Good Morning!

“…to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.” 3 John 1&2

If you never had a lesson from 2 John (except yesterday’s lesson) then you certainly haven’t had one from 3 John. This is a personal letter John sent out to Gaius, a man who seems to be a convert of the apostle himself (v. 4). There are at least two other men named Gaius mentioned in Scripture (Acts 19:29 and 20:4). It was the most popular name in the Roman Empire – Julius Caesar’s first name was actually Gaius.

This letter indicates the care and affection that this apostle had for his friends and his flock. He acknowledges that Gaius’ “soul prospers;” a term meaning that he is flourishing in his faith walk. Gaius is demonstrating a faith that can be seen and experienced by the church around him. But John prays that, “in all respects you may prosper and be in good health.” This may be John’s way of translating the Hebrew term “Shalom” into Greek. Shalom meant that you would have peace and prosperity in every aspect of your life. Gaius was flourishing in his faith; John wants him to flourish in the rest of his life too. It is like combining “Be well!”, “Stay healthy!”, and “the Lord bless!” all rolled into one greeting.

We can identify now with that wish, “Stay healthy!” We say it and we mean it. But from our perspective as believers, we really mean a deeper understanding of how life works. We pray that God would grant good health just as John does here. We pray that should we become ill – because that comes to the just and the unjust – that they would be healed. The most important part of this understanding is that in sickness or in health we glorify God. When we are sick, the intensity of our prayers increases to critical level. We pray often and in earnest. We beseech God for healing – and to maintain a good witness to doctors, nurses, therapists, friends – but mostly healing.

Do we pray for our witness with that same intensity when we are healthy? There is no indication that our friend Gaius was sick. John prays for his entire life to match his spiritual health. How many can pray that we wish our physical condition would match our spiritual health?

I do pray for your physical health and your general prosperity as well. But most of all, I pray that your spiritual health will prosper so much that we hold it up as the standard for the rest of your life to meet.

“Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.” 3 John 11

In Jesus Christ, the God who is always near…

Pastor EA