**NT Greetings!**

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday October 1st, 2023

Text: I Corinthians 15:58 Scripture Reading: III John 4-6

# Intro

1. Greetings are important!
   1. A greeting usually sets the tone for the rest of the conversation, whether by letter or by word.
   2. Often you can tell if a conversation will be light, serious, positive, negative, sad, or happy by the greeting that starts it all! (“We have to talk…”)
2. In Acts 2, after the first people baptized into Christ as a result of “gladly receiving the word” *(NKJ: Acts 2:41)* we see them added to the church and develop spiritually! (Acts 2:42, 44-47)
   1. In time, the first converts went back to their home territories where churches were eventually established by the help of the apostles.
   2. These various churches gained reputations based on the influence of the brethren that made up each particular church.
3. Churches still today gain reputations based on the influence of their members!
   1. Can be remembered for their love, coldness, faithfulness, apostasy, etc.
4. We bring back Warm Greetings from six congregations in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania:
   1. Greetings from the church in Mbezi!
   2. Greetings from the church in Tabata!
   3. Greetings from the church in Chanika!
   4. Greetings from the church in Kizuiani & the Dihigo Household!
   5. Greetings from the church in Mwanambya & the Mwakyami Household!
   6. Greetings from the church in Kingugi!
5. N.T. Greetings are a tribute of character and can teach us the importance of the local church being a recipient of good, positive, and faithful greetings!
6. **New Testament Greetings**
7. To the church in Rome…
   1. Romans 1:8: “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.”
   2. What a commendation and compliment to their faithfulness! (I John 5:4: Faith is the victory that overcomes the world)
8. To the church in Corinth…
   1. I Corinthians 1:11: “For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you.”
   2. Not a glowing report of the Lord’s body, or a good start to a letter!
   3. To quarrel is to be fleshly, not spiritual (Js. 4:1-4: Quarrels and conflicts)
9. To the church in Galatia…
   1. Galatians 1:6 (NKJV): “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,”
   2. It’s frustrating and sad to see faithful brethren turn to apostasy! (II Tim. 4:3-4: From inside the faith will turn from truth to myths)
10. The church in Ephesus…
    1. Ephesians 1:15-16 (AD 61-62 from Paul): “For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;”
    2. Revelation 2:2-5 (AD 95-96 from Jesus): “But I have this against you, that you have left your first love” (2:4)
    3. Our love for one another is the demonstration of our belonging to Jesus (John 13:35: Love each other as Christ loved us).
    4. Our love for God is our motivation for obedience! (I John 4:19: “We love, because He first loved us”)
11. To the church in Philippi…
    1. Philippians 1:3-6: “…in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.” (1:5)
    2. At the time of Paul’s letter the church was faithful! (I Corinthians 15:58: Always abounding in the work of the Lord, being steadfast and immovable)
12. To the church in Colossae…
    1. Colossians 1:4-6: “since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints…constantly bearing fruit and increasing…” (1:4, 6)
    2. The church here was known for its faith, love, hope, and productiveness! (Matthew 13:23: Good Soil Saints)
13. To the church in Thessalonica…
    1. I Thessalonians 1:2-9; II Thessalonians 1:3-4: Their faith, love, and steadfastness in hope spread far and wide, and they were known for their love for one another and for bearing through trials!
    2. They had a positive influence far and wide (Matthew 5:16: Let their light shine)
14. To the church in Smyrna – Rev. 2:9-10: Commended for their faith.
15. To the church in Pergamum – Rev. 2:13-16: Some faithful, some not.
16. To the church in Thyatira – Rev. 2:19-21: Steadfast love & faith, but also tolerance (sin).
17. To the church in Sardis – Rev. 3:1-2: Hypocrites! (Have an alive name, but are dead)
18. To the church in Philadelphia – Rev. 3:8: Kept God’s word, had not denied Him!
19. To the church in Laodicea – Rev. 3:15-17: Compromise had made them spiritual paupers!
20. In all cases, each church became known individually based on the collective faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the saints within!
21. **To the Courthouse church of Christ…**
22. The N.T. greetings revealed the reputation of many 1st century churches.
    1. The character of a congregation is very important to the community and to Christ!
23. Learning from the N.T. churches, there are ways the local church can possess a good character and receive positive greetings of faithfulness!
    1. Develop faith – Rom. 10:17; II Tim. 2:15; II Pet. 3:18
    2. Have a sincere love of the brethren – Gal. 6:2; I Pet. 1:22; I John 4:7, 11-12
    3. Remain steadfast in God and His work – I Cor. 15:58; Titus 2:14; Heb. 3:14
    4. Be supportive of preachers and teachers of the gospel – I Thess. 5:11-13
    5. Teach the gospel to others – II Tim. 2:24; I Pet. 3:15
    6. Be encouraging & edifying to one another – Rom. 14:19; I Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:24
       1. Send cards, letters, make phone calls…let others know you appreciate them!
    7. Show others that Christ is important to your life – Matthew 6:33; Heb. 10:24-25
       1. Wanting to be at every assembly when possible
       2. Wanting to be in Bible class
       3. Being friendly to all assembled
       4. Greeting not only the brethren but visitors alike!
    8. Be hospitable – Heb. 13:2; I Pet. 4:8-9
24. What report is heard of us? (The local church)
25. What greeting would the apostle Paul or Jesus Himself send to us?

**Conclusion**

1. Everyone likes to hear good things said about them.
2. The Lord’s church is no different!
   1. We must strive together to be found faithful, abiding in His doctrine (John 15:4), abounding in the work we are tasked to do, loving and encouraging one another, and bearing each other’s burdens!
3. Not every congregation is only defined by one characteristic, such as many of the churches in Asia had something positive said of them before Jesus rebuked them (Revelation 2-3).
4. The letter to an unnamed group by the apostle John had both positive and negative:
   1. The apostle John wrote, “I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth” in III John 4.
   2. He also said, “Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God” (III John 5-6).
   3. But he also rebuked a man named Diotrephes, who seemed to be ruling the church, kicking out whom he wished and not accepting the apostles, “I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church” (III John 9-10).
5. Greetings are important – they are a tribute of character!
6. The church is as strong and faithful as its members.
7. As we invite our friends and family to hear the gospel, let us strive together to receive a positive greeting from Christ and to be an influence for good to those around us!
8. If not a Christian, you need to be! Repent & be baptized today!
9. If a Christian who has erred, repent and be renewed!
10. Whatever your requests, let them be known ***NOW*** while we stand and sing!