

Love, Joy and Truth

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[0 : 0 0] in the Bible and the shorter epistles as Ian puts the reading on the screen. So John John never mentions his name, he mentions his name in the in his gospel he doesn't mention his name here in this letter. This he is the elder this is John to the beloved Gaius whom I love in truth.

Beloved I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health as it goes with well with your soul. For I rejoice greatly when your brothers came and testified to your truth as indeed you're walking in the truth. I've no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. Then verse 5. Beloved it's a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers strangers as they are who testify to your love before the church. You'll do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God for they've gone out for the sake of the name accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these that we may be fellow workers for the truth. I've written something to the church but Diotrephes who likes to put himself first does not acknowledge our authority. So if I come I will bring up what he is doing talking wicked nonsense against us. I'm not content with that he refuses to welcome the brothers and also stops those who want to those who who want to and puts them out of the church.

Beloved do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God. Whoever does evil has not seen God. Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone and from the truth itself.

We also add our testimony and you know that our testimony is true. I'd much to write to you but I would rather not write with penning. I hope to see you soon and we will talk face to face. Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends each by name. Amen and may God add his blessing to that reading from his holy word.

God's name. Amen and may God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

[2 : 36] God bless you. Lord's Day evening services. You'll notice as we were reading that letter, that short letter, the frequency of the mention of truth because truth is a constant in the life of the Christian because the Christian follows the God of truth the Christian abides in the truth of Jesus Christ and when the Christian when he when she is is following the Lord when he's doing so with all his heart when the Christian is seeking to do so you'll seek to live by the truth of God's word in every area of his life in every domain of his life that's that truth that well we were exploring those of us who were at the midweek meeting on Wednesday evening when we were looking at the ninth commandment the ninth commandment remember it says you shall not bear false witness we're looking at the different aspects of that not bearing false that bearing false witness we're looking at the different things that come under that that heading even as we saw this morning in our in our studies in Nehemiah 6 when we saw the the if you like the disruption of truth the the not upholding truth from Nehemiah's enemy son ballot and Tobiah but we saw that they were involved in rumor mongering and scandal and lies and falsehood against Nehemiah they were exhibiting lies that denied the truth and you know the prevalence of of truth as a characteristic of of of the Christian who loves the truth who lives the truth whose lives characterized by by sincerity and honesty honesty and conformity with the truth well that that's a joy it's a true joy to consider it's a true joy to contemplate that life lived in the truth a life that loves the truth a life that seeks to abide by the truth it's a joy to contemplate and behold such a life of course it's a challenge it's a challenge to you who love the truth it's a challenge for you to to be more and more those who are truth bearers and truth lovers and truth promoters it's that truth that we saw expressed here in in John's third letter truth truth that if you'll notice was accompanied or is accompanied by joy and love truth joy and love three graces three graces joined together and in this one person who who follows the savior follows the

Lord Jesus of course the Lord Jesus the epitome of joy and love and truth and so as we've been doing in our midweek meeting even this morning we want to continue with our thoughts on this whole matter of truth and and truth and as the Christian abides in the truth and we're going to look at as we said the first part of this letter where the author John where he addresses his words to this individual Gaius common name at the time it seems that this is the only reference this particular Gaius in the whole whole of the Bible and as we look at these words as we consider these words as we do so in the context of worship and praise to God and as we do so for our own edification then we're going to look as we saw on the screen in the notices we're going to look at the at the passage from three perspectives the true love of the believer the true joy of the believer and then the truth loved and rejoiced in by the believer so let's look first of all at the true love of the believer and of course as we say we have to realize that love joy and and truth are three strands within the same cord if you like but you know if you had a coloring pen if you were to highlight the first eight verses that we read there in third

John these references to truth and love and joy and you see how frequent frequently joy mentions them five references in these verses to to love or or beloved it's the same word love or beloved and five references to truth and two references to joy and all within the space of a few verses so it's it's these three graces they're intertwined like you know strands in a rope and strands twisted together to give strength and to give power and for John here John other times called the apostle of love you see how John exercise these graces of truth love and joy as he noticed in Gaius this individual Gaius who exercise truth love and joy so let's look first of all at at love at this true love the love that John expresses here it's love in the Lord and the Lord towards his brother in Christ towards Gaius and as we said these are three strands three graces the strands combining together to give strength the strength of love and truth and joy that well we can't you know separate we can't neatly separate into three different component parts but we can highlight where love joy and truth combine to reveal a heart that's right with God and to see then here an example for each one of us and each one of you who who love the Lord Jesus and in truth with joy and and express that in love to God and to one another and so what we read here in Gaius we can seek to emulate in your practice of glorifying God and and enjoying him forever so let's look at the passage then first of all verse one let's think of love the elder to the beloved

Gaius whom I love in truth and then twice more in verse of two and five Gaius is referred to as beloved then in verse six you see Gaius commended for his love towards the church I notice here how John doesn't hold back in his expression of love to this church leader to this individual Gaius he doesn't hold back in in commending Gaius for his for his commitment in love towards his fellow believers and maybe it's something that's lacking in our own culture whether we're even speaking of our national culture or perhaps more particularly our church culture there are times when we're very reluctant to express love one to another and love for one another and when we think of that love that that to love within the purity of that that love that that speaks of love between the brothers and sisters in Christ and isn't it the case that so often and too often too often we we hold back from expressing love or showing love for one another and that indeed has to be considered and seen a failure in in in any church now the early church was characterized by by love behold how they love one another said of so many in the early church and Jesus himself spoke of the the character of the church the true church when he when he said that by this shall all men know that you're my disciples if you love one another now we know of course and sad to say and tragically there can be such a thing a sham love a pretended love a false love even within the church and perish the thought that any kind of false love or any kind of falsehood that lies within even any congregation represented here this evening here John's expressing the reality of his true pure love his love his brotherly love towards say Gaius and expressing that his love is sincere it's true it's it's genuine it's real it's befitting someone who loves the Lord and loves his neighbor as himself I mentioned earlier that I was attending an online meeting of some 50 ministers in our congregation in our denomination and our moderator Donny G McDonald he led that meeting and he mentioned his desire to return to the building where his congregation meets there's of course a problem there in poetry they meet in a primary school so there's no immediate return for them certainly but what he he wanted to to express was his true desire his heartfelt desire to be back physically for the people as he said the people whom I love and there was no embarrassment in what he said there's no embarrassment in that that desire there was no no reluctance to state what should be in all our hearts if you're following the savior of love of course in God's time and we want to be back amongst those whom we love in the Lord and may that truly be a sincere desire in your heart a desire expressed in truth a desire expressed through love one for another just as John expressed that sincere love that he had for for Gaius for Gaius and as we've seen truth as John expresses it truth is accompanied then in love in John's love one for another and in John's expression and the sincere expression of love for Gaius it wasn't any kind of half-hearted love half-hearted commitment there was no dishonesty or

and sincerity and that expression of love and i pray that you know in truth that that love in truth is nurtured and you know even now when we're still in these lockdown conditions that we still express truth and love and love and truth one for another as there will be and in god's providence there'll be a time when we can't physically get back into the building remember this we're not going back to church we already are church but we're going back to meet one with another to worship the lord corporately one with another we're going even now in even these lockdown conditions we are church and therefore fulfill the responsibilities that we have to love one another as we seek to pray for one another as we seek to enjoy even now the fellowship that we have one with another to show kindness one to another even in our communications one to another and so let's be sure that your love your love for each other even within the congregation that your love is sincere love that your love is in truth as we seek to grow as a church in love you know that love is intensified when you see one another you see others express love in service you see others express love for the lord and for each other and you see that expressed in humble service such as we see here with with gaius which we see his his work for the lord particularly in what he did for others even strangers those who we'd never met before when he exercised hospitality towards them his love gaius's love was seen in action love is a verb love is an action now of course love isn't isn't conditional in how we you know in how someone performs services for the lord love for one another is unconditional god's love for you god's love for me is unconditional love it's utterly undeserved it's undeserving love but you know there's that focus of true love on another when there's some particular sacrifice that's conducted in christ's name and when the apostle john here when he hears of gaius's hospitality to strangers to to fellow believers to those whom gaius loves in the lord people whom in all likelihood guys had never met before yet gaius has embraced these brothers in christ he's embraced them in the warmth of christian love and so john's commending him for for that love in action and surely that has to be the response of those who love one another who love our neighbor as ourselves you express that that warmth of true christian affection when the lord's work's been done not even when that work's been done sacrificially and that work's been done yes to the glory of god and for the good of others the cause of the kingdom and so seek out those seek out those who are doing the lord's work and don't hold back and giving thanks to them for the work that they're doing in jesus name and it truly lifts the spirits it lifts the spirit of the person who who receives that gratitude that gratitude given in sincerity given in and in truth given in love that gratitude that's that's received because of of the service done in christ's name of course none of us go looking for praise absolutely not but the lifting of spirits to to those who are the lord's workers when they're

[17 : 26] yes given commendation for that work when they're shown love from others it lifts the spirit brings joy to the heart of the believer who labors for the lord now we're not told of gaius's reaction when he received this letter when he first received this letter but we can be sure that his his spirits were lifted when he read john's letter to when he read john's letter when he saw john commending him for his work in the lord and it may be that you you who see and hear and know of others who are who are tireless workers for the lord well send them a word expressing your love for them expressing your love for the love that they're showing to the lord and to the lord's people in the work that they're doing because you know this the downhearted worker for the lord surely is lifted in heart lifted in spirit when he or she is is touched touched by the love of a fellow believer who gives expressions of true love true loving the lord when that love is given and received and of course that response of love it says no no we are human to human expression the lord loves god loves those who serve him god rejoices in in the person who serves him faithfully and truth and in love and god commends those who serve him faithfully and truthfully gaius here gaius was a faithful servant of god and john's commending him for that faithful service and remember this has been written and we're reading this in the inspired word of god and so when we're reading john commending gaius and truth that of course comes ultimately from god god who saw fit to have john write these words write these words for for your edification so that you give praise to god that god should use and send someone like like gaius that he experienced and expressed these fruits of of grace he showed love and truth towards others and in glory in the glory of heaven as with all of the lord's people gaius has heard the voice of god say to him well done good and faithful servant enter into the joy of the lord that joy that heavenly joy that's inexpressible joy that joy of the lord that that all who are in christ all in christ and the glory of heaven know now and will know eternally you know joy isn't confined to heaven there's joy of joy in earth that that fruit of the spirit that paul speaks of in galatians that fruit of the spirit that that rejoices the heart and the joy that is expressed the joy of the lord that joy that comes from knowing god that joy that comes from walking in god's truth as well as we see here in in this in this letter we look at verse three the joy the true joy of the believer let's listen again to john's words for i rejoice greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth that you're walking in the truth i at verse four i have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking walking in the truth john had that sincere joy of heart when he knew of others when he knew of gaius who knew god and and was walking in that in truth you see the joy here that john expresses when he hears the news of gaius is showing love love and hospitality love to these in all likelihood itinerant evangelists

when john even gaius expressed that true fellowship the lord with these individuals john's writing here of having no greater joy than than hearing about gaius is abiding in the truth of god's word and seen expressed and what he did for these these strangers these these travelers of course john could have rejoiced in his own work could have rejoiced that god had set him apart as an apostle could have expressed joy for himself that that jesus had chosen him to be a disciple and called him to be an apostle there's no doubt i'm sure that that john did rejoice in that in that truth but notice he tells us here that his greatest joy it's great i have no greater joy his greatest joy was the impact of the gospel on the lives of others and so truly he did and was rejoicing with those who rejoiced and isn't that surely a mark a mark of grace and any believer any believer who rejoices in the lord you know the power of the gospel you know that that power is real that that power transforms lives and you rejoice and you rejoice and you hear of others knowing god saved converted and doing the work that god gives them to do in the name of the lord jesus what about yourself do you rejoice when you hear of someone being saved do you rejoice when you when you know of someone maybe it's a a relative a brother or sister a family member maybe it's a friend you've been praying for for so long maybe a neighbor maybe a colleague whose whose life's been changed by the power of the holy spirit you rejoice in that truth do you rejoice in the work of god in changing an individual and are you rejoicing when you hear of others who are doing wonderful things for the lord even in sacrificial service for the cause of the gospel and can you can you echo john's words then of course echo them in context that you have no greater joy than to hear that such and such a person is walking in the truth but then if we explore the passage in a little more detail what about the expression that that john uses here and what he's rejoicing in again we have to see the combination of these graces where he combines joy and truth see the joy that john expresses that joy that he expresses relates to the fact that gaius's testimony bears witness to the truth that resides in gaius's heart john sees and john knows that gaius is living out the truth of the gospel because guiding his love for others he's showing that in his conduct and his behavior it's evident in his humble service it's there in his heart again listen to to john's words but i rejoice greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth as indeed you're walking in the truth i've no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth listen to these words again or partly anyway for i rejoice greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth uh your truth as you're walking in the truth now what is john what's john saying here when he speaks of your truth and walking in the truth well surely these two expressions really tell of the same reality the reality of abiding in the truth of god's word and of course not just in in word but in action gaius didn't just simply hold to a you know whole set of collect a whole collection of truths truths of course found in god's word gaius practiced these truths gaius didn't just believe

that christians must love the lord and love their neighbor gaius put these truths into practice gaius lived out the truth and in every aspect of his life that was shown it was expressed and so john could rejoice in the reality of christ that reality of christian faith demonstrated by works and so it's for for each one of us one of you who love the lord to live out a radically transformed life and a radically transformed lifestyle not just confessing god's truth but applying that truth in every area of your life and test your life by the truth of god's word test even the extent of your following jesus are you doing so in every area of your life are you conforming to the truth of god's word then thirdly and and finally we see the truth loved and rejoiced in by the believer in many ways we've we've looked at that aspect already but let's again focus the more on that that aspect here the truth loved and rejoiced in by the believer we see that from verse five to verse eight and we should read these words again beloved it's a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers strangers as they are who testified to your love before the church you'll do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of god for they've gone out for the sake of the name accepting nothing from the gentiles therefore we ought to support people like these that we may be fellow workers for the truth

Gaius this individual Gaius exemplifies the truth that the knowledge of god knowledge of god isn't an end in itself but knowledge of god true knowledge of god is a means to glorify god Gaius loved god Gaius loved the truth that he found in god's word but he didn't keep that knowledge of the truth to himself but Gaius showed that knowledge of god and in action he showed it in obedience to the truth Gaius revealed the truth that as paul wrote to timothy that all scriptures god breathed and profitable for teaching for reproof for correction and for training in righteousness and then these words that the man of god may be complete equipped for every good work every good work of course every good work so often more often than not involves mutual service mutual service for the cause of the gospel and Gaius had shown love to these strangers and these strangers in turn spoke to the church of Gaius's love towards them and you see there that mutual love that mutual respect even there within the body of believers that John highlights that he expresses in his words and he shows the importance then of working together for the sake of the gospel now Gaius had his particular work to do he had a particular role to play in the work of the kingdom wherever these strangers were that we read of there they had their god-given work to do they were spreading the good news of the gospel to different parts John himself has been already seen he had been blessed by being an apostle of the lord and as witness to the lord Jesus so you've got John here you've got these strangers you've got Gaius

I said we're all combined together in their love for the lord Jesus lord Jesus who'd saved them Jesus who'd given their life for them in love for them and his joy over them through the truth of the gospel that that saves and continues to save you who know the lord you who serve him you follow him you who who who abide in him you remember this that your life is wrapped wrapped in the arms of Jesus and even we can say this that you are conjoined with every person who knows the love of the lord Jesus the saving love Jesus you are with one another who loves the lord Jesus who serves him in truth who rejoices in that truth and the work continues support for that work continues maintaining the truth of the gospel continues we were thinking this morning of that spiritual battle that goes on in the life of believers that battle is continuing that spiritual warfare that you're engaged in you who love the lord with all your heart and soul and mind and strength because remember this what you're doing in the cause of the kingdom it's not for self you don't do what you do for self it's not for self glory what you're doing and for the lord is for the truth is for the truth that's in christ is that for the truth that's that's the word of god it's the truth that you love the truth that's come from one the one who's altogether true gaius loved the truth gaius was noted for that love and as with him as with all of the lord's people there's that desire to share the truth to be united in heart one with another to live out that truth to love that truth to love that truth and to show to others the truth of the gospel and so as we do that work that god gives us each one to do remember we do so as fellow workers for the lord we ought therefore as john says to receive such that we may be fellow helpers to the truth or fellow workers to the truth and that's it isn't it we're in this together you know whatever there's division in a church that's a contradiction to the bond that jesus has forged through his death for sinners lord jesus by his death has brought sinners into the kingdom and so let's show that unity of heart that unity of spirit that unity in love for the lord jesus who died for our sakes for your sake and of course that brings then a responsibility that all who are in christ we join together in upholding the truth and to live by the truth and to help one another to propagate the truth and to know that truly it has to be our heart's desire to show others and tell others the truth of the gospel the truth that we know and love in the lord jesus so we seek then to love the truth as we love one another but we seek to rejoice in the truth as you rejoice in that fellowship of believers united in christ and seek by god's power to give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the king of kings amen and let us pray our lord our god our heavenly father you who have blessed us in truth you who have showered upon us your love

[33 : 28] you who rejoice over sinners such as ourselves when sinners come to that saving knowledge of the lord jesus and may it be then lord that we love the truth that we live by it that we rejoice in the truth and seek to show love one for another as we love you lord forgive us for the many times when we fail in that love forgive us for the many times when we don't rejoice in that great salvation forgive us lord we pray when we fail to love one another as we ought so give us that strength that power that enabling so to do to put into practice your word so that you may be glorified so be with us lord as we continue before you in praise and we ask these things in jesus name amen so we're going to close in psalm 36 psalm 36 we're going to sing from verses 5 to verse 10 your steadfast love is great oh lord it reaches heaven high your faithfulness is wonderful extending to the sky 5 to 10 psalm 36 to god's praise your steadfast love is great oh lord it reaches heaven high your faithfulness is wonderful are your east

The mountains high and sea, Your justice is my ocean bed, O man, and peace to Thee.

How precious is Your steadfast love, For dawn with exit brings, For I am open sheltered in the shadow of Your grace.

Make peace within Your paths, And drink from streams of Your delight, For within You is the source of light In Your night we see light.

To those who know You have said God, Your steadfast love in heart, May take Your righteousness To those of You and of my heart.

[37 : 35] Now let's close in prayer. Lord, be with us, go before us, be near us. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, And the love of God the Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with you all both now and forevermore.

Amen.