

TRUTH AND LOVE

3 John

4/1/07

The Bible repeatedly warns us that there will be false teachers and pastors who will misuse religion to build their own little spiritual empires.

Third John was written to encourage a Christian who was being abused by a selfishly ambition pastor.

This pastor was a religious dictator who cared more about his own little religious empire than he did about people

I don't believe that anything has hurt the cause of Christ more over the last 2000 years than false teachers and abusive pastors.

There have always been those who use religion out of selfish ambition.

Ministry to them is about personal gain and glory

It is more about church growth and numbers rather than ministering for God to hurting people.

The Bible warns us that some of them will use their religious positions to gain sexual advantage, and exploit people financially. Cf 2 Peter 2

We have seen each of these in our day with the television evangelists and the clergy sexual scandals.

Often these men are abusive spiritual dictators.

Many Christians have been hurt by this type of leadership and have quit going to any church.

The Apostle John wrote third John to encourage a godly man who was suffering under an ungodly, abusive pastor.

1. Gaius Is An Example Of A Godly Christian. 1:1-8

a. He walked in truth. 1-4

He lived his faith.

He knew God's word and lived it

His life was characterized by obedience to God.

v. 4 No Bible teacher has a greater joy than to know that those under his charge are applying God's word to their lives.

b. He walked in love 5-8

5 His love was seen in his ministry to the brethren and in his hospitality to strangers.

These strangers were the itinerant preachers who had been sent from the Apostle John to instruct the young Christians in the various new churches.

Gaius had opened both his heart and home to them.

He and his wife may also have provided money and food as well as washing and mending their clothing.

6 These itinerant preachers went back and reported to John and the church at Ephesus about Gaius' hospitality and generosity.

Gaius sent them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

In reality we are ministering to God when we are providing for His people.

Matthew 10:40 "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

8 We should to support those who minister the gospel. Cf Galatian 6:6-10; 1 Corinthians 9:7-11

When we do we become fellow workers with them

God will reward us for what they accomplish through our support.

Matthew 10:41 "He who receives a prophet in *the* name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of

a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

2. Diotrophes Is An Example Of An Abusive Pastor. 1:9-11

a. He was selfishly ambitious. 9a

He loved to be first

He was self-centered, self-seeking, and self-promoting

Matthew 20:25-27 But Jesus summoned them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. ²⁶ But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; ²⁷ whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. ²⁸ Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Godly leaders see themselves as servants of Christ and the congregation.

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

b. He rejected the truth. 9b

He would not accept the apostles or their teaching.

c. He acted unlovingly. 10

He unjustly slandered the apostles

He apparently considered John a threat to his little kingdom building so he set out to destroy the people's trust in John.

This is a warning that we must be careful not to believe everything we read or hear about God's servants.

1 Timothy 5:19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

He would not receive the brethren

He forbid others to receive them

He excommunicated those who helped them

d. His lifestyle demonstrated that he wasn't saved. 11

Matthew 7:15-16 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ "You will know them by their fruits.

Salvation is a free gift.

However, when a person receives Christ as his Lord and Savior the Spirit of God begins to change that person.

There should be the finger prints of God on a true Christian.

Diotrophese's life didn't demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit.

True Christians believe and receive the truth.

2 John 1:9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

True Christians walk the truth.

1 John 2:3 And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; ⁵ but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: ⁶ the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

True Christians walk in love.

1 John 3:17-18 But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against

him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

John 13:35 ^a"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Diotrophese lifestyle gives us no evidence that he was saved.

3. Demetrius Is A Christian Whose Life Was A Good Testimony. 1:12

From everyone

From the truth

His beliefs and lifestyle were consistent with God's word.

We also bear witness - ie From the apostles

Testimony (witness) is a key word in third John (vv. 3,6,12)

How you and I live reflects on the God we proclaim.

Each of us is a witness, either a good one or a bad one.

We are either helping people come to Christ or hindering them.

There is no better way to attract people to Christ than to live like a Christian should.

4. Parting Words Of Encouragement 1:13-14

John was planning on coming shortly to encourage Gaius and the other true believers in the church.

He wishes them peace in the meantime in the midst of this time of conflict.

John is also planning to confront Diotrophes. 10a
cf 1 Corinthians 4:19

False teachers and abusive pastors need to be confronted by those in authority. (The church elders or denominational authorities)

Remember that God will ultimately deal with false teachers and abusive pastors.

BIG IDEA: True Christians should believe the truth, walk the truth, and love in truth

11 Do not imitate what is evil, but what is good.

The one who does good is of God.

The one who does evil has not seen God.

The Bible is clear that we are not saved by being good, but by faith in Christ alone.

Galatians 2:16 . . . a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.

Romans 3:20 . . . by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

Salvation is a free gift.

Cf Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Romans 6:23

But those who believe and receive Christ will begin to walk in the truth and love in truth.