

The Faithful Work of The Church

3 John

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I'm glad to be with you tonight and for us to continue our time in God's word together. You know, I'm going to say this just really briefly for just a moment that I truly do love the opportunity to come at night and to be able to continue our Lord's Day service. You know, when Grant and I and the elders were praying about an evening service back in the middle of the heart of COVID by the way, we thought we didn't know how this is really going to launch, but obviously the Lord has blessed it because the sole purpose and the crux of our evening service is to begin and end our day in worship and to really to bracket the day with an opportunity to come and sit at the feet of the cross and to be able to worship, to sit underneath the teaching of God's word, but also to build fellowship and to see one another not only in the morning, but also in the evening. And that's why we do this. This is not just another program, it is an opportunity to worship. It's an opportunity to worship, and so I say that just from my own heart and an opportunity just to say I'm glad that all of you are here tonight.

If you have your Bibles open, let's go ahead and connect to where we are going this Sunday and next. If you have your Bibles, I'm going to ask if you will, turn over to 3 John, 3 John, and if you are new to the student of the Bible, go to the end of the back of the Bible towards Revelation, go to Jude and then 3 John. So it is towards the tail end of your Bible. And let me give you a road map of where we are going tonight and as well as next Sunday evening as well, but we're going to be doing a two-part sermon series in 3 John. Now not a lot of us have probably walked through 3 John before. Does anybody know what the shortest book of the New Testament is? 3 John, you get an A. You get a gold star on your report card. It is 3 John. I know if you were to flip over just one page to 2 John, you would see it has 13 verses compared to 15, but when you look at word count it actually is shorter than 2 John. And so, but it is the shortest book in the Bible, but

nonetheless it packs a powerful punch. This short little letter that John writes to his friend and fellow faithful follower of Christ, Gaius, is one that we need to hear today and the crux of what we're going to be looking at tonight and as well as next Sunday, as you can tell in your bulletin, we're going to be looking at the faithful work of the church, what the faithful work of the church is tonight, and next Sunday we are going to be looking at opposition to the church, opposition to the church. And so tonight we're going to be looking at the faithful side of church work and specifically we're going to be talking a lot about this man named Gaius, or depending on what part of North Carolina you're from it could be Guyus. I grew up called Guyus. I'm going to say Gaius because that's what I've been saying to myself all week.

But let me give you a little context of where we are in 3 John. This is three letters of the Apostle John has written to a group of churches. John at this time has not been exiled to Patmos yet. He is much older in life. He's writing from Ephesus. We know Ephesus very well from Paul's journey. And he is writing to these churches to give them a warning, to give them a warning and the warning is clear: there are defectors or there are also known as false teachers that have come into the church, have infiltrated the church and they are preaching a false gospel. They're preaching a false gospel and these false teachers are doing four things. 1. They are denying the person and the work of Christ, most importantly, they are denying his redemptive work. 2. They're not practicing the love of Christ, brotherly love. And the reason why I pull that out is if you have studied 1 John before you know that John is nothing but a brother and apostle of love. Over and over and over again, if you've walked through John letters, you've probably have walked through 1 John before, or you have heard 1 John before at a, what? At a wedding because 1 John 4 is over and over again replete of the definition of godly love. The third thing these false teachers are doing is that they're arrogant. They're arrogant. They're arrogant. Why are they arrogant? They think they know the true gospel, but in fact it is entirely false. And the fourth thing that they are opposing is a low view of sin. Let me say it another way: they don't understand the ramifications of what sin does. They don't understand that sin separates us from a holy God. They don't understand that sin does damaging effects to our lives and can just keep us so far away from our Lord and Savior that it can send us all the way to hell. It's a reality that these false teachers over and over and over again are saying, "Listen, John's church, it's no good. This is the way you should go," this false way.

And so that's where we are and so if you were to look at these three letters together, John starts off in the first letter of John basically like a test, and the whole letter of 1 John is for you to see this litmus test, this line in the sand, so to speak, is if you're on the faithful side of following Christ or you're opposing Christ. Over and over and over again, he gives nothing but test after test to make sure you are a true and faithful follower of Christ. 2 and 3 John are nothing more but an echo of one another, saying both support or commendation of faithful work of the church and as well as a warning to those who were opposing the work of the church, opposing the gospel of Jesus Christ, or opposing gospel ministry, let me say it in a in another way. And that's where you are in regards to 3 John, and so tonight what we're going to be looking at is really more than anything this letter from the Apostle John that is commending the work of a man named Gaius.

Now this is the same John, by the way, that wrote the gospel of John. This is the same John who was there when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain with, who? James and who else? Peter. This is also the same John who was there at the foot of the cross, who saw our Lord crucified for our sins. This is the same John who also got the commission from Jesus to take care of, who? His mother Mary. And this is also the same John who was there with Peter and the boys in Matthew 16 when Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the work of the church, that nothing will thwart the work of the church, Christ's church. So this is John writing again to his beloved church, his beloved Gaius.

And so tonight, if you've got your Bibles open, let's read verses 1 through 8, verses 1 through 8, and that's what we're going to be looking at tonight in our time together. So listen along with me in God's word starting in verse 1,

1 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. 2 Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. 3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. 5 Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, 6 who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. 7 For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. 8 Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

Let's go to Lord in prayer and just ask him to lead us in our time together. If you will, let's bow our heads and go to the throne of grace.

Eternal Lord and heavenly Father, we're thankful for another hour that we can come and sit at the feet, your feet, Lord, and worship and to sit underneath the teaching of your word. Father, I pray guide us through your word, increase and have me decrease, teach us in the power of the Spirit. And we put all these things in Christ's good and holy name. Amen.

Look with me in verse 1. It says, "The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth." John identifies himself as an elder, and what is an elder? It is one who presides over at the church. Now remember, this is John who's in Ephesus but he has helped plant these churches that are from afar at this point. But John, when you see that word of elder, this is one who is presiding over the church, and we see the qualifications of an elder that John would know about through Paul's writings in 1 Timothy 3. We see the qualifications there of what an elder is supposed to look like and we also see it in Titus 1. They are high and there are holy aspirations for those who are going to be called an elder. But also what we see with this word elder is that it goes hand-in-hand with another word called pastor,

and that's what we see here from John in verse 1. This is the heart of John the elder, but also the heart of John, a pastor.

But look further as we go a little bit deeper into verse 1, "to my beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth." John has a heart of love. If we were to go back into 1 John, you would see over and over and over again, like I said, this repeated theme of the love of Christ that is being poured out not only to the brethren but also we can see here with Gaius. And this is an important point for us to see because this really sets the tone for us as we are going to go through this letter in 3 John because this is the heart of a pastor. This is the heart of the Apostle John that he has for his beloved friend Gaius, and this really sets the tone for us because what an entrance for us to see this not only an encouragement of the Lord, but also an opposition or warning against that we will see next week that John has for his church for Gaius.

This love permeates all throughout this letter for his brother Gaius, and when we understand this first word of beloved, it is where we get the Greek word *abapetos* in the Greek. That term is a term of endearment. It's a term of one who is being cared for. It is a word for love. And then when we go a little bit further, "whom I love and truth," this is where we get our word *agape* that you may have heard before in the Greek. But this word love is actually derived from this term of beloved, but nonetheless what we see here in a nutshell is this word of affection that John uses towards Gaius. It's brotherly affection that he has for this brother named Gaius.

And so John here at the end of verse 1 is wanting to see where this beloved love is being anchored in. You see that last word in verse 1, what is it? Truth. It's anchored in the truth. This is not feel good, passionate love. This is love that is anchored in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. This is love that is anchored in the truth of who God is and what he has done. And this very much, again, is helping us set the tone for this letter that we see because this word truth here is the Greek where we get the word *aletheia*, but it's anchored in divine truth. It's anchored in divine truth. It's anchored in who God is, and I know I've said that twice already, but it begs repeating with a purpose and a cause because so often it's easy for us to look, especially from outside a worldview, so to speak, looking in, to say, "Well, this is just nothing but feel-good love. He loves his brother." No, this is anchored in divine truth, eternal truth of who God is. And again, this is important for us to see because John, of all people, knows that true truth, divine truth is anchored in Christ and Christ alone. John of all people knows when he was there with Peter in John 6: 6 to 8, he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go because you have the words of eternal life." The Apostle John believed this more than anything, that true understanding of the world around us and what life is all about is anchored in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ transfixes everything we understand and know and this is what John is pulling out for us, and this is also helping us understand this brotherly love and affection that he has for Gaius and as well as the churches that he's writing to.

And so John is helping us to see right out of the gate, the heart of this elder, heart of an apostle but again I want to use the word pastor. Pastor. This is the heart of a pastor. Now

the reason why I'm going to call that out and bring it to your attention is because the reality is this: there are many pastors in this day and age all across this country, all across this world that are not anchored in the truth. They are not anchored in the love of Christ. They are not anchored in what we see that John is commending to Gaius. And the reason why I call that out for us to see tonight is because when we don't see pastors and churches anchored in this divine truth of who God is, you're going to see nothing but a program-centered, big building, nothing but feel-good messages coming out of the pulpit. But what we see from John is he's setting the tone for us to see that the true understanding of a pastor comes from the perspective of knowing God.

John is taking serious the things of God, you follow me? He's taking serious the things of God and a pastor has to know this because if you go back to 1 Timothy 3 or Titus 1 and you see the qualifications of an elder or pastor, they are serious callings. It's something that we are not to take lightly. They are to be above reproach. There's supposed to be the husband of one wife. They're not supposed to be a drunkard. But what you see especially in Titus 1 is that that man, that pastor is supposed to hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught. He's supposed to be God's steward. God's steward. But the reality is this, though those callings and those qualifications are for men called to the office of elder, by the way, those are also qualifications that every disciple should aspire to. When you see above reproach, you should be living a life of integrity. When you see not a drunkard, that applies to everybody. When you see those qualifications listed in 1 Timothy and as well as Titus, you should be looking at yourself as well and that's something for us to pull out because the reality is this: I can tell you from my heart, and I say this humbly as the associate pastor here, if I wasn't anchored in truth, this would just be another job. My words would be empty. Grant's words would be empty. But I can tell you from my heart, from Grant's heart, from our lay-elder's hearts, our ministry, our work is God-centered. It's for the fear of the Lord because it's pure and it's enduring and endures forever. That's what ministry is about. It's not some feel-good love language. It's not some emotional exercises that we're supposed to partake in week in and week out. No, it's anchored in the fear of God which shakes us to our core in a good way because it allows us to bow the knee like Isaiah did in Isaiah 6 and say, "Woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips!" And only known through the redemptive work of Christ that we can approach the throne of grace and worship the King of kings and have life everlasting.

The job of a pastor is to hold up the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ, my Lord, and that's what we see here from already in verse 1. Now I can pretty much pray and go home now, can't we? But the reality is this: this is the heart of John. This is the heart of the elder John that is setting forth before us in this short and brief letter.

Now the look with me in verse 2. He goes a little bit further. He says, "Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul." The love and the truth of Christ that the Apostle John has for Gaius is now going on a very practical level, and it's really a two-sided coin that we see here. It's a two-sided coin that we see here. The first is this, when you see that word there in verse 2 "that it may go well with you that you may be in good health and then it goes well with your soul," John is saying on one side of the coin, "I want you truly to be healthy. I'm praying

for your health." That's a good thing. That's something I actually pray for all of you, for your health to be well, for you to be healthy. But the other side of the coin is what John helps us to see as well as Paul writes to Titus in Titus 2, to be also of sound doctrine. Good health equals sound doctrine. We have to see that connection there, what John is writing to Gaius. So he's praying, "I pray that your health is good. I hope you're healthy, but most importantly I pray that you are walking in sound doctrine," and that's what we see in Titus 2:1 as well when it says, Paul to Titus, he says, "But teach what accords to sound doctrine." And what is that doctrine? What is that truth that he is anchored in? 1 Timothy 1:11 reminds us, "in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessing of God with which I have been entrusted." The gospel of the glory of God. And that's what we see.

Verse 3, look with me. John goes a little bit further, "For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth." So right after the prayer of blessing in verse 2, we see now John is rejoicing in the fact that Gaius has showed Christlike love to these fellow missionaries that are going to spread the name of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. That's what he's saying here. He's commending Gaius for showing Christlike love for these total strangers that have come into Gaius' region, to Gaius' hometown and John is saying, "Thank you for taking care of them. Thank you for sharing Christlike love to these brothers." And it's important for us to see this verse here in 3 because here are a couple of words I want you to either underline or to write in your notes if you have a piece of paper with you. "Testified to your truth," so that phrase first, "as you are walking in the truth." Testified to your truth and you're walking in the truth.

Verse 3 is an important verse for us to understand this man Gaius in a whole different way because what verse 3 helps us do, it is a litmus test very much we would see in 1 John. The litmus test is this: are you a faithful follower of Christ? Are you taking serious your walk with Christ? Because if you're not, that couldn't be said of you, could it? I've heard your testimony. I've heard what you've been doing. I've heard that you've been taking care of these brothers in Christ who are missionaries, who are going to the ends of the earth for the sake of Christ. People can't say that because if the opposite is said, if you are not being obedient to the commands of Christ, there would be no testimony. No one would be commending your of your faith. What this is a test of goes back to one of those qualifications I mentioned earlier in 1 Timothy 3 which is: are you above reproach? Are you a man or a woman walking in integrity? And that's what we see here, because whether we realize it or not, what you truly believe is going to show itself up, whether you like it or not. It's like my mom used to say, "What you hang out with is what you are." Remember that phrase? Now since I was a perfect child, she didn't have to say that a whole lot, but being that I walked in perfection my adolescent years, it's phrases I heard my friends say. [laughter] I'm just kidding, but nonetheless it is a litmus test for you to make sure you're walking above reproach, a walking in integrity because what you believe your actions are always going to follow.

What do people say about your actions? What do people say about your words? When you're driving alone around in your car what are you thinking about? When you get a lot

of windshield time, as the older expression says, what's going on? What are you talking to yourself about? What are you beating the dashboard over, if you want to beat the dashboard as a new hobby that you can pick up? But nonetheless it is a serious question because I want to ask you again: are you taking serious your walk with Christ? Because that's what verse 3 exposes before us. Luke 6 reminds us this, "Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." What you speak is what your heart believes. Matthew 7 reminds us, "So every healthy tree bears good fruit, but a diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits." Pretty stark word, isn't it, from Jesus in Matthew 7.

Gaius could have easily turned away and run. Gaius could have easily turned away and not helped out these brothers in Christ and their missionary work. But he didn't. He didn't. It's the same with the example of our brother Boaz and Ruth. Boaz wanted to marry Ruth, wanted to redeem, remember, Ruth. He could have easily not gone before the elders and bought the field according to, what? The law. Gone publicly and bought the field. Remember they exchanged shoes to show the passing of property? He probably could have easily slipped by and said, "Come on, Ruth, be my wife. No one is ever going to say anything." But no, he went the way of the Lord and that's what we see in verse 3.

A lot of you know this before, but my grandfather worked for a funeral home and in high school I worked for that funeral home and as well as a little bit in college, which also explains a lot of weirdness about myself. But nonetheless, I worked in the funeral home, but when you go to a funeral after a while you hear the same thing. You hear the same thing and you can guess pretty much within two or three minutes whether or not this person was good or bad, a good brother or a bad brother. But here's something that hit me when I was in college working. I came in for the summer and helped out one time. The people that left a legacy, the people that left an impact are the people who got up, or the pastor who got up and talked about those attributes. It was brothers or sisters who had gone on who had been deceased who were praised because they were selfless. The ones that you really heard those home run victories about were brothers and sisters in Christ who died to self and served. Think about that. Our funerals are coming. What's going to be said at yours? What's going to be said at mine? So that's a serious question to ask. Yeah, we hear about the success stories at funerals but what really matters is the people that get up there hard to be able to talk about it because the love they have felt from that person who's deceased. And again, the ones that had the cherry on top are those brothers and sisters in Christ who gave Christlike love. And I know probably right now even this moment you're thinking of those people who have helped you to go along the way in your Christlike walk. And that's what we see in verse 3 and it's a pretty stark word that we see.

So go a little bit further. In verse 4, here's where we see John say, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." This, again, goes back to the phrase I said earlier, this is the heart of the pastor. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." No greater joy. Let me tell you something, ladies and gentlemen, my prayer for you daily is for you to behold the glory of God, for you to

be well with your health, for you to magnify Christ in every sphere of your life, but also for you to be a testimony that is above reproach, to have a testimony above reproach.

Verse 4 is the heart of a pastor again because the reality that John is setting before us is the question I've asked already: are you taking serious your walk with Christ? When you go to another town, you go to another church, can people say and come back to Capital and say, "Hey listen, that brother Bob or Sister Susan or whoever, man, she really, she really magnifies the Lord." Like my youth pastor used to say to us growing up, "We live before an audience of one." Have you ever heard that phrase before, an audience of one? Whether you realize it or not, folks, you're representatives of the kingdom of God. You're representatives of Jesus. But you're also representatives to Capital Community Church. You take a great deal behind you when you walk out of those doors and go about your work day and your family life and your friendship life. The call of Christ is serious and it has serious demands on our life, and that's what we see here in verse 4, that this is the heart of a pastor. It's the heart of the pastor.

If you've got your Bibles, flip over really briefly to the book of Psalms, Psalm 119. And these are some verses I say to myself daily. Psalm 119:127 and 128. Listen to these words, "Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold. Therefore I consider all your precepts to be right; I hate every false way." Can you echo that tonight? Do you love God's word more than gold? Do you consider the ways of the Lord right? And do you hate every false way? These verses also set the tone for when we go back to Psalm 1, the blessed man or the cursed man, two paths to life here that we see.

So look with me in verses 5 and 6. So here we're getting in a little bit further deeper into this letter. Verses 5 and the first half of 6, now John is actually getting into the practical side of commending Gaius of his faithful ministry, his faithful service to the Lord, his faithful work that he has done to these brothers, strangers as they were. These missionaries, as I'm going to say, as I said before, and I'll say it a few more times this evening, these men that have gone out for the sake of the name who were going out spreading the name of Christ. Now here's a couple of things we need to see. Again, we see this idea of beloved, it's a faithful thing in all your efforts, but what are these all your efforts? What does that even mean? What is Gaius doing? Here's the practical element of this letter that we need to see. Gaius is also being commended for supporting missionaries. That's it. Pretty simple, isn't it? He's being commended to supporting these missionaries. What John is saying is, "Thank you for taking care of these men who I've sent out of my church, who have now testified of your good works, who have testified that you helped them to be able to continue their work of gospel ministry." This is what John is saying here in verses 5 and 6, but the reality is also this, whether we realize it or not, we are called to care and to show hospitality for those around us.

Now for the sake of where we are and the time tonight, that word hospitality is what I want to hold up here for a second because it's actually a bigger word than we realize and hospitality has many different faces in a good way, many different facets, many different divisions for us to look at when we are looking at verses 5 and 6 together because when I say hospitality, it's really a twofold that we see here within 3 John. The first is this, John

makes it clear and as well as Paul does, and as well as the writer of Hebrews, and as well as our Lord does in Matthew, that the Bible teaches us that we should care for others in need. Now we can go into a whole different sermon series about how to help people well, so don't get me wrong. I know we can go down that road very quickly and we should, and we should talk about those things but for the sake of time I want us to look at what the Bible tells us to do. If you can write these verses down or jot them down, the first one is this Romans 12:13. It says this, "share with the saints to those who are in need." Practice hospitality. Practice hospitality. Hebrews 13:2, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by doing so some people have entertained angels without knowing it." Angels without knowing it. Matthew 10, "Whoever receives you receives me. Whoever receives me receives him who sent me," Matthew 10:40.

So the Bible is clear what we see in 3 John, what we see in Matthew, what we see in Hebrews and Romans is that we have a clear command that we are called to take care of those who are in need. But here's the other side of the application: we are also commanded to care for those who are continuing the work of the ministry. Another word, missionaries. Missionaries. Gaius is doing that. He's helping support however he did it back then with his time, with his finances, with his resources, with his shelter, clothes, whatever the case may be, his testimony came back sure, sure that he obeyed the commands of Christ to take care of these brothers so they can be equipped to continue their work. And the command is clear for us as well. We are called to take care of our missionary brothers and sisters as well and take much care and love, Capital Community, because we have an awesome mission's ministry here in the life of our church. Well over 13% of our budget goes to missions both locally and overseas. A couple hundred thousand dollars goes out of this church to be able to support missionaries all across the world and we've listed them in time and time before, but there's some right here in Raleigh, there's some here across the nation, and there are some who cannot even be listed for security purposes because they are in a dark dark country sharing the name of Christ. Pretty humbling, isn't it, to think about it. But that's what we see here.

Let me give you this number 2, with this idea of hospitality and caring for our kingdom siblings: hospitality is also essential in kingdom work. Hospitality according to the Cambridge Dictionary says this, "the act of being friendly and welcoming guests and visitors." This really is the hallmark of Christian living, showing hospitality to our brothers and sisters in Christ, the grace and the mercy that we have received from our Lord. Like 1 John 4 reminds us, we love because he first loved us. The love that we have received from the Father we should be giving to others. It's that clear. It's that clear from scripture and the same thing with Matthew 10. When you receive, when you take in a brother in Christ, you're receiving Christ himself. That's a huge command and conviction, isn't it? But that's what we see with this idea of hospitality. But let me also say it on a practical level: hospitality is also very much for building up the kingdom of God because what it does is it also continues to help you and me to do life together on a practical sense. When you get to know somebody, when you invite them over for a meal, you go to dinner with somebody, you get to bring down that Sunday facade and you get to see what's going on. You get to hear about how they're struggling. You get to hear about the

ways they're being encouraged, maybe in a season of blessing. Whatever the case may be, that's what we see with the gift and the command for us to show hospitality.

And let me say that also with a couple of practical elements of hospitality. I'd be remiss if I didn't say these few things. Hospitality looks different for everybody. Whether you open your home, you take somebody out for dinner, you call them which, by the way, that means you actually take out your phone and you dial the number and there's a voice on the other end of it. It's a beautiful thing, and I say that because, you know, we text so much these days. But really, there's a voice on the other end of that phone. It's amazing. But to call somebody, to check in. "What's going on? How are you doing?" But yes, there is a gift as well of opening up our homes to somebody. Listen, hospitality, it means you have to give up yourself. You've got to be able to serve. And then listen, I know all of us in this room can attest from going over to somebody's house, going out to dinner, when someone does that with you it really is special, isn't it? It's intimate. It's kind. It's sweet.

I love how Jonathan Edwards talks about the sweetness of Christ and it really is a sweet time to gather together with the brothers and sisters in Christ. Let me just say this on another level: COVID robbed us of so many things, but I think what COVID robbed us of more than anything was being together. What COVID showed me as one of your pastors of being in this room by myself with just Grant and a camera for 12 weeks, that's pretty sad. And I'm good looking. And Grant, I mean, he's gotta put up with this, you know. But listen, I remember that first Sunday when we opened up. It really was, honestly, a lack of words to see people, just to see people. Let's don't take that for granted when we were showing hospitality, when Jesus says in Matthew 25, "When I was hungry, you gave me no food. I was thirsty, you gave me no drink." Remember he says, "Lord, when were you hungry? When did we see you?" He answered them saying, "Truly as you did not to one of the least of these, you did it all to me." Clear command there.

But open up our homes. But also the reality is this: when we are hospitable, it goes back to verse 3, it also shows where your true belief lies. Listen, hospitality is different for everybody in their own context and season, okay? You know, when I, for example, you know we just had a baby, you know? I'm not necessarily maybe invite you over to my house when we've got screaming kids everywhere and all stuff like that. Do you see what I mean for that example? There may not be the season in the context to invite somebody over, but nonetheless there are so many different ways in the means of grace to be able to be hospitable and to show love for one another.

But also I want to say this: I pray on a practical level when missionaries come to this place, I pray they will leave when they go back to their mission organizations, when they go back to their home turf, that they can say, "I was cared for. I was loved." What a way to go back. What a way to echo the words John said to Gaius that your testimony is true. Your testimony is true. But also the reality is this: it's very tempting for us as the people of God not to want to be hospitable in everyday church life. Listen, it's easy for us to be a fly on the wall, come in, come out and that's it, treat it like a bank transaction. I pray that you and me when you see a guest, welcome them. When you see a brother and member here at Capital, welcome them. See how they're doing.

I remember a couple of months ago I called a visitor who is now a member, and I was on the phone with that person and we're talking and we're getting to know him, put him on speakerphone with her husband. It's the three of us on the phone and we're talking and I remember the husband, I think it was, said to me, "Hey, by the way, you're not the first person from Capital to call us." I said, "Really?" He said, "Yeah." So he's sort of telling me the names of people who had gotten their information and they had called them before I did and I'm the best pastor here. [laughter] And yet someone beat me to it. Grant's not in here so I can say these things. But the reality is that's hospitality. That's how the kingdom is supposed to work. That's how the kingdom is supposed to work.

Now look at the end of verse 6B, "You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God." Verse 6B, so to speak, the tail end of 6B is John again graciously saying, "Keep up the good work. Keep up the good work. Keep doing what you're doing." As Grant says to us a lot here, "Keep on. Keep on." And that's what he's saying at the end of verse 6.

Now look with me in verses 7 and 8, "For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth." Now we've heard it already been said that John is commending Gaius of his faithful work in ministry. He's saying, "Yes, you have supported these fellow Christians, these brothers in Christ to go out and spread the name." By the way, this is the only time directly that we see the name of the Lord being listed here. The name, by the way, is what they would say in these times to talk about Jesus. So that's what John is saying. You could say it another way of saying, "Thank you. You would do well for they were gone out for the sake of Jesus for the gospel of Christ," is another way for us to see it there in verse 7.

But nonetheless what we see also within verses 7 and 8 is that these missionary workers also are being faithful to what God has called them to do as missionary workers. And what am I getting that? Verse 7 is accepting nothing from the Gentiles and what is a Gentile? It's an unbeliever. Don't accept anything from an unbeliever. And why would John need to call that out? Why is that in this letter? The reason why John is calling it out is because at this time when this letter was written AD 85 to 100, there would be so many different false teachers out there who were going for the sake of the name, but not even going out, by going on a false way. There were so many Hellenistic Jews out there that were going out teaching truth as they would define it, but in fact they were teaching something opposite and they would take advantage of those people extending hospitality to those missionaries. Does that make sense? They would squander the hospitality of the good of others for no good reason, for false reasons. And so what these missionaries have done is that they are going out and saying, "We will only accept help and support from faithful followers of Christ," and by God's grace here come Gaius, he's faithful, and here he is, the man of the hour, which is also something for us to think about as well, isn't it? Again, I've been beating it like a dead horse. Repetition is good for the soul, but the reality is this: Gaius keeps coming back over and over again because of his testimony, because of his actions. If Gaius hadn't opened the door, would God have provided for

them on their missionary work? Of course, but what we see here, again, is the example of Gaius being faithful to what God has called him to do, to take care of these faithful missionaries.

But here is the other reality: what we see in verses 7 and 8 is also, I believe, a warning for us also to test other missionaries who were coming in the name of the Lord, so to speak. There are a lot of "missionaries," there are a lot of "pastors," there are a lot of "people out there doing good work in the name of Christ," but they are so far from heaven that it's shocking to see. And I say that as a word of conviction for us, but also warning because, listen, these missionaries had to test Gaius and Gaius had to test these missionaries. Do you see that, the relationship between the two? Because John is very much, I think, showing us here to use biblical wisdom to be able to make sure we are truly taking care of people for the sake of the name, fellow missionaries, fellow true faithful followers of Christ that we see here because 1 John 4:1 reminds us, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit but test the spirits," test the spirits, "for many false prophets have gone out into this world, but this you may know the Spirit of God," listen to this, this is how you know, "every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God and every spirit that has not confessed Jesus is not from God." You see what the plus is in the formula? Jesus. There's your test.

There's your answer of whether or not, but then you've got to get into the nitty-gritty to make sure they know who Jesus really is. There are a lot of false teachers out there that say Jesus, that love Jesus. They talk about him all the time but they don't know him. Just like Grant said this morning with the example of Queen Elizabeth, remember? Do you know her versus facts about her? It's a true saving faith that we need to see.

And then of course, in verse 8 John is clear with his command. He says, "Therefore we ought," we ought, "to support people like these." What is that "ought" there? It's a command. It's an obligation. I know I've beat it already, but it's again it begs repeating: we are called to care for fellow missionary workers. We're called to care for fellow missionary workers. It's a command. It's a command. And I know I've said it too many times already but that's what we see, but what we need to draw out from verse 8 as well is that we see two sides of the missionary work. We see those who are called to go and we see those who are called to support. But we also see it flipped over. We are all commissioned to fulfill the Great Commission. We are all commissioned to share the good news of Jesus Christ no matter where we are. And we are also called to support those who are going out. It's twofold and I wanted us to see that there in verse 8.

So in our time tonight as we close up, I really want to go back to that question again. I want to go back to that question I proposed just a moment ago: are you taking serious your walk with Christ? Are you taking serious your walk with Christ? Gaius is an example. He's an example of faithfulness. He's an example of a man who understands the things of God. He is a man who understands what God has called on his life. Gaius is a man to which we can look to as an example. Was he perfect? No, but he's an example. And when you think about that question, are you really taking serious your call to walk as a faithful Christian, your call of Christ, it really goes back to a deep reflection before you

and the Lord, really getting alone with God and asking like David did, "Lord, if there's any grievous way in me, show me and lead me to the way of everlasting."

There are Christians falling left and right in this world to moral failures, to outright fleeing the faith like these false teachers have done that John is writing to watch out for. Over and over and over again, we see people who say they walk with Christ, but when you get them out of this building, they look like just everyday Joes. And I don't mean that in a bad way, but you don't know if they're a Christian or not. And that really is something for us to think about, isn't it? Because listen, we have so many influences in our life. We have so many, our education, our background, our parents, our grandparents. There are so many providence of God that have influenced you and have gotten you to be the person you are today, whether you like it or not, for good or for bad. But thank God for his most important providence by saving you. If you are a Christian and that is a big if, and if what I'm saying to you is fuzzy and you're trying to connect the dots, the dots you need to make is a true saving faith in Jesus Christ. And I pray today that if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. Call on the name and. Lord and you will be saved. Come to a saving faith that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, rose again on the third day and is alive and is seated at the right hand of God the Father. And that truth is going to affect and change everything.

The gospel is applicable to all of life and, ladies and gentlemen, fellow members of Capital, or whether this is your first time with us tonight, I pray that when you go out, I will hear, you will hear of example after example after example of faithful Gaius's out there. Are you a faithful Gaius? Are you being faithful what Christ has called you to do? Or are you running in the exact opposite way? Now is the time to confess that. A lot of you know one of the things Grant and I love are Westerns, and one of my favorite movies is "Lonesome Dove." There's a part in there, anybody seen "Lonesome Dove"? If you haven't, it'll teach you how to live life. Most important, the Bible will teach you how to live life. Well, there's a part in there that Jake will know that Grant and I say, well, there's a part with Augustus McCrae and Woodrow McCall, they confront one of their fellow Texas Rangers, Jake Spoon, and Jake has run off with these outlaws and he's going to be hung for the consequences of how he's been a bank robber and the like. And Augustus McCrae says this famous line, he says, "You ride like an outlaw, you die like an outlaw." That's the ramifications of our sin. You choose the path of evil, you choose the path of sin, it's going to lead you straight down a dead road to damnation and hell, but thanks be to God we have a Savior, Jesus Christ, who leads us on the path of victory for us to live a life to which we can say and which we adhere to, to be salt and light in this world.

So 3 John pcks a powerful punch because it helps us to examine our life to make sure are we taking serious the call of Christ, taking serious what Christ has demanded of our lives. But also the implication is corporately as well. How you take serious your walk with Christ is going to affect the church. Do you follow that equation? How you take serious your personal walk with Christ is going to affect the corporate walk here at Capital. We're in this together. We're in this together.

Let's bow our heads and pray and then we will sing, "A mighty fortress is our God."

Lord, the road to Christianity, the path, the life of a Christian is not always easy. We have suffering. We have hardship. Sin. Lord, this world, Satan's thralldom, is constantly breathing down our necks. Lord, we've seen from 3 John tonight the clear command to be faithful. To be faithful. Being faithful, Lord, is being, Lord, lock step with the commands of your word, being men and women of integrity, being men and women who fear the Lord, being men and women who understand the great calling and the high calling of Christ. Lord, help us to be like our example here, Gaius. Help us, as the words of Paul, "Follow me as I follow Christ." Lord, if there is something going on in our life tonight, something bearing heavy on our conscience, I pray right now for that brother or sister to confess it to you and to repent, to run far, flee from the sin. I pray, Lord, also that you will help us in these days to take serious what you say about what it means to be a child of God. Lord, we love you. Help us, O Lord. And that is the great admonition we have, that's the great word we have because we are not left to ourselves. Thank you, God, for the Holy Spirit. Thank you, God, for the church. Thank you, God, for your word. So Lord, help us hold things close to our heart, the deep things of you. I pray all these things in the name of Christ. Amen.

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