

Apply The Word

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THE LETTERS OF JOHN

Message Info

Title:

Give Joy by Doing Good

Speaker:

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Date:

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Scriptures:

3 John

Theme: Give joy by doing good.

Introduction: In his third epistle, John is writing to the church to teach them to bring joy to Christ and to the church by doing good. He provides three examples in this short letter to illustrate the kind of gospel-good that believers must engage as they follow Christ.

1. Gaius (vv. 1-8, 13-15)

John introduces us to Gaius, a faithful brother who is the main recipient of the letter. Gaius is shown to be a brother who is "walking in the truth" (v. 4), hospitable, and by his hospitality he "lends" to the credibility to faithful teachers and believers whom he invites to his home. The fruit of his commitments and actions brings JOY.

2. Diotrephes (vv. 9-10)

Secondly, John brings to our attention the man, Diotrephes, who embodies so much of the opposite of Gaius's faithful participation. This man "likes to put himself first" and from that motivation, does much harm in his commitments and actions. He fails to acknowledge authority, but instead makes himself out to be a spiritual authority. He "talks wicked nonsense" in his attempts to tear down the legitimate spiritual authorities in the church. The fruit of his commitments and actions brings division and sorrow. There is such a vital lesson for the church in this example: we must discern when we are dealing with people speaking "wicked nonsense", who fail to acknowledge and honor authority, but step out in their own.

3. Demetrius (vv. 11-12)

Thirdly, John introduces us to Demetrius, whom he briefly describes as one who "has received a good testimony from everyone" (v. 12). This man's reputation was one of grace and godly character: seen by all. Our fruit should be obvious – as "whoever does good is from God" (v. 11). We are commanded to imitate the likes of Demetrius, and to bear much good fruit in the gospel so that the church is brought joy.

Questions:

1. Why are good works and "doing good" of vital importance to our fellowship with each other?
2. What are the specific ways that we should be bringing joy to the believers?
3. What is the nature of "wicked nonsense" conversations? How should we be prepared to speak and act when faced with this kind of talk? Have you encountered this kind of thing in the past?
4. Why is discernment required in our fellowship with people (including who we invite for hospitality)? What risk do we run if we fail to be discerning?