

### III John – No Greater Joy III Jn. 1-4

Thesis: To encourage us to have greater joy over our spiritual well-being.

Introduction:

#### I. John utters a prayer for the prosperity of Gaius (III Jn. 2).

- A. Notice what we can learn from this prayer of John.
  - 1. It is not wrong to pray for physical blessings and prosperity.
    - a. Notice those in the Old Testament whom God blessed physically.
      - 1) Isaac (Gen. 26:12-14)
      - 2) Jacob (Gen. 30:25-43)
      - 3) Joseph (Gen. 39:3, 23)
      - 4) Solomon (I Kgs. 3:13 – after Solomon asked for wisdom, God gave him riches as well)
      - 5) In each case, the Bible says that it was God who gave them this prosperity.
    - b. Having great physical prosperity is not wrong.
    - c. The important thing is what we do with these physical blessings.
  - 2. We must always remember to put God first at all times.
    - a. We are commanded to put Christ first.
      - 1) Mt. 6:33 - But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
    - b. Rich young ruler
      - 1) Mk. 10:22 - But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.
      - 2) Mk. 10:23-24 - Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” {24} And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!”
    - c. John prays that Gaius would “prosper in all things.”
      - 1) The reason is because Gaius would be able to use these physical blessings for good because his soul also prospered.
      - 2) John understood that Gaius would follow the command of Paul to the rich.
      - 3) I Tim. 6:17-19 - Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. {18} Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, {19} storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.
  - 3. When we put our trust in riches, we are doomed to failure.

- a. **Ecc. 2:4-11** - I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. {5} I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. {6} I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. {7} I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. {8} I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds. {9} So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. {10} Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my reward from all my labor. {11} **Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; and indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.**
  - b. **Ecc. 12:13** - Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all.
- B. Notice the application for us today.
- 1. If our physical health and material blessings were directly related to our spiritual health, how would we be?
  - 2. To put it in another way, if our material possessions were directly related to our spiritual prosperity, how rich would we be (physically)?

## II. John had heard of the great faith of Gaius (**III Jn. 3-4**).

- A. Witnesses had come and told John of the great faith of Gaius.
  - 1. In the Greek language, the phrase “when brethren came” is in the present tense; which indicates that this occurred on a regular basis.
  - 2. The significance for us is that Gaius had a reputation for being a faithful Christian.
- B. Some of the faithfulness of Gaius is mentioned by John (**III Jn. 5-6**).
  - 1. He had done good to both the brethren and strangers.
  - 2. He had also demonstrated his love for the church.
- C. Notice how our soul can prosper just as the soul of Gaius prospered.
  - 1. We must know the truth.
    - a. Notice what the truth does.
      - 1) Purifies - **I Pet. 1:22** - Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,
      - 2) Sanctifies – **Jn. 17:17** - Sanctify them by Your truth.
        - a) The truths of God set us apart from the world.
      - 3) Encourages – When we think of the great things that await us in heaven, we are encouraged by them.

- a) Part of the reason we come together is to encourage one another.
    - b) **Heb. 10:25** - not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
  - b. If our soul is going to prosper, we must desire this truth.
    - 1) **I Pet. 2:2** - as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,
    - 2) If we want to learn the truth of God, we can!
- 2. We must exercise the truth.
  - a. Paul tells us to exercise godliness.
    - 1) **I Tim. 4:7-8** - But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. {8} For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.
    - 2) In order to exercise something, we must put it into use.
  - b. We must put the commands of God into practice in our lives.
    - 1) Jesus tells us that we should be doing His truth.
      - a) **Mt. 7:21** - Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.
      - b) **Jn. 14:15** - If you love Me, keep My commandments.
    - 2) We are also told elsewhere in the Bible that we must obey these truths.
      - a) **Rom. 2:13** (Paul is painting a picture of the judgment of God) - for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified.
      - b) **Js. 1:22** - But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
      - c) **Js. 2:14-17** - What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? {15} If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, {16} and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? {17} Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
      - d) **Js. 2:26** - For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.
- D. Notice the application for us today.
  - 1. Others were able to report on the faith of Gaius.
  - 2. He truly was letting his light shine (**Mt. 5:16**).

3. Again, we ask ourselves the question, “What would others say about our faith?”

### III. The greatest joy that John could have is to know that his children are faithful to God (III Jn. 3-4).

- A. When John heard of the faith of Gaius, he “rejoiced greatly.”
  1. In fact, John goes on to say that he “could have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (III Jn. 4).
  2. This is a joy that we should have today in knowing that there are others who are faithful because of something that we have done.
- B. Today, we can also have joy in knowing that we are following the truths of God.
  1. Any time someone obeyed the gospel of Christ, there was great joy.
    - a. Acts 8:8 (Philip preaching in Samaria) - And there was great joy in that city.
    - b. Acts 8:39 (Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch) - Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.
  2. There is also great joy in heaven when we obey and live faithfully.
    - a. Lk. 15 – Lost Coin, Lost Sheep, Prodigal Son
    - b. In each case, there is great joy when someone obeys the gospel.
  3. We have this great joy because we understand that this world is not our home.
    - a. I Thes. 4:13-18 – we read of that last great day when Christ returns.
    - b. We can “comfort one another with these words” because of the great joy that we will have on that day.
- C. In what do we find joy?
  1. John took great joy in knowing that Gaius was faithful to God.
  2. Do we find joy in our material possessions?
  3. Do we find joy in our social status?
  4. What is it that brings us the most joy?

### Conclusion:

- I. If our physical health were directly related to our spiritual health, how would we be?
- II. What would others say about our faith?
- III. What do we find joy in?