



Small Books, Big Messages

2 & 3 John – Part Four

Sermon Study Guide

November 15, 2020

Background

II and III John were written by the Apostle John, who also wrote the Gospel of John, I John, and Revelation (5 books total). Second and third John are the shortest letters in the New Testament. John was with Jesus for all His earthly ministry and witnessed all the works of Jesus as well as His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension to the Father. Because of his especially close relationship with Jesus, John was referred to as **“the disciple whom Jesus loved”**.

John lived longer than any of the original disciples, into his 90's. He wrote II and III John during the later years of his life. In these letters, John refers to himself as **“The Elder”**, which probably supports his place of respect and authority as the only remaining disciple who had walked with and ministered with Jesus.

In his writings, the phrase **“the elect lady”** refers to the church. The phrase **“her children”**, refers to the people in the church. In this short book, John writes a warning that is critical for the early church as well as for the church today.

We begin with 2 John:

- When you were growing up, where did you gather for family reunions or celebrations? What was special about those times?

Read 2 John 1-4

- In the first three verses, John emphasizes a key word-**truth**. What is important about knowing truth and being known as a man or woman of the truth?

- In the Gospel of John 4:22-25, Jesus said, **“those who worship God are to worship Him in Spirit and truth”**. Why do we need to evaluate our worship and teachings against the Word and Holy Spirit? Why in verse 4 of 2 John, does he tell us to walk in the truth?

Read vs. 5-7

- John asks the **Dear Lady/the church** to “love one another”. Why does John need to exhort the church to love one another?
- Love is intrinsically tied to keeping God’s commandments. In the Gospel of John 14:22, John tells us that Jesus said, “**He who has my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me**”. How do truth and love interconnect in this passage and how is Jesus glorified?
- There have always been and will always be those who preach a false message that denies Jesus in some way. What were the false teachings that were being spread at this time?

Read 8-9

- How does bad doctrine affect our rewards and, even worse, affect our eternal destiny? Why does John tell them not to live this way and why does he suggest that a person who lives this way does not have or know God?
- If we are abiding in and living by the teaching of Jesus Christ, what do we have and why is this important?

Read 10-11

- If someone comes to you and does not bring the truth of Jesus Christ – what are you to do and why?

Read 12-13

- We discover that John desires to write more to the church – but his supplies are low. Many missionaries today need supplies. Pray about supporting a missionary and finding out their needs so you can send a care package.

- John preferred meeting with people face-to-face and building relationships which resulted in mutual joy and encouragement. Are you in a group of believers that helps you grow in Christ?

Observations from II John

1. Truth/sound doctrine are of fundamental importance in the church.
2. In addition to holding to/believing truth, we are to walk out/live what we believe.
3. We are to love one another in the church.
4. It is important for believers to meet face-to-face.

Now go to III John.

III John is written to a man named Gaius, who was John's friend. Gaius was a leader in a church, though not a pastor. He was a man who practiced hospitality and was generous to traveling pastors and missionaries.

Read 1-4

- What do we learn about Gaius and his character? What did people say about him?
- What was John concerned about? Also, what pleased John the most?

Read 5-8

- John commends Gaius for the way he had shown hospitality to traveling ministers as they passed through his city and church. What was Gaius known for in and out of the church?
- How can we be like Gaius? (v.8)

Read 9-12

- It seems that John had written to pastor Diotrephes asking him to welcome some traveling ministers. How did pastor Diotrephes respond to John's request?

- As a result, John felt like his authority as an original disciple and as an elder was being ignored. What was going to happen when John comes to visit the church?
- Diotrephes was stopping anyone else in the church from welcoming others and he tried to put believers out of the church. What do you think would happen to a church that routinely rejected hospitality to traveling ministers and visitors? How would you evaluate us – are we a church that practices hospitality? If so, why and if not, why not?
- Describe Demetrius. Is he the kind of man you would follow?

There is no place for evil in the kingdom, and selfish pastors like Diotrephes. Diotrephes was not one to be imitated, but Demetrius surely was. Though we do not know very much about Demetrius, we do know he had a “good testimony”. What kind of testimony do you have at church and in the community?

Read 14-15

John had lots more to say to Gaius but wanted to talk to him face-to-face. Notice what a personable man John was. He also prays for peace for his good friend Gaius.

Observations from III John

1. Christians need to be willing to partner with those who are ministers of the Gospel.
2. Young leaders need to be influenced by those who are older, wiser, and more seasoned.

3. We need to have the important conversations face-to-face.

4. We all need to strive to have a “**good testimony**” with those around us