

## Refuge City Church — July 23, 2023 “Support & Love” (3 John)

### **Introduction [Verses 1-2]**

“The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. 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.”

- 2 John, we dealt with the idea of “truth and love”; they are inseparable.
  - It is imperative that we stand on the truth of God’s word, as there will be some who try and shift our focus away from the truth of God and His love.
- In that same vein, we have to look *within* the doors of the church.
- John writes to a specific individual named Gaius.
  - But like the “lady and her children” of 2 John, the content of this letter is vital for the church as a whole to understand *and* practice Support & Love.

### **“Testimony” [Verses 3-4]**

“For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”

- John gave a similar testimony in 2 John, verse 4: “I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth...”
- People are going to notice you. They’re going to talk about you. What would they say?
  - Are you walking in the truth, that others can’t help but associate you and Jesus together? [Matthew 5:14, 16, “You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”]
  - **John 8:31**, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,”
  - **John 15:8**, “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”
  - **John 13:35**, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- **[vs. 4]** When there is a testimony given by someone as to what the Lord is doing in their life, or how their life has changed because of Jesus, how does that make you feel? [Encouraged? Filled with joy?]
  - **1 John 1:4**, “And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.”
    - To live, see, hear, and witness the experiential relationship with Jesus, in ourselves and in others, can’t help but produce joy in the life of a believer!

### **“Support” [Verses 5-8]; the ‘go & do’ and/or ‘receive & love’ of Christianity.**

“Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. 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.”

- The ministry of hospitality & support
  - Not everyone is called to pastoral ministry or the international mission field.
  - **All** are called to be apart of the body of Christ! [**I Corinthians 12:13**, “For in one Spirit we were *all* baptized into one body.”]
    - **Romans 12:13**, “Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”
    - **I Peter 4:9-11**, “Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies...”
- The encouragement given to Gaius is meant to encourage us in how we serve the church.
  1. It’s honoring to God
    - **Matthew 10:40**, “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.”
    - 2 John warned us about receiving deceivers into our homes and church.
    - Yet how much should we honor those who come in truth?
  2. It’s obedience to God.
    - **Galatians 6:10**, “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”
    - **Verse 8: “we ought to support people like these...”**
      - In 1st & 2nd John, we emphasized the necessity of our obedience to God’s commands.
        - **1 John 2:3**, “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.” [2:7-8; 3:11, 24; 4:21; 5:2-3]
        - **2 John 1:6**, “And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments...”
  3. It’s significant in God’s eyes.
    - You’re not a benchwarmer. We’re not meant to sit on the sidelines.
      - **Example:** Raising support for SVM = recruiting “team members”.
      - **Example:** Locked gate prior to Summer Fun Fest.
        - Without the relationship built with Bill, our former Custodian, the festival would’ve gotten cancelled.
- **LAST WEEK:** What’s the most important thing to come out of the mine? [**the miner**]
  - **QUOTE:** “William Carey [**18th century missionary to India**], comparing his missionary enterprise to the exploration of a mine, said: ‘I will go down if you will hold the ropes’.”
- Our support of Breath of Heaven in Africa, Lottie Moon for international missions, and Annie Armstrong [**church planting**] in North America.
- This is why we felt convinced to send encouragement to a small church plant in Newfoundland, Canada.
- Our partnership with Dream Center and other churches here in our city.

- We do what we can to make an impact for the kingdom of God, and if we're not the one's doing it, we know someone else is part of the same team, with the same mission, and we will do our part to support those efforts by 'holding the rope'... **[vs. 8] "that we may be fellow workers for the truth!"**
- **Philippians 4:14-18**, "Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God."

### **"Reproof" [Verses 9-11]**

"I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church. Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God."

- From the encouragement of one, to the reproof of another.
- John makes it extremely clear the faults of Diotrephes.
  1. Pride
    - He elevated himself to a position, not of authority, but tyranny.
    - Proper biblical authority is encouraged. We need leadership in our life.
    - Lordship vs. Leadership
      - **Luke 22:24-27**, "A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves."
  2. Deception ["talking wicked nonsense"]
    - He was telling lies about John and the others, which could cause a tremendous amount of distrust in biblical authority, the church, and cause division.
      - **Proverbs 16:27-28**, "A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire. A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends."
    - How much have we been talking about 'truth'?
      - **1 Corinthians 12:25**, "that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another."
  3. Disrespect
    - Closing the door of the church against those who may challenge his assumed authority; the very opposite of hospitality.

- It can be a very sad & lonely place when your pride keeps you from receiving the truth of God, and your ego keeps you from serving the Lord, especially in His church.
- **John 3:30**, “He must increase, but I must decrease.”
  - When we fix our eyes on Jesus and seek to imitate Him, we keep ourselves in a position of humble servitude, ready to do His will, as opposed to an arrogant authoritarian who seeks to be the center of attention.
  - **1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1**, “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”

### **Conclusion [Verses 12-14]**

“Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true. I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name.”

- John could have come back to Gaius, but he brought encouragement to another; Demetrius.
  - He provides us another clear example of someone who is walking in truth.
    - The importance of focusing on the good examples, not the bad [Ex. Hebrews 11; hall of faith]
  - Humanity is not perfect, but God gave us examples so we can walk in the present and presence with someone who...
    - Receives good testimony from other church members.
    - Lives according to God’s word on a regular, consistent basis.
    - Receives commendation by those in proper church authority.
- We need to support those doing the work of God, and we need to be supported/ encouraged by those who have gone before us.
- **Ephesians 4:11-16**, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ [walking in the light and love of God; 1 John], so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, [standing on the truth of God; 2 John] from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” [working to support one another in love; 3 John]