

Hey Gaius: Keep Walking in Love

Read: 3 John 1-8

Watch: <https://youtu.be/ZU5NFB1E7jA>

Consider: The Elder wrote this letter to encourage a young leader who was serving in a local congregation named Gaius. There is some debate about the identity of this Elder, but most scholars agree that it was, as the title proclaims, John. But which John? There is a long-standing debate about this as well, but everything in this short letter seems to indicate that it was the Apostle John. He lived until 90 AD, so he grew older and had plenty of wisdom to share.

The Greek term translated Elder is 'presbuteros.' It indicated one who was older, and was the title given to the leaders who served along with the chief priests to rule over Israel. This term was picked up by the emerging church for leaders who served with the apostles in Jerusalem. And it was also used in reference to the men in local churches that the apostles' appointed to be leaders.

Gaius came to the Lord when the apostle Paul passed through Derbe. Gaius responded to the gospel message and was one of two people who were actually baptized by Paul. He became a leader in the church, even following Paul around, learning from him and serving with him. It is believed that after Paul's death, that Gaius focused his ministry through a local congregation near Ephesus, which is where John ended up serving. John, the Elder, developed such a close relationship with Gaius that he came to think of him as a son.

John felt that Gaius needed to be reminded of his love, and that he was praying for Gaius' health, physically and spiritually. John had received news from some "brothers" who had been at the church where Gaius served and reported that he was still "walking in the truth." John was delighted to hear this news. And John encouraged Gaius to continue receiving and sending on "brothers" who might show up in the future.

These "Brothers" were more than just fellow believers passing through, they were more like the disciples whom Jesus had gathered to himself. John (as well as other apostles) had followed Jesus' model of making disciples, and when they were ready, these disciples were sent out to preach the gospel message. But instead of going into a town where the gospel had never been preached before, they arrived in towns where it had been preached and a church had already been established.

Gaius had welcomed these disciples of John, provided support for them while they were in town, encouraged them to "evangelize" (share the good news), and sent them on their way with blessings when they were ready to head back. John was proud of how Gaius and these "brothers" had worked together. It gave him hope for the future. He wanted all those who followed Christ to support one another in a united effort to reach out to the lost.

We still need this sort of dynamic today. We, who are striving to carry out the great commission in Los Alamos should welcome and encourage fellow believers who join us at the Christian Church in sharing the good news in Los Alamos; just as we support those who are sharing the gospel in other places.

Pray: Lord Jesus, help us become disciples who make disciples, that the lost You love, and came to save, hear and experience Your grace. Amen.