

SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

Int.

1. Aim: To explain how we can prosper spiritually and in all ways.
2. III John 2 "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers." NKJV
 - a. Written by the Apostle John to Gaius who had probably been converted by John.
 - b. Gaius was a member of the church in Asia Minor
 - c. He took great interest in the church.
 - d. John felt especially close to Gaius because he used the term "Beloved" 4 times
[V.1,2,5,11] "Great Affection" = beloved
3. This verse teaches some valuable lessons about our soul and its prosperity.

Discussion

I. PRAY FOR OTHERS

- A. ASV - v.2 "Beloved, I pray that in all things..."
 1. John sets us a good example in praying for those whom we love.
 2. Paul asked the brethren to pray for him -- "Brethren, pray for us."
 - a. I Thes. 5:25 - "Brethren, pray for us. "
 - b. II Thes.3:1 "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have [free] course, and be glorified, even as [it is] with you:"
 - c. Rm. 15:30 2 Cor.1:11 Eph. 6:18,19 Col. 4:3
 - d. Paul felt the constant need of the prayers of others, that he might be able to stand steadfast in the truth, and be bold to teach the whole will of God to man.
- B. We certainly need the help and strength that comes through the prayers of others.

- C. We should pray for one another
1. It is right for us to pray for the prosperity of one another.
 2. John prayed for the prosperity of Gaius.
 3. Three types of prosperity:
 - (1) Spiritual - soul
 - (2) Physical - body
 - (3) Financial - economic

II. MARKS OF A PROSPEROUS SOUL

- A. Has the truth dwelling richly within
1. III John 3-4 "For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."
 - a. Gaius knew the truth - and he walked in the truth - lived according to God's word
 - b. This brought great joy to John to learn that Gaius was faithful.
 - c. This is a mark or characteristic of a prosperous soul
 2. Col. 3:16a "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom;..."
- B. Has a large heart for all people
1. III John 5-8 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; 6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: 7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth.

- a. Gaius practiced hospitality to the brethren
 - b. He also extended hospitality to strangers
2. We are to work for the good of all people
 3. Heb. 13:1-2 "Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."
- C. Has no wrong ambitions
1. III John 9-10 Diotrephes had the wrong attitude and ambition "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth [them] out of the church."
 - a. He was jealous
 - b. He wanted to be first - or the main character
 - c. Therefore he would not accept the brethren.
 - d. He had brotherly jealousy instead of brotherly love!
 2. Gaius did not have any jealousy and wrong attitudes.
 3. We should imitate Gaius not Diotrephes - v. 11 "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God."

D. Is well proportioned

1. III John 2 "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."
2. Spirit - body - finances
3. Lk. 2:52 - Jesus was well balanced or proportioned "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."
4. Bodily exercise is important
 - a. I Tim. 4:8 "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."
 - b. It is of some value
 - c. With a healthy body we can do more for God.
5. Financial well being is necessary
 - a. I Tim. 5:8 "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."
 - b. Provide - Eph. 4:28 "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with [his] hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."
 - c. II Thes. 3:10b. "...if any would not work, neither should he eat."
 - d. We need to have money to care for ourselves and our family and to help other people.
6. We need to be healthy fiscally - physically - spiritually = PROSPEROUS

III. CHALLENGE TO HAVE A PROSPEROUS SOUL "As thy soul prospereth"

- A. Could this prayer be prayed for you?
1. What if your physical health were as good as your spiritual health?
 - a. Would you be able to sit up, walk, run, play, work and go about your normal activities?
 - b. Or would you be bedfast, crippled, unable to care for yourself?
 - c. Skinny, weakling
 - d. Would you be in the hospital in ICU, or CCU? Would you be blind and deaf?
 2. It might be dangerous for a prayer like this to be prayed for some because if it were answered you would be in grave trouble.
 3. On the other hand some who are now diseased and feeble would become sound and vigorous. They could hear and see and do much better physically. Strong, weight lifter.
- B. Could this prayer be prayed for your financial condition?
1. What if your financial condition was on the same level as your spiritual condition?
 - a. Would you be able to provide the necessities of life - food, shelter, clothing?
 - b. Could you afford a car and the upkeep? Or would you be walking or riding a bike ?
 - c. What kind of house would you have? [Mansion, shack, tent, or on the street]
 2. For some it would be dangerous to pray the same prayer that John prayed for Gaius because if they prospered financially in the same way they prospered spiritually they would be in poverty; begging for something to eat. Pauper = a very poor person. Bankrupt !

3. For others this would mean that they would be wealthy because they are rich spiritually. They could pay all their debts. They would have money in the bank.
Wealthy - millionaire

C. We must be careful about Material prosperity

1. John prayed: "even as thy soul prospereth."
2. Whenever our soul health does not measure up to our physical health, and when our spiritual prosperity is not equal to our financial prosperity, we are not in good standing before the Lord.
3. Here is the standard by which to determine how rich one may safely become: --- just so long as the soul prospers
 - a. If his soul is prospering then his riches bless and benefit not only himself, but others.
 - b. Jesus found a man whose financial prosperity exceeded his spiritual prosperity, so he commanded him to sell what he had and give to the poor - Mt. 19:16ff
 - c. When material prosperity impairs spiritual health it demands a surgical operation be performed and they be severed from us!
 - d. 1 Tim. 6:6-10 and 17-19
 - e. Mk. 10:17-31

Conclusion

1. John Prayed for Gaius. We should pray for one another.
2. Could I pray this prayer for You?
3. Challenge -- So live and conduct our lives at all times so that we can fervently pray for one another that God prosper us in health and finances as our soul has been prospered.
4. It is a good time to check our condition:
 - a. Spiritually - this is the most important - Mt. 6:33 - I Tim.4:8
 - b. Physically - care for your body
 - c. Financially - be responsible, honest and fair in all money matters.
5. Are you healthy? Do you need to obey? Or be Restored?

Sources

Sermon by C. Myron Keith on III John 2
Commentaries on III John
A.L.C.

Sermon by Arthur Pigman -
Evans Church of Christ
515 Gibbs Road
Evans, Ga. 30809
706-855-1249
arthurpigman@cybrtyme.com