

University Heights Church
of Christ
445 Columbia Ave.,
Lexington, KY 40508
(859) 255-6257
www.uheightschurch.com

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is
immediately followed by a
short worship period)

First Friday of Each Month

Singing: 7:30 PM

LEADERSHIP

Elders

David Collins
John Thompson
Troy Antle

Evangelist

Adam Litmer

Deacons

Richard Brundige
Matt Thompson
Adam Litmer
Bill Morelan
Jim Parsons
Pat Seabolt
Adam Daniels
Jamie Powell

From Jesus

Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in Heaven.

Matthew 6:1

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Mildred Collins, Luke Ramey, John Thompson, Declan Weatherholt, David Seabolt, Jeff Howerton, Rhonda Boyd (and her sister, Dorothy), Louis Harrod, Paul Atkisson, Ed Allison, The Bays and Robbins family, Sheila Lawson, Keia Burton, Robert Brundige, Susie Burton, Valerie and Barry Boyd, Janett's mother and stepfather, Sandy Driver, Erlene Young, Larry Sells, Evelyn Damron, Jennifer Dunbar, Jean Gartland, John Blessing, William Roberts, Paul Lyda, Pete Soro, The Smith family, our brethren in southern Philippines, our brethren in Zimbabwe, Jamie Powell's father, Bruce Feltner, Harleigh Spartman, Fay Thomas, Mattie Johnson

University Heights Messenger

Volume 9--Number 36

August 6, 2017

Gaius, A Man Whose Soul Prospered

John Thompson

Gaius comes to our attention in the inspired writings of John. What is said about this Christian is said in just a few words in the shortest book of the Bible, the Apostle John's third letter written to Gaius himself. And even though John uses an absolute minimum of words to tell us about Gaius, we are able to draw innumerable conclusions about this man and to know him quite intimately.

I believe the most important information we are given about Gaius is found in verse 2. *Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers (NKJV)*. What conclusions can we reach based upon that bit of information? Paul desired two things on behalf of Gaius: 1) that Gaius would prosper in all things and 2) that he would have good health. John was always interested in and prayed for his brethren to do well in life. I don't know of any biblical reference to John being jealous of the prosperity of others, or any examples of him desiring bad things to happen to his brethren. He cared for them, desired the best for them, greatly rejoiced in hearing of them walking in the truth, and frequently called them beloved.

But verse 2 of 3rd John is really not about John. It is about Gaius. And it is really not the fact that John desired prosperity for Gaius that seems most significant. Rather it is what John uses for a comparison of prosperity that should capture our attention and inform us about this man Gaius. John does not simply state his desire that Gaius prosper in all ways and to have good health. John desires that Gaius prosper to the same degree that his soul prospers. So simple a statement, yet one that speaks volumes about this man Gaius, a man whose soul prospered. Other brethren had reported to John on the prosperity of Gaius' soul and John had no reason to doubt those reports.

Prosperity is the condition of being highly successful. It is synonymous with thriving and flourishing. The difference between merely being alive and being vibrantly engaged within one's environment can be readily observed. Gaius was not merely spiritually alive, barely hanging on; he was spiritually thriving and flourishing. He was walking in the truth (verse 3); he faithfully supported travelling brethren and was pleased to be considered their fellow workers for the truth (verses 5-8). That support could not have been given without some repercussion because of the abuses perpetrated by Diotrephes. Diotrephes *refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to* (welcome the brethren) *and puts them out of the church.* (Verse 10). Gaius may have already been put out of the church or was in danger of that happening soon. Regardless, his soul still prospered.

Spiritual prosperity, and to some degree even secular prosperity, is intimately connected with God's communication to man, i.e. the Bible. *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of*

scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. (Psalm 1:1-3) Notice in the passage it is the law of the Lord which is being meditated upon. Who wants to meditate upon law? Law is restrictive and limiting. Law requires dependence upon the lawgiver and demands obedience. But it also promises great rewards and if one will delight in dwelling upon it and routinely and consistently meditate on it one's soul will prosper and thrive.

Jesus said in John 10:10 *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.* Paul Fox stated in his first bulletin article, "[If you will] follow [Christ] completely without reservation...you will receive the love and abundance He has promised. Seek first the salvation available through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and then claim the joy, the peace, and the spiritual abundance that the Shepherd offers His sheep. A life in Christ is abundant beyond measure, exceedingly ample, overwhelmingly able to flood us with spiritual benefits. Those benefits will be realized to their most profound and fullest extent beyond the grave when Jesus returns to take us home. But even now, in this life, there is an abundance of spiritual goodness to be had."

John desired and prayed that Gaius prosper in all things and have good health. We are not told whether Gaius prospered as John desired, but we do know that his soul flourished. May we all be like Gaius whose soul prospered.

