

SERIES: III JOHN: LOVING AND LIVING THE TRUTH,
WEEK 1

TITLE: THE GREATEST JOY

TEXT: III JOHN 1:1-4

INTRODUCTION: (1) THE BOOKS OF SECOND AND THIRD JOHN ARE VERY SIMILAR IN STRUCTURE, STYLE AND THEME.

* FOR EXAMPLE: IN BOTH BOOKS JOHN INTRODUCES HIMSELF AS THE ELDER. IN BOTH BOOKS JOHN CONCLUDES THAT HE WILL NOT WRITE EVERYTHING BECAUSE HE HOPES TO SOON SEE THE BELIEVERS TO WHOM HE WRITES AND WILL SPEAK WITH THEM AT THAT TIME.

** IN BOTH BOOKS JOHN GIVES COMMENDATIONS FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR AND REBUKES FOR BAD BEHAVIOR.

*** AND IN BOTH BOOKS, THE ISSUE OF A BELIEVER'S RESPONSIBILITY AND DUTY TO SHOW HOSPITALITY WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF FAITHFULNESS TO THE TRUTH IS COMMUNICATED.

**** AND SPECIFICALLY IN II JOHN, JOHN REVEALED THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF THAT: FALSE TEACHERS WHO REJECT

THE TRUTH ARE NOT TO BE GRANTED HOSPITALITY IN THE NAME OF LOVE.

(2) WHEREAS III JOHN COMMUNICATES AND EXPRESSES THE POSITIVE, THAT ALL WHO EMBRACE THE TRUTH ARE TO BE LOVED AND CARED FOR THROUGH SHOWING THEM HOSPITALITY.

* THEREFORE BOTH LETTERS ARE CONCERNED WITH CHRISTIAN TRUTH AND LOVE WITH THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO BIBLICAL HOSPITALITY.

** TO SAY IT ANOTHER WAY, II JOHN SHOWS THE FIRMNESS OF LOVE IN REFUSING TO ENTERTAIN THOSE WHO DO NOT TEACH THE TRUTH, WHEREAS III JOHN SHOWS THE TENDERNESS OF LOVE IN ENTERTAINING AND HELPING THOSE WHO TEACH AND HOLD TO THE TRUTH.

*** II JOHN WARNS AGAINST HAVING FELLOWSHIP AND SHOWING HOSPITALITY WITH THOSE WHO ARE FALSE TEACHERS AND DENY THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, II JOHN V. 10. (QUOTE IT)

*** BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, III JOHN WARNS AGAINST REFUSING TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP AND SHOW HOSPITALITY TO TEACHERS OF THE TRUTH, VV. 5-8 –

V. 5 – BELOVED, YOU ARE ACTING FAITHFULLY IN WHATEVER YOU ACCOMPLISH FOR THE BRETHREN, AND ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY ARE STRANGERS;

V. 6 – AND THEY HAVE TESTIFIED TO YOUR LOVE BEFORE THE CHURCH. YOU WILL DO WELL TO SEND THEM ON THEIR WAY IN A MANNER WORTHY OF GOD.

V. 7 – FOR THEY WENT OUT FOR THE SAKE OF THE NAME, ACCEPTING NOTHING FROM THE GENTILES.

V. 8 – THEREFORE WE OUGHT TO SUPPORT SUCH MEN, SO THAT WE MAY BE FELLOW WORKERS WITH THE TRUTH.

**** NOW BEING FELLOW WORKERS WITH THE TRUTH IS AN ISSUE AND THEME.

(3) FOR THE WORD TRUTH AS IN II JOHN IS A KEY WORD, USED 6 TIMES IN III JOHN.

* FOR IN V. 1 JOHN THE APOSTLE TELLS GAIUS, THE MAN HE IS WRITING TO THAT HE LOVES HIM IN THE TRUTH; IN VV. 3&4 JOHN SPEAKS OF WALKING IN THE TRUTH AND USES THE WORD TRUTH 3 TIMES; IN V. 8 THE PHRASE FELLOW WORKERS OF THE TRUTH IS USED; AND IN V. 12

JOHN SPEAKS OF HAVING A GOOD REPORT OF THE TRUTH.

** AND IN ESSENCE, EVEN IN THE VERSES IN WHICH THE WORD TRUTH IS NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED, THE FOCUS IS STILL ON LOVING AND LIVING THE TRUTH, THE TITLE OF OUR SHORT 3 TO 4 WEEK SERIES IN III JOHN.

*** NOW SOME MORE QUICK BACKGROUND FOR THIS EPISTLE. III JOHN IS THE MOST PERSONAL OF THE 3 JOHANNINE LETTERS.

**** THE LETTER IS ADDRESSED TO GAIUS WHOM JOHN REFERS TO AS THE “BELOVED” 4 TIMES IN III JOHN.

(4) AND BEYOND GAIUS, TWO OTHER MEN ARE MENTIONED BY NAME, DIOTREPES AND DEMETRIUS.

* AND ALTHOUGH THIRD JOHN IS A VERY PERSONAL LETTER TO GAIUS, IT ALSO CONCERNS THE LIFE AND WELFARE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH TO WHICH GAIUS BELONGS AND TO WHICH DIOTREPES IS A PART OF AND AT THE VERY LEAST, THAT DEMETRIUS IS ASSOCIATED WITH TO SOME DEGREE.

** IN FACT, THE WORD CHURCH IS USED 3 TIMES IN III JOHN IN MAKING REFERENCE TO THE LOCAL CHURCH THAT THESE 3 MEN WERE A PART OF AND ASSOCIATED WITH, AND MOST LIKELY, GAIUS AND DIOTREPHES WERE LEADERS OF.

*** AND THE APOSTLE JOHN (THE HUMAN AUTHOR OF THIS INSPIRED BOOK THROUGH THE DIVINE AUTHOR THE HOLY SPIRIT), JOHN THE BELOVED WRITES THIS LETTER FROM EPHESUS, BETWEEN AD 90-95 SHORTLY AFTER THE WRITING OF 1 AND II JOHN.

**** AND JOHN HAS CONCERNS FOR THIS SISTER CHURCH IN ASIA MINOR AND AS THE LAST LIVING APOSTLE WANTS TO PROTECT IT AND DIRECT ITS WRITING TO GAIUS WHICH JOHN LOVED WITH A DIVINE KIND OF LOVE IN CHRIST.

(5) NOW THE THEMES HE COMMUNICATES TO GAIUS IN III JOHN ARE NO. 1 BELIEVERS LIKE GAIUS MUST KNOW THE TRUTH AND OBEY IT, V. 3; NO. 2 BELIEVERS ARE TO BE HOSPITABLE TO FAITHFUL TEACHERS AND PREACHERS OF THE TRUTH, VV. 6-8; AND NO. 3 BELIEVERS ARE TO PATTERN THEIR LIVES AFTER GODLY EXAMPLES WHO LIVE IN THE TRUTH, V. 11.

* AND BELOVED THE SUMMARY APPLICATION IS, WHERE THE TRUTH PREVAILS, THE LORD IS GLORIFIED IN HIS CHURCH.

** TWO LAST THINGS IN BACKGROUND OF III JOHN BEFORE A FEW WORDS OF INTRODUCTION ABOUT OUR TEXT FOR TODAY.

*** NO. 1 THE KEY VERSE OF III JOHN IS V. 8 WHICH SAYS: "THEREFORE WE OUGHT TO SUPPORT SUCH MEN, SO THAT WE MAY BE FELLOW WORKERS WITH THE TRUTH."

**** AND THE PRINCIPLE COMMUNICATED HERE IS THE CONTRAST TO II JOHN. FOR IF YOU RECALL IN II JOHN, THE APOSTLE CAUTIONED AGAINST PARTICIPATING IN FALSE TEACHER'S EVIL DEEDS BY SUPPORTING THEM AND SHOWING HOSPITALITY TO THEM.

(6) BUT IN III JOHN, BY SUPPORTING THOSE WHO PRESENT AND TEACH THE TRUTH, CHRISTIANS PARTNER WITH THEM FOR THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL AND THE GLORY OF GOD. SO VERSE 8 IS THE KEY VERSE.

* AND LAST OF ALL, III JOHN IS SUMMARIZED IN A SIMPLE OUTLINE THROUGH THE SKETCHES OF THE 3 MEN THAT JOHN MENTIONS IN THIS PERSONAL EPISTLE.

** NO. 1 THE DEVOTED GAIUS, VV. 1-8; NO. 2 THE DICTATORIAL OR DOMINEERING DIOTREPES, VV. 9-11;

AND NO. 3 THE DEVOUT DEMETRIUS, V. 12 WITH THE CONCLUDING VERSES OF THE EPISTLE THAT FOLLOW.

*** AND WITH THAT BACKGROUND INFORMATION BEFORE US, WE COME TO OUR STUDY TODAY, VV. 1-4 OF III JOHN WHICH I'VE TITLED: "THE GREATEST JOY."

**** AND IF I WERE TO ASK YOU TODAY, WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST JOY? THERE WOULD BE MANY ANSWERS.

(7) FOR SOME OF YOU, IT MIGHT BE YOUR CHILDREN, FOR SOME OF YOU IT MIGHT BE YOUR GRANDCHILDREN, FOR OTHERS IT MIGHT BE YOUR SPOUSE AND EVEN OTHERS, SERVING THE LORD THROUGH HIS CHURCH WOULD BE YOUR ANSWER.

* AND NO DOUBT IF SOME OF YOU WERE TRANSPARENT, YOUR ANSWER WOULD BE LEISURE OR VACATION OR MATERIAL THINGS OR MONEY, TEMPORAL THINGS WITH A TEMPORARY WORLDLY FOCUS.

** BUT JOHN'S ANSWER TO WHAT HIS GREATEST JOY WAS WAS NONE OF THE ABOVE, WHICH MIGHT BE SURPRISING TO SOME OF YOU.

*** BUT THAT ANSWER IS GIVEN IN OUR STUDY OF VV. 1-4, WHICH I'LL DIVIDE UP WITH A TWO POINT OUTLINE. NO. 1 THE BELOVED, VV. 1&2 SPEAKING OF GAIUS, THE MAN

JOHN IS WRITING TO; AND NO. 2 THE BLESSING, VV 3&4
SPEAKING OF JOHN'S GREATEST JOY.

**** AND WITH THAT THEME AND THOSE POINTS TO
DIRECT US, LOOK AT V. 1 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL START
TO SEE OUR FIRST POINT, THE BELOVED.

I. THE BELOVED, (READ V. 1)

A. NOW JOHN THE BELOVED WAS THE LAST SURVIVING
APOSTLE. AND BY THE TIME HE WAS INSPIRED BY THE
HOLY SPIRIT TO WRITE THIS LETTER, APPROXIMATELY 60
YEARS HAD PASSED SINCE JESUS DIED, ROSE AGAIN AND
ASCENDED TO HEAVEN.

* THEREFORE JOHN WAS AN OLDER MAN AT THE TIME OF
THE WRITING OF THIS LETTER, HE WAS AN ELDERLY MAN,
A SENIOR CITIZEN, A SEASONED SAINT, ONE WHOM HAD
HIS GOLDEN BUCKEYE CARD FOR A LONG TIME.

** WELL, HE BEGINS II JOHN AND NOW III JOHN WITH THIS
TITLE OF ADVANCED AGE – THE ELDER, FOR EVERYONE
HE WROTE TO WOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT HE WAS AN
OLDER APOSTLE, THE LAST APOSTLE, A SENIOR PERSON
DESERVING RESPECT.

*** SO HE STARTS OFF HERE IN V. 1 WITH THE WORDS
“THE ELDER” NOT AN ELDER TALKING ABOUT THE OFFICE

OF PASTOR OR OVERSEER, AS SOME INTERPRET IT, BUT THE ELDER, A DESIGNATION FOR ADVANCED AGE.

**** WITH THAT SAID, TO WHOM DOES JOHN WRITE TO?

1. WELL, AS WE MOVE ON IN V. 1, "TO THE BELOVED GAIUS."

* AND GAIUS, A DISTINCTLY ROMAN NAME, WAS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON NAMES IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

** AND WE SEE THAT EVEN ILLUSTRATED IN THE N.T., FOR THE APOSTLE PAUL LIVED IN THE HOME OF GAIUS WHERE MOST LIKELY HE WROTE HIS LETTER TO THE ROMANS IN ROMANS 16:23.

*** AND THEN A RIOTOUS MOB AT EPHESUS SEIZED ANOTHER GAIUS OF MACEDONIA IN ACTS 19:24.

**** AND THEN ANOTHER GAIUS OF DERBE ACCOMPANIED PAUL ON HIS LAST TRIP TO JERUSALEM IN ACTS 20:4.

2. AND THEN WE HAVE THIS GAIUS, WHICH JOHN WRITES TO HERE IN III JOHN, WHICH APPEARS TO BE ANOTHER GAIUS. AND ALL WE KNOW ABOUT THIS MAN IS WHAT JOHN SAYS ABOUT HIM IN THIS EPISTLE, WHICH IS A LOT.

* FOR NOTICE IN THE REST OF V. 1 THAT JOHN CALLS HIM “BELOVED” AND “WHOM I LOVE IN TRUTH.”

** NOW JOHN USES THE WORD BELOVED 4 TIMES IN III JOHN TO TALK ABOUT GAIUS AND THE GREEK WORD FOR BELOVED IS A-GA-PA-TOCE FROM THE VERB AGAPAO FROM WHICH WE GET OUR WORD AGAPE TO TALK ABOUT GOD’S SACRIFICIAL GIVING SUPERNATURAL DIVINE LOVE.

*** AND IN THE CONTEXT OF V. 1, GAIUS WAS GREATLY LOVED BY THE CHURCH, THE FAMILY OF FAMILIES, THE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY OF BELIEVERS.

**** BUT NOT ONLY WAS HE LOVED BY THE CHURCH, HE WAS LOVED BY JOHN, “WHOM I LOVE IN TRUTH.”

3. AND THE PHRASE “IN TRUTH” QUALIFIES AND EXPLAINS THE SPHERE OF JOHN’S LOVE FOR GAIUS.

* FOR TRUTH IS THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN LOVE. IT IS WHAT BINDS THE CHURCH TOGETHER IN CHORDS THAT SHOULD NOT BE BROKEN.

** FOR A BELIEVER’S DEEP MUTUAL LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER FLOWS OUT OF THEIR SHARED COMMITMENT TO THE TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD AND THE GOSPEL.

*** THEREFORE TRUTH IS THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN LOVE.

**** HENCE JOHN'S LOVE FOR GAIUS WAS BASED ON THEIR MATUAL LOVE OF THE TRUTH.

4. FOR TRUTH IS THE HIGHEST MOTIVATION FOR LOVE.

* FOR THINK ABOUT IT, TRUE BELIEVERS DO NOT LOVE EACH OTHER BECAUSE THEIR TEMPERAMENTS OR PERSONALITIES ARE ALWAYS COMPATIBLE, THEY MAY BE EXACT OPPOSITES.

** AND TRUE CHRISTIANS DO NOT LOVE EACH OTHER BECAUSE ALL OF US HAVE SIMILAR WORLDLY INTEREST OR AMBITIONS.

*** WE DO NOT LOVE EACH OTHER BECAUSE WE ALL HAVE SIMILAR BACKGROUNDS OR COME FROM THE SAME SOCIAL ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS, NOR DO WE ALL HAVE THE SAME AMOUNTS OF INCOME. WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS, WE HAVE DIFFERENT ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS.

**** WE EVEN HAVE DIFFERENT PREFERENCES IN AREAS LIKE CHRISTIAN MUSIC.

5. SO WHAT BINDS PEOPLE TOGETHER IN LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER WITH ALL THESE SOCIAL, BACKGROUND, ETHNIC AND MUSIC DIFFERENCES?

* IT IS OUR LOVE FOR THE TRUTHS OF CHRIST AND THE TRUTHS OF HIS WORD THAT GOD HAS OPENED OUR HEARTS BY HIS SOVEREIGN GRACE THAT MAKES US A PART OF THE FAMILY OF FAMILIES, THE CHURCH. (WE ARE HUMBLLED BY THAT.) QUOTE EPHESIANS 4:1-3

** SO THE LOVE THAT JOHN SPEAKS OF HERE IS THE UNIQUE LOVE THAT BELIEVERS HAVE FOR THOSE IN CHRIST AND THAT ARE FAITHFUL TO THE TRUTH.

*** AND BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THE BASIS OF TRUE CHRISTIAN LOVE THEN IS THE UNCHANGING TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD FROM WHICH SOUND DOCTRINE COMES, THEREFORE THE TITLE OF OUR SERIES IN II JOHN, AND NOW THIRD JOHN, LOVING AND LIVING THE TRUTH.

**** AND JOHN LOVED GAIUS, THE MAN HE IS WRITING TO IN V. 1, HE LOVED HIM IN TRUTH.

6. AND THAT LOVE FOR GAIUS IS FURTHER ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN'S PRAYER FOR GAIUS AND BY THE FIRST WORD IN V. 2. LOOK AT V. 2 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 2. NOW RATHER THAN CALLING GAIUS BY HIS NAME IN V. 2, JOHN ADDRESSES HIM AS BELOVED, THE SPECIALLY AND UNIQUELY LOVED ONE, THE DEAR ONE, THE BELOVED, THE BETTER TRANSLATION THAN “DEAR FRIEND” USED IN THE NIV.

* BUT BEYOND CALLING GAIUS “BELOVED” JOHN SHOWS HIS LOVE FOR GAIUS IN HOW HE PRAYED FOR HIM, THAT IN ALL RESPECTS GOD WOULD PROSPER HIM AND BE IN GOOD HEALTH, JUST AS HIS SOUL WAS ALREADY PROSPERING.

** NOW LET ME ATTEMPT TO UNPACK V. 2 AND SAY FIRST OF ALL, THIS IS NOT A PROOF TEXT FOR THE WORD OF FAITH MOVEMENT, SOMETIMES CALLED THE HEALTH, WEALTH AND PROSPERITY GOSPEL.

*** AND FOR SEVERAL REASONS, BY THE WORDS USED HERE AND THE BACKGROUND OF THAT DAY.

*** AND WHAT I MEAN BY THAT IS NO. 1 JOHN’S PRAYER TRANSLATED WISH IN THE KJV MIGHT HAVE BEEN PRECIPITATED BY GAIUS’ ILL HEALTH, THAT HE DID NOT HAVE GOOD HEALTH.

1. FOR JOHN’S WISH WAS THAT HIS PHYSICAL HEALTH MIGHT CORRESPOND TO HIS SPIRITUAL HEALTH. THEREFORE THE WORD PROSPER DOES NOT REFER TO

THE PROSPERITY OF WEALTH, BUT THE PROSPERITY OF HEALTH.

* FOR THE GREEK WORD FOR PROSPER IS A COMPOUND WORD FROM EU (YOU) WHICH MEANS “WELL” AND HODOS WHICH MEANS WAY – THE WELL WAY, AND IT LIT. MEANT TO HAVE A GOOD JOURNEY.

** AND CONTEXTUALLY THE WORD PROSPER IN V. 2 REFERS TO GAIUS’ PHYSICAL HEALTH, AS THE CONTRAST OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH IS USED AT THE END OF V. 2. JOHN’S WISH WAS THAT GAIUS’ PHYSICAL HEALTH ON HIS SPIRITUAL JOURNEY WOULD BE AS GOOD AS HIS SPIRITUAL HEALTH.

*** AND OBVIOUSLY GAIUS HAD GREAT SPIRITUAL HEALTH, HE WAS PROSPERING SPIRITUALLY, HE WAS WALKING IN TRUTH AS WE WILL SEE IN VV. 3&4.

**** SO GAIUS MAY HAVE HAD ILL HEALTH AND JOHN’S WISH WAS THAT HIS PHYSICAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE WOULD BE AS GOOD AS HIS SPIRITUAL HEALTH.

2. BUT ALSO LET ME ADD THAT JOHN’S WISH OR PRAYER AT THE BEGINNING OF V. 2 WAS A STANDARD GREETING IN ANCIENT LETTERS AND WAS A COMMON GREETING.

* IT CAN BE ILLUSTRATED BY US SAYING TODAY, “HAVE A GOOD DAY.” THAT IS OUR WISH, OUR DESIRE FOR THAT PERSON.

** AND THERE IS SOME GOOD BACKGROUND THAT THE PHRASE: “I PRAY OR I WISH THAT IN ALL RESPECTS YOU MAY PROSPER AND BE IN GOOD HEALTH” WAS A STANDARD GREETING IN LETTERS AND IN GREETINGS IN THAT DAY.

*** SO IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GAIUS HAD NO HEALTH ISSUES, BUT JOHN WAS USING A STANDARD GREETING OF THAT DAY, BUT THEN APPLIED IT SPIRITUALLY BECAUSE GAIUS’ SPIRITUAL HEALTH WAS GREAT!

**** AND A QUICK APPLICATION QUESTION HERE. WOULD WE WANT OUR PHYSICAL HEALTH TO CORRESPOND TO OUR SPIRITUAL HEALTH? IS IT NOT SADLY TRUE THAT MANY PEOPLE WHO PROFESS TO BE CHRISTIANS TAKE BETTER CARE AND PUT MORE TIME INTO THEIR PHYSICAL HEALTH OVER THEIR SPIRITUAL HEALTH?

3. AND I’M NOT SUGGESTING THAT WE ABUSE OUR BODIES WHICH ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND NOT TAKE CARE OF THEM. BY GOD’S GRACE I RUN, EXERCISE AND EAT HEALTHY ON THE WHOLE.

* BUT SOME PEOPLE ARE SO PREOCCUPIED WITH THE PHYSICAL, THEY NEGLECT THE SPIRITUAL AND THEY SAY THEY DON'T HAVE TIME TO READ, STUDY, SERVE AND ASSEMBLE IN THE CHURCH, BUT ALWAYS HAVE TIME FOR THEIR WORK OUT. WHAT SHOULD COME FIRST? THE SPIRITUAL AND ETERNAL.

** AND MY CHALLENGE IS WE START THERE, BUT ALSO TAKE CARE OF OUR BODIES, THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THAT OUR BODIES THAT WE SERVE GOD IN ARE LIVING SACRIFICES TO THE LORD ON HIS ALTAR FOR HIS USE, AND BECAUSE WE WERE TO BE EFFECTIVE AND HAVE ENDURANCE FOR HIM, WE TAKE CARE OF OUR BODIES.

4. GAIUS DEFINITELY TOOK CARE OF HIS SOUL FIRST. BUT JOHN PRAYED THAT HIS PHYSICAL HEALTH WOULD BE AS GOOD AS THAT OF HIS SPIRITUAL HEALTH, QUOTE I TIMOTHY 4:8.

* NOW WITH THE PURSUIT OF GODLINESS FIRST, IT WAS FLESHED OUT BY THE TRUTH OF GAIUS' SPIRITUAL HEALTH, HE "WALKED THE TRUTH" AND WHAT A BLESSING THAT WAS TO JOHN AND THE CHURCH GAIUS WAS A PART OF. LOOK AT V. 3 WHERE WE'LL START TO SEE OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE BLESSING.

II. THE BLESSING, (READ V. 3)

A. NOW THE EVIDENCE OF GAIUS' SPIRITUAL WELL BEING BROUGHT JOHN GREAT JOY.

* FOR JOHN SAYS "I WAS VERY GLAD" IN MY BIBLE, AND THE WORD GLAD CAN BE TRANSLATED REJOICED OR TO HAVE JOY AND THEN THE ADVERB VERY OR GREAT OR GREATLY INTENSIFIES THE JOY AND REJOICING.

** SO JOHN SAYS, I HAVE GREAT JOY ABOUT YOU GAIUS?

*** NOW WHY?

**** WELL, THE BRETHREN CAME TO ME AND TESTIFIED TO YOUR TRUTH. MEANING, BROTHERS CAME TO JOHN AT EPHESUS AND TESTIFIED THAT HE WAS WALKING IN TRUTH.

1. AND THESE BRETHREN WERE PROBABLY TRAVELING ITINERANT TEACHERS AND PREACHERS TO WHOM GAIUS HAD SHOWN HOSPITALITY AND COMMUNICATED THAT HE WAS A MAN LIVING OUT THE TRUTH BY LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN IN HOUSING AND CARING FOR THEM FOR THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL.

* AND OBVIOUSLY GAIUS' GENUINE LOVE IN ACTION FLOWED FROM HIS OBEDIENCE TO THE TRUTH. SO JOHN'S JOY BY THIS GOOD REPORT FROM THE

BROTHERS WAS GAIUS NOT ONLY KNEW THE TRUTH BUT LIVED IT.

** FOR BROTHERS COMMUNICATED GAIUS WAS “WALKING IN TRUTH.” AND THE WORD WALK METAPHORICALLY SPEAKS OF OUR MANNER OF LIFE, HOW WE LIVE, HOW WE ORDER OUR BEHAVIOR, HOW WE REGULATE OUR LIVES, WALKING IN A CERTAIN WAY.

*** SO JOHN WAS BLESSED BY THIS REPORT.

**** AND HE EXPANDS IN TALKING ABOUT THIS BLESSING IN V. 4. LOOK AT V. 4 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 4. NOW KENNETH WUEST IN HIS WORD STUDIES OF THE N.T. POINTS OUT THAT THE GREEK IN V. 4 LIT. READS: “GREATER JOY THAN THIS I DO NOT HAVE.”

* SO THIS WAS JOHN’S GREATEST JOY IN HIS MINISTRY, WHICH WAS WHAT?

** TO HEAR THAT HIS CHILDREN ARE WALKING IN TRUTH.

*** AND NOTE THAT JOHN USES THE PRONOUN “MY” BEFORE CHILDREN MAKING REFERENCE TO HIS SPIRITUAL CHILDREN, THOSE CONVERTED UNDER HIS MINISTRY OR THOSE TO WHOM JOHN HAD SPIRITUAL CARE OF BY SHEPHERDING THEM.

**** JOHN HAS A FATHERLY SPIRITUAL AFFECTION FOR PEOPLE LIKE GAIUS WHO WERE AT THAT TIME, OR ONE TIME UNDER HIS TEACHING AND PREACHING MINISTRY.

1. AND JOHN'S GREATEST JOY, HIS JOY OF ALL JOYS, HIS GREATEST MEANS OF REJOICING AS A SPIRITUAL PARENT WAS BOUND UP IN THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF HIS CHILDREN, WHICH LIT. COULD BE TRANSLATED "MY OWN CHILDREN." JOHN SPEAKS OF CHILDREN, NOT IN THE SENSE OF PHYSICAL DESCENT BUT SPIRITUAL BIRTH.

* AND AGAIN THE GREAT JOY WAS GAIUS WAS WALKING IN THE TRUTH, MEANING WITH GAIUS THERE WAS NO DIVISION, NO SEPARATION, NO DICHOTOMY BETWEEN PROFESSION AND PRACTICE, BETWEEN CREED AND CONDUCT.

** AND SUCH CONFORMITY OF LIFE TO THE TRUTH ON THE PART OF HIS SPIRITUAL CHILDREN BROUGHT JOHN GREATER JOY THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

*** TO JOHN, TRUTH MATTERED AND TRUTH APPLIED LED TO LIVING A LIFE THAT WAS CONSISTENT TO THE TRUTH.

THERE WAS NO DISCONNECT FROM BELIEF AND PRACTICE.

**** GAIUS LIT. ADORNED THE DOCTRINE OF GOD TALKED ABOUT IN TITUS 2:10. HIS ENTIRE LIFE SHOWED FIDELITY TO THE TRUTH.

2. AND JUST AS WE PUT CLOTHES ON TO DRESS OURSELVES AND HOW WE DRESS IS EVIDENT TO ALL, SO OUR LIVES SHOULD DISPLAY HOW WE EXHIBIT THE TRUTH.

* WE MUST NOT ONLY BELIEVE AND LOVE THE TRUTH BUT WE MUST ALSO PUT IT INTO PRACTICE IN OUR LIVES AND GAIUS DID THAT.

IN WRAP UP: (1) TWO APPLICATIONS DIRECTED AS QUESTIONS. NO. 1 WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST JOY? AND CERTAINLY WE AS PARENTS CAN APPLY THIS TO OUR PHYSICAL CHILDREN. ARE WE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PHYSICAL OVER THE ETERNAL? ARE WE MORE CONCERNED OVER OUR CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN EXCELLING IN SPORTS OR ACADEMICS AND THE MAKING THAT THE PRIORITY OF OUR LIVES, CENTERED AROUND THAT OR FOCUSING ON THEIR SOULS, THEIR ETERNAL WELL BEING, AND IF GOD GRACIOUSLY SAVES THEM THAT THEY WALK IN TRUTH.

* AND EVEN FOR NON-PARENTS, WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST JOY? A NEW CAR, A NEW HOUSE, MORE MONEY, LEISURE, VACATIONS, A BETTER JOB OR SEEING GOD'S PEOPLE AND YOURSELF WALKING IN TRUTH?

** WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST JOY AND BURDEN? SOME OF US NEED TO CHANGE THE PRIORITY LIST AND ALIGN OURSELVES WITH WALKING IN TRUTH AND SEEKING GOD'S KINGDOM FIRST.

(2) NO. 2 IN APPLICATION, WOULD WE WANT OUR PHYSICAL CONDITION TO CORRESPOND TO OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION?

* DO YOU TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOUR BODY THAN YOUR SOUL?

** F.B. MEYER REMARKED: "IT WOULD NOT BE DESIRABLE TO EXPRESS THE WISH OF VERSE 2 TO ALL OUR FRIENDS BECAUSE IF THEIR BODIES WERE TO CORRESPOND TO THE CONDITION OF THEIR SOULS, THEY WOULD SUDDENLY FALL INTO ILL-HEALTH." (END QUOTE)

*** AND HOW TRUE THAT IS.

**** I PRAY THAT THESE QUESTIONS MIGHT BE USED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BRING CONVICTION AND CHALLENGE US IN ALL OF OUR PRIORITIES TODAY, MATTHEW 6:33.

(3) AND LASTLY, IF YOU ARE HERE WITHOUT CHRIST, YOUR GREATEST PRIORITY AND NEED IS FORGIVENESS OF SIN THROUGH JESUS CHRIST THE LORD AND ONLY SAVIOR. REPENT TODAY OF YOUR SIN AND TURN TO HIM IN FAITH, TRUST HIM ALONE TO SAVE YOU FROM YOUR SINS AND GOD'S HOLY WRATH! (LET'S PRAY)