



### **Diotrephes and Demetrius, 3 John - Pastor Greg**

John is writing to Gaius – friend, brother and son in the Lord (possibly at Ephesus church)

- He commends him for his faithful walk in the Lord (in truth: to John walking in love and in the truth are one and the same) (v2-4).
- He commends him for his loving hospitality shown to some brothers who were sent to his church (it was the custom for those early Christians to venture out with nothing and hopefully find some hospitality along the way. Also, if you put these people up you would send them off with fresh supplies) (v5-8).

I am particularly moved with verse 5. 'Even though they are strangers'. It is easier to help people we know, but we are also called to help strangers. There is something about this that reflects the heart of God.

John goes on to mention his letter sent to Gaius' church and the opposition he experienced from a prominent and influential church member named Diotrephes. (v9-10)

Diotrephes is guided by self interest, is self centred, self promoting, prideful, manipulating and controlling. He lacks the humility and love of Christ (he obviously never read Phil 2). And he is inhospitable!! It's interesting that his name means 'nurtured by Zeus' the all powerful Greek god.

In contrast John points to a man named Demetrius who reflected the love and humility of Christ and was held in high regard. His name means 'of Demeter' who was a Greek goddess of fruitfulness and fertility. Also, it comes from 'Demas', which means 'common folk' (v11-12).

So here we have a picture of power (control) on the one hand, and lowliness (servant-hood) on the other.

Over the years I've run into Diotrephes. I.e. In my Wagga days: Singer who was self seeking; permission givers who, if they didn't like something, would withdraw their support; pompous people who lacked humility; others who 'had to have' a ministry;



others who tried to have their own way.

Of, course, Diotrephes is everywhere in the world, but you don't expect to find him in the church. But, alas, there he is, a hindrance to John, hurtful to the brothers, and damaging to the work of Christ.

On occasion, though, I have found Diotrephes in the most unusual place. The other day I had a bit of a spat with Joy – wasn't particularly pleasant. I then went off to the bathroom, and lo and behold there he was standing in my bathroom. I then suddenly realized that I was looking into the mirror. I was Diotrephes: prideful, unyielding, self centred, inhospitable, lacking humility, unloving!

Romans 7; Gal 5; 6. We should always be more concerned with the Diotrephes within, than with the Diotrephes without. We all have the capacity to be like Diotrephes, but thankfully, like Demetrius too.

John writes to Gaius to commend him for his faithfulness and to urge him to follow the example of Demetrius. Gladly, I meet Demetrius more often than I do Diotrephes.

It is quite possible that this is the same Demetrius who was such a problem to Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19: 24; 38), now converted and following Christ.

What a difference Christ makes to our lives?