

Open in prayer

Read 3 John

¹ The elder: To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. ² Dear friend, I pray that you are prospering in every way and are in good health, just as your whole life is going well. ³ For I was very glad when fellow believers came and testified to your fidelity to the truth—how you are walking in truth. ⁴ I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my children are walking in truth.

⁵ Dear friend, you are acting faithfully in whatever you do for the brothers and sisters, especially when they are strangers. ⁶ They have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God, ⁷ since they set out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from pagans. ⁸ Therefore, we ought to support such people so that we can be coworkers with the truth.

⁹ I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have first place among them, does not receive our authority. ¹⁰ This is why, if I come, I will remind him of the works he is doing, slandering us with malicious words. And he is not satisfied with that! He not only refuses to welcome fellow believers, but he even stops those who want to do so and expels them from the church.

¹¹ Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. ¹² Everyone speaks well of Demetrius—even the truth itself. And we also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

¹³ I have many things to write you, but I don't want to write to you with pen and ink. ¹⁴ I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. ¹⁵ Peace to you. The friends send you greetings. Greet the friends by name.

Introduction

R In the early decades of the twentieth century, an advertisement appeared in a London newspaper. It was brief. Blunt. • And it offered almost nothing that any sensible person would desire. ••

R It read, • *Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.* ••

R That was the legend of Ernest Shackleton's call for his Antarctic expedition. • He did not offer comfort. He did not offer safety. • He offered hardship, sacrifice, and the slim chance of standing on solid ground at the end of the earth. ••

on And yet, thousands applied. ••

R Why? •• Because human beings know, deep down, that the things most worth standing for are never cheap. ••

□ We live in a culture obsessed with cheap truth. •• We want truth that fits nicely on a social media profile, truth that requires no sacrifice, truth that costs us absolutely nothing. •• We sign online petitions, post opinions, and convince ourselves that we are champions of righteousness. •• But opinion costs nothing. Real allegiance demands a price tag. ••

~ Here is the sobering reality of the Christian life, • *Standing with the sent when it costs proves you stand with the truth.* •

○ Not your loud talk. Not your big opinions. Not your passive endorsement. • Your concrete, costly partnership. ••

R In his third letter, the apostle John writes to a man named Gaius. And he exposes a massive divide. He puts before us a stark question. • What does standing for truth cost? ••

R In this brief, powerful letter, John shows us three inescapable realities. First, Standing for truth costs resources and comfort (3 John 5-8). • Second, Standing for truth costs peace with the proud (3 John 9-10). • Third, Standing for truth costs your ego (3 John 11-12). ••

~ Standing with the sent when it costs proves you stand with the truth. ••

R Before John unpacks the heavy demands of this standing, he opens with an intimate greeting. • Let us look at The greeting (3 John 1-4). •••

The greeting (3 John 1-4)

R **Verse 1**, **The elder** writes. Not with a title of worldly power like the charlatan apostles of our day and age. This elder writes as a spiritual father to a beloved son. • This is John. The apostle. Writing in his old age. ••

P And he says he loves his dear friend **Gaius** in the truth. • John doesn't have fleeting emotion for Gaius. He doesn't have a vague tolerance for him either. • John has a deep affection for Gaius rooted in God's objective reality. ••

R **Truth** is no abstract concept. Truth is the solid, unyielding reality of who God is and what He has declared. ••

P **Verse 3**, John has heard that Gaius is walking in truth. • Belief may be in your heart, but it doesn't stay invisible. Salvation looks like something. Faith moves the feet. • Faith changes how you handle your work. Your marriage. Your family. Gaius was walking in truth. And others could see it. ••

P **Verse 4**, John's greater joy is not grounded in Gaius's health, wealth, or happiness. John's greater joy is grounded in this, Gaius is walking in truth. ••

R 4 times in 4 verses John has spoken about truth. • John loves Gaius in the truth. Gaius holds with fidelity to the truth. Gaius is walking in truth. And John is glad to hear that his children are walking in truth. • This letter is about truth. Standing for the truth. While others oppose truth. • Truth comes at a cost. First, standing for truth costs resources and comfort. ••

1) Resources and Comfort (3 John 5-8)

R John commends Gaius for living out his faith through tangible action. • **Verse 5**, **Dear friend**, you are acting faithfully in whatever you do for the brothers and sisters, especially when they are strangers. • Faith in action. There were no cosy bed and breakfasts in the ancient world. Public inns were dangerous, immoral, and disreputable. Traveling missionaries could not simply check into a safe hotel. They relied entirely on the open doors and open hearts of local believers for shelter, food, and provisions. • Gaius did not offer vague spiritual sympathy. He opened his home. ••

P His quiet, generous witness did not stay hidden. • **Verse 6**, These traveling brothers returned and testified to your love before the church. • Their report was clear. Gaius stands with the sent. John encourages him to keep going, saying, You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. • **Why do**

gospel workers need support? • Because they go where the gospel is not yet known. • Your practical support provides their fuel, their food, their shelter. ••

R John gives the theological reason for sacrificial giving. • Verse 7, since they set out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from pagans. Therefore, we ought to support such people so that we can be coworkers with the truth. •• These itinerant preachers refused to take money from unbelievers so the gospel would never be mistaken for a commercial enterprise. They depended on the body of Christ. • When you support those who carry the Name, you are not just paying a bill. You are an active coworker with the truth itself. • In God's kingdom, everyone is on mission. You are sent, or you are a sender. ••

R Think of a supply line in time of war. • The soldier on the front line cannot advance a single metre without the crew back at the base fuelling the trucks, packing the rations, and securing the ammunition. • The frontline worker and the supply provider have different jobs but are on the same mission. ••

Here we see the clear evidence of Gaius's faithful support for gospel workers. • His commitment to the truth was not demonstrated through loud words or big opinions, but through costly, concrete provision. • Commitment to truth is shown by costly support of gospel workers. ••

R Truth comes at a cost. • First, standing for truth costs resources and comfort. • Second, standing for truth costs peace with the proud. •••

2) Peace with the Proud (3 John 9-10)

O Verse 9, ⁹ I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have first place among them, does not receive our authority. ¹⁰ This is why, if I come, I will remind him of the works he is doing, slandering us with malicious words. •• Diotrephes is no cartoon villain. He is a prominent local church leader who has convinced himself that he is protecting his flock. • He fears losing control. He wants pre-eminence in the meeting, in the leadership, and in the community. When apostolic authority threatens his personal influence, he attacks. He whispers. He slanders. He uses malicious words to assassinate John's character because he cannot dismantle John's doctrine. ••

O And John continues, And he is not satisfied with that! He not only refuses to welcome fellow believers. • Unchecked pride is never static. It demands action. Diotrephes slams the door on travelling gospel workers. These men arrive weary and hungry, carrying the truth of Jesus Christ into a hostile world. But Diotrephes views them as a threat to his territory. • He turns them away into

the cold. Not because they teach heresy. Not because they lack character. Simply because they do not bow to him. ●●

○ And John presses on, but he even stops those who want to do so and expels them from the church. ● Pride does not tolerate quiet disagreement. It demands total compliance. If a faithful believer attempts to show hospitality to a sent preacher, Diotrephes uses his local power as a weapon. He issues threats. He forces excommunication. He fractures church fellowship to preserve his personal kingdom. ●●

R Think of a security guard at a site gate who begins deciding which delivery trucks enter based on whether the drivers show him enough deference. ● The guard was put there to serve, not to rule. But over time, he forgets his place. He rejects drivers because they did not ask for his personal permission. ● That is Diotrephes. He mistook local oversight for personal ownership. ●●

John brings Diotrephes's self-serving opposition into the light. ● Selfish ambition in leadership always sabotages gospel expansion. Standing for the truth means you will lose peace with the proud. ● Commitment to truth is shown by costly support of gospel workers, even when opposed. ●●

R Standing for the truth costs resources and comfort. ● And, if standing for truth costs peace with the proud on the outside, it demands an even sharper look within. ● Standing for truth costs your ego. ●●●

3) Your Ego (3 John 11-12)

R Verse 11, Dear friend. John addresses Gaius with fatherly affection, calling him back to the fundamental orientation of the Christian life. ● The command is simple. It is stark. ● Do not imitate what is evil. ● In a context where Diotrephes is posturing, excommunicating faithful believers, and demanding pre-eminence, the temptation to fight fire with fire is real. The temptation to copy the bully's tactics to protect yourself is real. But John issues a direct prohibition. Do not copy the arrogant. But do do what is good. ●●

R Why? ● John gives the theological rationale in the second half of verse 11. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. ● Goodness is not a self-generated human virtue. Good originates with God. ● True goodness flows from God's nature, and those who belong to Him will inevitably reflect His character. Conduct reveals spiritual lineage. Behaviour exposes the heart. To continually practice evil, to walk in self-serving pride like Diotrephes, is to prove that you remain blind to God. ●●

P Then John points to a living, breath-and-blood example. • **Verse 12**, Everyone speaks well of Demetrius—even the truth itself. And we also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true. •• Here stands Demetrius. His character is proven. He carries a threefold witness. • The community affirms him. • His lifestyle aligns so seamlessly with God's Word that the truth itself testifies for him. • And the apostle John personally adds his apostolic seal of approval. ••

R I put up a bookshelf in my son's room last week. I used a spirit level. Got the bubble to sit dead in the center. • It doesn't matter if my wife said that it looked crooked. The tool itself verifies the line. • Demetrius's character was like that bubble. Place the straight edge of God's truth against his life, and the alignment was indisputable. ••

John's main charge in this section is clear. Imitate Demetrius's good example. • Look past the noise of the proud and fix your eyes on proven, quiet, gospel-hearted integrity. • If Diotrophes represents the destructive pull of self-exaltation, Demetrius demonstrates the humble path of truth. And this point drives John's overarching argument straight home. Your commitment to truth is shown by costly support of gospel workers, even when opposed. • Supporting the sent will cost your pride. It requires stepping out from under the shadow of overbearing leaders and laying down your own ego to stand with the faithful. ••

R How then does John close this warm yet searching letter? • He moves to his final personal intentions and greetings. ••

The farewell (3 John 13-15)

P ¹³ I have many things to write you, but I don't want to write to you with pen and ink. ¹⁴ I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. ¹⁵ Peace to you. The friends send you greetings. Greet the friends by name. •• John ends his letter with a warm, intimate sign-off that highlights the irreplaceable value of personal Christian fellowship. • While pen and ink served as a necessary tool, his heart longed for face-to-face communion. Reminding us that true gospel partnership is grounded in real, relational connection and shared peace among believers. ••

R Yet, John's yearning for presence over paper points us to an even greater reality. Ink on paper could never fully bridged the gap between God and humanity. • God did not merely send us a written decree from afar. He sent His Son in the flesh so that we might know Him face to face, bringing us true peace and adopting us as His friends. •••

Connect to the gospel

~ Commitment to truth is shown by costly support of gospel workers, even when opposed. ●●

R Gaius lived in light of gospel truth. ● Without the gospel, this is nothing more than a heavy, moralistic weight. Without the cross, hospitality is reduced to a burdensome law. We cannot rightly apply this word apart from Jesus Christ. ●●

Å Look at what happened at Calvary. ●● Jesus, the ultimate Sent One, emptied Himself. He left the glory of heaven and came into a world that rejected Him. ● He faced proud, self-seeking men. He was slandered. He was opposed. He was nailed to a Roman cross. ● He died for our selfish, self-exalting hearts. ● But God raised Him from the dead! Jesus lives! ●●

~ The death and resurrection of Jesus transforms this ethical call into empowered, Spirit-driven participation in Christ's mission. ● Grace changes everything. ● Faith is not an invisible, intellectual opinion. Faith looks like something. It is demonstrably lived out in daily life. ●●

□ When you see the cross, Diotrephes's self-seeking ambition is exposed for what it truly is. A blatant denial of Christ's self-emptying example. ● Diotrephes wanted first place. Jesus took the lowest place. ●●

P Because Christ welcomed us when we were enemies, we now joyfully open our hearts, our homes, our wallets to support those who go out for the sake of the Name. ● Supporting gospel workers is not a tedious duty. It is a Spirit-driven, joyful response to the grace we received at the cross. ● Sacrificial love is the outworking of the very same welcome God offered us. ●●

P Look at the cross and behold the wonder of His grace! ● Standing with the sent when it costs proves you stand with the truth. ●●

R So, how does this truth press into our daily lives? ● Let us turn to the application. ●●●

Application for believers

R Test your heart by checking your budget. • Salvation looks like something. It is not an invisible, comfortable sentiment. • Salvation stands with the sent, and standing with the sent costs. ••

^ Being a co-worker with the truth is not a passive prayer-card commitment. It is a radical reallocation of your resources. It requires saying no to lesser goods. No to a personal luxury, no to a self-indulgence, no to a temporal ease. So you can stand with the sent who stand with the truth. • You've heard that faith moves mountains. This passage teaches that genuine faith moves your bank account. • Faith opens your wallet. ••

R How do you begin? • Pray about your giving. Pray with our missionaries in mind. The Funnels. The Mollers. The Webbs. Paul Richardson. Pray with our mission in mind. To reach Benoni with the gospel, and equip all for life. • Pray on your knees, with your bank statement open before the Lord. Ask Him where you are buying comfort instead of advancing truth. • Pray about your giving today. •••

Application for unbelievers

0 Hear me clearly, you cannot stand with the sent unless you stand in the truth. • You cannot simply support missions as a nice, noble cause to feel spiritual. That is self-deception. • To truly stand for the truth, you must first stand in the truth. ••

R The ultimate Sent One is Jesus. He left the glory of heaven and came into our world. • He was opposed, slandered, rejected, and crucified for sinners. He took the lowest place while we craved pre-eminence. ••

^ The only way to partner with Him is to stop running. Admit you have lived for yourself. Demanded control, loved first place, lived like Diotrephes. • Turn from your pride and receive His costly forgiveness today. • Come stand in the truth. ••

Conclusion

R Remember Ernest Shackleton's advertisement? • *Men wanted for hazardous journey.* • He did not offer comfort. He offered hardship, sacrifice, and a slim chance of standing on solid ground at the end. • Why did thousands apply? • Because the things most worth standing for are never cheap. ••

□ Cheap truth costs us nothing. But real allegiance demands a price tag. ••

~ Standing with the sent when it costs proves you stand with the truth. ••

R So, what does standing for truth cost? •

R First, standing for truth costs resources and comfort (3 John 5-8). Test your heart by checking your budget. Open your wallet to fuel the frontline workers who go out for the sake of the Name. ••

⊕ Second, standing for truth costs peace with the proud (3 John 9-10). Refuse to bow to Diotrephes-like ambition, even when standing up brings slander, pushback, or local opposition. ••

R Third, standing for truth costs your ego (3 John 11-12). Lay down your self-exaltation, do what is good, and align your character with the straight line of God's Word. ••

⊕ Demonstrate your allegiance to the truth by sacrificially using your resources, enduring opposition, and laying down your pride to support gospel workers. Turn from your self-exalting pride and trust in Jesus, the ultimate Sent One, to receive His costly forgiveness so you can stand in the truth. ••

~ Standing with the sent when it costs proves you stand with the truth. ••

R Amen. •••

Close in prayer

Benediction

3 John 3, Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Homiletic indicators

- The operative word in the sentence is underlined.
- R – Instruction
 - **Body:** Natural, one hand gestures.
 - **Voice:** measured, firm.
- ^ – Uncion
 - **Body:** Forward, expressive.
 - **Voice:** Raised, faster.
- Ø – Fear
 - **Body:** Narrow eyes, still shoulders, lift your chin slightly (exposed posture).
 - **Voice:** Breathy, higher pitch, quick shallow breaths. Speak into the back of the throat.
- O' – Anger
 - **Body:** Jaw forward, stable feet (no shifting weight), sharp hand strikes (karate chop motion).
 - **Voice:** Hard attack on consonants. Drop pitch slightly, but increase volume on key syllables. Staccato.
- P – Happiness
 - **Body:** Relax shoulders, soften the brow. Open palms, wider stance.
 - **Voice:** Rise in melody at the end of phrases. Bright, forward resonance (smile while speaking).
- Å – Sadness
 - **Body:** Heavy eyelids, slight forward slump, hands still or clasped low.
 - **Voice:** Lower volume, monotone descent (each phrase ends lower than it started). Use mostly single-syllable words.
- □ – Disgust
 - **Body:** Wrinkle nose, pull back your head, sharp turning away from the pulpit.
 - **Voice:** Nasal, sharp, with a "negation cadence" (rising then falling sharply on the sin's name). Hard glottal stops.
- ɹ – Surprise
 - **Body:** Eyebrows up, slight backward step or open-mouth inhale.
 - **Voice:** Bright, high onset. Use a sudden upward interval (a leap in pitch on the unexpected word).
- ● – Pause
 - **What it does:** Allows the last sentence to land, convict, or heal.
 - **Length:** 1 second (colon), 2 seconds (period), 3+ seconds (after a weighty statement or call to worship).
 - **Body:** Stop moving. Hold eye contact. Do not smile or nod. Let the silence be uncomfortable.
 - **Delivery note:** A pause feels longer to you than to them. Trust it. Hold one more beat than you think is comfortable.

John's joy is grounded in Gaius's commitment to the truth (3 John 1-4)

¹ The elder [Ὁ πρεσβύτερος]: To my dear friend [τῷ ἀγαπητῷ] Gaius, whom I love [ΠΑΙ, ἀγαπῶ] in the truth [ἀληθείᾳ].

² Dear friend [Ἀγαπητέ], I pray [PMI] that you 1.) are prospering [PMN, increase] in every way
2.) [S] and [I] are in good health [PAN, ὑγιαίνειν, material],
[I] just as your whole life [ἡ ψυχὴ, immaterial] is going well [PMI].

[G] ³ For I was very glad [API] when fellow believers 1.) came [PMP]
2.) [S] and testified [PAP] to your fidelity to the truth [ἀληθείᾳ]
—how you are walking [ΠΑΙ, περιπατεῖς] in truth [ἀληθείᾳ].

⁴ I have [PAI] no greater joy than this: to hear [PAS] that my children are walking [PAP] in truth.

1.) Evidence of Gaius's faithful support for gospel workers (3 John 5-8)

i. His love demonstrated through hospitality (3 John 5)

⁵ Dear friend [Ἀγαπητέ], you are acting [PAI] faithfully in whatever you do [AMS] for the brothers and sisters, especially when they are strangers.

ii. His witness commended to the church (3 John 6)

⁶ They have testified [AAI] to your love [ἀγάπη] before the church [ἐκκλησία].

You will do [FAI] well to send them on their journey [AAP] in a manner worthy of God,

iii. His support makes him a coworker with the truth (3 John 7-8)

[G] ⁷ since they set out [AAI] for the sake of the Name [τοῦ ὀνόματος], accepting [PAP] nothing from pagans [τῶν ἐθνικῶν].

[I] ⁸ Therefore, [C] we ought [PAI] to support [PAN] such people

[E] so that we can be [PMS] coworkers [συνεργοί] with the truth [τῇ ἀληθείᾳ].

2.) Exposure of Diotrephes's self-serving opposition (3 John 9-10)

i. He undermines John's authority (3 John 9-10a)

a.) ⁹ I wrote [AAI] something to the church,

b.) [A] but Diotrephes, who loves to have first [PAP] place among them, does not receive our authority [PMI].

¹⁰ This is why, if I come [AAS], I will remind [FAI] him of the works he is doing [PAI], slandering [PAP] us with malicious words.

ii. He rejects gospel workers (3 John 10b)

2.) [S] And he is not satisfied [PMP] with that! He not only refuses to welcome [PMI] fellow believers,

ii. He excommunicates those who do (3 John 10c)

3.) [A] but he even stops [PAI] those who want to do so [PMP] and expels [PAI] them from the church.

3.) Exhortation to imitate Demetrius's good example (3 John 11-12)

i. The command to imitate good, not evil (3 John 11a)

¹¹ Dear friend, a.) do not imitate [PMP] what is evil, b.) [A] but what is good.

ii. The rationale is because good originates with God (3 John 11b)

The one who does good [PAP] is [PAI] of God; the one who does evil [PAP] has not seen [RAI] God.

iii. The example of Demetrius's proven character (3 John 12)

¹² Everyone speaks well [RMI] of Demetrius—even the truth itself.

And we also speak well [PAI] of him, and you know [RAI] that our testimony is [PAI] true.

Closing personal intentions and greetings (3 John 13-15)

[I] a.) ¹³ I have [IAI] many things to write [AAN] you,

b.) [A] but I don't want [PAI] to write [PAN] to you [with 1.) pen 2.) [S] and ink].

[I] ¹⁴ I hope [PAI] 1.) to see [AAN] you soon, 2.) [S] and we will talk [FAI] face to face.

¹⁵ Peace to you. The friends [οἱ φίλοι] send you greetings [PMI]. Greet [PMM] the friends [τοὺς φίλους] [by name].

This is how I indicate the function of conjunctions:

- I put a letter in square brackets before a clause to indicate a logical relationship.
 - [S] - SERIES, Each proposition makes an independent contribution to the whole (and, moreover, furthermore).
 - [P] - PROGRESSION, Each proposition is a further step toward a climax (then, and, moreover, furthermore).
 - [A] - ALTERNATIVE, Each proposition expresses an opposite possibility arising from a situation (or, but while...).
 - [W] [Ed] - WAY-END (ACTION-MANNER), Statement of an action and one which tells more explicitly what is involved in carrying out this action (in that, by).
 - [/] [/] - COMPARISON, Statement that clarifies an action or idea by showing what it is like (even as, as...so).
 - [-] [+] - NEGATIVE-POSITIVE, The relationship between two alternatives in which one is denied so the other is enforced, implicit in contrasting statements (not...but).
 - [Gn] [Sp] - GENERAL-SPECIFIC, Statement of a whole and one or more statements which set forth parts of the whole.
 - [Ft] [In] - FACT-INTERPRETATION, Statement and clarifying statement; does not set forth a distinguishable part of the preceding whole.
 - [G] - GROUND, Statement followed by the argument or reason on which it stands; supporting proposition follows the supported proposition (for, since, because).
 - [I'] - INFERENCE, Supporting statement followed by the conclusion drawn from it; supporting proposition precedes the supported proposition (therefore, wherefore, consequently).
 - [C] [E] - CAUSE-EFFECT (ACTION-RESULT), One action and another action which results from the first as an automatic consequence (that, so that, with the result that).
 - [C?] [E] - CONDITIONAL, Like cause-effect except existence of the cause is only potential (if...then, if, except...).
 - [M] [Ed] - MEANS-END (ACTION-PURPOSE), One action and another that is intended as the goal or purpose of the first (in order that, that, lest, to the end that).
 - [T] - TEMPORAL, Proposition and the occasion when it occurs (when, after, before).
 - [L] - LOCATIVE, Proposition and the place where it can be true (where, wherever).
 - [Adv] - ADVERSATIVE, Main clause that stands despite a contrary statement (although, yet, but, nevertheless).
 - [Q] [A] - QUESTION-ANSWER, Statement of question and answer to that question (question mark ?).
 - [S] [R] - SITUATION-RESPONSE, The relationship between a situation in one clause and a response in another.
 - [B] [L] - BILATERAL, A proposition which supports propositions in both directions, rarely used.

This is how I use colour highlighting:

- **Orange**: structure indicator, conjunctions, and prepositions.
- **Yellow**: verbs, Greek, and Scripture reference.
- **Green**: keywords.
- **Red**: repeated words.
- **Pink**: imperatives.
- **Blue**: main idea.

Sermon preparation worksheet

Passage: 3 John **Preaching Audience:** Benoni Baptist Church, average age thirty-five, married, young children, spiritually interested.

1. How has the author organised this passage? a) *Structure in sections*, b) *Strategies*, c) *The emphasis*.

a) John's joy is grounded in Gaius's commitment to the truth (3 John 1-4)

1.) Evidence of Gaius's faithful support for gospel workers (3 John 5-8)

i. His love demonstrated through hospitality (3 John 5)

ii. His witness commended to the church (3 John 6)

iii. His support makes him a coworker with the truth (3 John 7-8)

2.) Exposure of Diotrephes's self-serving opposition (3 John 9-10)

i. He undermines John's authority (3 John 9-10a)

ii. He rejects gospel workers (3 John 10b)

iii. He excommunicates those who do (3 John 10c)

3.) Exhortation to imitate Demetrius's good example (3 John 11-12)

i. The command to imitate good, not evil (3 John 11a)

ii. The rationale is because good originates with God (3 John 11b)

iii. The example of Demetrius's proven character (3 John 12)

Closing personal intentions and greetings (3 John 13-15)

b) I identified the text type as discourse. I used grammatical analysis, identifying the main clauses and supporting participles. I traced the logical flow, following the argument from personal joy, to the basis for joy, then to the problem undermining it, and finally to the solution. I noted transitional markers, such as the grounding γάρ and the causal οὖν. I tracked the repetitions, truth, dear friend, reinforcing the argument.

c) Live truth out in hospitality.

2. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage? a) *Literary*, b) *Historical*, c) *Cultural*, d) *Biblical*.

b) Diotrephes, a powerful local church leader, loves preeminence, slanders John with malicious words, refuses to welcome the itinerant brothers, and excommunicates those who do. Gaius faces real social and ecclesiastical pressure. This matters because, John's emphasis on truth counters Diotrephes's false claims, and instructs Gaius that obeying the apostolic command to support these workers is the true mark of fellowship, regardless of Diotrephes's local authority.

c) Public inns were dangerous, immoral, and socially disreputable. Traveling missionaries depended on the hospitality of believers for shelter, food, and financial provision. This matters because, being a co-worker with the truth is a material, costly act, not a vague spiritual sentiment. Housing these men exposed Gaius to Diotrephes's reprisal, which carried socio-economic consequences.

3. What is the main point the author is arguing to his audience?

Commitment to truth is shown by costly support of gospel workers, even when opposed.

4. How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Gaius lives in light of gospel truth. The death and resurrection of Christ transform the ethical call into empowered participation in Christ's mission. Supporting the workers for the Name is a joyful, Spirit-driven response to grace not a burdensome law. Faith looks like something. It is demonstrably lived out. This exposes Diotrephes's self-seeking as a blatant denial of Christ's self-emptying example. This connection summons us to costly, concrete support for missionaries, assuring that sacrificial love is a outworking of the same welcome we received at the cross.

5. What is the main point you will argue to your audience?

Standing with the sent when it costs proves you stand with the truth.

6. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? a) *Sermon outline*, b) *Sermon title*.

b) What does Standing for Truth Cost?

a) 1) Standing for Truth Costs Resources and Comfort (3 John 5-8)

2) Standing for Truth Costs Peace with the Proud (3 John 9-10)

3) Standing for Truth Costs Your Ego (3 John 11-12)

7. What applications will you make? a) *To believers*, b) *To unbelievers*.

a) Test your heart by checking your budget. Salvation looks like something. Salvation stands with the sent. And standing with the sent costs. Being a co-worker with the truth is not a passive prayer-card commitment. It is a reallocation of resources that require saying no to lesser goods so you can stand with the sent who stand with the truth. Pray about your giving.

b) You can't stand with the sent unless you stand in the truth. You cannot simply support missions as a nice cause to feel spiritual. To truly stand for the truth, you must first stand in the truth. The ultimate sent one is Jesus. He left the glory of heaven and was opposed, slandered, and crucified. The only way to partner with Him is to admit you have lived for yourself (like Diotrephes) and receive His costly forgiveness.

On my sermon preparation sheet, these are the questions and an explanation:

1. How has the author organised this passage?

- a) An outline: The author's organization (or structure) is a way of talking about the shape or form of a biblical passage. Beneath the surface of each passage is an underlying arrangement of material and a logic that the author has used to organize the passage. And each part of the passage has a role to play in that structure.
- b) Tools: Identify the text type, and any grammatical tools used to identify the structure.
- c) The emphasis: The structure will reveal an emphasis that the author is making.

2. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage?

- a) Literary context: How do the passage that comes before and the passage that comes after relate to your passage?
- b) Historical context: The historical situation or circumstances experienced by the first audience at the time when the book was written.
- c) Cultural context: The setting in the daily life of the people/characters in the book and how that will have been understood by the first audience. This is distinct from historical context in that it does not relate to a particular audience in a particular place at a particular time, but the details of life that the people/characters in the text had in common. Anything that requires extra-biblical knowledge should be treated skeptically.
- d) Biblical context: Is the author citing or alluding to some previously written Biblical passage? What connections could the author have reasonably expected his first audience to make.

3. What is the main point the author is arguing to his audience?

The author's main point is a way of talking about the aim of a passage as a whole. It can be descriptive or prescriptive. It is not simply a summary statement. But rather, it is the idea of which the author is trying to persuade his audience. As you work on articulating the author's argument, please keep in mind that it needs to be specific enough to the passage that it clearly comes from the particular passage (and not any other passage), it is for the first audience, it should be one single sentence that is both short and clear, and captures the argument of the passage.

4. How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

What part of the gospel (the death and resurrection of Christ) is in view? Every part of the Bible, every passage of Scripture, in some way relates to the gospel of Jesus Christ. What parts of the passage connect to the gospel? The connection must be legitimate and textually driven.

5. What is the main point you will argue to your audience?

6. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? a) Sermon outline, b) Sermon title.

7. What applications will you make? a) To believers, b) To unbelievers.

The main point of a sermon is the fundamental statement of what you, as a speaker today, are trying to convince your audience today. It will certainly be intimately related to the author's main point for his original audience and it will consider the gospel connection. It should be well reasoned and, perhaps, articulated as the result of proof (so depending on premises and building arguments).

On my sermon preparation sheet, this is how questions relate to one another:

- 1 a) should be driven by the text.
- 1 c) should be driven from the outline in 1 a).
- 2) should be directly relevant to 1 c).
- 3) cannot be disconnected from 1 c), and should be clarified by 2).
- 4) must be found in the text.
- 5) cannot be disconnected from 3), and should be driven by 4).
- 6) should flow from 5).
- 7) should structurally relate to 1 a), and make the argument in 5).