

Text: III John 5-11

Title: "Do Good"

Introduction: 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. Wesley knew that he had a wide variety of people coming to know Jesus Christ through his preaching and his 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 an exciting 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 follow to stay close to God. One of Wesley's 'methods' to keep people 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. John's argument was that if the people of the Methodist Movement would follow these "Three Simple Rules", that group of 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 take over the present 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 wanted to help out 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.

Do you want to hear that someday?!? I'm asking... Do you know what the alternative is? The alternative is hearing Jesus say, "I never knew you ... get away from me."

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.

Wow! Those sound so simple, right?!? We know to do those things anyway. 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 have a general sense of right and wrong.

John (Kvigne not Wesley) challenged you all last week with our **first rule: Do no harm**. Wow, that's simple enough isn't it? Don't hurt the people around you or hurt God. If you were here, you probably started to realize that even though we are calling this series "KISS" for Keep It Simple, Silly, these SIMPLE RULES are not for the faint of heart.

Let me get this out of the way: In order to truly follow Jesus Christ, you are going to have to be tough, determined and disciplined. In order to follow Jesus Christ 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, etc. Christianity is not for the pansies of the world. Pansies (those who follow the crowd because they are afraid to do what is right) will get run over by the world we live in and never be able to follow Jesus Christ.

So, "Do No Harm" = has an understanding that every person you see and don't see in this world is a 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 understand that this is not passive and wimpy. To "Do No Harm" is an active response to the evil of this world. It is a choice that we make in order to be who God wants us to be.

Today, we move on to the **2nd Simple Rule: Do Good**. John Wesley 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 that reads:

²⁷ *"But if you are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. ²⁸ Pray for the happiness of those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you."*¹

Do good! It's not that hard. Wesley wrote in his journal (1738-9) that if we desire to do good, there are daily possibilities. He wrote about poor families, which there are not a shortage of, who always need some sort of help; children who need to be educated; factory workers who need to hear God's Word; and prisons full of needs.

We find out in our Scripture for today that doing good is absolutely of God. We are going to read from the 3rd Letter from John. We believe that these letters were written by the Apostle John (the Beloved) to people involved in the house churches of the 1st Century. This 3rd Letter is John, the Elder, writing 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. So, John was writing to Gaius on behalf of one of his preachers so he would have a place to stay while in town. Most of the Inns in those days doubled as brothels. That could make things a bit uncomfortable for the traveling preachers.

READ III JOHN 5-11 NOW AND PRAY!

I. Diotrephes Vs. Gaius

¹*Holy Bible: New Living Translation*. 1997 (Lk 6:26). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House.

- A. 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.
1. 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 are preaching at Gaius House Church, they are well taken care of.
 2. It sounds like Gaius has gone out of his way to accommodate the Christian teachers and John wants Gaius to know that he knows all about it ... keep up the good work.
 3. Understand that the Christian teachers were to take nothing from people who were not followers of Christ, which limited who they could receive food/clothing/housing from. It was essential that the Christians helped the Teachers/Preachers for Christ.
- B. Diotrophes, on the other hand, had not been so good. We're not sure if Gaius and Diotrophes were from the same House Church, but it kind of sounds like it.
1. John said that he wrote a letter to the Church about accommodating the traveling Preachers, but not sure if it ever was read to the Church.
 2. Diotrophes must be in a leadership position and is letting the position go to his head. Ever know people like that!?!
 - a. Suddenly, it seems that the Church is all about Diotrophes.
 - b. He decided that they were not going to accommodate these preachers from Jerusalem or wherever ... that cost too much money and took too much time and effort.
 - c. Dio not did not want to accommodate the traveling teachers himself, but told others in the Church not to accommodate them either.
 - d. Not only that, he was kicking people out of the Church who did accommodate the traveling preachers!
- C. Don't worry, notice in verse 10, John tells Gaius that he will take care of Diotrophes when he gets there. John's going to let everyone in that Church know what Diotrophes is up to and how that it is not of God.
- D. Hear Verse 11 ... "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."
- E. DO GOOD!!! Wow! What John Wesley said was Scriptural!

II. Do Good = A Way of Life

- A. To “Do Good” is a great challenge from Wesley and a command from Jesus (“do good to those who hate you”), BUT...
1. What does it mean to “do good”?
 2. Where do I start if I decide to “do good”?
 3. What are the limits to ‘doing good’?
 4. What does ‘doing good’ look like in our world today?
- B. Remember that part where I said Christianity is not for the faint of heart? Brace yourself as we talk about “Doing Good”.
1. Please understand that these “Three Simple Rules” are a lifestyle, not a diet! We don’t just stick with it until we don’t feel like it anymore. It is a life commitment.
 2. When we “Do Good” it is for everyone (Love your neighbor as you love yourself) ... we don’t get to pick and choose.
 - a. We don’t get to choose who we do good to. I know we would like to only be good to those like us and who like us, but that’s not how it works.
 - b. We do good even to those who don’t seem ‘worthy’ to us for whatever reason.
 - c. Remember, Gaius was good to teachers and preachers that he had never met before. It didn’t matter what they looked like or acted like. They were children of God!
- C. “Doing Good” is, like “Doing No Harm” an active way of life. When we Do Good, we initiate it and not wait for it to be needed. “I’ll only Do Good if I have to...” does not cut it!
1. As Christians, we are 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!
 2. We make a decision that we will do all the Good we can in whatever circumstance we are in!
 3. Please know that if we are going to do this it will take discipline. We will have to continually assess ourselves and the world around us. What are the needs and what am I doing to help?
 4. I think we are all willing to do a little good here and there. Toys for orphans, sending youth to Montana to help people in poverty, helping out with the food pantry once in awhile, sending a couple hundred dollars to a cause that tugs at our hearts ...
 5. 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?”

III. Obstacles to Doing Good

- A. 1st Obstacle = Control ... “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!”
1. 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!”
 2. “This whole DOING GOOD THING is like completely giving up my right to myself and simply following God! Doesn’t seem very responsible...”
 3. Keep in mind that my desire to DO GOOD is not just to look good to the people around me. We DO GOOD in response to God’s invitation to follow Jesus Christ!
 4. That’s what is in our CONTROL, the CHOICE to Follow Jesus Christ.
 5. Remember, Love is a Choice; not a feeling!
- B. 2nd Obstacle = Rejection! What if I offer Goodness to someone and they laugh at me? What if the people watching start saying mean things about me? What if I offer something good to someone and they take it and don’t use it the way I thought they should?
1. A few years ago the Mt. Zion Church reached out to a young family in need. We helped them with a house and a car through some very generous people in our community.
 2. I warned early that we do GOOD not for what we will get in return, but because Jesus said to!
 3. They were grateful, but within a couple of months the couple split, the car was wrecked and they moved out of the rental...
 4. Good came of it in more ways than one, but it was not about US! It was sort of painful, but it was not about US!
- C. The REWARD for DOING GOOD is not what we get in return here. The REWARD is yet to come and it’s from GOD!

IV. To “DO GOOD” is Simple; NOT Easy!

- A. Please understand when John Wesley ... and more importantly, Jesus Christ ... said to “Do Good”, we may not set up boundaries!
1. We do not get to pick and choose who we want to help out.
 2. We are going to have to help people that do not like us or do not look and act like us.
 3. Remember what Jesus said, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you ... pray for those who abuse you.”
 4. That is an order, not a suggestion!

- B. “Love your neighbor” is also a demand of Jesus Christ ... and we don’t get to pick our neighbors either... Jesus never said it would be easy, **BUT IT IS ESSENTIAL** to following Jesus Christ!
1. Following Jesus Christ is not for pansies!
 2. “To walk with Jesus meant to focus on something larger than the individual and Someone larger than any human being or human institution.”
 3. Wesley prayed that God would “disengage me from all things else...” so that he could solely focus on Jesus Christ and Doing Good for God’s Kingdom.
- C. Okay, so following Jesus and Doing Good is simple but incredibly challenging.
1. What if I forget about myself? Jesus liked that idea a lot!
 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 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?
 6. **YEP!**
- D. Our Culture tells us that “ME” is the most important person in the world and that we are supposed to take care of ourselves first!
1. Have you noticed where that mentality has gotten this world?
 2. The new golden rule is, “Do unto others whatever you can get away with.”
- E. Jesus called us to **CHANGE** the world ... **TRANSFORM** the culture, not follow it!
1. When John sent preachers/teachers out to different towns and different House Churches, do you know what they were after? Transforming the world they lived in!
 2. 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!

Communion: Jesus came to change the world and by one act He changed eternity! On that night in the Upper Room, Jesus told His disciples how He was going to Change the World!

Let’s Pray!