

3 John verses 9-14 (Teaching)

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Back in third John this morning. Lord Willem, we should be able to finish up third John.

And this morning we're not quite positive where we're going to go after work, but we'll come to and train on today. I'm worried about that in the days to come.

Last week we read quite a bit about a man named Gaius that John was writing this letter to. We talked about Gaius and how John was commending him for his work and commending him for his willingness to take in what we refer to as missionaries and other people, you know, other believers, preachers, and teachers of the gospel.

John commended him on this and encouraged him to continue to do otherwise. And we talked a little bit about why John would have been writing such a letter. Well, it's not only for encouragement to continue in the good works, in the hospitality that we should show other brothers and sisters in Christ, but it can be rightfully assumed that Gaius was being encouraged by darker means to stop doing what he was doing.

He was possibly being pressured to not do what he was doing. And John, again, was encouraging him to do so. So we read about Gaius a lot last week.

[1 : 42] This week we're going to be reading about two other people, one named Deotrophes and one named Demetrius here in 3 John. So we'll pick up in 3 John, beginning at verse 9.

He says, I wrote unto the church, but Deotrophes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveeth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds, which he doeth, and he is standing against us with malicious words and not content therewith.

Neither doth he himself receive the brethren and forbideth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. So back to verse 9, John says, I wrote unto the church, but Deotrophes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveeth us not.

There's a lot of people out there that think that when John wrote, I wrote unto the church, the first word of this verse that he's referring to 2 John.

I personally do not believe that. You can have your own opinions on that. I believe this would be a lost letter of John's that we no longer have any record of.

[2 : 56] Because it plainly says, Deotrophes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveeth us not. And those words receiveeth us not. And the original Greek that it's written in is referring to the letter that John would have written.

He received not the letter, he received not the words of John into that congregation. But I don't want to concentrate so much on what letter exactly that John is talking about here.

I want to concentrate on what John is writing about this man, Deotrophes. And folks, Deotrophes is the type of person that the church here in 2023 needs to keep their eyes out for.

They need to be aware of a Deotrophes coming in to the congregation. A Deotrophes that comes in and loves the preeminence such as this one did.

What does that mean? It simply means he liked to have the dominion. He liked to worship a man. He wanted the backpats from fellow man. He wanted the power in the church.

- [4 : 06] And this is something that the church nowadays needs to keep their eyes open for. And I've seen it in several different congregations. You may have seen it in several different congregations.
- And sometimes it's not just one person. Sometimes it's a group of people. Sometimes it's a family within the church. And I'm not down in churches where there's 100 people in the church and 80 of them are blood related.
- I'm not down in them at all. I'm not saying that's the case in every scenario at all. But what I'm saying is there are people out there, there are groups of people out there that want to have all the power.
- And they want all the glory that comes along with the power. And they want to have to say so. This is the type of person that Deotrophies was that John is addressing here.
- He says, whether if I can, I will remember his deeds which he doeth. Praying against us with malicious words. This is just a fancier way of saying he was slandering us.
- [5 : 17] He's speaking lies about John talking about himself and possibly some missionaries or preachers that John had recommended to this church or had sent to this church to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- This Mandiotrophies wasn't receiving them into the congregation. He says, and not content there with neither doth he himself receive the brethren and forbid it them that would.
- So not only was he turning the brethren away that had come to preach and to teach the gospel, but he was rebuking people for receiving them.
- People within the congregation of whatever church, whatever assembly that this was. This Mandiotrophies was rebuking fellow believers in Jesus Christ for receiving the men.
- He says, and he casted them out of the church. Now, once again, this Mandiotrophies obviously he was very prideful man.
- [6 : 24] And again, this is something that the church needs to be on the lookout for. And I'm saying stay in defense mode the entire time that you're in a worship service.
- That's a dangerous spot to get into because if you're constantly in defense mode, your worship is going to be way down on another level that it doesn't need to be.
- But I will tell you for me personally that nothing will take me out of the worship mode and put me in defense mode quicker than someone standing and saying, I have a word from the Lord.
- That will put me in defense mode real quick because I'm going to listen to every syllable that comes out of that person's mouth and see if it lines up with scripture.
- And it does, it puts me in defense mode. But this Mandiotrophies, he wanted complete control of whatever assembly this was, whatever congregation this was that John was writing to.
- [7 : 26] And once again, this is something that is prevalent in churches nowadays. There are people that, as I said, there's families that have that.
- There's individuals that have this issue. And a lot of times they'll hop from church to church, maybe not necessarily the families, but the individuals will hop from church to church and they have a rule and rule attitude.
- They'll do one or the other and they don't care what the final outcome is, just as long as what they had to say got heard by somebody.
- And this is a dangerous, dangerous type of person that we're talking about here. But this is something that was obviously had infiltrated the first century church.

And folks, it didn't slack off any as the centuries went by, in fact. And this isn't to down any certain religion or denomination, if you'd like to call it that, but it eventually evolved into bishops and cardinals and a pope.

[8 : 34] As far as one ruler goes, or over a congregation, that's exactly what it evolved into. And people accepted it. No one would stand up against it.

I don't know if the people were afraid of what might happen to them, because we read here where Deotrophes was taking it upon himself to excommunicate people from the congregation, from the assembly.

And folks, I can't find in Scripture that kind of pastoral authority. I can see in the Scripture where there are certain means.

I mean, there's entire chapters written in the Word of God as to how someone is to be excommunicated. And a pastor just deciding to do it is not part of that process.

There's a process that must take place before someone is excommunicated. But as Amare said, this man, he wanted all the power.

[9 : 38] He wanted to feel important. Who does that sound like? Sounds to me like Satan. Satan wants all the power. Satan wants all the glory. Satan wants the worship that belongs to God.

Satan wants all the authority. And this man here is no different than this man, Deotrophes, that we're reading about here. John says, he says, if I come, I will remember his deeds.

This tells me that even though John was an old man here, John would have likely been willing to his 90s at this point. Even though that was the case, John was willing to address the situation.

Should he come to this congregation here? Verse 11 says, Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God, but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

So beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. And this is kind of a reverb of some things that we found when we went through 1 John.

[10 : 45] But we follow that which is good. And John is just simply encouraging Gaius. Now remember, he's writing to an individual here, which I'm sure this individual would have gladly shared this letter with the rest of the church that he was part of.

But he was writing to an individual calling him Beloved. And this is the fourth time in this letter that we read that from John. It calls him Beloved, or dear friend, as it's translated in other English translations that we have.

But Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. And that sounds like, you know, so elementary to us. You know, I mean, it makes perfect sense. Why is he saying this?

Folks, he is encouraging Gaius. He is encouraging him what to do. He's not only encouraging him, though, he is instructing Gaius what to do. In other words, as we covered last week in the first eight verses of this short little letter from John, you know, Gaius was facing pressure.

He was facing an evil. He was facing a darkness. And John is encouraging him to continue doing what you are doing. He says, don't follow evil. Don't follow this deotrophies that I just wrote about.

[12 : 08] Don't give in to the pressure. Don't give in to anything that he's wanting you to do. Following up that which is evil, but that which is good.

He that doeth good is of God. He that doeth evil hath not seen God. This is very reminiscent of 1 John. We covered this in 1 John.

Those that doeth good are of God. And those that doeth evil are not of God. Folks, that's very cut and dry. I mean, there's no lines to read between. There's no reason to get out of lexicon or concordance or anything else.

If we do good, and once again, we'll get into the tenses that are used here. That is a perfect tense that's being used there.

Which means if you continually do good, that doesn't mean you're going to walk this life and never sin again. But if you're continually striving to do good, then you are of God. If you're continuing in evil, then you're not of God.

[13 : 10] And once again, that's not hard to understand. And there's no reason to get into word studies and things like that as far as this goes.

It's talking about a continuing thing. It's a perpetual doing good or a perpetual doing or following evil. And I explain back in 1 John when we were going through that, and we run into very similar verses there, that someone that wakes up in the morning and they're thinking about what sin they're going to commit throughout the day.

And they spend their day thinking about what sin they're going to commit that evening. And they spend their evening relishing the sin that they committed previously in the day and they go to bed at night. Thinking what sin they're going to commit tomorrow.

That's the person that is continually doing evil. Continually and perpetually doing evil. That's the type of person that is not of God.

So John here simply saying that he that doeth good is of God and he that doeth evil has not seen God. He's already commended gaius for doing good.

[14 : 23] He's already commended gaius for doing what he should be doing. And once again, he is encouraging gaius. Continue in those things. Keep doing those things. Folks, I'll encourage you now to continue in good. Keep on doing those things.

Don't be influenced by the world. Certainly don't be pressured by the world. And every one of us have temptations that roll our way every day. One way shape form or fashion.

Something will come along that will tempt us to not do good. Attempt us to do evil. Attempt us to stray a little bit off of the straight and narrow path that God has set before us.

Every one of us run into that. Keep doing good. Perpetually do good. Continually do good. Because that's what people of God do. Verse 12, Demetrius hath a good report of all men and of the truth itself.

And we also bear a record and you know that our record is true. So here we come to another man. We talked a little bit about deotrophies, but he brings up this man Demetrius.

[15 : 37] Now you also read about a man named Demetrius in the book of Acts. He was a silversmith in the city of Ephesus. I do not believe that this is the same Demetrius that is brought up in the book of Acts.

Could be, but I don't think that it is. Again, you got to consider the culture. You got to consider the Roman culture that they were in and the names and how common some of the names were and so on.

We spoke last week about deus and how common of a name that was in this culture that we're talking about right now. So I do not believe this will be the same Demetrius that we read about in the book of Acts.

But he says Demetrius hath a good report of all men and of the truth itself. Well, if we go back to some previous writings that we've been over, the Bible teaches that if the world loves you, it hears.

And we talked about then that it's a dangerous thing for everybody to want to give you backpacks, for everyone to agree with, for everyone to love you.

[16 : 53] It's a dangerous thing for that to happen. But folks, we got to take this into context and it is that it's Ian says Demetrius hath a good report of all men. Who is all men?

Who is John writing to? He's writing to Gaius. What was Gaius? Gaius was a part of a church. He was part of a congregation. So of all men, he's speaking of all men in that congregation that Gaius belongs to.

I mean, folks, he's not talking about the entire region of the Middle East. He's not even talking about an entire country or an entire city or province or anything else.

Remember, he is writing to Gaius who is part of a congregation of believers. So all men would be any of the brethren that have come to John and spoken of Demetrius.

They have all had a good report of him. Any of the brothers and Christ that have come to John. And I tell you that because people will use this verse as an opposite to the verses which talk about the world loving you.

[18 : 05] And if that's the case, then that's because you're a worldly person. Basically what the scripture teaches. And this is one of those verses coupled with the previous that I just spoke of.

That atheists will use and contenders of the Bible will use to try and make the Bible contradict itself. But if you take it in the context that it's written in and consider whom it is that John is writing to.

And I know you all have heard me say a hundred times that all means all depending on the context. And the context here would be brothers and Christ or really an assembly of believers and Christ.

Demetrius has a good report of all men and of the truth itself. It doesn't say Demetrius has a good report of the truth. It says that the truth has a good report of Demetrius.

How many of us can say that? Can I say that? Can you say that? What is the truth? The gospel is the truth. We've covered that. Jesus Christ is the truth. He's the way the truth is allowed.

[19 : 09] And the gospel is all about him. And it says again, Demetrius has a good report of all men and of the truth itself. He doesn't have a good report of the truth. The truth has a good report of him.

The gospel has a good report of him. Demetrius, whoever Demetrius is here. And this is, you know, if it's not the one that's brought up in Acts and I don't believe that it is, this is the only mention of this Demetrius that we have in Scripture.

All we know is that all men had a good report of him and that the truth had a good report of him. Folks, that's heavy words. That's very meaningful words.

I hope that the truth has a good report of me and I hope that the truth has a good report of you. Can we really say that? Can we look at ourselves in the mirror and say, does the gospel, does the Word of God have a good report of me such as it did Demetrius?

I'm not saying to model yourself after this man Demetrius. Like I said, we don't know anything else about him. You can't find anything else about him in church history. You can't find anything else about him in the Scripture. Anything along those lines.

[20 : 26] This is all we know is that men had a good report of him and that the truth had a good report of him. Folks, that's all I'm concerned about. And you can take the men off of that.

I want the truth to have a good report of me. I want the gospel to have a good report of me. I want to, you know, whenever I reach the end of my line, I want the truth to speak well of me.

And it's not in arrogance. It's not in pride. It's nothing along those lines. But I want to know that whatever God has graced me with, whatever God has given me, whatever talents he's given me, whatever abilities he's given me, I want the truth to say that I used all those things for his glory.

And I want to speak well of him. I want the truth to speak well of me. So, yeah, we also bear a record and you know that our record is true.

So, not only do all men bear a record that Demetrius is an alright guy, not only does the truth bear a record that Demetrius is an alright guy, but John goes on saying we also bear a record and you know that our record is true.

[21 : 40] He's writing to Gaius, remember, not an assembly, which this would have probably been shared with the fellow believers. He's writing to Gaius, he says, you know that our record is true, even if deotrophies that was mentioned before this, even if he doesn't think that our record was true, even if he is slandering against us, even if he is telling lies because he loves the preeminence, even if he's doing these things, you know that our record is true.

And this is John and this man Gaius would have known that John was one of the original apostles of Jesus Christ. This is actually something very similar to what John says in his own gospel, that his record is true.

He says right at the end of his own gospel, he says our record is true. This is the same section where he says that if all the works of Jesus Christ were compiled together, that the books of the world would not be able to contain them.

But he says they rots these things to people that they believe. He says that you know my record is true. He says the same thing to Gaius here. You know our record is true. In other words, you know that I'm an upstanding guy.

You know that I'm not a liar. You know that I'm not a lot of deotrophies. He says these men are bearing record that Demetrius is an all right guy.

[23 : 10] The truth says this. He says, and I say this about Demetrius. Verse 13, I have many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee. But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face.

Peace be to thee, our friends salute thee, greet the friends by name. Back to verse 13, again I have many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee.

Then the first line of verse 14, but I trust I shall shortly see thee. And we talked about this when we covered second John. How, you know, pen and paper is great.

If that's the only means of communication you have. Text messaging, wonderful. If that's the only means of communication you have, a phone call is great. Email is great. All this is all great and fine and well, but it does not substitute personal contact.

It does not substitute face to face conversations with a brother, sister, and Christ. It does substitute physical presence in other words. And I know when we come to the end of second John, because second John ends much the same way as third John does.

[24 : 26] And I know when we come to the end of second John that I said the same thing goes for assembling with the brethren, assembling with fellow believers in Jesus Christ.

You know, for those that are shut in, whatever the case is, online is wonderful, but it is not a substitute. It is not a substitute for the assembling of the saints, and it should not be treated as such.

And I'll use the example then that if that's the case, just tell your friends and family to stay home and you all will zoom your next Thanksgiving or your next Christmas. You all don't have to get together if it's still the same.

And I think that's a fine example. It's not the same. It's not the same as having someone there with you and folks. It ain't the same when we gather here in this building or these other congregations throughout King'sport and throughout the Tri-Cities and state of Tennessee and all over the country.

You know, when we get together, we're following a commandment that is in the Scripture. We're forsaking not the assembling of ourselves. And folks, we need each other. Whether you want to admit it or not, we need each other.

[25 : 43] I don't need you for me to worship God. You don't need me for you to worship God. But we need each other. When I hear people testify the goodness of God and testify about what God has done in their lives, yes, I can hear that all the time.

Yes, I can hear it in a recording. And you know, I'm going on YouTube and find testimony. People are giving in churches all day long. But it is not the same as sitting amongst the brethren listening to their testimonies and hearing their voice when they're doing it.

Hearing their voices they speak, you know, live. And seeing the tears come down their cheeks when they're testifying of what good God has done in their lives in the past week or the past month.

Or just simply saying, I thank God for saving my soul. And you all might look at me and say, Spencer, I've never heard you give testimony. And you haven't. I pretty much keep quiet during church services. I do.

That don't mean that I don't worship God. And you know, I'm not saying that you got to shout and scream and run the aisles and take the roof off the church in order to worship God.

[26 : 54] I'm not saying that at all. Each one of us has our own ways. Now, I've told you all before, I've been known to pitch a holy fit once in a while. Y'all just ain't saying we do.

But either way, you know, whether you're a silent worshiper, or such as myself, or whether you're a more vocal worshiper, such as some other people are, regardless to worship amongst the rest of the saints, that's what we're called to do. It's what we're commanded to do in the Scripture.

And we should have a desire to be amongst the saints. You take these letters that we've been going through for the past several weeks, past couple of months maybe. I don't know how long we've been in these little letters of John.

But you take these letters and when you really read them, you see the heart of a pastor in John. And John was a pastor. You know, church history has it that John and pastor at the church of Ephesus.

And I have no reason to doubt that. As far as church history goes, you don't really read it in the Scriptures. But you really see a pastor's heart in this.

[28 : 10] And in this third letter of John, it's no different. You see him commending Gaius from what he's doing. You see him saying, I'm not afraid of deotrophies.

I'm going to address deotrophies when I show up there. And while I address him about this matter, you see him talking about Demetrius here and commending or encouraging Gaius to basically follow in Demetrius' steps.

And I understand folks that Jesus Christ is the ultimate model. And I agree with that wholeheartedly and 100%. But even Paul, you know, you're reading 1 Corinthians and chapter 11, I believe it is, and verse 1, Paul said, follow me even as I also follow Christ.

And that's another question we can ask ourselves. My goodness, can I say that to people? Follow me as I follow Christ. Do you want your kids to follow you as you follow Christ?

Do you want maybe nephew, nieces? Do you want your friends to follow you as you follow Christ? Or do you know that you don't follow Christ as close as you should? I have to ask myself that.

[29 : 23] I have to ask myself, do I follow Christ as close as I should? Am I a good role model for my own children? Am I a good role model for my wife, for my grandson? Whatever the case is, can I say that?

And John here gives Demetrius a good report, but he goes on to say, I had a whole lot of other things that I wanted to write.

They said, I want to see you face to face. He says, I trust that I shall see you shortly or see thee. He says, and we shall speak face to face, peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee, greet the friends by name.

So he closes his letter with a wish or a hope or a prayer for peace with Gaius. And this was wonderful because I said, I believe that Gaius was facing some opposition.

And likely his opposition was coming from this man, Deiotrophes, that we read about when we first started this lesson today. Our friends salute thee, greet the friends by name.

[30 : 28] Something unique about this. This is the only time in scripture that I can think of that the brethren are being spoken of. Well, believers in Christ are being spoken of, but they're named friends instead of brethren.

This is the only time in scripture I believe that that happens talking about the congregation. Why would John have addressed it like that? I mean, you look over at 2nd John, he says, the children of thy elect sister, greet thee.

Amen. And I told John when we closed up 2nd John, I believe he was talking about the rest of a congregation, or the congregations of other churches, other assemblies.

I believe that's what John was referring to. He says the children. And these are the things that you see brothers and sisters in Christ referred to as either the brethren or believers or children, or whatever the case is.

This is the only time that that particular group of people is referred to as friends. I don't know why John would have closed like that. I don't know why he wouldn't have said brethren or something along those lines.

[31 : 37] I do know that in the Gospel of John, chapter 15 and verse 13, Jesus Christ said himself, greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

And maybe that's why John was reverting back to me. Maybe that's why he was thinking of it. Or maybe he was just encouraging Gaius that, you know, you have friends, you have people that are on your side.

You have people that have your back here. He says our friends salute and greet the friends by name. So he says the people that are with us, the fellow believers that are with us, those that are on your side, they greet you.

You greet those that are on your side. Over there where you're at, wherever it may have been. You greet them the same way that we're greeting you.

And just as a side note before we close this up today, some folks say that Demetrius is the very person that delivered this letter to Gaius.

[32 : 45] And there, once again, there's nothing in the Bible that says that. There's nothing in church history that says that. That's speculation. But it's a good speculation. It's very possible that that happened.

That Demetrius was there with John, and that's why he closed the letter the way that he did. Saying you can basically encourage and Gaius, you can trust Demetrius with this letter that I'm delivering to you.

You weren't going to deliver it to the assembly because deotrophies had already rejected at least one letter that we know from John. So he was delivering it to a person of the congregation.

And I don't know if that's the case or not, but it's a good possibility that was the case. That brings us to the end of third John. Anybody got any questions or comments? Anything to think about?

Alright, God bless you all. I appreciate you.