

Thursday, August 29, 2024 • Read 3John v1-4

Questions from the Scripture text: Who wrote this (v1)? To whom? What is his relation to him? What does he call him in v2? What does he do for him? What does he pray that he will do? In how many things? For what two types of prospering, especially, does he pray? How has the apostle responded (v3)? To what—in what two ways does the truth relate to him? Why did this gladden him so much (v4)?

**What should be one of the greatest joys in the Christian life?** 3John v1-4 looks forward to the second serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these four verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **loving others well, and loving the truth well, makes other believers' walking in that truth one of the greatest joys in the Christian life.**

**The elder.** By calling himself "the elder," the apostle John was highlighting his relationship to Gaius and the congregation to which Gaius belonged. John is an apostle, but to Gaius and that church, he was their elder.

**The locus of love.** Later, John is going to talk about receiving and caring for others for the sake of the truth that they bring with them. But first, he points out that Gaius is beloved especially for the sake of the truth (v1). They may not have had much in common. There are several men named "Gaius" in the New Testament, because it is an extremely common Roman name. But what they had in common most of all was the truth about the triune God, the divinity of Christ, the fellowship with God into which one is brought by faith in Christ, and the eternal life that comes from that fellowship. When believers have this in common, they cannot help but love one another dearly.

**The desire of love.** Because Gaius was beloved to him, John desired and prayed for every possible good that Gaius could receive and enjoy. Of course, this means, most of all, the good of Gaius's soul (v2). But it necessarily included also his health. Just as our Father's love runs the gamut from the hallowing of the Father to the bread on our table, our love should desire every good for its recipients, each good in its proper place and proportion. Perhaps Gaius's health had been in question. But even so, the Spirit employs that providence to give us a lesson here in loving one another well.

**The joy of love.** In 2Jn v4, we saw the apostle rejoicing greatly over the members of that church who were carrying the letter back to them. Now in v3, we see him rejoicing greatly, and it is for the same reason: a brother is walking in truth.

Gaius is not just walking in uprightness, morality, kindness, etc. Surely, he is doing all of these. But he is especially walking in the truth. This walking in the truth must include accurate doctrine about the triune God, Jesus Christ the God-man, life in Him, etc. But it is more than accurate doctrine. It is a life that is united to Christ Himself, Who Himself is the truth.

The apostle is not merely rejoicing over doctrinal precision that has powerfully produced Christian character. He is rejoicing that the truth itself is in Gaius. Gaius couldn't make the trip to John, but some brethren had come from Gaius to John (v3). And upon carefully asking after Gaius, John had come to this greatly rejoicing conclusion: Jesus Himself was dwelling by His Spirit within John's dear brother Gaius! This is cause for great rejoicing. If we know how the Christian life functions, then when we see or hear of other believers genuinely growing in grace, we rejoice greatly: the Truth (Himself) is in them!

It is no wonder that the apostle would proceed that there actually isn't anything that could give him greater joy than this (v4). He has a fatherly spiritual responsibility for those under his care in the church. And what could be greater or sweeter than to know that Jesus Himself is permeating their life with Himself?! Of course, as we see in the rest of John's writing (and in all of Scripture), this cannot be separated from the doctrinal truth of Who Jesus is and how He saves. But this doctrine is about a reality, and it produces that reality, and when we hear about believers living that reality, the reality rejoices us!

Dear reader, I hope that you are a beloved one who is walking in truth. And I hope that part of that walking in truth is coming to a place in your life, where there is no greater joy than this for you, also.

What truth about Jesus do you believe? Whom else do you find yourself loving on account of their believing that as well? Whom do you know that walks in the truth? How do you know that you walk in the truth? How does this come about in someone's life? What makes this such a cause of joy for the believer? How much of a joy do you find it to be to yourself? How can that be increased?

*Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for how we have failed to love one another in the truth. Our hearts and minds often emphasize many things about those whom we love, even emphasizing them above how much we have in common in our faith in the Lord Jesus. Forgive us for how our love for others has been small, not desiring and praying for their prospering in every way in body as well as soul. Forgive us for how we have been satiated by worldly pleasures to the point that we would not be able to say honestly, with the apostle, that we have no greater joy than that other believers are walking in truth. Forgive us, and keep sanctifying and growing us until we are conformed to Christ in this, we ask in His Name, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP197 "Christian Unity" or TPH406 "Jesus, with Thy Church, Abide"**

**"(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))**

Third. John verses one through four. These are God's words. The Elder. To the Beloved Gaius whom I love and truth. Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when Brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you just as you walk in the truth.

I have no greater Joy than to hear. That my children walk. In truth. Men so far, the reading of gods inspired and inerrant word. Apparently, there are some Brethren who have Come and seeing the Apostle, John and They are going back to the congregation. That Gaius belongs to a congregation for which the Apostle John.

has some shepherding responsibility. As he identifies himself here, not as The Apostle or John?

As he identifies himself here, not as The Apostle or John, but as he did.

But as he did in second John identifies himself as the Elder. And so it's this isn't being written just with merely with Authority or in his office as an apostle generally, but as an elder to several churches in the area, And some of the men from This particular guy is his church, we don't know if he's one of the three other goddesses, New Testament is very, very common Roman names.

So Probably unlikely. Even there's one of these other three. but John has asked after him and he's asked after his up. Or at least he has asked after his, Spiritual health, the prospering of his soul and he's glad to hear that. His soul is prospering.

But it seems that there's question also about his health, whether John has asked about the health, or those who are from that church have Informed John about some difficulty with Gaius's Health. In response to John's asking. but he's the Apostle, John has met Brethren from that. And they have given him a good report, and he has rejoiced greatly.

And he thinks Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He, thanks in his Joy. I should write a letter to tell them how glad I am and to give them. Some instruction and some warning and We'll get to that instruction and that warning. Next week, and maybe the week after that.

As well. But first, we just have his expression. Of love and joy. Those who are Christians should love one. Another this has been a great theme of first John, it was one of the great themes of second John. And John himself, of course loves this Gaius. but not only then should Christians generally love one another, but there was a special love.

Of Elders unto their people of those to whom the shepherding of souls is entrusted and Towards those. Souls. Towards those people. Whom they are shepherding. And so, the first thing we see is the locus of this love. The. From which this love comes upon which this love centers.

Verse one to the Beloved Gaius whom I love in truth. I love in truth. It's not just saying, I'm not pretending to love you, like whom, I truly love. But in truth, here is A location as it were. there are many reasons. We might love one another.

things that we have in common, the compatibility of our personalities together, the experiences that we have had our history towards one another relationship in one of the Spheres that God has created whether the family or the church or the society of the state, more generally in its Providence, many different Factors.

Enter into our loving one, another and our reasons for our loving one another. But here is the highest factor for any of us is that we are in the truth together, or as he puts it for Gaius. Verse 3, the truth is in, not just that God has convinced us that Jesus is God, the son and so he's made us to confess the truth about God, that he's Triune the truth about Christ that he's God.

And man, the truth about salvation that it's in Christ alone, through faith alone, and that this Faith, unites us to him and produces His life in us, brings us into a shared life with him and Eternal life at that, and all these things as our truths that are in us.

But the truth really is in the Lord, Jesus, he is the truth. And when he has convinced us by his Spirit of all these truths and when he has brought us to the place where we are no longer in ourselves but we are in Christ. And indeed, by his Spirit, Christ has come to dwell in us.

Then when this is, this is the reality is when this is the case with someone else, we love them, dearly for our having this in common and even this in Union Other. And so this is the great Locus of Christian love. There should never be a greater reason that we are loving.

One another then that we are both in the Lord Jesus, that he is in. he has convinced us about himself and he has joined us to himself. So, to the Beloved, guys, whom I love in truth. And of course, he is stirring up for Gaius and for anyone who would read this letter for us.

That our love would be in truth in this particular way. And so that's the locus of love. Then we see What love desires. So why love loves whom I love and truth or how love loves whom I love and truth. And then what love desires, beloved, it's still singular here.

I know you can't tell in the English turns, to the plural. when It's talking about the Brethren and my children in the plural, but other than that, it's singular. All of the you use here and this beloved beloved I pray that you may prosper in all things.

And to be in health just as your soul prospers. So what love desires is Every good for its object, not just some good. Not just the main good. Sometimes. When when someone has mistreated or neglected, someone else in some ways because we are both finite and we miss things and sinful.

And so we don't care as much as we should. You'll, Excuses. Given. you know, I was really caring more for your soul. Well, Love, ought not to prioritize one over the other. it genuinely desires, good every possible, good for its object. And of course, if this love is in truth, this desire is expressed.

Not just in wishes, but in prayer. Beloved, I pray. That you may prosper in all things. And so, yes, the first thing, the great thing that John inquires about that, he rejoiced greatly over hearing about, had to do with Gaius's Soul prospering, But he's also heard now that gaius's body Gaius's Health.

May not be as well as it could be. And Christian love. Brotherly Love. Cares for every part of the person because it is imitating. God's love Even as Sophia is telling us this week and repeating the Lord's Prayer and the children's catechism. we too, when we pray to God, praying for those things, that our father in Heaven knows that we need before.

We ask praying for big things like the hallowing of God's name and the coming of his kingdom and the doing of his will and our being forgiven of sin and not falling into evil, not being tempted, and all these big things. And yet, what else do we pray for?

Give us this day. Our daily bread. Pray every day for the little bit of bread that we'll have that day, that will need that day. And then we pray the next day for a little bit, a little bit of bread that we'll need for that day. And you see how God cares for us.

Yes, he cares for the most important, things most greatly and teaches us to pray and desire the same. According to the the priority that he teaches us in scripture, but God doesn't leave anything out. He cares for us completely, he cares for us in every detail and our love for one.

Another should imitate that too. That we should care about. the details there. there is a priority. Of detail. in our lives but there are no minor details. for our Christian. Brother or sister. I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health.

Just as your soul prospers. And so the desire of love every good. Its object and then the joy of love. that we Rejoice, of course, over any good but that we Rejoice most of all To see Those whom we love. In the truth, the truth in them and especially as demonstrated by their walking in truth.

and so being in truth or having the truth in you, having the Lord Jesus in, you is not only a function or merely a function. Of holding to and being able to repeat accurate Doctrine. That's necessary. If you don't believe in Jesus as God the son, the second person of the Triune godhead who became a man to save us.

And has died and risen again and ascended into heaven and soon, returning, Etc. Whatever you are calling Jesus. Not actually he And, if that's the case, then you're not United to him through faith because the fancies of men cannot unite you to the actual living. True, second person of the godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is sitting in glory right now.

So, accurate Doctrine is necessary. but Walking in truth. That is the great demonstration is the fruit that shows what kind of tree you are. The good tree, bearing, good fruit, and the good tree being, of course, the one who abides in Christ and Christ abides in him. And so he says, I rejoiced greatly when Brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you just as you walk in truth.

So he's heard about Gaius that he's holding to the true Doctrine and he's heard even more the way in which Gaius lives. Especially we can. Expect or conclude deduce from first John and second John. Gaius doesn't just hold to the accurate Theology of Of God and of Christ.

But he loves the Brethren. Sacrificially, gives himself for the Brethren, maybe. it's not too much to infer here despite his poor health, he laying himself out for the the Brethren. And, maybe has been hospitable to Those whom John. Sent like this Demetrius also who has this good testimony?

But, Gaius is walking in the truth. John rejoices. Rejoices that Gaius hasn't been taken in by the Heretics, rejoices that Gaius's life is showing the Fruit of being United to Christ and he said he adds to that. I rejoiced greatly in verse 3 by adding I have no greater Joy.

The center here that my children walk in truth. That's a pretty amazing thing. The fruit of the spirit is Joy, the Lord John has known the Lord Jesus for a long time. And, And he's got lots of Joy. Many great Joys. And yet, none of them is greater. Than when he hears that his children are walking in truth.

Because he knows not only that Christ has done this. But that this this is the expression of the Life of Christ in. Themselves. And this is what John has been called to in his life, and his love, for the Lord Jesus in his office as the Elder to these various churches for whom.

He has some shepherding responsibility. And nothing glidens him more. Nothing glad and send more. Than hearing that one or another of these Christians and these congregations. Is believing the true Doctrine about Christ and is walking living in Union with Christ as demonstrated. How they live, and how they love and how they obey and how they serve.

what Joy We ought to have and want another. This is a great antidote. There are problems. There is this. deotrophies whom he calls out by name in verse 9. From the congregation. That he's sending the letter back to, where this Gaius is. There are lots of griefs.

in this age in which there are sinners in the churches and there's heresy, and so forth. And yet, we see one of the antidotes that God has given. in the Christian Life. Look at what the Lord is doing. Rejoice greatly over, Jesus himself in the lives of those in whom he is working.

John does not write this letter. to or on the occasion of geotrophies and the need for deotrophies to be corrected. He writes it to Gaius. Occasion of rejoicing greatly over, what he has heard about Gaius and he does take the appropriate opportunity to write the correction.

But this. A helpful example to us. that we would, Love and Truth and desire. That would all that is good. Every good for those whom we love. And that our love would be a rejoicing love. Eager to hear. The fruit of Christ's work in Christ's own life, in Those whom we love that, we might Rejoice greatly Over.

So may the Lord give us so to love. And so to Rejoice, And then, let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we read and we hear. And we think about this, we realize that We have not rejoiced greatly so much as we should. And it is in part, because we have not loved so much.

As we see here that we should, or In such a way as we should. So help us by your spirit. Use this portion of your word and write its truth in our hearts. And make us to love more and to Rejoice more. According to your scripture, according to the mind of Christ, as you make us to be more like he is, and which we also ask through him.