2017. 5. 14 Sunday Morning Service

Title: Blessing

Passage: <3 John 1: 2>

“Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.”

<Introduction>

Let me rephrase today’s reading passage, 3 John 1:2. “Dear believers, I pray that in all respects you will prosper and be in good health just as your soul prospers.” The reading passage is a prayer written in the letter of John the apostle to the elder Gaius. We can feel John’s warm heart toward his beloved believers.

However, to whom does this warm heart actually belong? It is actually the heart of the Father God who wants us to prosper in all things and be in good health just as our soul prospers. God the Father is faithful, and He has always blessed us in our lives as in this verse. His love never changes though seasons have changed and years have passed. This year, too, He has been continually blessing us starting from the Lunar New Year through the Special Daniel prayer meeting, Easter, spirit festivity, and even up to this very moment.

In this message, I’d like to talk to you about the reason why God the Father is giving us so many blessings. Through this message, I hope you will better understand the love of God the Father and His love will be etched more deeply in your heart. In so doing, may the prayer of today’s reading passage be fulfilled in your lives, I pray this in the name of the Lord!

<Main>

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, what is the reason that God the Father is continually giving us blessings?

**First, it’s because you’ve been ardently marching toward holiness.**

You are truly doing great! Most people waste their precious lives just to get visible wealth, fame, or power. But you have been selling all your possessions in order to gain sincere hearts, which is invisible. You’ve dedicated for God’s kingdom your youth, knowledge, fame, and power and even money and time that you could’ve spent for yourself or your family.

While many people of the world think about making more money and getting more respect from others, you thought about the ways to give to God more and to humble yourself and serve others like the Lord who washed the feet of His disciples. Sometimes you had concerns over your forms of evil that you couldn’t cast away, namely hatred, anger, and hard-feelings.

Why do you try so hard to cast away evil? It’s because you long to resemble God the Father who is holy, blameless, and spotless. Also, it’ because you dearly long for New Jerusalem where God the Father and the Lord are and where the patriarchs of faith who cultivated sincere hearts and perfect faith entered. Furthermore, it’s because you know well the prosperity of your soul is the fundamental answer to all life problems and basic condition of blessings.

Of course, you might feel like you want to give up when you don’t see any significant results of your hard work. Just like the sons of Israel who said they ought to go back to Egypt when they couldn’t see the Canaan land, you might have wished you wanted to go back to the world. But you made up your mind once again to look up to the Father and New Jerusalem.

Philippians 1:6 says, “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” Also, Psalm 126:5 says, “Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting.” You believe in this law of the spiritual realm.

If you with this faith have been marching toward holiness, you will eventually receive blessings even if you might have stumbled several times. Even when you couldn’t immediately see the fruit of spirit or whole spirit, God gave you grace and blessing according to your faith as you showed your faith.

If you feel you haven’t received such grace, you might want to check if you lack gratitude and are self-content. Also, you might want to check if you really longed for spirit or the blessings that are attached to going into spirit.

In his letter to elder Gaius, John the apostle also wrote the following: 3 John 1:4 says, “I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth. If you’re happy, it will show on your face. Likewise, if God the Father is joyous seeing His children walk in the truth, He will show His joy in one way or another. Namely, He will give joy to His children, too. If your efforts to become holy please God the Father, you will be able to enjoy peace and blessing even in this generation in which life is not always easy-going.

Your endeavor to become holy is something truly valuable and blessed. Therefore, may you exert yourself more on holiness and take hold of New Jerusalem by force, I pray this in the name of the Lord!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I am talking about the reasons why God is continually giving us blessings today.

**The second reason is that you trusted your shepherd established by God.**

The following is an account of when Elisha was the prophet of Israel. A noble woman in Shunem treated Elisha whenever he came to that area and persuaded her husband to provide a room for him so he could rest anytime. Elisha was touched by her hospitality and blessed her. She got a son.

However, this son suddenly died, and yet, he was revived by Elisha. Later, thanks to Elisha this noble woman recovered her house and land that she once had lost. Namely, she experienced God who is in control of life, death, fortune, and misfortune of men by trusting a man of God, Elisha.

How could she trust a prophet of God and receive such blessings? It’s because she had reverence for God and longing for spiritual things. For such people, if they hear there is a person who can show God on this earth, they would like nothing more than to be able to see him. When they meet him, they’d recognize that he is a man of God as in this Shunammite woman’s case.

In 2 Kings 4:9, she said to her husband, “Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually.” Because she revered God, she knew Elisha was a man of God just by hearing news about him. So, when she met him for the first time, she invited him into her house to serve him a meal. Through her act she received unimaginable blessings.

You know why rain comes down in a place that had drought for a long time and why those who were dying of diseases are revived when I pray. You know well how God is accomplishing His end-time providence through the shepherd He established. Furthermore, those who experienced the living God; who received solutions to impossible problems; and who received blessings that they could never receive, they trust the shepherd, and because their trust is generated from love, it does not easily change.

Such people, if I tell them deep spiritual things that are hard to understand, they pray to understand the best they can. Also, because they believe that God fulfills His will through the shepherd, they seek the good will of God humbly.

Of course, some of the church members who have weak faith might have doubts or pass judgment in their thoughts. Even to these people, God gives them grace in various ways so that they can gain understanding.

Recently a male believer crashed into a truck when he dozed off while riding on a motor-cycle. And yet, God protected him completely that he didn’t even get a bruise not to mention broken bones.

After he experienced this space of the shepherd, he repented of not keeping the Lord’s Day holy and not giving proper tithes, and that he momentarily had improper thoughts about the shepherd. Then, along with hope of heaven, he gained the confidence that he could also change. We can see that our spiritual strength can become very different depending on whether or not we trust the shepherd.

Until now, God has shown countless evidences upon which you could trust in your shepherd. As you’ve witnessed all these things, you should be able to trust your shepherd more deeply than others. May you cultivate beautiful and perfect trust so that you will enjoy abundant blessings, I pray this in the name of the Lord!

Dear brothers and sisters,

**The third reason why God is continually blessing us is so that He can receive glory.**

God does not dictate or force His children to give Him glory. He first gives them many blessings, answers to problems, happiness, and joy so that they can willingly give glory to Him.

Deuteronomy 4:35 speaks about the reason why God brought Israel out of Egypt, “To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him.” Also, God sternly says in Isaiah 42:8, “I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.”

Our God is the only God who can give answers and blessings, which graven images cannot give. He is the living God who is worthy to be praised. Especially in this church, we have fullness of testimonies about receiving answers and blessings, and thus thanksgiving and praises overflow, too.

You also have come to believe that your soul prospers as you expend your efforts to become holy and that you will certainly receive blessings if you trust your shepherd. As your soul prospers, all things go well with you and you are in health, so you lead a happy life. You know by experience that even if you are a little short of holiness, you can still lead a peaceful life free of poverty, diseases, or disasters by trusting in your shepherd.

Your blessed lives foreshadow the kind of life you will lead in heaven after the end of human cultivation. Revelation 21:3-4 writes as follows about the life in heaven.

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

Also, latter part of Revelation 5:13 says, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.” We can read that in heaven there are praises and worship forever. Especially in New Jerusalem, the concentration of happiness is the thickest and God’s glory wraps the place in the most beautifully magnificent way.

You believe in God who is working in our lives and receives glory even today. You also believe that the Lord will come to take us and lead us to the heavenly dwelling places as written in the Bible. In this faith and hope, if your soul prospers and recovers the image of God completely, you will receive the glory of New Jerusalem.

This past spirit festivity was utmost love of God who wanted us to feel the future glory now, long for it, and take hold it by force. May you receive all the blessings and give glory to God the Trinity who gives us overflowing blessings and happiness, I pray this in the name of the Lord!

<Conclusion>

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The reasons why God has been blessing this church continually are:

First, you’ve been ardently marching toward holiness, second, you trusted the shepherd established by God, and third, so that God can receive glory.

Recently, I believe you were quite touched by the testimonies of Moldova Manmin church members. A person with terminal diagnosis of a couple of weeks was miraculously healed through my prayer transcending time and space. There are many other healing testimonies, but mostly, many of them said their spiritual thirst was quenched by this holiness gospel.

Maxim Chuvachuk said as follows: “Senior pastor’s sermons gave me fullness of spirit and hope of heaven. I tried to put into practice whatever I heard in the sermons. The senior pastor received this holiness gospel with all his life, and I believed if this message came from God, it would be realized in the actual life, too. As I practiced these messages, my life was changed and I received blessings. Namely, I experienced that these messages were working in my life. I came to realize God’s true love. I give heart-felt thanks to the senior pastor, my beloved shepherd, who has given me precious word of God and is leading me to life.”

Brothers and sisters,

How did this brother acknowledge me as his shepherd and come to follow the holiness gospel in his life, even though he had never met me? It’s because he was hungry and thirsty for righteousness. Is there anyone who feels like, “How come I don’t change quickly even though I’ve listened to so many messages in this church for a long time?” Then, rely on the 99% of the measure of justice that the shepherd has filled up in your place. Then, anyone will be more than able to change.

May you receive blessings tomorrow, the day of blessing, with your longing for holiness and trust in the shepherd, I pray this in the name of the Lord!