

Reject the Bad – Support the Good

II John 10-13 – III John

Last week we looked at being diligent in our faith. We saw the warnings of John in regards to the antichrist's who will come and cause people of the faith to turn away from God and embrace false doctrine or false ideas about God. They do this for various reasons possibly for the approval of other people or even for support of their own ideas.

We also looked at the fact that all of us are living our Christian faith as a result of a combined effort of people, let alone the Holy Spirit. People have invested their time into us whether it be through the church, through books, music, or various other avenues. We need to be sure that we show people that we value their input by not simply turning away from their effort and walking away from God. Or by treating their effort as if it doesn't mean anything. Don't waste people's efforts. Don't waste the church's efforts.

Finally, last week we saw John's charge to remain diligent in our walk with God. The Apostle Paul compared his Christian walk with running a race. Paul challenges us to run in such a way that we will win. To not simply run for the sake of running, but to put a steady and energetic effort into living for God. Diligence means that we don't simply embrace something because it sounds good or lines up with something we like. But means that we don't wander away from the faith from time to time. Run like you will win.

This morning I want to complete our study of the Epistle's of John and look at John's challenge to support what is good and godly and reject what is deceiving and misleading. John tells us in **II John 10-11**:

¹⁰ *If someone comes to your meeting and does not teach the truth about Christ, don't invite him into your house or encourage him in any way.*

¹¹ *Anyone who encourages him becomes a partner in his evil work.*

III John 5-11 ⁵ *Dear friend, you are doing a good work for God when you take care of the traveling teachers who are passing through, even though they are strangers to you. ⁶ They have told the church here of your friendship and your loving deeds. You do well to send them on their way in a manner that pleases God. ⁷ For they are traveling for the Lord and accept nothing from those who are not Christians. ⁸ So we ourselves should support them so that we may become partners with them for the truth. ⁹ I sent a brief letter to the church about this, but Diotrephes, who loves to be the leader, does not acknowledge our authority. ¹⁰ When I come, I will report some of the things he is doing and the wicked things he is saying about us. He not only refuses to welcome the traveling teachers, he also tells others not to help them. And when they do help, he puts them out of the church. ¹¹ Dear friend, don't let this bad example influence you. Follow only what is good. Remember that those who do good prove that they are God's children, and those who do evil prove that they do not know God.*

1. Avoid Those who Do Not Teach The Truth

There are many things out there that would fall under the category of being truth-less. John isn't simply talking about the lack of truth but the complete disregard or rejection of what the Word of God teaches - anything that sets itself against God. The Apostle Paul, when writing to Timothy in **I Timothy 3:9** told him how to find a deacon for his church and said:

⁹They must be committed to the revealed truths of the Christian faith and must live with a clear conscience.

Paul is simply identifying a characteristic of a Christian. One who is committed to the truths of the Christian faith. Unfortunately, what we see in the church more and more is this lack of commitment. We are people labeled as compromising as opposed to committed. We view the standard as something to strive towards as opposed to something that we fall from. We approach every rule or principle of Christian living with questions and ideas of outcome.

With this in mind the whole idea of hanging around someone who opposes the truth is a scary thing indeed. Spiritually shallow Christianity can be broken apart by the influence of those who reject the Good News of Jesus Christ. We eventually become like the people we hang around. Have you ever noticed that you begin to talk, act, or even think like those you spend the most time with. We use the same terminology or we adapt our view of life around other people's ideas. Influence is so critical in a Christian's life.

Influence from this sinful world is out to make us go against God's principles, to rip us off from God's best. Paul tells us in **Ephesians 5:10-14**:

¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, rebuke and expose them. ¹²It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. ¹³But when the light shines on them, it becomes clear how evil these things are. ¹⁴And where your light shines, it will expose their evil deeds. This is why it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

The question to us today is how many of us want to live to please God by avoiding the things of this world. In the church today I think that we are in danger of allowing evil and darkness to become a part of the church all for the sake of seeing new believers come in through our doors. I want to make it very clear that we, as a church, are to stand against sin in this world exposing it for what it is, instead of playing around with it.

We wouldn't allow our children to play with a loaded gun, would we? Just as God doesn't want to allow us to play with something that could eventually bring spiritual death. If you are here today and you are living contrary to how God tells you to live through his word, then I plead with you to make it right and turn and embrace God's plan for you today. Don't risk being influenced by what the world says is all right to do. Pay more attention to God.

Why am I talking to some here in this church building about not supporting those who teach contrary to God's word? Because some of us here are in danger of becoming a negative influence upon others, and according to this verse in II John we as a church body need to distance ourselves from your behavior because it could cause others to neglect God's plan or become a distraction from His truth.

Make your life right before God. We don't want to give anyone the impression that we are okay with behavior that goes against God's principles. Even if that impression could be the result of us not saying anything against it all for the sake of not wanting to offend someone. I think it is more important for us to fear God than people. The Apostle Paul said in **Romans 16:17-18**:

¹⁷ And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things that are contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. ¹⁸Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people.

We need to make sure that we are not being influenced by sinful behavior or being an influence to sinful behavior. Instead we are to stand against evil and support the good which leads us to our next point.

2. Support Goodness and Bearers of the Good News.

In III John we find that John praises a man by the name of Gaius for taking care of those who travel for the benefit of the Good News. This doesn't only pertain to ministers or pastor's of a church but it also pertains to all of us here. We all have the ability to be ministers as well. We want to make sure that we support the good things that point to the truth of God.

Our church is fully dependent upon the support, both financially and physically, of those who come and find benefit from it. Not only do we have bills and monetary needs to make sure that all areas of ministry have supplies, that the bills are paid, and that we remain good stewards of what God has given us, we also have areas of ministry that require that we be involved somehow - whether that be through prayer, volunteering for

youth, aiding or teaching a Sunday School class, or serving on the church council. John tells us today to support the good.

I think it is a tragedy that some would give their time to nonessential aspects of life and yet deny the church any help. If there is anything worth our investment it is the investment into the lives of those who come to our church to be spiritually fed.

There is nothing more frustrating to a minister than to commit themselves to a goal and yet not have resources to do their job or see their needs provided for. Jesus relied upon the support of people in his ministry. We read in **Luke 8:1-3**:

¹ Not long afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby cities and villages to announce the Good News concerning the Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, ² along with some women he had healed and from whom he had cast out evil spirits. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons; ³ Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's business manager; Susanna; and many others who were contributing from their own resources to support Jesus and his disciples.

We need to support ministries that we know have the goal of seeing people impacted with the Good News. I want to take this a step further and deal with a topic that is very uncomfortable for me to talk about simply because it is related to me as the pastor of this church. The church has a responsibility to the ministers of the church. This includes those who have committed their lives to spreading the Good News and developing the Christian life.

3. Supporting Ministers

There are those who don't believe in financially supporting ministers. They don't think that a minister should make his living from preaching or helping people. Jesus, when he sent out his disciples told them in **Matthew 10:5-15**:

⁵ Jesus sent the twelve disciples out with these instructions: "Don't go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, ⁶ but only to the people of Israel—God's lost sheep. ⁷ Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received! ⁹ "Don't take any money with you. ¹⁰ Don't carry a traveler's bag with an extra coat and sandals or even a walking stick. Don't hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve to be fed. ¹¹ Whenever you enter a city or village, search for a worthy man and stay in his home until you leave for the next town. ¹² When you are invited into someone's home, give it your blessing. ¹³ If it

turns out to be a worthy home, let your blessing stand; if it is not, take back the blessing. ¹⁴ If a village doesn't welcome you or listen to you, shake off the dust of that place from your feet as you leave. ¹⁵ I assure you, the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah will be better off on the judgment day than that place will be.

Can we agree this morning that Jesus points to the fact that those who continue to spread his Good News should be supported by those they help? The Apostle Paul tells us in **Galatians 6:6**:

⁶ Those who are taught the word of God should help their teachers by paying them.

In fact, Paul has more to say about this subject in **I Corinthians 9:7-11**:

⁷ What soldier has to pay his own expenses? And have you ever heard of a farmer who harvests his crop and doesn't have the right to eat some of it? What shepherd takes care of a flock of sheep and isn't allowed to drink some of the milk? ⁸ And this isn't merely human opinion. Doesn't God's law say the same thing? ⁹ For the law of Moses says, "Do not keep an ox from eating as it treads out the grain." Do you suppose God was thinking only about oxen when he said this? ¹⁰ Wasn't he also speaking to us? Of course he was. Just as farm workers who plow fields and thresh the grain expect a share of the harvest, Christian workers should be paid by those they serve. ¹¹ We have planted good spiritual seed among you. Is it too much to ask, in return, for mere food and clothing?

It can be said that the work of a minister can be underestimated. Ministers are responsible to God for the development of people's souls. When we leave this earth, the only thing that we can take with us is our soul. When you consider this, the material provision for ministers is the least that could be done.

But, what about those ministers who drive their fancy cars, wear their \$800.00 suits, those who fleece the flock for their own personal gain? Obviously, there is balance to everything. There can be checks and balances in place to make sure that this support of the minister is not overindulged. For us here at Redwood Foursquare Church we have a Church Council who decides where, and what each ministry receives in order to function within balance.

In **III John 5-8** John gives us three good reasons why we should support our ministers. First I want to define the word support. In the Greek it means "to take up or to carry." We are to carry or take care of our ministers because it pleases God. God wants to bless those and provide for those who are doing his work. Second, our support is a testimony