

SERMON, CLASS, and/or ANNOUNCEMENT NOTES:

Lined area for notes.

THIS WEEK'S CLASS SCHEDULE
SUNDAY MORNING: Proverbs — Lesson 8 (Bottom of p. 1)
WEDNESDAY EVENING: John 12:12ff

Answers: James 5:17 / 2 Kings 6:5

THE SENSE

“they read from the Law and gave the sense, helping them to understand”
(Nehemiah 8:8)

CONSIDER THE ANT—Ross Oldenkamp

Proverbs 8:30 says that when God created the world wisdom accompanied Him as a master craftsman. Is it any wonder, then, that a thoughtful observer of God’s creation should be able to detect signs of divinely ordained wisdom, even among the habits of some of the smallest and seemingly insignificant creatures? It is remarkable that even an ant has the capability of convicting us to be better people (Prov. 6:6-11). How are they always so hard at work, when we are often seeking “just a little more sleep?” Where did they learn such initiative and willful compliance that, even though they have no Captain, overseer, or ruler to keep them on task and in line, they still prepare ahead for the winter? Where did they get the drive and the ingenuity to persevere even when a size “12” sneaker blocks their formations, theoretically speaking? God instilled that! God has given so many opportunities to learn wisdom. It cries out

everywhere (Mt. 6:26)! We, therefore, are without excuse when we fail to live up to such reasonable standards that even a bug could comply. In Charles Bridge’s Proverbs commentary he wrote, “It’s a shame”, said the heathen philosopher, ‘not to learn morals from the small animals.’ Yet, what a proof it is of the degradation of the fall, that man, created in the image of God, and made wiser than the creation, should be sent, as here, to this insignificant school for instruction!”

How about this for a New Year’s resolution—Let us make it our aim in 2019 to be at least as bright as the animals. The ox knows it’s master, do you? (Is. 1:2-3).

Northern Kentucky Church of Christ - Vol. 1, No. 2

NORTHERN KENTUCKY CHURCH OF CHRIST

Elders:

Greg Litmer, Craig Powell, Bob Rice, Marvin Saylor

Evangelists:

Greg Litmer & Ross Oldenkamp

Sunday AM Worship 9:45
Sunday AM Bible Study 11:10
Sunday PM Worship 6:00
Wednesday PM Bible Study 7:30

18 Scott Drive
Florence, KY 41042
(859) 371-2095

www.nkcofc.com

## GIVING THE SENSE (CONT.)

---

### PROSPERING, EVEN AS OUR SOULS PROSPER

By: Ross Oldenkamp

It is not uncommon at this time of year to hear such benedictions as, “May you have a happy and prosperous New Year!” As benedictions go, this one is about as good as any other. However, the one used by the apostle John in his third epistle to his beloved friend Gaius is my personal favorite. To him John wrote, “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be healthy, just as your soul prospers.” (3 Jn. 2) Think of it...”just as your soul prospers.” I’m certain that John wrote this having every confidence that his friend’s soul was prospering well; if only he could fare as well physically as he was spiritually. However, if you consider the possible implications of John’s statement, you’ve got to admit that these words had the potential to be a *benediction with a bite!* If someone were to offer you such a salutation, how would you feel about it, as a proposition for your own life?

It reminds me of an old Oscar Wilde movie called, “The Picture of Dorian Gray.” The movie is about a handsome, young, but morally bankrupt man who had his portrait made. He was granted his wish that he could keep his youthful good looks, and that the painting itself would instead bear the signs of his aging. It did, but his image also grew increasingly deplorable with every transgression, until it was absolutely grotesque to behold. Imagine, if in a similar vein, that our physical health and prosperity mirrored our spiritual health. What if whenever we began to wander away from God or in some other way forsake His will that we had to bear repercussions to our health and prosperity? Would you sign up for that? I wonder how many of us would have serious reservations. Is it because we really don’t intend for our souls to prosper all that much, yet are still hopeful that we might continue to enjoy the good blessings of God? Should we even want to enjoy good health and prosperity when living outside of God’s favor? The last thing I want to hear at the judgment is what was uttered to the rich man in Luke 16, “...you received your good things in life.”

I wonder what would change in our behavior if God allowed us to bear some measured, but immediate recompense for our sins. Would it cause you to think twice. Imagine being alive in the days of Moses,

## GIVING THE SENSE (CONT.)

---

when the law for sin was: *“If a person commits a trespass, and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things of the Lord, then he shall bring to the Lord as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from the flocks, with your valuation in shekels of silver according to the shekel of the sanctuary, as a trespass offering.”* Sinning could really cost a fellow! If you think that living under such a law would create for you a greater deterrent from sin, then you have completely missed the point! Sin IS expensive! Jesus paid in blood. The last thing we would ever want to do is to treat the blood of the covenant by which we were sanctified a common thing, thereby insulting the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:29-30) and turning the grace of God into licentiousness (Jude 4).

I’m just wondering out-loud here but, shouldn’t the prayer of a man whose soul is not prospering be, “Afflict me, O Lord! Make it hurt! Do whatever is necessary to humble my proud heart” Consider what the Psalmist acknowledged about trials and adversity in his life, and the connection they played in helping him to grow. *“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word (119:67). It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes (119:71). I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me (119:75).*

Therefore, in addition to the resolution offered on page one, I offer the following benediction: “May the Lord bless and prosper us in the New Year, as our souls prosper...And, may the Lord rebuke and chasten the evil heart of unbelief that departs from the living God! (Heb. 3:12)” If that sounds too strong consider Paul in 1 Cor. 16:22—“If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.”

*If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?...11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteous-*

### Do you know your Bible?

- 1) For how long did God withhold rain at the request of Elijah?
- 2) How did the prophet Elisha make iron float on water?

*(Answers on back)*