

3 John v 1 - 3

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Preacher: Alan Caley

[0 : 00] You're a chap, so it's easy for us chaps to do this, but ladies, it might be harder, but I want you to imagine that your name is Gaius, right? And you've just received this letter from a really good friend of yours, and his name is the Apostle John.

So I think if you put yourself in the place of Gaius, then you'll see the wonderful richness of this letter, third letter of John, third epistle of John.

The Elder, to my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth, 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.

It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell me about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth.

Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers.

[1 : 13] Even though they are strangers to you, they have told a church about your love. You will do well to send them on your way in a manner worthy of God.

It was for the sake of the name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. We ought, therefore, to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us.

Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church. 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. Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone and even by the truth itself.

[2 : 23] We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true. I have much to write to 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 in my name.

Amen. Thank you, Graham, for leading. I was wondering when you prayed that maybe you'd been reading my notes, because it's very close to what they were wanting to say this evening.

It's remarkable how the Lord works in that often. You know, I'm sure each one of us has met an old Christian friend that perhaps we haven't seen for a good while.

And you would, of course, ask them, well, how's the family? And they'd let you know how everybody is. They would ask about their work and church, how's things going at the church.

[3 : 39] And they'd say, well, Sunday mornings, there's a good number, but not so many in the evening and not sure about Wednesday night. But then you would always say, well, how are you keeping?

How are you keeping? How's your health? And the answer usually goes something like, well, thank you for asking. As a matter of fact, in myself, I'm feeling fine, just fine.

But having said that, they would then go on to tell you of all the illnesses and things that have happened to them over the last few weeks and months.

Well, my cons are killing me. And when I wake up in the morning, I have to work my fingers because they're not functioning properly.

And my back hurts. When I put my socks in in the morning, I get tired and short of breath.

[4 : 50] My hearing's not so good. My sight, well, I could see, but now I used to have to hold it at arm's length and see, now I put it on the floor and now I'm not tall enough.

Well, but apart from that, well, my hair's falling out and my teeth, the ones that belong to me, are full of fillings.

Well, other than that, I'm just fine. In myself, I'm feeling great. Really fine. In myself, I'm fine. I think that's what John had in mind when he wrote 3 John 2 Gaius where he, as Graham read in verse 2, 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.

A remarkable prayer of John for Gaius. And it seems that John was reasonably satisfied that Gaius' inner health, his well-being was fine.

But he was concerned that his body would give an adequate expression of his inner health.

[6 : 45] John knew the difference between the physical, the visible, and audible part of us, the body, and the invisible part of us, the soul.

There's a physical and an invisible part of us, each one of us. I'm looking at you, the physical part of you. That doesn't mean to say that I know you.

I just know the house you live in. It's a temporary accommodation. Any one of us could be called home at any time, any day.

The Bible says, absent from the body, to be present with the Lord. But I'm in no hurry. So it's a temporary accommodation.

We recognize each other by our peculiar shapes. Some of us have more peculiar shapes than others. But the body is an important part of us.

[7 : 56] But it is the least important, because it's only temporary. But that's why, it's the only means we have of communicating with each other.

That's why I brought my body along with me this evening. I hope you did too, otherwise it would be a little spooky. But, in spite of the fact that the body is only a temporary accommodation, it is important.

I'm using my body my chest muscles to force air out of my lungs, up my throat, and by tightening my, and slackening my vocal cords, I'm producing vibrations of different frequencies.

And they're going out, moving out through the air. And you are catching these vibrations with two cup-shaped appendages on the sides of your head.

And God stuck them there. So that these vibrations might be focused on the eardrums, which are a thin membrane.

[9 : 19] your eardrums, your eardrums, then start to vibrate in harmony with the vibrations that I'm making in my throat.

in touch with the membrane is a small bone called the hammer.

And this little bone starts to vibrate in harmony with the vibrations I'm making in my throat. Attached to the hammer is another small bone called the anvil.

And this starts to vibrate in harmony with the vibrations I'm making in my throat. And attached to the anvil another little bone called the stirrup.

And this starts to vibrate in harmony with the vibrations I'm making in my throat. You've no idea what I'm doing to you as I speak to you right now.

[10 : 19] All these little tiny bits of you are working. The stirrup is connected to a tiny sac called the organ of cortea which is filled with fluid.

Now inside this sac are about 25,000 neurons which are receptor cells. And each of these neurons are so wonderfully created by God that each one of them will respond to the vibrations that are going through your ears.

And so as I'm speaking each cell is responding to its set frequency. And it sends an electrical current through your nervous system into a certain part of your brain.

And then you know exactly what I'm talking about. Babies are born and in the process of time they're able to unscramble these electrical currents.

Some of them learn to unscramble them faster than others. others. But I don't know if you've ever heard a sound and thought oh I've never heard that sound before.

[11 : 52] It reminded me of a time in the village in Ivory Coast when I was sitting in my office and a big thunderstorm was coming.

And suddenly bolts of lightning started falling from the sky all around where we lived. All around the village. And it wasn't like they are here where there might be a minute or two minutes between each bolt.

This was every few seconds. One would come down and they were all within about a few hundred yards of our house. And between the bolts I ran from my office to the house and I went in there and Faye, she was only about five years old at the time, she had run to her bedroom and grabbed a pillow and had it stuck around her head like this.

The noise was just barely describable. It was like the atmosphere was being just split, like torn apart.

It was just incredible. I'd never heard that sound before in my life. And these receptor cells had never been used before in my ears.

[13 : 16] God is a wonderful God, wonderful creator who is worthy of our praise. So the body is important.

It's how we communicate. But your body is not you. It's not you. You know, you could, if you wanted to, you could chop off both your legs, both your arms, take out several organs and you'd still be you.

The whole of you would be right there. It is not your body. You are not made up of your body. It's body only, but it is fearfully and wonderfully made.

a temporary accommodation until we receive a new body. 2 Corinthians 5 verse 1 tells us, Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands, a body without sin and is once more available to God to fulfill the function for which he originally created us.

Why did God create us humans? He created us humans to be the human vehicle of his divine activity so that we, with a physical, visible, and audible body, could give a physical, visible, and audible display of an invisible God, indwelt and governed by our creator, so that we would fulfill our job which is to bring God out into the open where he can be seen.

[15 : 24] This is something which Jesus did perfectly while he was here on earth. That's why he could say, he that has seen me has seen the Father.

Jesus took that human body, born at Bethlehem, and placed it into his Father's hands to do that which God originally intended for us men to do, and that was for God to live in and through us in total surrender and dependence on the Father.

The soul. The soul is the invisible part of us. It determines how we behave.

It is a mind to think with, an emotion to react with, and a will to decide with. Your body is controlled by your will.

Your will is controlled by your mind and by your emotions. So whoever controls your mind and your emotions ultimately controls your will and therefore in the end controls your behavior.

[16 : 54] That's why we have to be very careful who it is that teaches our minds. The books we read, television programs we watch, the conversations we have, they're all feeding our mind.

And all kinds of circumstances can stir your emotions. Things you see, read, people you mix with. That's why we live in an age of propaganda.

Television and magazine advertisements, etc. Everybody's trying to catch your mind and stir up your emotions.

And then they can control your will and dictate and manipulate your behavior. So whenever you see a sports car advertised, there's always an attractive lady standing next to it.

The charity advertisements you see on television, they show a emaciated child about to die, and trying to get your emotions involved in trying to get you to do what they want you to do.

[18 : 22] Shampoo advertising, you always notice who it is that has this beautiful, perfect hair and they tell you that nothing else will do.

Trying to manipulate your mind and thinking to make you go out to the shop and buy their brand of shampoo or whatever it might be.

We are constantly being manipulated. So, if a man realizes that he was created by God to be inhabited by his creator, behavior, so that God can teach his mind, control his emotions, direct his will, he can govern his behavior, just as was originally intended by God for him to live, then look at that man, you will see God behaving.

That's what God meant when he said in Genesis chapter 1 verse 26, let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

And in Genesis 5 1 he says, in the likeness of God made he him. So that each one of us, living how God intended us all to be, will be a physical, visible, and audible body, and give a physical, visible, and audible expression of an invisible God.

[20 : 11] God created animals. He gave animals instincts, controlled from within, so that what an animal does, it does it because it has to.

There's no choices. Bees, they do what's programmed internally. They don't have to be told how to make a honeycomb, or how to search for pollen, to do a little dance or a jig, to direct the other worker bees out to the direction of where the food is.

It all comes by instinct. Any of you who have been in the tropics, and have seen soldier ants, it's just incredible how they work.

We have them all the time visiting our house. Sometimes we were glad, because some of the insects around the house would keep us awake all night.

But when the soldier ants came, millions of them, literally millions, would come. And our courtyard was 50 meters square.

[21 : 46] I went out one night when our girls were playing in their bedroom at the other side of the house, and they said, there's ants in the bedroom.

I went and had a look, and they were soldier ants. I thought, oh, they must be coming from that side of the house. so I had my handy squeezey bottle full of paraffin with a hole already punched in the top, and I would go out and surround the house with a line of paraffin.

And the ants didn't like to cross it. If you're ever in the tropics, it's an excellent tool to have. I got my big torch, put my ex-fireman boots on, sprayed them with insect repellent to stop the ants crawling up my trousers and taking bites out of me.

I opened the door, which is diagonally opposite to the girl's bedroom, shone the torch outside, and the whole ground was moving moving.

Literally, the whole ground was just black and moving. And I shone around the whole yard and everywhere. Millions and millions of ants were just everywhere, crawling up the house walls.

[23 : 12] I thought, too late. Too late. We did the best we could, spraying around the house and putting the paraffin close to the house to stop any more getting to the house.

but it's marvelous. They have their nest, usually under an old tree, underground, and they would all come out at night and they'd head off in one direction, out maybe 100 meters, and they'd have a big envelope of area, and they would just eat everything, down the holes, everywhere.

Nothing would survive, even as something as big as a snake would be consumed by these ants. So any huge pythons that killed something, like a rabbit or something, as they were swallowing it, they wouldn't be able to get away if the ants came and got them, and so they would kill the animal, and then the snake would go and crawl all the way around, make sure there were no ants coming, and then go back and eat it.

and these ants, they would cover that huge area, go back home, the following night they'd go diagonally opposite, and cover that area over there, get all the insects from over there, back home, and then they'd head out opposite, but just a little further away, cover the next pot, until they'd done a full 360 degrees around that nest, and then they'd all up and move 200 or 300 meters away, make another nest and do the same there, remarkable, did they go to school, to learn how to do that, no, they did it by instinct, fish, how does salmon know where to go, but they go to where they were born, spiders, do they go to the web, to learn how to make a web, okay, oh yeah, sorry, but it's remarkable watching little spiders, spinning their webs, it's wonderful how these things that were created by God can do these things by instinct, but God made a distinction between man and made him man because God had a special desire and plan for him, he wanted man as his creature to be capable of loving him back, and you cannot force somebody to love, love.

If God had given us humans love for God as an instinct, then we would be like robots.

[26 : 38] The way we would work would be satisfying to God, just like the animals are, but we would not be morally satisfying to him.

so he gave us the ability to respond to God's love for us, with our love for him in return, but it had to come from a free choice, because you can't make somebody love you.

Did you get your wife by threatening her with a stick? I might keep my wife that way, but I didn't get her that way.

God could have made man like animals to have an instinct, and then he would have done the very thing God wanted him to do, in everything that he does and says and is.

This would show what God is like, but there would be no special relationship between man and God. Man would be like a television set, and there's no loving choice when it comes to watching television.

[27 : 55] When you want to watch a game of football, you wouldn't tiptoe over to the television and hope it's in a good mood, or if it shows a good match, you wouldn't go over and say thank you very much.

If you did, your family would start to get worried about you, more worried than they already are. It's just a machine. That's why God made man different from the animal kingdom.

Not only did he give us a physical, visible, and audible body, and a soul, mind, emotion, and will, but he built into man the human spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5.23 says, May God sanctify you wholly. Sanctify. That means set apart.

John 17.19 says, For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Jesus sanctified himself.

[29 : 07] A saint has been set apart for what? For the intelligent purpose which an intelligent creator created us for.

anything can be sanctified. A jumper, it's getting to that time of year, where you sanctify your jumpers.

You put them on. That's what they were designed for. Growing up as a child, ground, we'd go out to Burley Park in Leeds, we'd take our jumpers off, put them on the ground, one here, one there, use them as goal posts.

That was not their original design, to be a goal post. In the village, you'd see a cockroach slip off your shoe and you'd use it for something it wasn't sanctified for.

I don't go around, I didn't go around with shoes on my hands to hit cockroaches, but I use them for the intelligent purpose for which they were intelligently made.

[30 : 26] a watch. Look at it and you sanctify it. It was designed to tell you how early, how late, how long that man has been speaking for.

Many of you have sanctified your watches already this evening. But humans were not originally designed to live for themselves.

being independent from God. They were designed by God to be the human vehicle of his divine activity. So that with a physical, visible, and audible body, we could give a physical, visible, and audible expression of an invisible God, indwelt and governed by our creator, so we fulfill the function which is to bring God out into the open where he can be seen.

1 Thessalonians 5.23 says, May your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

Spirit, soul, and body. Three parts involved in being sanctified. And they're in the correct order as far as God is concerned of importance.

[31 : 58] We are made of three distinct parts with different functions. Every human spirit was created to be inhabited by the Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 20.27 The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord. Lamps need oil. Oil always speaks of the Holy Spirit.

The presence in man of the Holy Spirit places in man the life of God who created him. He is born again.

Not only that, but when the Holy Spirit is given access by you from your human spirit to the human soul so that the Holy Spirit within you can teach your mind, control your emotions, and govern your will, that then determines your behavior.

So that others looking at you see God as others did 2,000 years ago when Jesus says, how do I do that, you may ask?

[33 : 20] Well, how do the advertisements work? It seems like the advertising people have been watching the workings of the human soul.

The Holy Spirit is trying to catch and teach your mind and stir your emotions so that he can control your will.

and direct your behavior. So, what then is sin? Sin is the margin of difference between what God is and what we now are, who were made in his perfect image.

Romans 3, 23 says, all have sinned and fallen short of what? the glory of God, which is God himself. That is what sin is.

Our coming short of his perfection. How can anybody say, I'm not a sinner, when sin is what is not perfect as God is.

[34 : 38] salvation. So, what is salvation? It is the restoration of us to his image.

Romans 8, 29 says, for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son.

The purpose of evangelism isn't to get people out of hell and into heaven. It is to restore the image of God into man.

That was God's original plan. Genesis chapter 1, verse 26 says, let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Jesus. Only one man ever lived a perfect life. Jesus. He bore our sins in his body on the tree.

[35 : 45] The just for the unjust that he might bring us to God. So that God, without compromising his righteousness, could restore us, could restore to us that which man lost in Adam.

When he obeyed the lie of a devil and thought that he could be a man without God. And so what happened? God withdrew the oil from the lamp.

He was still a lamp, but he wasn't able to shine. Every human walking on the earth is a lamp without oil.

Having died for us, Jesus rose again, went to heaven to be with his father. Does he have no witnesses now on earth?

Well, yes, he does. You are his hands, you are his feet, you are his mouth, you are a member of his body.

[36 : 56] So, if you are a member of his body, how is he keeping? If we could send a letter to God and thank him for all his blessings, encouragements, provision for us in so many ways, oh, and by the way, how is your health?

He might reply, well, in myself, I'm doing fine, just fine, but we are having trouble with our body.

We have hands that are crippled, feet that are wayward, when we tell them to go one way, they go the other. We have minds that are filled with so many worldly desires.

members that won't even talk to each other. Mind you, in ourselves, we're just fine.

Friend, if you are a member of his body, is he in trouble? Most of us would have to confess that if I were the only member of God's body on earth, in which others could see what he is like, then I think I need the great physician's healing and restoring to health.

[38 : 28] Amen.