



Promise of Prosperity

Message Notes, May 20, 2018

Genesis 13:14-15, Psalm 1:1-3, Jeremiah 29:11, John 10:10,

Mark 10:29-30, 2 Corinthians 9:10-11, 3 John 2

What do these verses say about prosperity? What do they *not* say about prosperity?

The idea of a “prosperity gospel” is certainly out there – that financial and material wealth is promised to every believer if you have enough faith.

What are your initial thoughts on the idea of “prosperity gospel”? What did you grow up hearing/being taught? Is there any part of you that agrees with it? Disagrees with it?

At its worst, the prosperity gospel is a scam/fraud. At its best, it’s a twisted Christian principle that puts us at the center of the universe and reduces God to a “genie in a bottle” kind of god.

Subtle forms of the prosperity gospel:

- “Following God ought to result in comfort, ease, luxury, success.”
- “If we worship Him, God will make our life work out.”
- “I’m keeping my end of the bargain – why isn’t God?”

Can you think of any other subtle forms of prosperity gospel thinking?

There *is* truth in this promise ... but it’s a twisted truth. We must be careful not to:

- Build an entire theology based on one verse or one truth.
- Define terms in ways that don’t line up with the original language. e.g., Jeremiah 29:11 – the word “prosper” is not talking about wealth/money; it is actually the word “Shalom,” meaning, peace/wellness/wholeness. He’s got plans to “SHALOM US” – to give us peace and wholeness; not necessarily plans to make us successful and rich!
- Take scripture out of context – we can miss the meaning of the passage and of the whole of God’s word.

We are to be students of God’s Word. What does that look like? How are you a student of God’s word?

What ideas do you have to become a better student of God’s word?

Wrong conclusions about the prosperity gospel:

- Wealth/success = God’s approval
- Poverty/unsuccess = weak faith
- God/the Bible condemns prosperity
- God/the Bible glorifies poverty



TRUTH of God's Word

God is good and His Heart towards us is good

- His goodness is not necessarily displayed in/through material wealth.
- Biblical prosperity is rooted in God – not in a quality of life.
- God's goodness does not eliminate the possibility of suffering
- Sometimes the best blessings come in the midst of suffering.

Real prosperity begins with seeking God first.

- Too often we are more interested in the blessings of God than in God Himself.
- See Matthew 6:33, Psalm 37:4
- AW Tozer quote: "Before the Lord God made man upon the earth He first prepared for him by creating a world of useful and pleasant things for his sustenance and delight. In the Genesis account of the creation, these are called simply "things." They were made for man's uses. But they were meant always to be external to the man and subservient to him. In the deep heart of man was a shrine where none but God was worthy to come. Within him was God; without a thousand gifts which God had showered upon him. But sin has introduced complications and has made those very gifts of God a potential source of ruin to the soul. Our woes began when God was forced out of His central shrine and "things" were allowed to enter. Within the human heart "things" have taken over. Men have now by nature no peace within their hearts, for God is crowned there no longer, but there in the moral dusk stubborn and aggressive usurpers fight among themselves for first place on the throne. "

What things push in and try to crowd God out of your heart and life?

It may be useful to confess these "things" and invite God back to first place on the throne of your heart and life.

God's blessings are meant to bring forth the fruit of generosity.

- God gives generously to us – we give generously to others – others give praise to God.
- He wants to bless us so that we can bless others and point people to *Him* (not glorify ourselves!)