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### Wishing the Best (vs.2-4)

**3 John 1:2-4:** “Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.”

As we come to 3 John, it shouldn't surprise you that there's an interesting parallel between this and the book of Joshua. It's like the book was written by the same people. God and His sovereignty has orchestrated these wonderful truths. We begin to see even as we've been preaching through different books that God reveals to us how wonderfully they tie together. As we were talking about brothers in the book of Joshua, we now look at brethren; which in some ways is the definition of what a true brother really is. How wonderful the description is.

I oftentimes think of the passage in Psalm 119:63. The verse says, “I am a companion of all those who fear Thee and keep Your commandments.” The comradery that comes about from our love and devotion for God because of what He's done for us. There is a moving in our hearts that just immediately conjoins us together with those that love Him as well. They instantly become our brothers. We find brothers and sisters that we didn't even know we had.

The way that John puts it in the Gospel of John, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” (John 1:12)

Now, he goes on to say this, “Who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:13)

Within the passage, he's saying that it's a different family, but it's a true family. There is a true family, and it's not as we would perceive the blood family; it is the Spirit family. So, we begin to see this relationship strengthened and explained throughout the epistles. In particular, as we went through 1 John, how wonderfully he explained and began to demonstrate how we who are of the true family are very transparent about our sins. We are very much longing for righteousness. Peter will even say that we long for that city where righteousness dwells. We're actually hungry for that. Of course, if you look at most of the world, that's not true. The fact of the matter is that we may have family that may not love God and there is a reason why we don't feel close. There are others who are brothers in the flesh as well as brothers in the Spirit and how wonderful that is.

I oftentimes reminisce about my own brother. As we're going to be talking about it, my thoughts about him really begin to stir in the sense of how selfless he was towards his love for me; which really is the description to me of a true brother. A true brother is thinking about what is best for the other. The way that it's put in 1 John 3:11-12, he says, “I want you to love

one another”, and then he goes and says, “Not as Cain loved Abel.” He’s conveying that the fleshly brothers are oftentimes very competitive and rooted in rivalry.

Ecclesiastes 4:4 reads, “I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry.” The verse is describing how we tend to compete with one another. If you don’t think that’s true, all you have to do is go through the brothers in Scripture and begin to see; whether it’s Cain and Abel or Esau and Jacob who wanted to kill his brother because he got his blessing. Also, when you’re looking at the sons of Jacob and how they wanted their brother out of the picture because he was loved. Instead of congratulating and saying, “Wow, we’re really glad that you were very successful”, they wanted him dead. Even with Miriam and Aaron there’s jealousy towards Moses and you begin to see their relationship in the household. I think one of the reasons that made David so strong in his desire for God to love him was that his own family shunned him. So, when he’s trying to get some sort of recognition or affirmation from his brothers, all they could do was criticize him. So, he wasn’t loved by his family. Therefore, the question arises as we go through the Old Testament, what is a true brother?

I’ve often thought about my brother in the sense that he was always happy when I got something. I’m going, why would he be happy when I got something, and he didn’t? He always had that disposition. I remember being younger, and I was very competitive and would have a hard time when somebody got something that I didn’t. Then as my brother started getting sick, the Lord began to stir in my heart, and I began to realize that I should actually want good for my brother in everything. God has a way of changing the heart, doesn’t He? Because we are very selfish and self-centered.

James says in James 3:14 that if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, you lie against the truth. This is not heavenly, but earthly. So many of us have relationships that are based on the earthly, but when you have the heavenly, that is true. It’s a true relationship, true love and true consideration.

So, as we look at the very beginning of 3 John, it’s John writing to this brother and he says, “We’re brothers because I know that you’re of the truth. You’re genuine. You’re sincere. You have the love of Christ in you. I see it in all that you do. When you have the truth, it’s not just sometimes; you actually love the person all the time. I suppose that we’ve all been in relationships where we heard somebody tell us that they loved us and then as time went on, it didn’t pan out in reality. The wonderful thing about having a brother in truth is that a brother loves at all times. So, the truth is that which never changes; it is that absolute that is ever a part of our lives. To know that there is someone you can depend on, and that somebody is rooted in something that is not changing is so comforting.

So, as he writes this letter, he then writes in verse 2, “Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.” Who does that? Who prays for somebody else to prosper and would rather somebody else prosper than themselves? The passage conveys that a true brother wishes the best for the other brother. He’s always

concerned about the good of the other. As we talked about in Philippians 2, you're holding others in higher esteem than yourself. Well, that's a true brother that is concerned for you, not for themselves. As this passage begins to explain, it almost seems as if John is worried about his physical health. I'm sure there are a lot of churches that have taken this particular passage and just ran with it as far as "you should always be healthy" and "have good health". Let's explain what the passage is really saying.

He first starts off in verse 2, "Beloved, I pray". An interesting word that is oftentimes used, and sometimes translated just by the simple phrase "I wish"; because the phrase itself is not as much about a prayer as it is about a desire. The word that is used "*euchomai*", the word "you" being the prefix is making reference to "good" and then the last part of that means "wish." "I wish good for you." Now, the point, as we understand the word "good", is it's not simply that which makes me feel good as it is that which is virtuous, beneficial, and most helpful to you. We could actually put in there, "I wish the best for you." Well, that really should be the heart of a brother and that we have for everyone here; that we wish the best for you. How wonderful that would be if everybody felt that way and responded to everyone like that; that we wouldn't take into account a wrong suffered, but we would only be concerned about the best for the other person. That would just literally change everything. According to the text, that's a true brother; and he's conveying that heart. Paul would say and use this particular word "*euchomai*", "I could wish myself accused for my brothers and the Jews." So, there's this longing of a heart that wishes for the best.

The way the phrase goes in verse 2 is, "I pray that in all respects". That's pretty general if you look at that; "in every manner" and "every perceivable way" "...that you may prosper." Now, our thoughts might immediately go to money, health or whatever. The word "prosper" is interesting. Once again, at the very beginning of the word, it uses the prefix "you"; which means "good." The second part of the word means "journey"; "that you may have a good journey". It is to be noted that when you come to 2 Timothy 4, Paul starts talking to Timothy as he's passing the baton, he goes, "I have finished my course." We're clearly all on a journey. In some way, I think Psalm 23 alludes to it; because as you come to the end of Psalm 23, it fundamentally says, "Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow you all the days of your life." Now, "follow you" means that you're actually going on a journey. It's wonderful to know that on the journey we can have the lovingkindness and mercies of God following us. That's a wonderful truth. We are on a journey.

When I think about the journey, there's a passage in 2 Corinthians 9. It begins to talk about the fact that we should abound in every good deed. Why would we abound in every good deed? Because your journey is good. Here again, let's go back to what "prosper" means. It means that your journey is a virtuous journey; it's doing the right thing, walking in righteousness, and doing that which is pleasing to God; that's what makes it good. The good comes out of that faithfulness and fidelity and the genuineness of heart that continues to do that because it's so much a way of your life. That's why you're going to see repeated over and over again in the

passage that you're walking in this truth. It is a way of your life; not something that you just do on occasion, but it's something that you constantly do.

So, if you look at this with me, "Beloved, I pray in all respects that you would do good on your journey," would be the way to convey it; "and be in good health". Once again, the instant perception is "he's really concerned about his health". Well, you can't rule that out, but the word itself is more used in the New Testament to define sound faith, sound words, and sound doctrine. So, actually the word is "sound". The phrase that is used is "that you would be sound in all things". What is he talking about? That you would literally be uncorrupt in your way of life. Now, could he be talking about physical health? He could be, but that isn't the emphasis. The emphasis is that on your journey, you would do good and that you would be uncorrupt in everything that you do. Because when you think about, when your life is sound, then according to the psalmist, your body is sound, right? "When I kept quiet about my sin, my body wasted away." (Psalm 32:3) The emphasis comes from "I wish that in all respects you would journey in the best of ways" and "as you journey, you would be uncorrupt in everything you do; sound in all that you do".

It goes on to say, "just as your soul...", "*psychē*", "prosper"; or journey's good". Now, why would he interject soul? The reason he would do that is because your soul is the focus of your desires. His point is that your desires are pursuing good. I can see this in the way that you walk. In fact, one of the things that he's going to state is, "I not only can see it; I hear it by the testimony of everybody else. They can see your desires." So, when he talks about prosperity or doing good according to his soul, he's saying that the desires and affections that you have are being made manifest because of the way that you conduct your life.

If you look in verse 3, "For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth". The evidence has been made clear that this is a person that loves the Lord. He means what he says, does what he says and does it with all of his heart. There's just a sense of truth that is beaming from him. This is somebody that is real and genuine about his faith.

"For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth." Once again, the emphasis is on the way you live and regulate your life; the conduct of your life. Where do you get that from? Walking. It's your walk of life.

So, he ends the text this way in verse 4, "I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth." Now, I want you to note, he doesn't say, "I have no greater joy than to know that everybody's doing physically well." So, we understand the context. What he's emphasizing is that "you would be sound". He's really saying that the soundness of his faith, the soundness of his word, and the soundness of his doctrine; that in everything he is sound because of his genuineness and sincerity in his faith. There is something about this guy that just makes John happy. What is it that makes you happy? Why is it John can turn to this guy, and go, "I want you to be successful in everything you do." That's a pretty broad brush. There are some kids that you can give your keys to your new car. You can throw your keys to them, and go,

“Have a good time”, and you feel very comfortable with it. But there are other kids that you don’t want to do that because you don’t know where they’re going to go or what they’re going to do. But there are certain ones that you trust and you know that they’re going to do good. That’s what a brother is. A true brother wishes the best for those that are doing their best.

We live in a day and age where people are going around blessing everybody saying, “God bless you”, “God bless you”. Don't do that. You want to bless those that are doing good. It’s the blessings of God that come upon those that are doing the right thing; that are traveling on this journey that are really walking in truth. I don’t want the blessings of God upon somebody that doing wrong. They might perceive in some way that “this is a good thing that I’m doing wrong”.

We are so thankful for brothers that are genuinely hungry for God’s word, genuinely and sincerely live out God’s word, and you know that you can trust them in all that they do. I remember talking to somebody a while back. They were talking about their church and how they hired some new people. They were saying, “We want to make sure that they’re doing this kind of work and that kind of work. We want to have them turn in time sheets and make sure they’re doing stuff.” Then they looked at me and said, “What do you do about that kind of thing? How do you make sure that the people working in your church are doing what they’re supposed to?” I said, “I don’t check up on them.” They said, “What do you mean?” I said, “I don’t even know half of the time what they’re doing.” They said, “why is that true?” I said, “Because if they love God, I don’t have to.” If you find somebody that loves the Lord and is walking in truth, then why do you have to micromanage their life? In fact, quite frankly, they’ll do better than you would even think. A lot of times, I wouldn’t even know what to tell them to do; but if they’re walking in the Spirit and their love for God, the love of God is going to constrain them and they’re going to do the right thing. You can trust them to say the right thing at the right time. I don’t try to put words in people’s mouths and tell them “You’ve got to say this”. I can tell you this, there’s certain people that I wouldn’t send and say, “Ok, you go tell them what they need to do.” There are others where I go, “Tell them whatever the Spirit of the Lord tells you.” Sanctify Christ as Lord of your heart and you’ll be ready to give an answer to every man of the hope that’s in you but get your heart right. This passage makes a very clear point that we need people that love the Lord and walk in truth. When that’s true, how wonderful it is that we can just let that go.

I want to mention to all of us who want to encourage people, oftentimes we might say something to somebody to convey that we’re very encouraged by what they do or whatever, but we’re not specific about what really causes joy. Even as a parent, I remember that I told my kids sometimes that I was very thankful for them or something like that, but I didn’t get specific on what made me really happy. In this passage, it’s like he’s sitting down with his own kids because he refers to them as “my children”. We know why he refers to them as that because this is this is somebody that he has led to the Lord. So, whoever he’s writing to, it’s somebody that he’s led to the Lord, and he goes, “Did I ever tell you what was so important to me?” You just see a father, “Let me tell you what is so important to me. What means the most to me is

that you walk in truth and follow the Lord with all your heart. Did I ever tell you that? Did I ever tell you that meant more to me than anything else? Did I ever tell you that it brought me the greatest joy that you could ever imagine?"

I remember one of my kids when they first started playing tee ball, I was really thrilled that they actually found the bases. We all rejoice about a lot of different things, but the wonder of "I've got a child that loves God. Did I ever tell you that meant the most to me?" Here again, I don't want to get into the whole Pygmalion effect in psychology, but the way you encourage and tell people, people begin to meet those expectations. Once again, it's not in my control; it's got to be the Spirit of God, but God wants us to encourage people in such a way that it stimulates them to love and good deeds. One of the ways that you can do it is by telling them what means the most to you. Kids are trying to please their parents. They're trying to find a way to make their parents glad. Can you imagine if a parent just defined for them, "I know you want to make me happy. Maybe you want to bake a cake or a pie, or you want to do something. You know what would really make me happy?" I often hear this from you, the congregation. You'll come to me, and you might want to do something for me. You know what really makes me happy? To hear that you love the brethren. I can't tell you how much comfort that gives me. A lot of times, I just sit here, and I'll watch you fellowship with one another and how you seem to enjoy being with each other. I can't tell you how encouraging that is to me. I know that you love one another because of the genuine love you have for God. I know that's what has brought you together. I sit back there, and I bask in joy, and I just couldn't be any happier. That's what this passage is about; that as brothers in Christ, we actually rejoice when we see another brother. We want them to succeed in everything they do. Why? Because we know that everything they do is going to be used to glorify God.

In 2 Corinthians 9, you'll see this fundamental point. We oftentimes read that this text is dealing with generous giving. Obviously, it's a lot about that and that God loves a cheerful giver. It says this in 2 Corinthians 9:7, "Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Now, watch verse 8, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed". Isn't that basically what John was saying to Gaius as he was writing to him? He says, "I want you to prosper in all respects." What did he mean by that? If you purpose in your heart to share and to help others, may God supply you with everything. May it increase. In fact, he goes on and says, "as it is written,

'HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER.'" (2 Corinthians 9:9)

(2 Corinthians 9:10) "Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing..."

I wonder why he doesn't say, "Will supply and multiply your seed for eating"?

“...will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; (2 Corinthians 9:11) you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.”

In fact, if you look at the end of verse 12, “but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God.”

(2 Corinthians 9:13) “Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience...”

Somebody that is doing that, I want them to have everything, don't you? You see some people as they begin to minister to people, and I go to God and say, “You know, God, I just wish You would give them everything they need and more. I don't care if it's more than me. They're doing it better than me.” How wonderful it is to see another brother that is walking in truth. I can't think of anything more joyful, can you? To imagine that brother is taking what he has, and immediately he's going to help somebody else that doesn't. I want them to have everything.

Before I go to this other passage, I want you to go back to Psalm with me because in Psalm 20 you see a prayer similar to this. In which you can see the heart of the Psalmist going, “I just wish they would be successful. I wish they would do well. I want them to have everything.” The question is, who and why? In Psalm 20, as the prayer begins, “May the LORD answer you”. He seems to be talking and praying on behalf of somebody so it's kind of an intercessory prayer.

(Psalm 20:1) “May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble!  
May the name of the God of Jacob set you securely on high!

(Psalm 20:2) May He send you help from the sanctuary  
And support you from Zion!

(Psalm 20:2) May He remember all your meal offerings...”

What are those? Well, the focus of that is free will offerings. In other words, God saw your heart and everything you did was because you wanted to out of love for Him.

“May He remember all your meal offerings  
And find your burnt offering acceptable!”

Burnt offering is total dedication. A burnt offering is that which was totally consumed. So, “May He find your total dedication to be acceptable to Him.” So, what you see is the “free will” and the “total dedication”. Now, verse 4 is the result of that. Do you understand what I'm saying? So, do we want everybody to have their heart's desire? No.

(Psalm 20:4) “May He grant you your heart's desire  
And fulfill all your counsel!

(Psalm 20:5) We will sing for joy over your victory...”

Why? Because we know that you're doing everything for God.

"...in the name of our God we will set up our banners.  
May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.

(Psalm 20:6) Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed;  
He will answer him from His holy heaven  
With the saving strength of His right hand.

(Psalm 20:7) Some boast in chariots and some in horses,  
But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God."

That's why we're brothers. We boast in the name of the Lord our God. That's why we want you to succeed, you've been saved.

In Psalm 122, you see the same kind of prayer. Like I said, these texts interestingly dovetail as this passage seems to convey that if you want the best for your brother, then the best is going to come to you. Have you ever heard this phrase? "I was glad when they said to me,  
"Let us go to the house of the LORD." Do you want to know why he was so glad? It's because he was going to be with other brothers as they worshipped God.

(Psalm 122:2) "Our feet are standing  
Within your gates, O Jerusalem,

(Psalm 122:3) Jerusalem, that is built  
As a city that is compact together."

"It is a city that is a place of gathering" would probably be the best way to put that.

(Psalm 122:4) "To which the tribes go up, even the tribes of the LORD—  
An ordinance for Israel—  
To give thanks to the name of the LORD."

I have found that if people come together and they all point to God, nobody ever feels slighted or hurt by anybody else. When that happens, then there's perfect unity within the body.

(Psalm 122:5) "For there thrones were set for judgment,  
The thrones of the house of David.

(Psalm 122:6) Pray for the peace of Jerusalem..."

Once again, let me just stop. It doesn't say "pray for peace in your heart", but as you're praying for the peace of Jerusalem, peace will come to you.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:  
'May they prosper who love you.'"



Isn't that what John is saying? "May your life prosper." Why? You're walking in truth. What do you mean? You're not thinking of yourself; you're thinking of others and you're pointing to Christ. In this, we want you to prosper in every way because you pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

(Psalm 122:7) "May peace be within your walls,  
And prosperity within your palaces.

(Psalm 122:8) For the sake of my brothers and my friends,  
I will now say, 'May peace be within you.'

(Psalm 122:9) For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,  
I will seek your good."

It is the same fundamental principle that we see in Philippians 2. How many times are these truths repeated in Scripture, and we sort of take them for granted? How wonderfully they come together and complement each other. As we've already made reference to "hold others in higher esteem", "have the same mind that Christ has", and that He took on the form of a bondservant". Hebrews will use this interesting phrase, "to bring many sons to glory". Therefore, He is not ashamed to be called our brother. You can hear the concern that he has for us. As Paul reminds people that we should do everything without grumbling or disputing (Philippians 2:14). Sometimes we try to do the right thing in our flesh, and our heart isn't walking in truth. Which you have to keep coming back to that because if you just say by sheer resolve, "I'm going to like that person", then before long, you'll find yourself murmuring and complaining against them. If you'll just get right with God and take on in your heart the mind of Christ who was willing to die that this person would be saved. If you just take on His heart, and you begin to walk in that Spirit, then that's the Spirit of truth. It's a genuine love and care. I don't have to like everything that somebody does. I don't have to agree with everything that somebody does, but I can say this, that's somebody Christ died for and that's my brother. I always look and go, "Do they love Jesus?" They might not agree with me, I could be wrong, but they love Christ. If they love Christ, I love them. That's what joins us together.

So, the way he puts it is interesting in Philippians 2:12, "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only..." When you're walking in truth, it's always a part of your life. That's why when John writes Gaius, he goes, "People are bearing witness that you're walking in truth." Now, if you're sometimes doing it, they can't bear witness that you're walking in truth. They can say, "Sometimes in truth", but if they say, "walking in truth", that means it's a way of life and they always responded that way. It didn't matter what happened, they were always doing that. I can't begin to tell you how thankful I am when I see that in your lives. Literally, there is no greater joy than when I see you guys walking in truth. People tell me, "We saw the Spirit of Christ in them even in the most difficult of times." I've oftentimes said that it's not faith unless you're rejoicing in the storm. There are going to be times in your life that things aren't going to be going well or maybe people haven't treated you right, but in fact you're

glorifying God in the midst of this and rejoicing in God, that's a person walking in truth. Man, our hearts are just bound together. I can't repeat that enough.

As you go into Chapter 2, he's saying, "You have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence..." So, you go, "What exactly does it look like?" We were actually talking about this before the service as we were going through some of the wonderful passages of Philippians. If you look with me in verse 19, it looks like Timothy. When you consider Timothy, you go all the way back to Acts 16 when Paul goes, "I want that guy to come with me." You go, "Why does he want that guy?" Well, if you've read Acts 16, it says something like this, he was a guy that was well spoken of where he lived; which means that he must have been pretty consistent in his faith. Paul says, "I want him to come." So, as Paul writes the epistle to Timothy, he says, "And you, Timothy, need to teach faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Those are the ones that we rejoice in and that we say, "God, bless them with everything. Just give them everything." Why would he be so general? Why wouldn't he be specific like "God, give him enough money to build this"? Why doesn't he do that? He doesn't know what's best for him. That's the point, you and I can't micromanage peoples' lives. We don't know what's best for them. "Get their heart right and God bless them in whatever way you see fit, and I know it's going to be great. God, give them everything they need. Supply all of their needs so that they can bless people more because that's what they're going to do."

So, the interesting picture here in Philippians 2:19 is "But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition."

(Philippians 2:20) For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare."

That's hard to believe when you think of all the people that Paul knew.

Then, he states this "For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus."

Now, when you read in the book of Acts and you see times in which Paul would send Timothy or Titus, your thought is "Ok, where is the text where Paul is telling them what to do?" You can't find it. There's a reason because once again, if the heart is right then they'll do right. If the heart's wrong, I don't care what you tell them, they're not going to do it. Even if they do the right thing, they're not going to do it in the right way. So, it's all about having that kindred spirit and heart. I can send this guy, and God, bless him with everything that he has.

(Philippians 2:20) "For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare."

(Philippians 2:21) For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 2:22) But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.

(Philippians 2:23) Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me;

(Philippians 2:24) and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

(Philippians 2:25) But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;

(Philippians 2:26) because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.”

Who thinks of somebody else when they're sick? "I feel really bad." "Ok, you feel really bad because you're sick." "No, I feel really bad because other people are concerned that I'm sick." That was Epaphroditus. Once again, here's somebody that is not thinking about themselves. So, let me ask you something. If you were to send somebody to help somebody else, who would you send? Would you send somebody to make sure they got every detail right, "read the list one more time to me", or would you send somebody that will love them and will share the love of God? If you were to send somebody you love to somebody that you love, who would you send?

(Philippians 2:28) "Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you.

(Philippians 2:29) Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;

(Philippians 2:30) because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.”

This guy was selfless, wasn't he? Who do we want to bless? Who are our brothers? Those who love the Lord; those who are striving to please Him; those who are walking in truth. Not just somebody that knows Scripture, but somebody that's actually practicing it; living it. He doesn't have any anger or hostility. There's no division in his mind or his thoughts. It's all to build up the body and to encourage somebody else. Would you not wish this person would prosper in every way? I trust I can pray that for all of you; that you would prosper in everything knowing that you would use it to bring thanksgiving to God.

There's a simple verse in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we come before You today and we ask that You would change our hearts. Lord, I have to admit that by nature I'm competitive. It's hard for me to wish good for other people. As

Peter would say, "What's in it for us?" But we begin to realize that when it's truly Your heart in us, when we are immersed in Your truth, we're not thinking of ourselves anymore; we're thinking of others. We want everybody who is walking in truth to be even more successful than ourselves. We wish the best for them. We wish that they would thrive; that You would use them greatly. They are our brothers.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, if you want to ask the question "who is your brother? Who is your father? Your mother?" Jesus simply put it, "The one who does the will of God." These are the ones you ought to be supporting. This is the true brother. Encourage one another day after day as you see the day waning. The day is coming when we're not going to work anymore. God's given you opportunity to strengthen the body. May you be zealous for that. May we be united as a church because we love God and because we love the brethren. May it be true and not just words that we say.