FBS “One Hit Wonders: Supporting the Truth, Dealing with Division” 7-9-17

Joel Breidenbaugh (3 John)

**Intro.** (walk up during “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” song, :14-:41 on youtube). “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” by Bobby McFerrin was a 1-hit wonder from 1988. Other 1980s “One Hit Wonders” include Grover Washington, Jr.’s “Just the Two of Us (81), Soft Cell’s “Tainted Love” (82), Toni Basil’s “Mickey” (82), Taco’s “Putin on the Ritz” (83), Scandal’s “The Warrior” (84), Twisted Sister’s “We’re Not Gonna Take It” (84) & Bill Medley’s “(I’ve Had) the Time of My Life” (87). “One Hit Wonders” in the music industry are artists who have but a single hit, but at least they had a hit. What I call “One Hit Wonders” in the Bible are single-chapter books which pack an important message into a few verses. We’ve looked at Obadiah, Philemon & 2nd John & today we look at 3rd John on “Supporting the Truth, Dealing with Division.”

Theme: Living in truth & faith

Background: John the Apostle wrote to a Christian named Gaius, who was known for supporting the truth & dealing with division. John writes to help believers avoid the dual dangers of heresy & division within the church while practicing love & discernment (knowing the truth).

* We need to be a church known for “Supporting the Truth & Dealing with Division.” To do that, individuals in the church need to support the truth & deal with division. Let’s talk about a couple of ways we can be “Supporting the Truth & Dealing with Division.”

**1. Support Christian missionaries (5-8)**

* Gaius was known for supporting traveling Christians, evangelists or missionaries, even though they were strangers to him, so long as they were part of the Christian faith (5-6)
* That they accepted nothing from the Gentiles probably means they didn’t appeal to the lost for financial support, but to fellow Christians, who should support them (7-8)

Illus: Such support is especially crucial for supporting Christian missionaries who are called out of a local church to serve in a way with similar faith & practice as the sending & supporting church—it is easier for a Southern Baptist church to support other Southern Baptist missionaries, because of shared beliefs, but especially those called out of your own church (that isn’t the same as a missionary coming to our church for a season to raise additional support, when they came out of a different church)

Illus: Supporting Christian missionaries is supporting the truth to see that it’s spread to other parts of the world. When something isn’t true, you don’t want that to be spread. In the early 1900s George Riddell acquired the sensational London newspaper *The News of the World*. Meeting British journalist Frederick Greenwood one day, Riddell mentioned that he owned a newspaper, told Greenwood its name, and offered to send him a copy. The next time they met, Riddell asked Greenwood what he thought of *The News*. “I looked at it and then I put it in the wastepaper basket,” said Greenwood, “and then I thought, ‘If I leave it there the cook may read it,’ so I burned it.” (*Today in the Word*, November 3, 1993).

* Because so many cults & world religions who do not share the truth are spreading throughout the world, it is all-the-more imperative for us to go & support others who go—who here today will stand up & be sent out with our prayers & blessings & support?

**2. Imitate good, faithful work rather than evil, divisive work (9-12)**

* John names 2 people in these verses—one as a kind of person to avoid being like & the other as a kind of person to imitate

**a. Deal with division head on (9-10)**

* John writes about Diotrephes, a man who would not recognize his authority as an apostle (they had greater authority than pastors, because they were eyewitnesses of the risen Lord who had been commissioned by Him)
* Diotrephes was spreading “wicked nonsense against” John & his associates. He also refused to welcome other believers to the church & kicked out whoever wanted to receive them—he was a modern-day cult leader who caused lots of division—John was going to confront him head on

Illus: I once served a country church where a deacon loved to fight. Sometimes he would fight with the pastor, sometimes the youth pastor (me) or other deacons. He wasn’t happy unless he was fighting & winning a few fights. No one in the church would confront him over his divisive attitude until one night he got so mad in a business meeting he just walked out, never to return again. The spirit & the unity in the church were at an all-time high after he left. That could have happened sooner if someone would have dealt with division head on. They could have removed him or he may have repented.

* This church has dealt with divisive people before & when they won’t repent, they must be disciplined by the church. I’ve known a gossip quit attending because we weren’t going to put up with them.

**b. Pursue & promote the good & faithful (11-12)**

* Rather than be like Diotrephes, who did evil & was not from God or had not seen God (11), John commends Demetrius for doing good & living a faithful life in accordance with the truth—many commended him, including John (12)—imitate him
* John was good at not only pursuing the good & faithful himself, for he was the closest disciple to Jesus, but he was also good at promoting others who were good & faithful, like Demetrius

Illus: The church in America is in need of a few good men & women—not just pastors, but laymen & laywomen who will serve as models of the faith in doing good & living out the truth. We are in need of more men & women to serve as mentors in the coming school year. Some have done so & want to recommit to another year. Others want & need to learn from some godly examples. We’ll be recruiting more in the coming weeks, but make the commitment to be a Demetrius in someone else’s life for the cause of supporting the truth.

**Conc.** Several factors helped America win the American Revolution in our division from Britain. One was the help from France. Another was the resolve to survive until the British could no longer put enough effort into the war. But the biggest reason why America won after a few years was because of the undying support & service of 6 people—a spy ring known as the Culper ring. Even British intelligence officer, Major George Beckwith, said, “Washington did not really outfight the British, he simply outspied us.” The Culper ring supported the truth of a free nation while dealing with the divisions we had to make with Britain to be a free people. The Culper ring has been used in training CIA operatives for decades. We need men & women willing to take such a stand for the victory of the gospel & the advancement of Christ’s kingdom in “Supporting the Truth & Dealing with Division.” Some of you need to take a stand & step out in faith to be in ministry or as a missionary. Some of you need to commit to becoming a mentor or being mentored in the coming school year. Some of you need to deal with division head on by putting a stop to slander & gossip & backbiting. Some of you want to pursue & promote the good & faithful, but you cannot until you surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. You are not good in God’s eyes unless you are in His Son. Will you repent & trust Him today?