

Workers with the Truth

3 John

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Bible Text: 3 John 1:5-8

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So as we think about the Great Commission, ask about this: what are you doing to participate in the in the Great Commission? Now the Great Commission is a command that Jesus gave his disciples in Matthew 28 and just read it for us. "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" Now, if you think about the Great Commission, the advancement of Christendom, the advancement of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who do you think about? If you were to associate the advance of the gospel with certain people, who would you think about? Well, undoubtedly you'd think about the Apostle Peter who at his first sermon over 3,000 preached, the second sermon 5,000. Undoubtedly you would think of the Apostle Paul who was just tireless traveling and preaching Christ where he had not been named and planting various churches. You might even also think about Apollos, who is mighty in the scripture, and we don't know all the ways that he was used, but he's mentioned in 1 Corinthians and so we know the Lord used him in a mighty way through, could be as the word is mighty, he understood the scriptures well. You might also think about some of the, moving on, some of the reformers. You might think about William Tyndale. You might think about Luther. You might think about John Calvin. And all these people played key roles in the bringing up of the church, the advance of the church. And it's the pattern is said even from early New Testament times, that the church embraced the Great Commission and moved forward, right? The book of Acts and the epistles of the New Testament bear testimony of the fact that the disciples were faithful to carry out the Great Commission.

They went out from Jerusalem and from Samaria, the outermost regions of the earth, and they carried that message out and the church has more or less been faithful to carry that message even through periods of distress, even in periods of persecution, even in periods of, I would say, disobedience to that. Even in the dark Middle Ages, God still had a faithful remnant who held to the truth and communicated that truth on to others. And we find ourselves even today, we find ourselves beneficiaries of many faithful men and women missionaries that we send out. William Carey, for example, or Jim and Elisabeth Elliot and Jonathan Goforth, and there's just so many people like Amy Carmichael, there are so many faithful servants who have taken the word of God and caused the word of

God to spread. It's really ultimately the power of God. It's not these people, but they're just servants.

So when you think about the advance of the gospel we rightly think about these kinds of people, they're figureheads in a sense, they represent something that they lead an effort that God used to rescue people from the kingdom of darkness. So when you think of these people, it's right, but I want you to understand today that it's not a complete picture, thinking of the Paul's, the apostles, the maybe even they, you know, those that come along like William Carey's, these key figures, that's not a complete picture because what we find in history through church history and even in the Great Commission itself, it requires lots and lots of people helping these key figures do what they do, do what they did. So the Apostle Peter, the Apostle Paul could not have done what they did without supports and help of the church, particularly Paul as he was going, being sent out on various missionary efforts, and we see this true throughout history. I mean, we've been studying English Bible history, somewhat on Wednesdays here or there, and one of the things that really stood out to me is you've got these men that led key efforts, they were trained in languages and gifted that way, and they translated the Bible into languages and they're known in history. You've got your William Tyndale, for example, very famous, but guess how many Bibles actually would have gotten to England as contraband if he was just working by himself? None. He was a wanted man. He couldn't show his face. He had to hide out. He had to do his work in secret. He needed people to be benefactors for him, to support him so he could actually do that ministry otherwise he'd have to be out working to get a job. He had to have people who were helping him get those Bibles, even the printed Bibles, and get them as contraband over to England. They had to have people who are selling them. They had to have people who are collecting the money, getting that money back so they could print more Bibles.

So just one example of how God uses really what we call from our standpoint in history, nameless workers, but essential workers. These are partners, partners in fact that helped Tyndale and others carry out the work that God wanted them to do. It's a very strategic ministry. And so we come to a passage of scripture today that talks about really the importance of the worker. And in this case, we know the worker's name. His name is Gaius, but many times in history we just don't know their names. And it's kind of interesting to point out that in scripture we do know some of the names, we just don't know what they did. For example, Romans 16 is packed full of names of people that helped Paul. In some cases, he tells us a little bit about how they helped him, other cases he doesn't. He just says greet them. They're coworkers. We don't know what they did right, but these are people that were strategic to the advance of the gospel of Jesus Christ and, again, we come to a passage of scripture looking at 3 John verses 5 to 8 that really celebrate and encourage us to think about our part in the Great Commission. What are we doing, both collectively as a church and individually as Christians, to participate in the Great Commission, seeing the important characteristics of that participation, of supporting them.

So without going further, let's just read 3 John. This is a short letter, so I'll read the whole thing, but this morning we're going to be looking at verses 5 to 8, so you can pay special attention to that. Again, 3 John, beginning at verse 1.

1 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. 2 Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. 3 For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. 4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth. 5 Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; 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. 7 For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. 8 Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth. 9 I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not welcome what we say. 10 For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly disparaging us with wicked words. And not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church. 11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. 12 Demetrius has received a good witness from everyone, and from the truth itself; and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true. 13 I had many things to write to you, but I am not willing to write them to you with pen and ink; 14 but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face. 15 Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

Now in verses 5 to 8, we see the Apostle John provide four reasons for supporting the work of faithful ministries. We call these missionaries today, faithful workers of the gospel. Four reasons and we see the first one in verses 5 and really 6 and that is the accommodation. God commends those who take on this endeavor of supporting missionaries and we see this through John's words. He begins verse 5 with the epitaph "Beloved." He describes Gaius again as beloved. Now again I'll point out from last time as I pointed out last time that Gaius is often called beloved, or John expresses his love to him. It just gives us an indicator that Gaius was under a lot of duress, and we pick up a little bit of that as I read through the letter you read about Diotrephes and putting people out of the church, so Gaius was under pressure to stop what he was doing, to stop the ministry he was doing to those who had traveled through these gospel workers. Diotrephes did not want that to happen, so there's some conflict in what appears to be a local church. So he's under pressure to stop and John writes to help Gaius to continue to do that and he's providing encouragement and he wants Gaius to know how much he is loved as a brother and also as a minister, as a coworker of the gospel. So again you see that "Beloved" as John's love flows through to Gaius.

He says, "Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever work you do for the brethren." Just stop there. The commendation is found in the words "you are acting faithfully." The word "acting" isn't talking about like actors in Hollywood and movies. It's not the fake stuff, it's the real acting that what you're doing is faithful. You're conducting yourself in a faithful way.

What was he doing? Well, we can gather from this letter he had received brethren, it's the same brethren that we talked about or read about in verse 3 where John says, "I was glad when brethren came and testified to your truth." There were brethren that came to Gaius and needed help, and they needed hospitality. They needed Gaius to help provide a place to stay, food, shelter, lodging and then help in getting back to their sending church. And so here John is commending Gaius for doing that very work. "You're acting faithfully." When you say acting faithfully, faithful to what? Well, look at the end of verse 8. In verse 8 John says that "we ought to support such men, so we may be fellow workers with the truth." So that's the emphasis or the thrust of the passage is being workers with the truth but here he's saying you're faithful, I think faithful to the truth, and ultimately it's faithful to brothers, other brothers in Christ. I mean, we see that he loved them. John specifically mentions that in verse 6, "they have testified to your love before the church."

So John loved these men and he gave them hospitality and that is faithful and consistent with the scriptures. For example, in 1 John 4 we read this, "Beloved let us love one another, for love is from God," I'm reading from verse 7, 1 John 4:7, "for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." So in essence, what Gaius was doing was nothing more than demonstrating love to brothers who had a need. He saw these brothers, we don't know the circumstances of how he met up with him, we can suppose from some of the things that are going on with Diotrephes, that these men perhaps came to the church and Diotrephes would not offer them a reception, would not help them and didn't want anybody else in the church to help them, and in fact put people out of the church for helping them. And yet we have Gaius who's willing to help these men, love these men and provide the help that they need.

Now why would, just to take a step back a minute, why would Diotrephes not want to help them? Well we know he wants to be first and we'll dig into that more at another time, but why would there be any hesitation with helping those who are traveling, who say that they're they're gospel workers, right? Well, part of the reason is found in 2 John, so you might not even have to turn a page to see there. Look at 2 John verse 7. We're told this, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist." So there are many. In 1 John we read that many had left the church and that likely was the church in Ephesus, but many have gone out from us, John writes, and that there are many antichrists. Yes, there's one antichrist yet to come, but there are many antichrists is what he says in the letter. So you must exercise discernment. Not every traveling preacher is

faithful and worthy to be supported. In fact, he says in verse 8, he says, and this is 2 John, verse 8, "Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward." Verse 9, "Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. The one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son." So in other words, there's the apostolic teaching, those who abide in the apostolic teaching know the Father and the Son. Those who don't abide in the teaching don't even know God.

And he says in verse 10, "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house," do not receive him, "and do not give him a greeting, for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds." So Christians if they're undiscerning in their hospitality and apply it today in our missionary support, which is undiscerning and support anybody that comes along, right, they go out and preach a false gospel, you're a partner with that false gospel. So there's good reason to be discerning with who we support and the ministries that we do support. We don't want to be participants with that and neither did Christians of that age. So there was some discernment that was called for and yet because true gospel workers needed help, you can't just say, "Well, we're not helping anybody. It's too dangerous. We're not helping anybody." And again that's not Diotrephes' concerns because scripture says he loved to be first and we'll dig into more of that next week. But notice that there was reason to be discerning.

So in 3 John, John tells Gaius, "You're acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren." There were true brethren who would go out and they would carry the true gospel. They would abide in apostolic teaching and notice Diotrephes doesn't do that, but John does, Gaius does, and he recognized these men as also abiding in the truth. So he supported them. So this commendation that John provides Gaius is provided because he acted faithfully. It was in faithfulness to the truth that he provided that support, faithfulness in love. And notice also before we, while we're still talking about the commendation that John provided Gaius, if we see at the end of verse 6, in the middle of verse 6, "you will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God," there's a lot in that phrase. He says "you will do well." Now, some commentators would say that that phrase "you will do well" was a way of saying please. "Please send them on their way in a manner worthy of God." But there's also an aspect of which he's saying "you will do well, you will be commended by God."

So if you think about the phrase "you will do well" or "having done well," that may stir up a remembrance of what Jesus taught in Matthew 25, the parable of the talents. You know, there were the faithful slaves. One was given five talents. He went and invested it, got five more talents. And when he came, and his master called him to kind of collect on what he had given him, what did the master do? He said, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You've been faithful with little, you'll be faithful much. Enter into the joy of your master." And he said the same thing to the one who had 10 talents and given 10 talents and he went and invested it and made 10 more talents. So he received the same kind of commendation. So there's a sense of which Jesus here is, John is commending Gaius for

his faithfulness. He's saying "you will do well. The Lord himself will commend you as a good and faithful servant if you will continue to do this."

So John is looking at the past, at Gaius's past actions and saying, "Continue this." Look to the future, it's a future thing, he said, "You will do well." In other words, there's going to be another party of missionaries, maybe another party of gospel workers that are going to come to you, and they're going to need your help again. And Diotrephes is probably going to oppose that, so that sets in the background. But he's saying "you will do well. Don't worry about Diotrephes, you just do what God wants you to do. God will commend you as a faithful servant."

Now the phrases he say "you will do well to send them on their way." The word "send" there has the idea of taking care of them. You could say it's hospitality. Now we talk about hospitality, we can't kind of import our more modern understanding of what hospitality is. There's some overlap but here, this isn't just a book about hospitality for hospitality's sake. This is a book about hospitality for the gospel's sake. This is about strategic use of one's home and one's resources for the advancement of the gospel for helping these missionaries, these gospel workers on their way so that sending really has the idea of hospitality, has the idea of providing for their needs, has the idea of protecting them whether in your home, it has the idea of then sending them out with the resources they need to make it to their next destination. Now to the extent that Gaius was able to do so because we learn in this letter, these workers aren't out for money. In fact, they're not collecting money from those that they're ministering to, so they have to have some way to purchase food there on-site as they're doing the ministry because they're not collecting money from unbelievers.

So that that is required in that, but look at that last phrase, "send them on their way," how? Look at your Bibles, "in a manner worthy of God." That's a very high standard. Now the word "worthy" is used in a couple other places in scripture, one of them is significant that we mentioned recently and that is in Colossians where Paul talks about the idea of walking and he uses it as a metaphor for living. He says "walk in a manner worthy of," what? "Worthy of God." What does he mean by that? Well, the idea there in that context, walking worthy of God, of your calling in God, walk worthy of your calling, he is saying walk in a manner of equal weight. So the worthy in that context is talking about looking at the calling you're given in Christ and it's a high calling in Christ, it's spotless, our standing in Christ is spotless. So because of that, seek to live that way in practice. And so you're trying to balance, you're trying to look at who you were called to be in Christ and live that way, to walk in a manner worthy of Christ.

So we go back to 3 John we he says to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. He saying send them in a way that's worthy of God. You could look at it from the standpoint of how would God, how would you receive God, how would you send God out? Now it's maybe an impractical illustration because God doesn't need anything, right, but keep in mind that Jesus taught in the judgment of the sheep and the goats, right, that the difference between those is between what they did or did not do. Jesus commends his sheep for taking care of him, for feeding him, for clothing him, and the sheep say, "Well,

when did we clothe you? When did we feed you?" And he says, "To the extent that you did it to the least of my brethren you did it to me."

So there's a sense in which Jesus identifies with his people, right, and when you are serving missionaries, you are serving the Lord himself. So send them on their way in a manner worthy of God that honors God. So Gaius would have helped them on the way to the extent that his resources allowed him to do that, which is really why John is praying in the first part, we looked at that last week, He said, "I pray in all respects that you may prosper and be in good health just as your soul prospers." So he prayed for Gaius to prosper financially so he would have the resources needed to help these men on their way in gospel ministries.

So you see this commendation in various ways in this text. John is commending but it's not the only commendation. Notice also in verse 6. He says, "they have testified to your love before the church." So these brethren, and we don't know a lot about them, we know very little about them, but they were out in some kind of gospel ministry and the church sent them out. Now, when it says they've testified before the church, which church are they talking about? Oh, it's not specified in the text, but in this period of church history, John is the only apostle and because of persecution, other things going on, we believe that church history said John ministered in the city of Ephesus. Now Ephesus was a center point of ministry in Paul's day though he based his ministry in Ephesus and ministered to many of the regions around. That's where he did a lot of training. That's where Epaphros and Philemon heard the gospel was during those days when Paul ministered in Ephesus. Well now in 3 John we're fast forwarding years. Paul is no longer on the scene. What Paul said to the to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20 where he says, "Beware, be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock because there's going to be false teachers even amongst your own selves who are going to rise and lead the flock astray." Well, that warning that Paul gave is the time setting of 1, 2 and 3 John. That time had arrived. False teachers had arisen even from within the church, led a church split, people left the church. That's the scene and what is going on historically with this.

And so the church, I mention all that just to paint the setting for us so that the John had come into Ephesus to help as the last remaining apostle to help steady the church, help provide truth, help provide training for those. And so it's likely that these men were sent by the church in Ephesus, and perhaps even by the Apostle John himself, were sent out to conduct ministry, gospel ministry, either teaching truths to believers in other places, or in this case, we see that they're teaching unbelievers. So they're evangelizing them, and we know they're unbelievers because of what he says later about the need and we'll look at that in verse 7 about the need for supporting them.

But notice that these are brethren that were sent out and when they came back, right, they gave a report about Gaius. Now you might think about that as a little odd but it's not at all. It's perfectly fitting in pattern. When the church of Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas out on their first missionary journey, that's the one where Mark abandoned them, but they went out and they went out to various cities, preached the gospel, what did they do? They came back to the church at Antioch and did, what? Reported to them what God had

accomplished through them. So they came back and gave a report. So these men that we're talking about in 3 John are just following that same pattern. They were sent out by a church, they went back to the church and reported to the church what God did among them, and part of what God did among them was by providing the support through Gaius.

And so they reported that and John rejoices in that and commends Gaius for that and these two, these men, these brethren testified of Gaius's love. Isn't that interesting? They don't say, he doesn't say "testified of your service, of your ministry." He could have said that and that would have been accurate, testified of what? Your love. Speaks of Gaius's motivation. He loved these these men even though he hadn't met them. Look at what he says in verse 5. He says, "Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are," what? Strangers. So when Gaius first ministered to them he didn't know them. They were, at least some of them were strangers. This isn't two groups, brothers and then strangers. These are brothers who are strangers. They weren't strangers in the sense of like foreigners. They were strangers in the sense that Gaius didn't know them. And the word "stranger" there is the word "xenos," from which we get our word xenophobia. So xenophobia means a fear of strangers.

So Gaius did not have a fear of strangers, and it's important that Christians not have a fear of strangers. Did you know that? It's a requirement that elders be hospitable, right? And to be hospitable is not just having people over for dinner. And it carries the idea of not being fearful of strangers. In fact, it's the love of the brethren. If you look at Hebrews 13, just turn there just a minute. It's not far from where you're at now. Hebrews 13. Hebrews 13 says, "Let love of the brethren continue." Verse 2, "Do not neglect to show hospitality for strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing this." Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers. In fact, that word "hospitality" there is actually a word for loving strangers, right? The Greek language takes the Greek word for love and combines it with the word for strangers, loving strangers. So it's actually something that's commanded of all of us, right, but required of elders that they'd be hospitable, and that's important for gospel ministry. It's important for shepherding. So someone who loves the word of God but doesn't love people is not a pastor. Perhaps could be a good teacher at a school somewhere, but is not helpful to actually shepherding people.

So we notice that John commends Gaius for this, that Gaius acted faithfully to the brethren when there were strangers. The brothers commended them. So all this to say there is accommodation not just for Gaius but for anybody who follows the pattern of Gaius. God will commend you. He'll say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant." But that's not the only reason to support faithful gospel ministers, faithful missionaries applying it to our own day and age. In verse 7 we see that why is there a need for support? Why is there a need? Verse 7, "For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles." So the word "For" is connecting it with what happened with what's been just said. So you're going to do well, he says, "you will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God, to support them." Why? "For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles."

So there was a need for it. Now keep in mind, this is a day and age where you had people, even philosophers, who would travel around from city to city, they would teach their philosophy and try to get as many followers as they could. And as they collected followers, they also collected, what? Money. And you know, the more popular they are, the more money they get, right? Kind of like music stars today do performances. But that was the idea. They traveled around from city to city. The more popular message they had, the more money they got and so Paul talks a little bit about this when he tells the Corinthians, he says, "I don't come to you with any kind of high-sounding philosophy. I don't want to come to you with an eloquent argument." Paul could have, he could have done that, but he came proclaiming Christ and Christ alone.

So go back to our context in 3 John. He's saying these workers went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. So there's two reasons here packed into this why there's a need, right? The first one is that they went out for the sake of the Name. These were not missionaries that were out to make a name for themselves. In fact, it's kind of, I think, fitting that they are unnamed. They went out for the sake of the Name, but they're unnamed and that's the way probably they wanted it, that's the way God wanted it because they're not named. So they weren't out to try to make a name for themselves, just like Paul, like the Apostle Paul. He wasn't out to build the first Church of Paul, right? I don't think he'd like it very much to know that there were churches named after his name, right? So that's just who Paul was. He was a humble man.

So these were missionaries who went out for the sake of, what? For the sake of the Name. Now when you see something like that, like when we looked at earlier in the letter the elder, how this letter starts out, the elder, and we looked at how the elder could only be in history like the last remaining apostle, right? Well, the Name here, and it's capitalized in the New American Standard Bible, probably is in yours to kind of help you get the hint, but when they went out for the sake of the Name, what's the Name? Jesus, right? The Name that saves. So they went out for the sake of Jesus. They went out for the sake of the Great Commission. They went out for the sake like of the glory of God, obviously to save sinners, they wanted to see people repent of their sins and be saved, but ultimately they were focused on the glory of God which is the highest motivation for missions. So John Piper has a great book on glorifying God in missions, and he makes the major point that we don't do missions just to see people save. Yes, we want people saved, but what's an even grander desire is the glory of God. We do missions, or involve ourselves in missions and involve ourselves in the Great Commission for the glory of God, for the sake of the Name, to see Jesus high and lifted up in this world.

There's another reason why they're to be supported, and that is they accepted nothing from the Gentiles. So they weren't like the traveling philosophers of that day who are gathering around traveling from city to city, trying to get as much recognition as they could so that they could get as much money as they could. Paul talks about how leaders would often travel around and eat to get support and he did not do that. But while he was doing that, he found it important, Paul's pattern of ministry was that he would not, he would go to a city and he would be a tentmaker. Now why would Paul become a literal tentmaker? Because he didn't want to charge for the gospel. He wanted to minister where

the name of Christ was not known but he was not going to charge for the gospel like the philosophers who went from city to city and city and had to collect their own, build up their own reputation. So he would go and labor with his own hands, and he did this to the Corinthians, we know that, and he would go and he'd minister to them and then when people were saved, then they would begin supporting his ministry or sometimes when gifts came from other churches that would support him, then he could devote himself fully to the work of the ministry and not to take any time to build tents.

But what's important for Paul is that he would not contaminate the gospel with ulterior motives of finances. And so when it says in 3 John that they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles, that's what they're saying. They weren't going collecting funds from the Gentiles. They talk about the Gentiles. It's used in a salvific sense. It's not talking about literal Gentiles. It's used in a metaphorical sense because Gaius was a popular Roman name. Romans are Gentiles for the most part. There's a few like Paul who are also Jews, but Gaius is a Gentile name so they would accept help from Gates. So they're not talking about Paul, I mean, John isn't using the term "Gentile" in a literal sense, he's using a metaphorical sense that speak of unbelievers.

So they accepted nothing from unbelievers and that's important because of the work of the ministry that Paul has for the believers there. So I think that the principle here flows out of 2 Corinthians 6:14 and here's the principle that many churches need to be mindful of today and we do as well. 2 Corinthians 6:14, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?" The word "Belial" is another word for the devil. What does Christ have in common with the devil? It's obvious, nothing. What has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Spiritually nothing.

And so he goes on and says, "Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are a temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God and they will shall be my people. Therefore come out from their midst and be separate, says Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will welcome you. I will be a father to you and you'll be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.'" So he's not saying come out in the sense of don't be around unbelievers. He's saying don't have a partnership with them. You actually don't have any partnership with them in a in a spiritual sense, so don't have any partnership with them when it comes to gospel ministries.

And so we see that principle being applied here. These missionaries, these gospel workers went out for the sake of the Name and they went out knowing they were not going to ask anything of those they evangelized because they didn't want to have a partnership with the darkness. They were carrying the gospel of light. How could the gospel of light partner with darkness? It can't. It's a mixing of the two and it's a confusing of the two. And so these men needed to be supported, 1) they're not making a name for

themselves, 2) because there's that financial need. They needed to be supported so that they could do gospel ministry there.

So why do we support people and missionaries, faithful missionaries and faithful gospel workers? One is because the action is going to be commended by God. He approves of it. Secondly, because there is a need for them to do that so that the gospel can go out without charge to those that need to hear the message. But we see a third reason in the first part of verse 8, "Therefore we ought to support such men." And notice the word "therefore." When you see therefore you ask why it's there for, right, and it's tying it all back into the context for us. Say because of all this, because there's this commendation, because there's this need, we ought to support. So if those who are in the kingdom of darkness aren't going to support the ministry, who should? Those who are in the kingdom of light. There is a moral obligation that we have as believers and you could say a responsibility, I would even say a privilege to support this work. That's our charge. Does God need us to do that? Well, if you really emphasize the word "need," God doesn't need anything. He could accomplish everything he wants to do without us, but he chooses to use us and he uses our time and our resources, our finances. Now time and resources are some of the most precious commodities to us. There are things that once gone, we can't get back, right? And God's asking you to invest time and resources, energies and efforts to support the work of the ministry. That's what John was asking of Gaius, and that's what God asks of us today. That's what he's asking of you today.

So there's an obligation for us to be involved and we are involved, and I know many of you are involved both as a church and individually. So this is a call just to strengthen that effort and to make sure that each one of you are participating with the gospel, with a Great Commission, and at some measure, right? When I say support, it's not all finances, right? There's a lot of encouragement that can happen, a lot of support that can happen through prayer and even just the emotional encouragement of kind of refreshing the spirit of missionaries by being in touch with them and let them know, "Hey I'm praying for you," right?

So it's one thing for me to say that and I say that to them on a regular weekly basis, "We're praying for you," but it's a whole other thing when they hear from you. You might not even know them, might not have met them but you say, "We haven't met but I'm going to Medina Bible Church, and we're praying for you. Just wanted you to know that." That's all you have to say and that's very encouraging. That's helping support in this sense, in the full sense of the term, keeping them on the field so that they're doing the work of God. You know, there can be the work of the ministry can be very discouraging, so it's not just about finances and you can help be a part of encouraging missionaries to stay on the field and keep their hands to the plow of where God has them at. So as we prayed for Walter, Walter is in a very hard place in Croatia, very hard spiritual ground. Be very easy to get, you know, discouraged with that. I don't think Walter is discouraged so I'm not saying that, I'm just saying it'd be very easy to be discouraged. So we pray for him in that, and let him know that we're praying.

So notice also there's the third part, there's this duty. Why do we support ministries like this? Well, we ought to do it. So there's this obligation. But also notice the fourth thing, the fourth reason why we are involved with missionaries, supporting missionaries is found the end of verse 8, "so that we may be fellow workers with the truth." And this really gets to the result. Not only are you going to be commended, not only are you going to fill a need, not only are you going to fulfill your obligation, but the result of it is you become a partner, right? Not everybody can go. There are people that God wants to go to the mission field, but there are people who need to stay. And when we see the importance of the people staying in Romans 10. I just want to read that to you or you can follow along with me in Romans 10. I'll just begin in maybe verse 11, "For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him, for, 'Whoever will call the name of Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? And how will they preach unless they are sent?" Paul just kind of backtracks. Yes, everyone who calls upon the Name of Lord shall have their sins forgiven. That's true of everybody, right? And if you're here today and don't know Christ, today could be the day of your salvation. If you believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, trusting in him, then you will be saved. That's a promise from God, right? That's not my promise. I'm just echoing God's promise. But you can't believe what you haven't heard and you won't hear unless there's a preacher, and there's not going to be a preacher unless someone is sent.

So in this sense, preacher could be someone officially sent as a missionary, but it could just be you telling a brother or sister about the gospel. But here Paul is looking at more in the official sense. How are these cities going to hear about Christ? How are these countries going to hear about Christ unless we send somebody? And sending someone isn't cheap, and it's dangerous for the person who goes, right? But there must be senders. There must be senders. William Carey is noted as saying, you know what, he likened missionary work to mining, mining it on the ground and he said, "I'll go down into the mine if you hold the rope." So like Walter's tagline on his emails, on his newsletters, he uses that and says, "Hold the rope. I'll go down, you hold the rope." He's in Croatia, down the mine, we hold the rope. We're part of that network that helps hold the rope for him.

So that's what the Lord wants us to do. You know, when I was in the National Guard many years ago, I think the ratio of battlefield soldier to support soldier was like 14 to 1. So for every soldier on the frontlines, they, the army, U.S. Army, knew they needed 14 people behind the scenes doing all the support work: ammunition, food, transportation, logistics, planning, everything. 14 to 1. Now is down to something like 6 or 7 to 1. But you know what? They haven't become more efficient. Do you know what they've done? Contracted it out so civilian contractors are doing the work so they can say that they don't have as many people involved, right, so they reduce their numbers, but you still have to have those people do those jobs. You know, there's computer and technology can help with some of that but you still need somebody to cook the food. You still need somebody to deliver the ammunition. You still need people delivering the ammunition, make sure the ammunition gets to be at the right place.

So all that to say is there's still a massive need for workers and that's true in a lot of logistics and a lot of things that goes on in this world, but in a spiritual sense, it's true as well. There is a need for us to be involved in supporting gospel workers and gospel ministry in the ways that God allows us to do that and that's something God desires of us, for a church. So we have to decide what kind of church will we be, and you have to decide what kind of Christian are you going to be. Are you going to be a faithful Christian who is commended, who helps fill the need, who sees your obligation and joyfully fulfills that obligation and then sees the result of becoming a coworker. All that to say and I'll come back to that is that's his point here at the end of 3 John. He says you're to be worker at the end of verse 8, that you may be fellow workers with the truth. You may not be the one who's sent, you might not be the one who goes to that city and proclaims Christ, who learns their language so you can proclaim Christ and see many turn to Christ. You might not be the first, you know, firsthand witness of all that's going on, but by faithfully supporting the one who does do that, then you become a participant. It's just like you were there. And it's not just my words, this is what God himself says. God credits that person's leadership, role ministry on the front lines, you get credit for that. He commends you for that, your partnership with that.

I want to show you this just in closing from Philippians 4. Paul talks about his learning how to get along with humble means. Look at verse 13 of Philippians 4. "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." It's not about just doing whatever your mind tells you. Look at the context. "Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone. For even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs." So they sent a gift so that Paul could keep ministering so he didn't have to take time to make tents, right? They just kept him working in ministry and they sent multiple gifts to him.

Look at her 17, he says, "Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account." Notice that, for the profit which increases to your account. The Lord credits the Philippian church's ministry as if they were right there working with Paul on the front lines. They get credit for that, and that's not like a credit to earn your salvation. These are just ways in which we honor the Lord, and so the Lord promises to reward those who are faithful. And he says there, "I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God." Notice what he says, its not ultimately a gift to me. It's ultimately a gift to God. It's a well pleasing sacrifice to God, an acceptable sacrifice, a fragrant aroma. All that language is language of worship. So the support is ultimately worship to God. So we support faithful ministries, faithful missionaries as worship to God.

So will you answer the call the Lord has placed upon your life as a believer and our life as a as a church to answer the call to be faithful to the Lord in this?

Let's pray.

Our Lord God, we thank you for your faithfulness, that you sent the gospel, you gave us the gospel, you gave us Christ, and having died for our sins, Christ commissioned his disciples and his church to preach Christ, to preach the gospel to those who had not heard the Name. And Lord God, I just ask that you help us to be faithful to do our part in the Great Commission. Lord, however you would have us to serve and however you would have us to support missionaries. I just ask, Lord, that you would help us to be faithful to the missionaries we do support and, Lord God, that you would enable us to support many more missionaries and to support them in a manner worthy of God. O God, help us to do this. Help us to embrace this work with joy and, Lord, just meet every need, provide us the resources that we need in order to do this for your Name's sake. For the glory of Jesus Christ our God we ask this. Amen.

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