

Daily Proverbial, from 3 John, 1 July 2013

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

3 John is another short book (like 1 John and 2 John) that the apostle wrote to people he knew. In this short book, John writes to a friend to encourage him, and even to warn him about the conduct of a mutual acquaintance. Originally, the letter wasn't thought to be part of canon Scripture, but revelation and time made it so. There's even question about whether or not it's written by the authentic Apostle John, though, according to the sources I read, its style is similar to the gospel of John. If you quickly read through it, you find that the letter is about loving God in the truth.

John wrote to his friend about a mutual friend, Diotrephes, who wasn't acting in a way worthy of Christ. The writer was concerned about this, and told Gaius of his intentions to correct Diotrephes. John also reminded his friend to act hospitable to others, in ways that reflect Jesus' love, and thus in ways opposite to those demonstrated by Diotrephes.

In other words, John reminded his friend that he loved him in faith, in the love of Jesus. Further, he reminded him that he would not only write: he would visit and help his friend, and set things straight.

That's a friend for you. John wasn't a Facebook friend, who you could agree to disagree with, or occasionally like his status posts. He wasn't a fair-weather-friend, who might be there when things got tough, or he might not be as well. He wasn't a know-it-all-friend, who told Gaius what to do and dominated their relationship. And he wasn't a weak friend, who promised support but then flagged when the chips were down.

Do you think John had any idea that his letter would still be read 2000 years later? I seriously doubt that my emails, cards, letters, or blog posts will be read 2000 years from now; I'm simply not that important. And I seriously doubt that I've been the kind of friend to some people that the apostle was; in fact, I know I haven't. And I seriously doubt, too, that I could pack as much punch into any of my 322 words that John does into his.

What I don't doubt is that the letter is here for you to read today, and that if you're open to reading it, then you're walking in Jesus' truth like John and his friend, Gaius. You and I are friends: online, in person, and in the faith. I pray that you be hospitable towards everyone you meet today, and that there are no people like a Diotrephes in your life, where you are, to complicate and cause friction. Life can be tough enough as is.

Dear Jesus, thank you for recording these words so long ago, and for teaching us still with them today. Encourage me to always walk in Your truth.

Daily Proverbial, from 3 John, 2 July 2013

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 John, verse 2.

Our friends are our neighbors who we should love as ourselves. The writer of this book heard Jesus Himself speak those very words to the Pharisees who questioned him. Whether we realize it or not, we involve ourselves in the lives of the people in our world by praying for them; just like John did. Prayer is an active thing, not just some wishing well or psychiatric gimmick. It's a way to call on Jesus to actively intervene in our lives, especially in the lives of people we care about.

If you're like me, sometimes prayer is difficult, especially when you don't always sense that you've been heard. That's where faith comes into play. We ask God for His help, for His activity and His presence, and it's only by faith that we can know we're heard. He answers ALL prayers, even as He does so in ways we don't understand, or on a timeline for which we're unprepared. Praying for the well-being and the happy soul of people we know is a way to do something for them, especially if we're separated by distance. Even more rewarding, I think, is praying for someone who doesn't know you're praying for them. I can't tell you how many bad days I've gone through where the only thing I felt was keeping me up was God. Behind that feeling, I know in my heart that many friends and strangers were praying for me, encouraging me to persevere in the Lord.

And when was the last time you wrote to a friend and inquired about the condition of their soul? We all know people whose souls are weighed down with sins, cares, and holding too tightly to the past. Maybe it's even you; I know 'that guy' used to be me, and I felt the weight of a hundred bricks on my soul. When was the last time you asked a weary friend about the condition of their soul, then listened, cried, grieved, and healed with them?

Hand in hand with that, when was the last time you celebrated with someone when their soul was light and cheery? I think about weddings, and go-live days (when you've done a job well), graduation days, and days when babies are born. Those are undeniably happy moments. When did we last pray for them?

Jesus told us: take my yoke for my burden is light. One way we can take that yoke is by going to Him in prayer for our neighbors, our friends, our loved ones, and the matters on our hearts.

Jesus, I pray for You to be active in our lives today. Build up the people around me who are struggling, encourage those who are sad, and use me to do Your work for them in Your world.

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Daily Proverbial, from 3 John, 3 July 2013

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. 3 John, verse 3.

I think I've mentioned this before: my parents taught me that one of the best compliments a child can give to a parent is for them to become independent and successful. Until I became a parent, I didn't realize how hard it can be to watch that whole process unfold. It's tough to teach your kids lessons of faith, then watch them make the same stupid unfaithful mistakes you made. It's tough to sit back and watch your children struggle financially, literally paying for dozens of bad choices...just like you did. It's tough to know that they are hurting because times are tough, prices are rising, and hearts seem to be growing colder.

Yet it's still a joy – a total, complete, unabashedly fulfilling joy – when they do their best and you can see it coming out in them. My wife and I have learned that 'success' isn't measured in dollars, property, or status. Real success is measured when the children you love live on faith. When they pray, when they are generous of heart, when they listen, when they empathize, when they help, when they are selfless, when they turn from bad choices, when they love without the expectation of love in return...

...when they walk in truth. Walking in Jesus' truth is evidence of loving Him. Love Him by loving others. It gives me great joy when people say how my kids love like Jesus.

As with me, I'm afraid it doesn't happen very often. Please understand: this isn't to 'diss' on my kids. They're wonderful people. It's just that none of us really love like Jesus very often. He always gave everything, always put others first, and always stood fast in his commitment to His Father. In all that, He always loved selflessly. How blessed were the lives of those who knew Him first-hand. How blessed can we be when we realize that we get to know Him first-hand in our own lives. And how blessed are the moments when we get to see that's true.

So when someone tells me, or I see it with my own eyes, that my kids are faithful, honest, and true people, I see Jesus at work in them. It warms me inside to hear of them teaching Sunday School, or working hard to honestly meet their commitments, or being a friend instead of just someone to hang out with. It warms me to watch them working to succeed, to hear good words said about them, and to understand why those words are true.

I think the apostle John would agree. He'd agree because Jesus put it on his heart to know love when he saw it.

Jesus my Lord, thank you for living in my kids, in people I love. I praise you for your always-present love.

Daily Proverbial, from 3 John, 4 July 2013, Independence Day

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. 3 John, verse 4.

This verse really could have gone with yesterday's verse, which said, "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." If you'll remember, I mentioned the same joy in the context of my children. John mentions his children, but it looks like he's actually talking about those he spiritually mentored, not children in his blood family.

So let's noodle this question: who are your children?

Yesterday, we went to a Cajun restaurant and we were the minority in the restaurant. Looking around, I'll admit: I felt out of place. It was a feeling that lasted only until our food came at which time I put the thought out of my mind. But when I got home and read the verse, I asked myself: were the kids in that restaurant my children? You know the answer.

Here's a partial list of the foreign countries to which I've traveled: Uganda, China, Korea, Japan, Italy, Turkey, the USSR, Germany, Austria, the UK, Romania, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Mexico, Canada, and California. In those places, I've met thousands of people younger than me. Were any of them my children? Again, you know the answer.

Recently I was standing in the mall, watching people go by. There are thousands of people who gravitate to Stonebriar Mall every day. I like to people-watch, so I will occasionally go there and simply watch as they go about their business. Tell me: which of them are my children? Are children just the teenagers and kids walking around, or are they also the people older than me? One last time: you know the answer.

You know it because God knows the answer. In fact, because of God, the answer is what it is. My children are the people who listen to me, learn from me, work for me, or are mentored by me. My children are my responsibility, and it's my responsibility to do my best for them no matter what the task is that I'm working on. My children aren't necessarily younger: maybe older people read my words, or depend on me, or are in my sphere of influence. I'm their child and they are mine. All of us are Jesus' children, even those who reject Him.

You're my brother. You're my sister. No matter what our ages are, we are peers, we are siblings in God, siblings of Christ, followers of Jesus, and children of Him who spoke the world into existence. For Him, there is no greater joy than to see us living in His love. For us, the joy is the same if only we will let it happen.

Lord Jesus, let me complete your joy by living better today in your love. I thank you for the freedom you give, and for independence from sin and death.

Daily Proverbial, from 3 John, 8 July 2013

Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. 3 John, verse 5.

Faithful is tough. I'm not just talking about fidelity versus infidelity; that shouldn't be tough, but once you get it in your heart that the grass is greener on 'the other side,' you're not letting yourself admit that they're just slinging more manure. It's tough to stay committed, and whether we realize it or not, that means so much more than just vows. But faith is tough. Having faith is the toughest thing you'll ever do, in fact.

That's what the Apostle John was talking about. It's what Jesus, speaking through him, wanted us to know.

Think about it: I'm betting you are faithful every day. You're faithful in doing your work. You're faithful in paying your bills, wearing clothes, being kind to animals, and a host of other activities. It isn't that difficult to do, you think, because it doesn't take much to do these things. You get the door for someone else. You tell your mom that you love her when you hang up the phone. You stay up to make sure the kids get home safely. You let someone go ahead of you in line. You smile at someone in the crowd.

Do you think you do these things on your own?

So now let's couple having faith with being faithful to strangers; total strangers. It's tough to get motivated to serve people who have zero chance of ever repaying your kindness. Not long ago, my friend, Mark, and I were doing some community work together when he told me, "you know that God's going to blow this up and move your life in crazy ways because of it." He meant that the work we were doing was something God would use and explode in ways I can't foresee, but will always be for His glory. We did our work with no expectation of reward, thinking that Jesus will indeed take it and make it into something new, something big, that will reap glory for Him in ways we can't imagine. We did it anyway.

And if you think more about it, it really is difficult to do these things. The natural world is a place of violence, where only those willing to take what they need survive. The fallen world is kill or be killed. It's easier to purchase things and have them rather than make payments. Wear what you want; animals are lower species; who cares what other people think; Mom already did her part; smiles are for chumps. Yet we still 'do the right thing' even when nobody is looking.

That's not a coincidence. That's Jesus. Being faithful to doing the right thing, especially when nobody is looking, is Jesus working in you. He loves through you.

Jesus, thank you for living through me so I can be faithful to You.

Daily Proverbial, from 3 John, 9 July 2013

They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. 3 John, verse 6.

Do we honor God in how we send people on their way? When a friend leaves your house, do you call ahead and tell people how much your friend loves God? Do you pile in bags of food and money into their car before they leave? Do you offer to spend all your savings on honoring them while they visit, then pay their road tolls, gas, and meals while they travel on to their next location?

Yeah, I've never done this either. I guess times have changed in the last 2000 years. Maybe these kinds of things were matters of hospitality or custom in first century Judea. Back then, if a friend traveled onward, they could count on your hospitality if they came back your way, or if they needed a recommendation going forward.

Then again...

...then again, we still do show our love for Jesus by showing our kindness for others even in today's interconnected electronic world. If you apply for a job, you still give references. Isn't giving someone a reference a way of honoring them and, thus, honoring God in doing so? When you write a good review of a restaurant, book, service, or anything in general, isn't that also honoring God by giving honest praise where it is earned? As we journey through our days, isn't it honoring God to say "please, thank you," and "yes sir / yes ma'am?" Of course it is.

Keep in mind, John was writing this short letter to a friend, reminding him to be kind to strangers who had reported of the friend's faithfulness to Jesus. In truth, that's a slightly different subject than what we've talked about so far. But if you think about it, that idea isn't very far removed from the simple idea of honoring God in other ways as we interact in His world. A kind word goes farther than one spoken in malice. You and I don't know how long we have on this planet. God could call us home at any moment. Isn't it better, then, to use our moments here in kind thanks instead of vindictive anger?

I travel a lot for work. Usually, I keep to myself, keeping quiet and buried in a book on a plane, or driving with the windows rolled up, or walking through a park with my headphones on. But just the other day my wife and I were talking about how it's better to yield right of way, to let the other guy go first even if he's a total stranger. The more I think about it, the more I know she's right: doing that is a way to honor God. How about you and I start doing that today?

Lord, show me ways I can honor you by serving others, being kind to others, yielding to others, and demonstrating Your crazy love.

Daily Proverbial, from 3 John, 10 July 2013

It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. 3 John, verse 7.

I just finished reading "Cross Roads" by William Paul Young, who also wrote "The Shack." The new book isn't a sequel to the previous one, but the author's approach to depicting Jesus, the Spirit and the Father is equally unconventional but completely appealing. The book is the story of a bitter man who finds himself in a coma-induced meeting with the Triune God. This verse could have easily applied to the main character of the book because, in his coma-world, he discovers that most of his life was spent living without faith. Like an unbeliever; like a pagan. He helped nobody but himself, and counted on nothing from God because God wasn't real...

...that is, until God proved He was.

Until God proved that people all through the man's life had been reaching out to the man for the sake of the Name of Jesus. To share His love, to share His hope, to serve the bitter man.

It's the same for us. Why do we cling to faith in a world where faith is considered to be nonsense? It's for the sake of the Name. The Name is more powerful than unbelief. The Name of Jesus is more powerful than any scorn a sinful world can heap on us. It's more powerful than any illiberal reason; indeed, the Name of Jesus is the foundation of all reason. The Name of Jesus is more powerful than the most advanced medicine, the fastest computers, or the deadliest weapons. The Name of Jesus is more powerful than anything else you or I could conceive of.

We cling to the Name of Jesus and walk in the world as followers of Him because we want to be on His side. There are easier ways to live, but none with such reward. When I think of walking in the name of Jesus, I think of doing battle, of that scene from the last Lord of the Rings movie (itself an analogy for a walk of faith). The men are surrounded by the forces of evil and the only thing they are assured of is death. In that moment, they can surrender (knowing they will then be murdered), or they can go out fighting. With a winsome look, the king turns to his men, half-smiles, and says "for Frodo," meaning "for our selfless friends." And with that, he rushes headlong to meet evil. That's how it is walking day by day in the Name of Jesus. Every day we rush headlong out to meet our daily evils. And, like the men in the movie, we soon learn that our willingness to fight for Him demonstrates our love...and before long we see how He is fighting so much stronger for us.

Jesus, I cling to You. Teach and fight for me today, that I may cling more and fight for You always.

Daily Proverbial, from 3 John, 11 July 2013

We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth. 3 John, verse 8.

We are here to show the real meaning of Christmas, even in July.

We are here for the unbelieving world.

That's who we're here for; that's why we are here. We are here to bring man sons to glory. We are here to learn to love Jesus yet not for ourselves but so that others may learn to do the same. For the pagans, for the Muslims, for the professors, for the irascible Facebook friends, for the bullies, for the haters, for the enemy, for the people not like us. We are here to serve as Jesus' ambassadors, brothers and sisters, fighting soldiers, quiet pastors, bold witnesses, listening teachers, and honest friends to people who don't know Him.

You and I: if we say we believe in Jesus, then we are here to talk about that with our friends, family, co-workers, strangers in the elevator, guy at the coffee shop, person behind the counter at WalMart or 7 Eleven, and anywhere. We are here to be hospitable to all people in the hope (and hope is a promise, not a wish) that Jesus' Spirit will work in us to build a relationship. We are here to be open to that relationship that it may evolve in a way that people will know we love them, that we care. We are here to care so that we can demonstrate Jesus' love to other people so that they, too, will be moved to ask us "why do you care?"

We are here to tell why we care to the unbelieving world for the glory of King Jesus, the risen Savior.

"That's the real meaning of Christmas, Charlie Brown."

King Jesus, help me to show hospitality to all people, to be a kind friend and a bold follower of You. Help create those moments to love others so that Your love and life may shine through mine.

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Daily Proverbial, from 3 John, 12 July 13

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. 3 John, verse 9.

Be ready, though, Christmas in July Followers of Jesus: we will meet Diotrephes. Diotrephes was a member of one of the churches John started. He was a doubter, a nay-sayer, and a vain obstructionist. He put his own welfare, wishes, and desires ahead of the church. As said in an earlier post, the whole letter was an encouragement written to a man named Gaius on how to deal with Diotrephes.

Tell me: would you like it if someone was talking about what a dirty so and so you were 2000 years from now? Me neither. So why are we Diotrephes?

The truth is maybe something we'll never fully master. We have mastered sin because Jesus mastered it for us. Yet from time to time, I still find myself being Diotrephes. It's all about me; my opinions are more important than yours. If my wife were describing me, she'd say I was "poopy." Game, set, and match. One should embrace the truth instead of doubting it.

But there's another truth to embrace: we are here to face up to our Diotrephes, whether he's in the mirror or in the seat next to us. We are here to meet him where he is and be Jesus for him. Sure, our Diotrephes may need rebuking or correction, but the old saying is true that we can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. We stand a better chance of being Jesus' representative if we love Diotrephes and listen to him. Be a friend; be a listener; be a comfort. It doesn't mean compromising with his low principles, or giving in to him when he is caught up in the muck of sin. And it doesn't mean we are to cave all the time to get through. John didn't. Neither did Paul, David, Noah, Abraham, Peter, or Jesus.

Instead, we are to meet our Diotrephes where he is and be open to him. Look for common ground, strive for understand, work for compassion, bridge the abyss. We are to do these things because they're what Jesus would do.

Jesus, help me to meet folks where they live, to see them the way You see them, and to act in ways that bring credit to your Name.

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Daily Proverbial, from 3 John, 15 July 2013

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. 3 John, verse 10.

Notice a few things about how the apostle John proposes to deal with sinners in his midst. If you remember, John was talking about facing Diotrephes, who had exhibited behaviors that were destructive to the church (the people, not some building) and contrary to the teachings of Jesus. In this verse, John talks about how he intends to deal with the situation that Diotrephes is creating.

First, he goes to it. "So when I come" is both a promise and a warning. He, John the apostle, close friend of the Lord Himself, promises to make a visit in person to set things straight. That takes courage, you know, to intercede in a situation known for conflict. More than courage, though, it takes determined love. Only love for other friends could motivate someone to want to help. John could go elsewhere but, instead, he goes to the source of the problem.

Then, he confronts it. John doesn't go someplace to beat around the bush. He confronts the issue. He calls attention to the situation because the situation is intolerable to the body of Christ. The problem can't be solved unless it is first discussed.

In doing this, he uses fact. John doesn't rely on emotions. He doesn't let feelings rule the moment; he doesn't let hearsay or 'he said she said' enter into the conversation. No, John deals in facts. 'This is what has happened.' 'Is this true?' Facts.

Finally, he corrects. This is the most important part because in it John identifies the infraction and then offers correction. He re-directs the behavior and holds the person accountable. Diotrephes' behavior crosses the line of acceptability and John promises to rebuke and correct. You don't do this for someone you hate: you do it in Christian love.

If you think about it, John was only doing what he had learned from his friend, Jesus. Action, confrontation, facts and correction: those are all behaviors that Jesus demonstrated over and over in all four Gospels. Further, they're things that He does in our lives as well. He meets me where I am. He uses the mind and reason to appeal through my conscience. He deals in truth, not lies, emotions, feelings, or wishes. Last, He always redirects behavior, offering a way of correction and different choices.

This is the way of dealing with sin. Yes, it's uncomfortable and it means facing some things that could get ugly. Yet the way to avoid the ugly is to do what Jesus and John did by approaching each situation in love.

Lord, teach me to deal with the sin in my life in the way Your friend, John, did. Teach me to hold to Your high standard.

Daily Proverbial, from 3 John, 17 July 2013

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. 3 John, verse 11.

Remember context. Without doing that, reading this verse alone seems pretty bleak, right? “Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.” That’s everybody, believer and un-believer alike. Remember to keep it in context of what was said before it.

Here’s some context I just heard about. A girl named Talia Castellano died yesterday morning. She was a 13 year old Youtube sensation with inoperable bone cancer. With the spirit and spunk that only an optimistic kid can show, she blogged her cancer journey and used it as a way to help others. Rather than dwelling on losing her hair to chemotherapy, instead, Talia became an internet model of sorts, focusing her web posts on ways to be creating with makeup, swag, and all she did. Her last year of life proved to be inspiring instead of debilitating to the soul.

One thing she said last year (in talking about her disease) really struck me: “Having cancer has been a gift—but a horrible, horrible, terrifying thing. But I’ve gotten so many benefits from it. ...The journey of having cancer was amazing. But every journey has an end.” What a powerful statement of faith that is, and what great practical evidence it is of what the apostle John was talking about. Miss Castellano wasn’t swayed by her affliction, even though she obviously stated how terrifying it could be. She didn’t let it break her even as it slowly killed her. She showed how doing what is good is a God-glorifying thing. Millions of people around the world saw her as a symbol of the human spirit through her blog, through articles written about her, and through her appearances on TV with Ellen DeGeneres.

Talia Castellano rejected the evil that cancer is and opted to fight it through wit, determination and beauty. Today, she’s alive and well in heaven.

The context of today’s verse is a commentary on the verses written before it; taking it out of that context makes it seem hopeless because we all do things that are apart from God. Miss Castellano – and all those like her – didn’t choose cancer and it wasn’t her fault that the evil disease plagued her. Yet where she could have allowed herself to wither and slip away, instead she opted to live the rest of her life positively, as an example of being strong in the things God gave her. That made her look at the dread disease as a gift instead of an undeserved curse.

God bless Tania and all those like her. Our prayers and love go out to her family.

Lord, thank you for the gifts of affliction in our lives. Strengthen us to keep them in context, then to rely on You to use them as a springboard to growing Your glory.

Daily Proverbial, from 3 John, 18 July 2013

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. 3 John, verse 12.

Do you like getting compliments? Of course you do; of course I do. My self-bruised ego thrives on praise, compliments, and attention. Of course (again) the apostle wasn't talking about you or me. He was talking about Demetrius, who was a member of the church where there was so much discord because of a particular member's divisiveness. Demetrius' example was a good one to follow.

John wasn't talking about us, but he could have been. Let's hope, then, that Demetrius and the people around him did the same thing we should do: thank God. A friend of mine works to keep humble by saying "all glory to Jesus" (or "AGTJ") instead of accepting all the praise for himself whenever someone gives him a compliment. We should do the same.

We should do this because, when people compliment us, they're complimenting something good, and all that is good is from God; verse 11 said this, and verse 12 applauds it. Demetrius' proper response might have been "thanks, but I'm only doing what the Lord taught" or something like that. Once again, we should do the same.

It's a healthy and good thing to accept praise from other people. It means that we have used our God-given talents well. Perhaps the best, most polite things to say are "thanks" or "you're very kind" or something like that. Yet we shouldn't ever stand there on our own without giving credit to God as well. We should follow up that response with "AGTJ" or something like it to include Him who gave us the talent – and the friends, the compliment, the means by which to exercise our talents, the talents themselves, and everything else you can think of – so that we avoid 'getting the big head.'

Please understand: I'm not saying this to be preachy. You're my friend and loved one, and I want you to receive the praise and compliments that your good attitude, hard work, and Jesus-facing actions deserve. I simply say these things because I think they're what John would have said if he were in our conversation. More than that, I wonder if Jesus Himself wouldn't use this time to remind us of them. Be thankful and happy for the blessings of friends, compliments, and satisfaction, yet always be ready to thank God more for all that is, including the good will of others. John spoke in complimentary terms of Demetrius because Jesus taught him how to do so. Ditto for us here today.

AGTJ!

Jesus, all glory to You. Thanks for people giving compliments and for making all in my life possible that they would even want to do so. You are kind, generous, and caring.

Daily Proverbial, the last of 3 John, 19 July 2013

I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. 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. 3 John, verses 13 and 14.

Of all that's said in this short letter, perhaps the most important words are these three: Peace to you. They are the words with which John concludes this short epistle. They are the same words that Jesus said over and over when He went forth from resurrection, and they are a benediction to this part of our journey together.

Peace to you.

Let's face it, my friend, there is no peace in humanity. In the wake of the Zimmerman trial, the media whips us into a frenzy, wanting us to believe the lie that the races will never live together in harmony. At any moment, war may break out in Syria, or Uganda, or North Korea; at any moment, we may learn of another mass shooting. Our government is bankrupt; political parties couldn't be farther apart; radical Islam is rising; tyranny advances; the world seems to be spinning out of control.

Peace to you.

And don't we know of too many people who are suffering? Too many of my friends are unemployed. I know friends who lost homes in the recent Colorado fires, and a friend of mine nearly lost her daughter to the Rolling Stone-Boston Bomber on that day several months ago. Me, I'm worried about my grandchildren's future, saving for retirement, starting a business, and cancer.

Through it all, Jesus says this: "Peace to you."

Peace to you that overcomes a spinning world and all the tangled webs we weave. Peace that is more powerful than North Korean weapons, bastardized religion's hateful invectives, or polarized political opposites. The peace with which Jesus umbrellas our every moment is designed in God's infinite love to render all human problems moot. Got death? Peace to you. Got unemployment? Peace to you. Got divorce, disease, hatred, bankruptcy, or depression? Peace out; peace to you.

Peace knowing that it's not just peace to you. The apostle John was invoking Jesus to his friends. He closed this short letter by leaving them with Jesus, who had left John with His peace. When Jesus said "peace to you" He meant "my love in your life. My love IS your life." When we boil it all down, there's really nothing else that we need.

There are 323 words in the book of 3 John, making it the shortest in the Bible. It is a book of rebuke, reminder, and remembrance. More than that, it is a small book of peace. Like father Abraham said, it is peace to you of Jesus, by Jesus, and for Jesus that will never perish from this earth.

Jesus, I praise You for Your peace, for Your guiding Word, and Your love. Teach me to share Your peace today.

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