria** for all missions support

→ the blessed **Consequences** of missions support

Proof – “^{8a}**Therefore we ought to support such men**”

In the original language, “**We**” is first word – built in **contrast** in the Greek language – right after Gentiles/Pagans– they on the one hand ... we on the other hand
– it is emphatic – “we, ourselves, ...”

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| v. 7 is the reason for 6b and the reason for 8 (“ Therefore ”) |
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“**support**” – from the original Greek word ὑπολαμβάνω
– intensified receiving!

John 13:14 – “you also ought to wash one another’s feet”

1 John 2:6 – “ought ... to walk in the same manner as He walked.”

1 John 3:16 – “ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

1 John 4:11 – “we also ought to love one another.”

3 John 4:8 – “we ought to **support such men**”

“^{8b}**that we may be fellow workers with the truth**” – from the original Greek word συνεργός - Synergy!

Common word used by Paul for those who labor with him

- **13 times** in Scripture
- **12 times** by Paul, **once** by John ☺

Gaius joins → Apollos, Aquila and Priscila, Aristarchus, Clement, Mark, Onesimus, Philemon, Timothy, Titus, Tychicus, Epaphroditus

2 John 11 – “the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.” → when a Christian welcomes a Heretic as a brother, gives a platform for the heresy, and sends away as a brother → becomes a co-conspirator and is **guilty**.

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| In contrast ☺ the point here is that senders and supporters are coworkers with the goers . |
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Nothing in the text indicates **Gaius** was a powerful man of great ability or office. Maybe he was, maybe not.

→ In many ways, he represents the unsung hero

Illustration– Fred Mitchell was an English pharmacist and later the 3rd general director of the China Inland Mission. On May 3, 1953, Fred Mitchell was on a plane from Calcutta to London that went down six minutes after it left the runway.

The last thing the ground control heard from the cockpit was “climbing on track.” When a biography was written about Fred Mitchell’s life, it was called *Climbing on Track*.

“The abiding message of Fred Mitchell’s life is that he accomplished no great thing. His name was linked with many Christian organizations, but he was the founder of none. He turned the feet of many into the paths of righteousness but not more than others of his contemporaries. He made no spectacular and aspiring sacrifices. He effected no reforms.

For the first forty-five years of his life the pathway he traversed was similar to that of thousands of others of other self-made, moderately successful business men. ‘From Village School to Chemist Shop’ would’ve been an appropriate summing up of his outward course. On that ordinary hum-drum track, however, he walked with God, climbing steadily in spiritual experience.”

For me, I receive weekly encouragement. Even when I lay an egg, some gracious soul will come and compliment the sermon (not my children ... they were raised well by their beloved mother ☺)

Alistair Begg – *“It’s relatively easy to walk with God when the track isn’t hum-drum, when the band is playing, when the enthusiasm of the surrounding company gives you some kind of energy that you don’t even bring to the journey. But that’s not routine. What’s routine, is routine. And unless we learn to climb steadily on the hum-drum track, we will never climb steadily at all.”*

“with the truth” – we end with how the letter begins ...

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| He who goes , he who sends , and he who supports are <u>one in the work</u> of the Great Commission . |
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Application – This passage gives a beautiful picture of the spiritual health of a godly example. An example to aspire so that like Paul, we can say, “Follow my example.” We should follow **Gaius’** example of spiritual health, of walking in truth and love, and of support of those who are working to spread the gospel.

CONCLUSION

Illustration – Blessing we have at STBC to partner with ...

Christian and Sheryl Andresen

Their focus is on raising up national leaders for pastoral and missionary work through the European Bible Training Centre (EBTC). They also serve in a newly planted local church.

Thomas and Karis Buerger

Volunteer Coordinator and Office Manager with a ministry that provides English classes, children's programs, and Bible teaching to the community of refugees.

Matt and Cameron Dodd

Matt and Cameron were ministering in Papua New Guinea. currently here as Matt battles stage 4 cancer.

James and Julia March

James and Julia serve in France and a local church ministry in Geneva.

R and P

[Classified]

Frank and Jacklyn Ruscio

New Tribes Mission, around the world among unreached tribal people groups. Airplane and Helicopter pilot training.

Alberto and Kathy Solano

moving to Mexico in the summer of 2017 to serve at a local church in Guadalajara, the second largest city in Mexico. They will be planting Iglesia Comunidad Bíblica church.

The Master's Academy International (TMAI)

fulfilling the Great Commission by training indigenous church leaders to be approved pastor-teachers, able to equip their churches to make biblically sound disciples.

Beloved, may we become and raise a generation who are truly willing to, “let goods and kindred go.”