

Sermon Handout

A Contrary Spirit

III John 9-10

I. John's Admonition Concerning Diotrephes

- a. The name, Diotrephes, means "Child of Zeus" (*lit.* "Zeus-raised")
- b. He buried or discarded John's previous letter v. 9
"I wrote . . ." but, Diotrephes "does not receive us"
- c. Diotrephes' behavior (as an elder!)
 - i. He likes to put himself forward v. 9 (personal vanity)
 - ii. He talks nonsense about the Apostle v. 10b *cf.* I Tim 5:13
Rejects Apostolic authority.
 - iii. He refuses to receive "the brethren" v. 10c (*cf.* v. 5)
These are those John commends Gaius for supporting. vv. 5, 8
 - iv. He excommunicates those who support "the brethren" v. 10d
Thus, he misuses his authority in the church.
- d. Diotrephes seems to regard John as a rival authority
- e. John promises to publicly rebuke Diotrephes when he comes v. 10a
 - i. Evil words & evil deeds accompany one another II Jn 11
 - ii. Gaius is urged to do good & reject evil behavior v. 11

II. Selfless Leadership is Required of Church Officers

- a. We are called to promote unity in the congregation
 - i. Eph 4:1-3 Keep the unity of the Spirit in peacefulness
 - ii. Gal 5:13-16 By love, serve one another
- b. Leaders are to be the "servants of all"
 - i. The instruction of Jesus Mk 10:35-45; Mt 23:1-7
 - ii. The admonition of Peter I Pet 5:1-4
 - iii. Paul's instruction regarding elders I Tim 3:2-3, 6; Tit 1:7-9
 - iv. The misapplication of I Tim 3:1 (what "desire" is in view?)
Desire can and does arise from improper motives.
We are called to selfless love II Jn 4-6; Eph 5:1-2; 23, 25, 32

III. Lessons for the Church

- a. Desire to serve is good; desire to "be important" is dangerous
- b. Elders are to guard the flock against those who would misuse authority
- c. All members must seek the wellbeing & unity of the church

"Personal vanity still lies at the root of most dissensions in every local church today" __ John R. W. Stott