

Hopewell ARP Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, October 7, 2020
Devotional from 3John v2-4

² Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

³ For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. ⁴ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

We are whole people—body and soul, not disembodied spirits. And, we are to pray for one another as whole people.

There is, of course, a priority upon the eternal soul. As the Lord Jesus asked, “what does it profit a man to gain the whole world but lose his soul?”

But the two are interconnected. Here, the apostle has already heard that Gaius’s soul is prospering. The word for ‘prosper’ here is not so much “to fare well” as it is “to do well.” John is overjoyed about Gaius, because other believers have come and testified that he is walking in the truth.

That’s a good lesson for us: to take note when brethren are walking in the truth and encourage others who know and love them by telling them about it. This is the apostle’s first great concern for his dear friend, for he says, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” This is the greatest joy about his friend—that his soul would prosper.

But our child’s soul doing well is not the only joy. We are to desire and pray that their body would be in health so that they would do well in all things. And, perhaps, something has been amiss with Gaius’s health. Sometimes the soul prospers, but it is hindered in its service by bodily ailments.

So, John is praying that by Gaius’s health being good, his doing well in soul would be extended to his doing well in everything.

Often, we hear of a believer’s health needs, or a believer asks us to pray for health needs. This gives us the design for how to do so: pray first and foremost that their soul would do well, but pray further that God would do for their health whatever enables them to do well in all things.

Let us be those who pray for one another: soul and body.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via tinysa.com/hopewellarp)

We'll be hearing third John verses two through four.

Loved. I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health. Just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified

of the truth, that is in you. Just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy. Than to hear that my children walk.

In the truth. So far the very words of God.

So when he says beloved I pray that you. We're a little bit handicapped because we are modern English people and we don't see loved. I pray that thou mayest and so we. We don't see immediately that it is singular although if I'd read verse one and we had seen that it was Gaia's who is being addressed we might have expected that John is writing to his dear friend he calls him beloved in verse 1 the loved and verse 2 beloved in verse 3 and what do we do for our dear?

Christian friends? Lots of things, but one thing we do is pray for them, don't we? And John as he's writing has just received this report about Gaius from he talks about in verse 3, I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you just as you walk in the truth, we love one another truly in Christ the the most important thing number one gliding thing as he says in the next verse in verse 4.

I have no greater joy. The most important thing is that we would hear that they are walking in the truth. And, John refers to Gaius here and others as his spiritual children. And he does so because that's true by analogy. You dear children. Of Christian parents. The thing that a believing mom or dad cares most about.

Is that you would be walking in the truth and no greater joy. Than to know that you know Christ and you're believing. His word and you're convinced of that word and you're walking according to that word welding John says the same is true about those who are his spiritual children and I can testify that as far as my new nature created in Christ that's true of me too concerning those who whom the Lord has privileged me to minister.

Has Gospel to that the greatest joy concerning you all is to see you walking in the truth and I'm grateful to God that I could give this testimony to of many of you. And we see that we ought to give that testimony of one another verse three I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you.

If we know that Christian love for one another means that what we want most of all is that that we would want another be walking in the truth, that's what I want to hear about my brother that is what I'm praying for my sister. Then we ought to want to give that pleasure to one another.

It's like inverted gossip, right? Rather than indulging the flesh and having juicy bits about others that make them look ugly so that I can look a little better by comparison or maybe join in some kind of psycho-emotional alliance with someone against someone else. Now, the Christian does the opposite out of love.

He he can't wait to tell his brother or sister about how the other brother or sisters walking in the truth because he knows that brother or sister

loves the brother or sister, he's going to tell on and that that will give them great joy. Well, we not only delight to hear about and pray for one another's souls because we are whole people body and soul, we're not disembodied spirits.

And so we're to think of one another and pray for one another as whole people the priority upon the soul here that the apostle shows in verse four. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth and that is what he describes at the end of verse two as.

His soul prospering or accomplishing or doing well succeeding. He's not using the word prosper there in the way we often use the word prosper and in terms of faring well, but in terms of of doing well and accomplishing. The apostle Paul at one point talks about uses this word to describe if I am able at last to come to you if I prosper it last to come to you he says at one point.

So he's heard about guys's soul and he's he responds by praying that he would do well in all things and be in health. The idea here may be that he's heard that something is going on with Gaius's health perhaps something is a miss sometimes our souls prosper and our bodily ailments are a trial to us not so much for the pain or for the discomfort as for types of service that aren't open to us.

Because of an illness or an injury. And we can be content in the Lord's Providence but we can also desire and pray for one another that by the Lord granting to us a measure of health we're able to prosper in all things and so this is both a prayer for the comfort and restoration physical restoration and maintenance of his brother Gaius and perhaps also the way that the thing that everything is connected in verse two a desire that.

As Gaius is doing well spiritually that the Lord would either use that to improve his health or use his health to improve his service and both happened don't they often somebody who has not been doing well physically the Lord grows them spiritually he actually the soul has an effect upon the body and sometimes even as we learned in James chapter 5 the affliction the physical affliction was sent to bring us to repentance so that we could be restored to doing well spiritually.

And so John is praying that Gaius's health would be good and that his doing well in soul would be extended to his doing well in everything and that helps us now to think about how to pray for one another's health we know to pray for one another's souls and as you start to seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you sometimes we can wonder if it's too earthly a thing.

To pray for the organ recital as it were. I was counseled once and you can see I've taken the advice to heart don't have for a request time at the prayer meeting because you'll have a prayer request meeting with a prayer conclusion. And the fellow who said that said if you want an organ recital yeah Matilda's liver and you know uncle Larry's kidney and yeah do the prayer and we can we can wonder is it too earthly if?

And no it's not. Because God teaches us to pray for our daily bread. God teaches us to make an old things to make our requests known unto him and he teaches us about the connection between the body and soul and he gives us apostolic example here not just that we may pray for one another's health but how to relate that the sole prospering most important the body prospering not unrelated opportunity for service as one of the goals as we pray for our brother or sister.

To their comfort and well-being and we know of course that it has always God's plan to heal the brother or sister that we pray for, isn't it? How do we know that?

Because they are going to rise from the dead. Right? Psalm 103 bless the Lord, oh my soul forget not all has benefits who forgives all your iniquities who heals all your diseases. The faith healing people don't promise too much. They promise utterly pathetically too little. They want a temporary repair done on this chunk of worm food that has to be transformed translated in to be shaped made like unto the body of the Lord Jesus Christ and so we could pray for one another's health with confidence knowing that as soon as as far as it benefits their soul and their service.

God will give them health now and he will absolutely. Give every brother sister that you ever pray for their health perfect health forever. Just that we not be so short-sighted like the guy doing \$5,000 repairs on his \$200 a lobby. That's what the faith healers promise and they can't even deliver that.

So let us follow the apostle here in our praying. And let us be those who pray for one another first and foremost soul, but also for one another bodily as well. As we come together tonight to pray we begin with prayers of adoration this week, especially giving honor to the three persons in the Godhead distinctly.

To the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit that great and sacred name into which we are baptized and in which we assemble for religious worship in communion with the Universal Church. So let's begin together. We also worship the Holy Spirit the helper whom the Son has sent from the Father The Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father and who has sent to teach us all things and to bring to our remembrance all things who wrote down the Scriptures.

Holy men of God writing them as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.