

TITLE: COMMENDATION OR CONDEMNATION

TEXT: 3 JOHN 3-12

THESIS: The purpose of this sermon is to show that God is aware of the actions of his people and will punish those who are disobedient and will reward those who are righteous.

INTRO: 3 John is a personal letter to Gaius – he had apparently been hospitable to some men that John had sent out preaching. So John writes to Gaius to let him know that there were some more men coming that he wanted him to take care of as well.

I. TRIBUTE TO GAIUS (v. 1-8)

- A. (v. 1-2) To the well-beloved Gaius (not sure which Gaius this is, but it isn't imperative to know). Why is he so "well-beloved?" (v. 2) Concerning all things, I want you to prosper (succeed) and be healthy (physically), just as your soul prospers.
Connection between physical blessings and spiritual blessings. The physical blessings come with spiritual blessings.
- B. Seeks truth (v. 3-4)
(v. 3) I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came (lit. coming – present tense, continuous – apparently came more than once to speak well of Gaius) & testified of you in the truth...even as thou walkest (also present – "are walking")
(v. 4) I have no greater joy... Aren't we pleased when we train someone at work, etc., and then see him/her succeed?
If you have studied with someone and baptized him, what greater joy could there be than to hear that he is sound and faithful? No wonder John calls them his children (he obviously does not mean in the sense of 'calling no man father')
- C. Reason for the tribute: Gaius was a fellow helper in the truth (v. 5-8)
(v. 5) You do/work faithfully (according to the faith) whatever you do (work; minister) to the brethren and to strangers. This is a good work! But what is this work John is talking about?
(v. 6a) It is that which the brethren have testified of – Gaius' love (agape) – the brethren told of it before the church!
(v. 6b) John then encourages Gaius to continue his love and support of the brethren in this manner – send them on their way (support).
- Why? They are going forth on this mission (preaching), and don't want to take anything of the Gentiles (nations – the lost).
- Paul defended his right to receive money for his preaching, but refused to exercise it because he didn't want that to hinder his work.
- Likewise here, these men want to preach to the lost (and need sustenance), but don't want to hinder the work by asking for money.
- We support "The Gospel of Christ", "Word of Life", and other missionary efforts so they can preach to the lost free of charge! This makes us "fellow-helpers to the truth" (v. 8)!

II. CONDEMNATION OF DIOTROPHES (v. 9-11)

- A. (v. 9) I wrote to the church (where Gaius attends), but Diotrophes, who loves to be first (seeks preeminence), doesn't receive us. There are men and women in the church like this. They want to be first. They want recognition for everything. They want control! The church has no room for this type of person. Christians *are not* to be like this.
Lk 14:7-11 – at the feast, don't sit in the best seat; sit in the lower seat. Then you'll be asked to move up to a better seat.
- B. (v. 10) Diotrophes' deeds:
1. He speaks evil against the apostle John & other brethren - prating against us (berating; falsely accusing us) with malicious words
2. He doesn't receive the brethren
3. He forbids others from doing so, casting them out of the church!
He is divisive in nature – Titus 3:10 – reject him; he is a sinner, condemned of himself.
I will remember him! He doesn't say what he's going to do, but as an apostle, we can assume he will follow the same instructions that Paul gave (1 Cor 5; 1 Tim 1:20; Titus 3:10).
- C. (v. 11) Transition between the condemnation and commendation (shows us that we are to learn from these two)

III. COMMENDATION OF DEMETRIUS (v. 12)

- A. (v. 12) His character is well known
1. He has a good report from all (**1 Tim 3:7** – a good report of them which are without is a qualification of an elder)
2. He has a good report of the truth itself – the Scriptures should be our witness. When people disagree with us and speak against us for the things we teach, turn to the Scriptures and let them be a witness for our words!
3. He has a good report of the apostle John and others, which John guarantees to be true!
- B. This is the example to be followed (v. 11)

CONCLUSION: In this letter we see two examples of brothers who desired to be obedient to God, and one example of a selfish brother. John, inspired by God, condemns the one while commending the two. God knows our works, and will reward us. Which do we seek, condemnation or commendation? Know that God is just, and always He is always aware of our actions. It may seem that people get away with Diotrophes-like actions in the church, but they will be punished. It may also seem that people don't receive any recognition for their good works, but they will!