

The Third Epistle of John

Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth. (3 John 1:8 NASB)

3 John 5-6

Someone read 3John 1:1-7

Someone read vv 8-14 (15)

Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; (3 John 1:5 NASB)

Beloved = *agapēte*, this is the third time John uses this term.

Prompted by the reports John received in the previous 2 verses

“acting faithfully” – what tense is “acting?” What does the present tense indicate?

It is ongoing. That hospitality was characteristic of Gaius. He is not merely talking about being hospitable, not merely having faith that it what he should do, he is actually living out his faith.

Gaius is demonstrating his loyalty to John and his fellow missionaries.

Where else are we encouraged to show hospitality to strangers in the Bible?

Heb 13:2 (cf., 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8; 1 Pet 4:9)

And when we welcome strangers and show them hospitality, who are we really serving?

Cf., Matt 10:40-42; 25:35, 38

Also, *The Didache* (ca 95ad) has this instructive passage:

“However, if his teaching contributes to righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, welcome him as you would the Lord.”

John is encouraging Gaius and strengthening him for the resistance of Diotrephes in v9.

“whatever you accomplish” – the Greek for ‘accomplish’ (‘are doing,’ NIV) is *ergasē*, which sounds like what English word?

Ergonomic, erg (a unit of force)

It implies a toilsome effort. It won't be an easy task. It may cost resources and time to show kindness to strangers. Such support could easily go beyond room and board. It could include such things as paying expenses, supplying them with food for their journey, washing their clothes, generally whatever they needed to make their travels as comfortable as possible.

What does the word "brethren" mean in this context?

Fellow believers, brothers in the faith.

Someone read the last clause of verse 5 in the KJV

"to the brethren, and to strangers"

Is this one group or two?

Now, someone read from a modern English translation.

"the brethren, and especially when they are strangers" (NASB)

Is this one group or two?

Can somebody who has been in this class for awhile tell me why the difference?

The older Greek MSS that most modern English Bibles are based on are more reliable than the ones available in 1611 when King James commissioned the Authorized Version.

Now, imagine you are Gaius. You are sitting at home one evening, when you hear a knock at the door. When you open it, you see a group of men standing there. Some are in shadow, some are partially lit by the candlelight from within. You have never seen any of them before. One of them says, "Hello, sir. We are Christians who are looking for shelter. Can you put us up for the night?" Would you do it? Why or why not?

Now, imagine the same situation, but when you open the door, the spokesman says: "Hello, Gaius. We are Christians coming from John in Ephesus. He sends you his greetings. May we have shelter for the night?" Would you do it? Why or why not?

and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. (3 John 1:6 NASB)

John now informs Gaius that upon their return (presumably to Ephesus), these missionaries have "borne witness your love". The verb "testified" is in a case that signifies an action done and completed in the past. We have a hard time expressing this nuance in English, and most often we use the simple past tense. We might say, "having once testified," but even saying it like this doesn't quite capture the Greek properly.

Testify = Greek *ēmarturēsan* which sounds like what English word?

Martyr – Someone who willing gives his life for his testimony of the truth.

This most naturally may be taken to mean the time that the missionaries actually stood before the entire church and gave the testimony to the way Gaius showed them love and hospitality.

And what Greek word does John use for “love” here?

Agapē, which means what?

The purest form of Christ-like love, which places the needs of the beloved above one's own.

Someone please read Phil 2:1-11

This is a beautiful picture of how Christ loves us. He suffered the greatest humiliation possible even before He drew His first breath as a human, the mere act of taking on humanity was the ultimate act of self-denial, to humble Himself, to the point of death for *US*.

And it was Gaius' experience of this love of and for Christ that animated his sacrificial love for his Christian brothers.

And for John, love is never a mere feeling or empty words; it is always an action.

1Jn 3:18

And where does our text say the brothers gave their testimony?

“before the church”

“before” implies they stood before (in front of) the congregation. “The church” does not have the article preceding it. It is close to saying “in church” in English.

As one commentator puts it: “Always and everywhere that man is to be highly esteemed in the Church, who combines firm conviction with a generous heart.”

Such a man was Gaius!