LIFT – **3rd John – Three Men and a Baby**

**Me being a kid – examples.**

**There comes a time – to grow up. That does not mean you are not fun – or that you can’t have a child like adventurous spirit.**

**It means changing the way you thing - 1 Corinthians 13:11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.**

**Today a look at a man who never grows up – 3 men and a baby – being mature in an immature world – still happens**

**Background Check:**

* **The world during the NT**

**A time of Rome providences (map pic). Rome conquered and worked to keep the kingdom under control - Usually at war somewhere to keep people under control. Former Israel was then a Roman province. With a strong police and military presence at all times.**

* **The political arena of the early church**

**Inclusive pagan. Rome acclimates cultures – allows other beliefs as long as you worshiped the emperor. Strict social classes. Rich & poor.**

**Rome opposes Christians and Jewish people for being monotheistic often with great persecution, arrest, and death. Rome saw them as a threat to the empire’s unity. Jewish cultures responded with riots and war. Christians responded with submission, courage, grace, & peace.**

**1 Peter 2:13 Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. (we can because this is not our home)**

**Paul says similarly - Romans 13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which is from God. The authorities that exist have been appointed by God.**

* **The lives of the early church**

**Diverse classes (dif from culture). Christian churches in different cities – had different issues. Examples – local influences (Corinth) Traveling preachers - some were false.**

**Today - 3rd John gives insight into the early church.**

**4 portraits of 4 men. Still like many of us today. John is writing to one of and mentions the other 2. He writes to encourage a personal friend.**

**Let’s read this short letter to a dear friend.**

**3rd John - 1 The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.**

**2 Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. 3 It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.**

**5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. 8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.**

**9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. 10 So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.**

**11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. (imitate others) Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. 12 Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.**

**13 I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. 14 I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name. (The heart of who the Apostle John is a person who loves people & friends - we’re part of a family)**

**A personal letter from an aging apostle. Why do you think it made its way into the Bible? We learn from good & bad examples.**

**3 Men and a Baby (1 leader / 2 laymen / 1 man-baby)**

* **John - Man 1**

**The elder / apostle – walked w/ Jesus – living out his years in Ephesus Writing letters to encourage and challenge the people of God.**

**His challenge - Keep the main thing – the main thing.**

**Love others and live truth. Love and stand strong in the truth.**

* **Gaius - Man 2**

**The person John is writing to. Common name appears 5X in the NT as possibly 4 diff people. This one is a good friend of John and a leader of a church. Considered a great leader and shepherd.**

* **Demetrius - Man 3**

**Spoken highly of – and lifted up as an example of someone to imitate.**

* **Diotrephes - The Baby**

**Warned of and told to avoid and not imitate**

**5 Traits To imitate: Qualities to look for – seen in Gaius & Demetrius**

1. **Faithful to the truth (3)**

**3rd John - 1 The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 3 It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth...**

**Knows it – keeps it – teaches it. Faithful – unwavering in it.**

**We unpacked this truth last week. He had right truth / doctrine.**

**What we believe matters: Jesus is fully God / fully man. One and only promised Savior who redeems - cross / resurrection.**

1. **Walks in the truth (4)**

**3 John 3 …telling how you continue to walk in it. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.**

**Doesn’t just know it – does it. Lives it out! Genuine!**

**James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.**

1. **True servant of others – (5-7)**

**5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God.**

**He provided for, gave to, fed, served – those coming thru. Most often without benefit for yourself. Does not expect others to do it – but steps up themselves.**

**“Faithful in what you do” - consistent/ reliable/ shows up ready**

**7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. (Christians are counter culture in how we serve!) 8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.**

**We work together for the truth – for Jesus to be known.**

**What our volunteers to is to make Jesus known.**

1. **Has a good love reputation (6a)**

**6 They have told the church about your love.**

**Known for your love – kindness – compassion – gentleness. People just might think you are part of Jesus family.**

**11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. 12 Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. (Good reputation - known by the truth itself - Jesus) We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true. (accept this guy – you can count on him)**

1. **A Good example to follow (11)**

**It is okay to imitate others, just make sure you’re imitating the right ones. We have examples not idols. People are imperfect.**

**5 Traits To Avoid: Qualities to notice in Diotrephes**

**Keep in mind each issue here has a story… and is still seen today**

**9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first…**

* **Self-promoter (9)**

**Self-exalting / Big ego / arrogant – 1st great sin (Satan)**

**Like’s the private parking, the attention, the praise.**

**Opposite Christ’s nature – Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross! (the self-promoter is one to avoid)**

**3rd John 9 Diotrephes … will not welcome us.**

* **Unteachable (9b)**

**Isolation / Rebellious / does not receive accountability. The lone ranger. Won’t even listen to the Apostle John.**

* **Slanderous (10a)**

**10 So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. (spreads lies - gossip)**

**This person loves to talk trash about others. Malicious lies. For the purpose of making themselves look more important.**

* **Divisive (10b)**

**10 He is… spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers.**

**Us / them dividers – loves to argue – quarrels. Divisive actions and words. In this case he is doing it at church.**

**Romans 16:17 - I urge you, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. (this is a word of caution about those who seek to divide the church)**

**10 … He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.**

* **Controlling (10b)**

**Leads with an iron first / manipulative / emotionally abusive – cult like. Control’s people and pressure people with fear of isolation.**

**If you help them – I am kicking you out!**

**A Few Insights**

* **You can’t judge a person’s spiritual life by material “blessings”**

 **3 John 2 Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you (prosper), even as your soul is getting along well.**

**His Soul was prospering – but his wealth is not (2)**

**Unlike the other two – Dio was spiritually poor, but materialistically rich**

**You can be rich in God – but materially poor**

**Your stuff is not an indicator of God’s blessings in your life**

**Those around the world who are materialistically poor but rich!**

**You can be materialistically wealthy – and spiritually poor**

**John then tells him how he has spiritual prosperity**

**Material prosperity is good (okay) – but spiritual prosperity is better and eternal (1 Tim 4:7-8, 6:6-10, 17-19 – Life Teams – true prosperity)**

* **Some “Christians” are not as they seem**

**Dio – who is a leader in a church. He was in the church – but not a true follower of Jesus (11)**

**How did Dio get so powerful - Some had allowed Dio to lead. They did not take a stand for the truth. He was able to get away with it.**

**11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.**

* **People are always watching and follow us – our good and bad**

**The sad reality of 3rd John – people not only allowed Dio to lead the church, but they were following it themselves – and becoming like him.**

**Listen people are watching… and following. Family, co-workers, your kids – for good & bad. We all imitate someone!**

* **Our reputation must be greater than theirs**

**11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good.**

**Our actions – lives – reliability – purity – loyalty – has got to be greater than theirs.**

**Overcome evil with good – Romans 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” (bring healing) 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

**This is a great season – to put this to work. With the transition of political positions.**

**Ours / mine / your - reputation must be greater than theirs**

**I hope you see Jesus in us – in me. That it will override the actions of those who claim to be Christians who have hurt you or discouraged you. I pray you see Jesus. The one and only savior.**