

Lessons From III John

Preacher Support

(III Jn 5-8)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of "Lessons From III John."
 - a. We looked at the introductory lesson last week.
 - i. We noticed John writes concerning three men and their "walking in truth."
 1. Gaius the recipient of the letter – walked in the truth.
 2. Diotrephes is the antagonist of the letter – didn't walk in the truth.
 3. Demetrius is the living example of the letter – walked in the truth.
 - ii. The letter focus on these three men and their righteousness or lack thereof.
 - b. Today we are going to look at what John writes concerning the hospitality of Gaius toward those that would proclaim truth ie preachers.
3. In II John we saw the danger of receiving and supporting one that did not proclaim the doctrine of Christ.
 - a. Here in III John we see the good that can be done when one receives and supports those that are proclaiming the doctrine of Christ.
4. The supporting of local preachers has long been understood as a righteous act and something that is important.
 - a. It is only in recent years that I have come across those in the brotherhood that are against the supporting of a local preacher.
 - i. The argument goes something like this, as I have heard it, "We don't find congregations in the N.T. supporting local preachers and thus we shouldn't do it. It is also better if the men of the congregation are able to preach as it will help them grow faster."
 - ii. The biblical arguments against this logic are is to find.
 1. First we see plenty of local preachers.
 - a. I & II Timothy are to Timothy a local preacher at Ephesus.
 - i. **I Ti 1:3** "As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine"¹
 - b. Paul was a local preacher in Ephesus as well for three years, longer than many preachers today.
 - i. **Ac 20:31** "Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears."
 2. Second this idea that men will grow spiritually fast if they are preaching is true but not because there is no local preacher but because they are forced to study the Bible to prepare their lesson. They could do the same study without preaching and grow just as much, a local preacher can't be the excuse here.
5. Thus we are going to examine what John writes concerning the "supporting preachers."

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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I. Authority For Supporting Preachers

- A. Jesus taught the support of preachers was a righteous thing
1. Remember Jesus himself was supported so He could preach the good news.
 - i. **Lk 8:1-3** "Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, **who provided for them out of their means.**" (emphasis mine)
 2. Jesus taught the 12 disciples as He sent them out this very truth.
 - i. **Mt 10:5-10** "These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. 9 Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, 10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for **the laborer deserves his food.**" (emphasis mine)
 3. Jesus taught the 70 this as well.
 - i. **Lk 10:1, 5-7** "After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go...5 But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the **laborer is worthy of his wages.** Do not go from house to house." (NKJV)
- B. Paul, being a preacher, also taught this
1. Even though Paul often chose not to accept support from the local congregation he was working at, he did support the practice and authorized it.
 2. Notice what he wrote to the brethren at Corinth.
 - i. Soldiers are not expected to support themselves.
 - a. **I Co 9:7a** "Who serves as a soldier at his own expense?"
 - ii. Farmers are not expected to support themselves.
 - a. **I Co 9:7b** "...Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?"
 - iii. The Old Law illustrated this point as well.
 - a. **I Co 9:8-10** "Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned?"
 - iv. Paul even appeals to common sense to illustrate this truth concerning supporting preachers.
 - a. **I Co 9:11** "If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?"

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- v. The temple workers were not expected to support themselves.
 - a. **I Co 9:13** "Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings?"
- vi. Paul even reminds them what Jesus taught concerning this truth.
 - a. **I Co 9:14** "In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel."
3. Paul makes this biblical principle to the Galatia brethren as well.
 - i. **Ga 6:6** "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches."

II. The Reason For Supporting Preachers

- A. It is an acknowledgment to our faithfulness
 1. **III Jn 5** "Beloved, **it is a faithful thing** you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are" (emphasis mine)
 2. "When we show hospitality to brethren (and ministers), it demonstrates our faithfulness to the teachings of Christ and His apostles" (Sermon: Supporting Ministers Of The Gospel by Copeland, Mark)
- B. It is proof of our love for one another
 1. **III Jn 6a** "who testified to your love before the church..."
 2. We exhibit in our life a willingness to keep the "new commandment" first given by Christ.
 - i. **Jn 13:34-35** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 **By this all people will know that you are my disciples**, if you have love for one another."
 3. When we see such love we should be grateful for the opportunity to bear witness of our love for the brethren in hospitality.
- C. It honors God
 1. **III Jn 6b** "...You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God."
 2. Worthy of God means in a way that is be-fitting of God.
 - i. In other words the way in which we support preachers of the gospel is in effect a reflection upon God Himself.
 - a. If we don't think of God's faithful preachers as worthy of support what does that say we think of God?
 - b. If we honor and support His servants who stand up and shout out His Word, it is because we honor and respect the "One" he serves.
- D. It is an indication of our support for God to the lost
 1. **III Jn 7** "For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles."
 2. Accepting nothing from the Gentiles would seem here to indicate the accepting nothing from the lost souls or those that are outside of Christ.
 - i. Thus preachers are therefore to get support from the brethren.

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3. It is easily seen why this would be the case.
 - i. When preachers accept outside support from non-Christians there is a natural question that will arise.
 - a. What he is teaching isn't worth anything since he can't even get his own people to support him.
 - b. Is he in it just for the money?
 - ii. If the gospel is supported by brethren and thus those that know it best it can send a powerful message of its worthiness and value.
- E. It obeys God
 1. **III Jn 8a** "Therefore we ought to support people like these..."
 - i. Notice this isn't a suggestion but rather a direct statement of fact.
 - ii. Supporting a preacher of the gospel is not only an opportunity but an obligation.
 - iii. An obligation support by not only the apostle John but the apostle Paul and the Messiah Jesus.
 - a. **III Jn 8; Ga 6:6; Lk 10:7**
- F. It makes one a participating worker for the truth
 1. **III Jn 8b** "...that we may be fellow workers for the truth."
 2. When we support any teacher, we become a supporter and thus co-worker in what they do and teach.
 - i. If we support teachers of error we are fellow workers of error and thus in sin.
 - a. **II Jn 10-11** "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, 11 for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works."
 - ii. If we support teachers of truth we are fellow workers of truth and thus we will be holy and acceptable to God in such.
 - a. **Ph 1:3-5** "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."
 - b. **Ph 4:15-16** "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. 16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again."
 3. When we support someone we also are expecting to have the same reward and will as given what we just read. Thus the reason to be so careful.
 - i. **Mt 10:40-42** "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. 41 The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. 42 And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

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CONCLUSION

1. Brethren we not only have authority to support preachers but we have a plethora of reasons to do so.
 - a. **Ro 10:15** "And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!""
2. Question: Are you confident with all those you support to teach the gospel?
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**