

Series: "3 For 2016"

Text: III John 5-11

Title: "Do Good"

Introduction: Good Morning BMZ! I'm so glad you are with us today as we CONTINUE our NEW YEARS WORSHIP SERIES called "3 For 2016"! We want to KICK OFF the NEW YEAR with 3 THINGS we can LIVE BY that will HELP US be more who GOD WANTS us to be in 2016!

So, as we begin today ... Wouldn't it be great if LIFE was a little SIMPLER? It just seems like the CHAOS of scheduling and appointments and commitments keeps on GROWING. WHAT HAPPENED to the times of sitting on the front PORCH SWING sipping LEMONADE?

Well, John Wesley KNEW when he REALIZED that he had STARTED a MOVEMENT within the Anglican Church / Church of England that he had to find a way to keep things SIMPLE. He had a wide VARIETY of people COMING to know JESUS through his PREACHING and classes in 18th Century England. In order TO COMMUNICATE with people from ALL educational BACKGROUNDS he knew that he had to communicate with them in a way that they could ALL UNDERSTAND.

See, John Wesley understood that for MANY people there is an EXCITING MOMENT or SEASON when they are really FIRED UP about their FAITH and getting to know God through Jesus Christ. He also KNEW that PEOPLE had a tendency to FALL AWAY IF they did NOT UNDERSTAND WHY they were following God or HOW to follow Jesus Christ.

Now, remember that John Wesley and his buddies were called 'METHODISTS' because they had come up with different 'methods' to stay close to God. ONE of Wesley's 'METHODS' to KEEP people CONNECTED to and EXCITED ABOUT their FAITH and to help the people know HOW to serve God's Kingdom came from his "THREE SIMPLE RULES".

John Wesley came up with "Three Simple Rules" FROM SCRIPTURE to help Christians stay on track with their faith journeys. WESLEY'S ARGUMENT was that IF the people of the Methodist Movement would FOLLOW these "THREE SIMPLE RULES", those PEOPLE could CHANGE the WORLD!

Did you know that is what God demands of us? Jesus someday wants to say to each of us, **"Well done, good and faithful servant."** But, "Well done good and faithful servant" does NOT come FROM us sitting around on pews/chairs and listening to what God wants from us. It is one thing to KNOW what God wants and another thing entirely to DO what God wants!

WHAT GOD WANTS from us is very SIMPLE: ***God wants us to transform the world around us***; to be FOCUSED on the Kingdom of GOD and NOT our PERSONAL Kingdom!

Remember the DISCIPLES ... how they thought they were headed to JERUSALEM to OVERTHROW the CURRENT government and that Jesus was going to be Messiah/King? And they were ARGUING over who would be in what position in that Kingdom in Jerusalem? Do you KNOW WHY they were ARGUING? They were CONCERNED ABOUT their own PERSONAL Kingdom and weren't focused on God's Kingdom!

Do you know what I want to hear when I die? I want to hear Jesus say, **"Stan, well done. You are a good and faithful servant. Welcome to My Kingdom!"** I DON'T WANT TO MISS THAT! I know that John Wesley didn't either. AND, I DON'T want YOU to MISS IT!!

Do you want to hear that someday?!? I'm asking BECAUSE ... The ALTERNATIVE is hearing Jesus say, ***"I never knew you ... get away from me."*** That would be a BAD DAY!

If you have your Bible with you, turn with me to **LUKE 6** ... if you don't; no worries. All of our Scriptures for today will be up on the screen and much of what we are doing is in your program. If you don't own a Bible and would like one, please stop by Java Jct/Blessed Bean and someone will get you set up with your own Bible. Speaking of which...

If you haven't already, I invite you to take out your message notes and Connection card... On one side you will see our Scripture for today and on the other you will find a brief outline walking us through our Scripture. You will see that there are blanks to fill in ... Please take the time to do so. Grab a pen and write down whatever else you think is important to you and your faith journey. After worship, drop off your CONNECTION CARD and take your notes home and refrigerate them. Please Re-read the Scripture and the notes to keep growing and learning. For those of you watching on-line, hit the button for notes and for CONNECTION CARD and stick with us. If you are watching/listening later, or IPODing; you can download the outline off of our website so you too can take notes.

Let's pray and then we will press on with where we are going today... **LET'S PRAY (turn off marked lights during prayer)!**

As we CONTINUE this series, "3 For 2016", If you want to hear, "Well done..." all you have to do is follow ***"3 Simple Rules": 1) Do No Harm; 2) Do Good; and 3) Stay in Love with God / Keep the Means of Grace.***

Wow! Those sound SO SIMPLE, right?!? WE KNOW to do THOSE THINGS. Many of us were probably TAUGHT those as a KID. DON'T HURT other people, BE NICE, do the right thing, GO to CHURCH, etc. We ALL, or MOST, have a general sense of RIGHT and WRONG.

I challenged you all LAST WEEK with our ***RULE #1: Do no harm.*** Well, that's SIMPLE! DON'T HURT the PEOPLE around you OR hurt GOD. If you were here, you probably started to realize that these SIMPLE RULES are NOT for the FAINT of HEART!

Let me get this out of the way: **In order to truly follow Jesus, you are going to have to be tough, determined and disciplined.** In order to FOLLOW JESUS you will be asked to do things that SEEM very SIMPLE on the surface ... but they will take TIME and EFFORT and ENERGY and DETERMINATION and TOUGHNESS and COMMITMENT! Christianity is NOT for WIMPS. Wimps (those who follow the crowd because they are afraid to do what is right) will GET RUN OVER by the WORLD and NEVER really FOLLOW CHRIST.

So, "Do No Harm" = has an understanding that EVERY PERSON in this world is a Creation of God and a Potential Child of God, so you will NOT GOSSIP, Degrade, Put Down, Offend or in any other way hurt or harm another human being ... NO MATTER WHAT!

Please KNOW that this is NOT PASSIVE. This is NOT: "I'm okay; You're Okay" or trying to be "Politically Correct". To "DO NO HARM" is an ACTIVE RESPONSE to the EVIL of this world. It's a CHOICE WE MAKE in order to BE WHO GOD WANTS us to be. If you missed last week

Today, we move on to Wesley's ***2nd Simple Rule: Do Good.*** John Wesley STUDIED his BIBLE and he knew that in Acts 10 the author wrote of Jesus that *"he went about doing good..."* Wesley was also aware of verses like Luke 6:27-28 = ²⁷ *"But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. ²⁸ Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you."*¹

DO GOOD! It's NOT HARD. Wesley wrote in his journal (1738-9) that IF we DESIRE to DO GOOD, there are DAILY OPPORTUNITIES. He wrote about POOR families (In the early 1700s in England 4 MILLION of the 5 MILLION people lived in POVERTY);

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Lk 6:27-28). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

CHILDREN needing EDUCATION; factory WORKERS who need to HEAR God's Word; and PRISONS full of NEEDS.

We find out in our Bibles that DOING GOOD is GODLY. As we read from the 3rd Letter from JOHN, we believe that these letters were written by the Apostle John to people involved in the HOUSE CHURCHES of the 1st Century. In his SHORT 3rd LETTER (NO CHAPTERS), John writes TO HELP ONE of his TRAVELING PREACHERS have a place to stay. The desire was that when PREACHERS from the Christian movement STAYED in towns, they stayed with someone from the CHURCH. BECAUSE, most of the INNS back then doubled as BROTHELS. That could make things a bit UNCOMFORTABLE FOR the traveling PREACHERS.

So, John was writing to GAIUS on behalf of one of his preachers so he would have a place to stay while in (WHATEVER) TOWN. Here's what John writes ... III John 5-8 = ⁵ *Dear friend, you are being faithful to God when you care for the traveling teachers who pass through, even though they are strangers to you.* ⁶ *They have told the church here of your loving friendship. Please continue providing for such teachers in a manner that pleases God.* ⁷ *For they are traveling for the Lord,* and they accept nothing from people who are not believers.** ⁸ *So we ourselves should support them so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth.* ²

Gaius is being COMMENDED by John. He is doing a good job ... such a GOOD JOB that even the people in the Church in Jerusalem have heard about it.

I. Gaius

That's a compliment ... the teachers/preachers who have traveled out of Jerusalem (the beginning of Christianity and home base for the Christian Church) are REPORTING BACK that when they preach at GAIUS' House CHURCH, they are well TAKEN CARE OF.

It sounds like Gaius has GONE OUT of his WAY to accommodate the Christian teachers and JOHN wants GAIUS to KNOW that HE KNOWS ... keep up the good work!

Understand that the Christian teachers were to TAKE NOTHING from UNBELIEVERS, which LIMITED WHO they could receive FOOD/CLOTHING/HOUSING from. It was ESSENTIAL that the CHRISTIANS HELPED the Teachers/Preachers for Christ. GOOD JOB, GAIUS!! John is attempting to ENCOURAGE a GOOD SERVANT for God's KINGDOM!

DIOTREPHESES, on the other hand, had NOT been SO GOOD. We're not sure if Gaius and DiotrepheSES were from the SAME House Church, but it almost sounds like it.

John said that he wrote a letter to the Church about accommodating the traveling Preachers, but not sure if it was ever read to the Church. III John 9-10 = ⁹ *I wrote to the church about this, but DiotrepheSES, who loves to be the leader, refuses to have anything to do with us.* ¹⁰ *When I come, I will report some of the things he is doing and the evil accusations he is making against us. Not only does he refuse to welcome the traveling teachers, he also tells others not to help them. And when they do help, he puts them out of the church.* ³

II. DiotrepheSES

DiotrepheSES must be in a leadership position and is letting the position go to his head. Ever know people like that?!? It seems that the Church is all ABOUT DIOTREPHESES. HE DECIDED that they were NOT going to ACCOMMODATE these PREACHERS from Jerusalem or wherever ... it COST TOO MUCH money and took TOO MUCH TIME and EFFORT.

DIOTREPHESES did NOT want to accommodate the traveling teachers HIMSELF, AND told OTHERS in the Church NOT TO accommodate them EITHER.

² Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (3 Jn 5-8). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

³ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (3 Jn 9-10). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

He DIDN'T STOP there ... He was KICKING PEOPLE OUT of the Church who DID ACCOMMODATE the traveling preachers! BUT, don't worry, notice in verse 10, JOHN tells Gaius that HE will TAKE CARE of DIOTREPHES when he gets there. John's going to LET EVERYONE in that Church KNOW what Diotrephes is up to and how that it is NOT of GOD.

Hear Verse 11 ... III John 11 = ¹¹ *Dear friend, don't let this bad example influence you. Follow only what is good. Remember that those who do good prove that they are God's children, and those who do evil prove that they do not know God.*⁴*

DO GOOD!!! Wow! John WESLEY was BIBLICAL!

III. **Do Good: A Way of Life**

To "DO GOOD" is a great CHALLENGE from WESLEY and a COMMAND from JESUS ("*do good to those who hate you*"), BUT... What does it MEAN to "DO GOOD"? WHERE do I START if I decide to "DO GOOD"? ARE there LIMITS to 'doing good'? AND, WHAT does 'doing good' LOOK LIKE in our world TODAY?

REMEMBER that part where I said CHRISTIANITY is NOT for the FAINT of HEART? BRACE YOURSELVES as we talk about "Doing Good"...

Please understand that these "THREE SIMPLE RULES" are a BIBLICAL LIFESTYLE, NOT a DIET! We don't just stick with it UNTIL we DON'T FEEL LIKE IT anymore. It's a LIFE COMMITMENT!

WHO do we DO GOOD TO?!? When we "Do Good" it is for EVERYONE (LOVE your NEIGHBOR as yourself) ... we DON'T get to PICK and CHOOSE! I KNOW that it would be EASIER to just DO GOOD to the people who LIKE US and ARE LIKE US, BUT that's NOT how it WORKS!

We DO GOOD even to the PEOPLE who DON'T SEEM WORTHY. Remember, GAIUS was good to PREACHERS that he'd NEVER MET before. It DIDN'T MATTER what they LOOKED like or ACTED like. THEY were CHILDREN of GOD!

"DOING GOOD" is like "Doing No Harm" in that it's an ACTION ... NOT a REACTION! When we DO GOOD, WE INITIATE IT. We DON'T WAIT for SOMEONE ELSE to DO IT! "***I'll ONLY DO GOOD if I HAVE TO...***" is NOT what our BIBLES TEACH!

As JESUS FOLLOWERS, we get to LOOK for WAYS to DO GOOD! We don't need to wait to be asked. WE DON'T WAIT for SOMEONE ELSE to start a relief organization to help someone in need ... WE JUST HELP!

We, as FOLLOWERS of JESUS, make a DECISION that we will DO ALL the GOOD we CAN in WHATEVER CIRCUMSTANCE we are IN!

Please know that if we are going to do this (DO ALL the GOOD we CAN in WHATEVER CIRCUMSTANCE we are IN) it will take DISCIPLINE. This is a CHANGE in our LIVES! We will have to CONTINUALLY ASSESS OURSELVES and the WORLD around us and ASK, "WHAT are the NEEDS and WHAT can I DO to HELP?!?"

I think we're all WILLING to do A LITTLE GOOD here and there. PIGLETS for ORPHANS, sending YOUTH and ADULTS on MISSION TRIPS; helping out with the FOOD PANTRY once in a while, sending MONEY to a CAUSE that TUGS at our HEARTS ...

So, the question comes: "If I'm to DO ALL THE GOOD I CAN in a WORLD that NEEDS so MUCH ... WHERE are the BOUNDARIES? HOW MUCH is TOO MUCH!?"

That takes us to ... some OBSTACLES to DOING GOOD...

IV. **Obstacles to Doing Good**

⁴ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (3 Jn 11). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

1st Obstacle = CONTROL / SELFISHNESS ... “If I decide to ‘DO GOOD’ to everyone I see, I’m not sure I’m going to know what’s going to happen tomorrow. I might be compelled to ‘Do Good’ for someone I have not met yet ... that does not fit into my agenda!”

Many of us like to know where we are going and what it’s going to cost to get there. “If I don’t know what tomorrow is going to be like, then I’m off of MY Schedule! I’m too busy already!”

“Pretty soon ... This whole DOING GOOD THING is like completely giving up my right to myself and simply following God! Doesn’t seem very responsible...”

Keep in mind that my desire to DO GOOD is NOT to LOOK GOOD to the PEOPLE around me. We DO GOOD in RESPONSE to God’s SALVATION THROUGH JESUS and God’s INVITATION to FOLLOW Jesus!

THAT’S what is in OUR CONTROL, the CHOICE to FOLLOW Jesus Christ.

Remember, LOVE is a CHOICE; NOT a FEELING! If we CHOOSE to LOVE GOD in RETURN for God’s great GIFT to us ... we CHOOSE!!

2nd Obstacle = REJECTION! WHAT IF I OFFER Goodness to someone and THEY LAUGH at me? WHAT IF PEOPLE WATCHING start SAYING MEAN THINGS about me? You all understand that “NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED”...

What if I DO something GOOD to someone and they take it and DON’T USE IT the way I THOUGHT they should?

KEEP IN MIND ... we do GOOD NOT for what we will GET in RETURN, BUT, BECAUSE JESUS SAID to! We DO GOOD so that GOD is pleased ... NOT other PEOPLE!

Remember, IT’S NOT about US / ME! WHEN people TAKE what we GIVE and they are UNGRATEFUL or they ABUSE what we’ve GIVEN ... that HURTS and makes us NOT WANT to HELP AGAIN. BUT, we do GOOD for GOD. It’s about PLEASING GOD through our ACTIONS to OTHER PEOPLE. It’s about RESPONDING WELL to GOD’S GIFT to US! It’s NOT about ME!!

The REWARD for DOING GOOD is NOT what we get in return HERE and FROM PEOPLE! The REWARD is YET to come and it’s from GOD!

V. To “Do Good” is Simple; Not Easy

Please understand when John Wesley ... and more importantly, Jesus Christ ... said to “DO GOOD”, we DON’T GET to SET UP BOUNDARIES! We DON’T get to PICK and choose WHO we want to help out and WHO NOT TO. That’s GOD’S JOB! We get to LISTEN to GOD and DO what HE SAYS...

That means that we are going to have to HELP PEOPLE that DO NOT LIKE US, NOR do they LOOK LIKE US or ACT LIKE WE’D LIKE THEM TO! Remember what Jesus said, **“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you ... pray for those who abuse you.”** That is an ORDER, NOT a SUGGESTION!

“Love your neighbor” is also a DEMAND of JESUS ... and we DON’T get to PICK our NEIGHBORS either... JESUS NEVER SAID it would be EASY, BUT ... “DOING GOOD” IS ESSENTIAL to FOLLOWING JESUS! IT’S NOT for WIMPS!

JOHN WESLEY PRAYED that God would **“disengage me from all things else...”** so that he could FOCUS SOLELY on JESUS and DOING GOOD for God’s Kingdom.

Okay, so FOLLOWING JESUS and DOING GOOD is SIMPLE, BUT incredibly CHALLENGING. Jesus asks us to THINK about LIFE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT from the REST of the WORLD! We might need to ASK OURSELVES some QUESTIONS for 2016:

1. **What if I forget about myself some and life wasn't about me?**
2. **What if I really did think about and put God first in my life?**
3. **What if I did think of the needs of others first?**
4. **What if I thought about what GOD WANTED and the good of the community BEFORE I thought about my own personal needs?**
5. **Would these things bring me closer to what Jesus had in mind for humanity?**

YEP!

Our Culture tells us that the 3 MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE in the world are “ME, MYSELF and I” and that we are supposed to take care of OURSELVES FIRST! Have you NOTICED where THAT MENTALITY has gotten OUR WORLD? The NEW GOLDEN RULE is: ***“Do unto others whatever you can get away with.”***

VI. Jesus Called us to Change the Culture: Not Follow It

Jesus called us to CHANGE the world ... TRANSFORM the culture, NOT FOLLOW it!

When John the Apostle and John Wesley SENT preachers/teachers out to DIFFERENT TOWNS and different House Churches, do you know what they were after? TRANSFORMING the WORLD they lived in!

If we learn to follow these THREE SIMPLE RULES of JESUS that John Wesley made simple to learn, we will TRANSFORM the World that WE live in!

Can you IMAGINE what it would LOOK LIKE if 400 people in South West Wisconsin decided to “DO NO HARM (STOPPED GOSSIPING and other things that HURT PEOPLE)” and we DECIDED to “DO GOOD (like, LOOKED for WAYS to HELP OTHER PEOPLE)”.

Remember, that's EXACTLY what JESUS DID in the 1st CENTURY! And, THOUSANDS came to a SAVING FAITH in JESUS!

Hey, BMZ, YOU are CHANGING the WORLD and Building The KINGDOM! There are people on the OTHER SIDE of the PLANET who will be in HEAVEN ... and, at least PART of that, is BECAUSE of YOU! In December, you gave almost \$30,000 to InterHope! AND, keep in mind that will be DOUBLED through our MATCH GIFT! That's DOING GOOD! Keep it up! BECAUSE, we don't know the DAY or the HOUR when JESUS will COME AGAIN!

“What you do for the least of these, you do to me.” –Jesus

Let's Pray!!

Next Steps: *I will memorize Luke 6:27-28*
 I will read Luke 6
 I'm signing up for GG# _____
 I will invite someone to attend “Rescue Me!” starting January 31st

“Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy).”
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