

Faithless Self-Love

3 John 1:9-11

Series: Christian Hospitality

1. Introduction –

- a. Today we see a contrast between the hospitable heart of Gaius and the inhospitable heart of Diotrephes.
- b. We will compare and contrast these two individuals. John warns of a false faith like that of Diotrephes.
- c. We are keenly aware that both men call themselves Christians but only one of these men demonstrated the marks of Christianity as set forth by John.
 - i. Love for God in obedience to all of His Word;
 - ii. Love for the family of God demonstrated practically in the service of our Brothers and Sisters.
- d. Two more contrasting pictures cannot be found in the New Testament.

2. Verse 9 – Putting Oneself First – I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.

a. I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes,...

- i. After commending and exhorting Gaius, John comes to the heart of the matter; his description of Diotrephes.
- ii. We note that John had made an attempt to write to the church, perhaps to exhort it to move towards Godliness as it was obvious that it was drifting under the leadership of Diotrephes.
- iii. John is not rebuking Diotrephes for false doctrine, instead John rebukes Diotrephes because of his behavior in the church and toward the believers.

1.

b. ...who likes to put himself first, ...

- i. Diotrephes does not understand servant-leadership which is essential for all Christians but especially for those that would lead within the church. Example of Christ.
- ii. He is a proud person and egotistical and refuses to recognize superior authority.
- iii. He desires to rule the church but not according to biblical principles. Hence not under the authority of God.

1. **Matthew 20:26-27** It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, (27) and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,
 - iv. ...does not acknowledge our authority.
 1. In hindering the letter from being read, perhaps in destroying it, Diotrephes was obstinate in submitting to Apostolic authority. In essence, he stood against God by refusing to submit to the apostolic leader.
 2. A refusal to come under the authority of Scripture is a refusal to come under God's authority; no matter what we might profess.
 - v. Notice the pronoun – our. Leadership established by God
3. Verse 10 – Evil Continued – 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.
- a. **So if I come,**
 - i. Here Diotrephes is put on notice. The church of God cannot allow sin rampant. It must discipline those that are sinning and excommunicate those that say they are Christians but who refuse to repent of unchristian-like behavior.
 1. **1 Corinthians 5:2** And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you...**1 Corinthians 5:6** Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?
 - b. **I will bring up what he is doing:**
 - i. **Talking wicked nonsense against us.**
 1. Gossiping maliciously – making unjustifiable accusations against John and his companions because he resents John's authority. He tries to undermine the true.
 2. **Exodus 20:16** “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
 - ii. **He refuses to welcome the brothers,**
 1. He shows no Christian hospitality. He does not want these brother to come because it would undermine his perceived authority.

2. By denying these missionaries shelter and food, he hinders the progress of the Word of God. Divine wrath abides.

iii. Stops those who want to

1. Diotrephes goes one step further and prevents members of the church from showing hospitality to traveling missionaries. We infer that he is trying to hinder the believers from receiving the missionaries and attempting to punish them for opening their doors to God's servants

iv. Puts them out of the church

1. Diotrephes places before the believers a choice: either side with me against John or receive the missionaries and be excommunicated.

4. Verse 11 – Imitate Good – Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

a. **Beloved** (The fourth and final time)

i. A reminder of the love of God and John's own love for him

b. **Do not imitate evil**

i. Never follow the example of Diotrephes. Here, Diotrephes is called evil – no matter what his confession might be.

c. **...but imitate good.**

i. **1 Corinthians 11:1** Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

ii. **1 John 2:6** whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

d. **Whoever does good is from God, whoever does evil has not seen God.**

i. **1 John 3:10** By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother

5. Benediction –

a. **Ephesians 5:1-2** Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

(2) And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.