

3 John 1:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

Analysis

But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name. John concludes with anticipated reunion: "I trust" (ἐλπίζω, *elpizō*) expresses confident hope, not mere wish. "Shortly" (εὐθέως, *eutheōs*) means immediately or soon, indicating John expected to visit before long. "We shall speak face to face" (στόμα πρὸς στόμα λαλήσομεν, *stoma pros stoma lalēsomen*)—literally "mouth to mouth we shall speak"—emphasizes direct, personal communication contrasting with written correspondence. This Hebrew idiom (cf. Numbers 12:8) denotes intimate, unmediated conversation.

"Peace be to thee" (εἰρήνη σοι, *eirēnē soi*) offers traditional Hebrew blessing (שָׁלוֹם, *shalom*). Biblical peace transcends absence of conflict, encompassing wholeness, wellbeing, harmonious relationship with God, and spiritual prosperity. This blessing particularly fits Gaius's situation: facing church conflict with Diotrephes, he needed divine peace sustaining him in difficulty. Christ's peace guards believers' hearts and minds (Philippians 4:7) even amid external turmoil.

"Our friends salute thee" (ἀσπάζονται σε οἱ φίλοι, *aspazontai se hoi philoi*) sends greetings from John's circle. "Friends" (φίλοι, *philoι*) appears rarely in New Testament to describe fellow believers—usually "brethren" (ἀδελφοί). Jesus notably called His disciples "friends" (John 15:13-15), transforming the relationship from servants to intimate companions. "Greet the friends by name"

(ἀσπάζου τοὺς φίλους κατ' ὄνομα, aspazou tous philous kat' onoma) instructs Gaius to individually greet John's acquaintances in that church. This personal touch reflects the epistle's intimate tone and emphasizes knowing believers individually, not merely as anonymous crowd. Christ knows His sheep by name (John 10:3); we should similarly know and care for individual believers.

Historical Context

Early Christianity's close-knit fellowship networks extended across cities and regions through traveling ministers, merchants, and personal relationships. Greetings exchanged in letters maintained these connections, encouraged isolated believers, and strengthened sense of belonging to universal church. Such personal touches humanized distant Christians and reminded readers they were part of a global family, not isolated communities.

The term "friends" (φίλοι) particularly resonates with John's gospel, where Jesus redefines friendship: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:13-15). Christian friendship transcends social pleasantries, rooted in shared love for Christ, mutual commitment to truth, and willingness to sacrifice for one another's good.

Greeting "by name" reflects biblical emphasis on personal knowledge. God knows His people individually (Isaiah 43:1, John 10:3), calls them by name, and invests in personal relationships rather than treating them as anonymous masses. This counters both ancient and modern tendencies toward impersonal religion focused on ritual compliance rather than relational knowing. The church is a body of individually known, loved, and valued members, each contributing uniquely to the whole.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Do you have genuine spiritual friendships characterized by mutual commitment to truth, love, and sacrifice?
2. How well do you know individual believers in your church by name, situation, and need?
3. Are you regularly speaking peace, blessing, and encouragement over fellow Christians?

Interlinear Text

ἐλπίζω δὲ εὐθέως ἰδεῖν σε, καὶ στόμα πρὸς στόμα
I trust But shortly I shall thee and face to face
G1679 G1161 G2112 G1492 G4571 G2532 G4750 G4314 G4750

λαλήσομεν εἰρήνη σοι. ἀσπάζου σε, οἱ φίλους
we shall speak Peace be to thee Greet thee G3588 **Our friends**
G2980 G1515 G4671 G782 G4571 G5384

ἀσπάζου τοὺς φίλους κατ' ὄνομα
Greet G3588 **Our friends by name**
G782 G5384 G2596 G3686

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