

Prosperity Gospel

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Good morning, Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

I'm preaching this message today as a follow-up to the excellent message last week as Brother Justin reminded us of the New Testament command of our Lord as laid out for us in **II Corinthians**...that every one of us purpose in his/her heart what we will give to honor the Lord this coming year.

Each year we stop about this time and take inventory as to where we are in trusting the Lord's promises and we make a decision...a personal choice, as to what percentage of the income that God provides to us that we will give back to honor Him...on top of the tithe, the first ten percent that already belongs to God.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

6 But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 **Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give;** not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work:

I have many times preached to you on the subject of tithing and giving. I believe in and do faithfully practice tithing and giving. I sincerely hope that last week you chose to participate in what we call Heart of Purpose; that you chose a percentage of that with which God blesses you to give back to honor Him.

Today, I want to talk to you about where you are going to get those resources to give from.

This morning, we are going to the first Psalm and see God's stated desire to bless every one of His children.

Psalm 1:1-6

1 Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And **he shall be like a tree** planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and **whatsoever he doeth shall prosper**.

4 The ungodly *are* not so: but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Today we're going to talk about prosperity; some would call it "prosperity gospel".

Gospel means good news. Prosperity is certainly good news.

This is a term that has been given some very bad press by phony TV preachers who dupe poor and desperate people into sending them what little money they have with a false promise that God is going to make them rich because they do.

These fakes and phonies are going to have a lot to answer for when they face the Lord; you can be sure that the reckoning they face will come. It may come at the White Throne judgment of the unsaved for many of them.

What may be worse and may be the true purpose of Satan's plan is to cause real believers to miss out on what God really teaches about prosperity when we over-react to the fakes and phonies.

- THE Gospel is the death, the burial and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ for our sins according to the Scriptures. That is THE Gospel!
- THE Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.
- THE Gospel is the means by which - and the ONLY means by which - you can go to heaven; it is the ONLY means by which you may have your sins forgiven.

Having said that; the word "gospel" means an announcement of good news or of a good message.

The death, burial and resurrection of our Lord is for us: certainly the best message in the Bible.

But there is lots of other good news as well!

One of those good areas of good news; one of those good messages is the message of God's desire that His Children should prosper.

Don't let the evil deeds of a few false preachers cause you to miss out on what God has for each and every one of us.

This is especially important in light of how He wants us to use those blessings He provides.

God doesn't bless us so that we can just have stuff; He blesses us so that we can abound to every good work for His glory!

So today we are going to talk about real prosperity; the true good news of God's desire that you should prosper.

To you who may be skeptical about this let me remind you of some Bible facts we have previously shared.

There are more than 2,000 Bible verses that speak to us about finances; that's about ten times the number that speaks to the subject of salvation. Why is that? You only get saved once; you must deal with success, failure and finances every day. If you come to love God's Word and stay in it, you will expose yourself to the wisdom that leads God's children to prosperity.

For example:

Psalm 112:1-3

- 1 Praise ye the LORD. Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments.
- 2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.
- 3 Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house: and his righteousness endureth forever.

Psalm 37:4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

As important as finances are to each of us, prosperity covers much, much more than just money and possessions; this term covers all good things.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

We know that life has its seasons; we know that we all have an appointment with death; we know Christian life is going to contain some suffering...yet with all that said, can you believe this morning that God desires your prosperity in all areas of His blessing?

If you are saved this morning, your spirit doth already prosper: spiritually, you have arrived, you indeed have it made!

I believe that God's desire for your daily life here on earth is just like John's wish for his beloved brother in Christ in

3 John 1:2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Today as we take a close look at **Psalm 1:3**, I want us to relate what we see to all areas of God's blessing in our life; money and finances, yes, but all those other areas as well.

Here is our text verse for today:

Psalm 1:3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Psalm 92:12-14

12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

13 Those that be **planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish** in the courts of our God.

14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

OK, so now God says you are one of His trees; you are planted in the house of God; (although some of you still need to get planted) you are exposed regularly to the water of the Word of God; you are feasting of the nourishment that comes from the Word; you now love God's Word and yearn to hear more and more of it...

So now, here are four principles that will help you to prosper. The first:

I. He "shall be".

Psalm 1:3 And he **shall be** like a tree planted by the rivers of water...

A. It takes some time for a tree to get from being planted to flourishing prosperity.

1. There is much to learn and much of it cannot be learned quickly.

Romans 5:1-4

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

2. Patience is waiting, it is enduring.

3. Experience cannot come any other way.
4. Dealing with the troubles of life according to God's plan, patiently waiting for the outcome and the experience of seeing God handle the problems according to His promises...cannot take place quickly.
5. The enduring of all this produces hope.
6. This term "hope" means **confidence in God**.
8. It only comes one way, but it is worth the wait.

1John 3:18-22

- 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.
- 19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.
- 20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.
- 21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.
- 22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

B. There is so very much to learn; it takes time.

1. You must discover your purpose and take it to heart.
2. You must learn to see yourself as a servant - whether a good one or a bad one, that's what we are.
3. We must learn the principles of stewardship.
4. We are not owners; we are managers of what belongs to God.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2

- 1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.
 - 2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.
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5. Stewardship is proper handling of what God has placed in your care, whatever that is.
 6. Why would God place more in your care if you are not taking proper care of what He has already given you?

C. Do not be discouraged; life is in the journey.

1. Many of you are in the middle of this process.
2. Trouble comes; it's emotional, it's financial, it's your physical health; it's always something.
3. You try this, you try that...you make wrong choices; sometimes you get it right...then you grow a little bit, then you get a little wiser.

D. When prosperity finally comes, it's great; but it's not the greatest blessing and it's not what you will remember the most.

1. Today, I want for nothing. I live in a beautiful house, I drive a nice vehicle, I wear nice clothes; our pantry is always full; I get to win people to Jesus for a living.
2. I know what prosperity is like; I live it every day.
3. What are the memories I cherish the most?
4. How awesome it was when I got my first new pick-up truck?
5. Our first nice house?
6. The first boat or big fish or that ten-point buck?
7. No, none of this. Outside of my children and family, what I will never forget is being dead broke and getting down to the last food in the house; and then seeing God fill the cupboard to overflowing with a miracle out of nowhere!
8. What I remember is being on my death bed with cancer and seeing God give me my life back against all odds.
9. What I remember is God proving to me that He could do anything when He took away my cigarette addiction in one night.
10. What I remember is how God brought me back after I lost everything I had; including my ministry, at age 40.
11. The greatest moments of my life have been at my lowest points and then seeing God step in and do the impossible.

Principle # 2:

II. Fruit comes in its season.

Psalm 1:3...that bringeth forth his fruit in his season;

A. What is this fruit?

1. The fruit is the purpose of the tree.
2. A tree has value only for fuel or lumber or beauty or fruit.
3. We are God's fruit trees.
4. **John 15:16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.
5. What the tree produces is its fruit.

B. It takes time for a tree to bring forth fruit.

1. Seasons change.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 To every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

2. The verse says "his fruit" and "his season".

C. There are many kinds of fruit.

1. New believers getting saved.
2. The Fruit of the Spirit:

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

3. Your paycheck is the fruit of your labor.
4. Your kids turning out right is the fruit of your love.

D. If you are ever going to see the fruit, you must stay planted and faint not.

Galatians 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

1. Look to the Lord, not at each other.

2 Corinthians 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

2. No two trees grow or produce fruit alike.
3. If you must compare yourself to something, compare yourself to where you were in your walk with the Lord yesterday.

Principle #3:

III. His leaf shall not wither.

A. Here's a little science lesson for you.

1. Structures within a leaf convert the energy in sunlight into chemical energy that the plant can use as food. Chlorophyll is the molecule in leaves that uses the energy in sunlight to turn water (H₂O) and carbon dioxide gas (CO₂) into sugar and oxygen gas (O₂). This process is called **photosynthesis**.
2. In normal trees, they bud, the leaves grow to fullness, they do their job of nourishing the tree by converting the light energy to sugar and oxygen, then they wither and die.
3. Then you get to rake the yard.
4. And then in their next season, after lying dormant for a while, they do it all again.

B. God has built in a mechanism into the believer like this as well.

1. He has put something in us that enables us to convert the light of His Word into life-sustaining nourishment.
2. What the leaf does for the tree, the Holy Spirit in us does for the believer.
3. Only with us, our leaf does not wither!

And then we get to principle #4:

IV. Whatsoever he doeth. “and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” There are actually three sub-principles here:

A. “Whatsoever”.

1. This term speaks of choices.
2. God does not have a specific “one and only one” plan for your life.
3. There are hundreds of great things you can do with your life, and you get to choose.

4. This works like Heart of Purpose; don't pray for God to tell you what percentage of your income you should give, God commands you to choose that.
5. It is by our choices that we glorify God.
6. Did not God say in **Psalm 37** that he wants to give you the desires of your heart?
7. Choose something wonderful and get after it!

B. Then the Scripture uses the term "Doeth".

1. This speaks to the fact that you actually need to do something.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might ...

Ecclesiastes 5:18-19

18 Behold *that* which I have seen: *it is* good and comely *for one* to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for *it is* his portion.

19 Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; *this is* the gift of God.

2. Go do something: if it doesn't work out, then do something else but don't just sit around wringing your hands waiting on God to do it for you.

I Corinthians 3:9 and **II Corinthians 6:1** both say that we are laborers together with God... "Co-laborer" means that **God wants to work with you... not do it for you.**

C. "Shall prosper".

1. Remember Elisha and that widow woman in II Kings 4?
2. She said, "All we have is this one pot of oil."
3. Elisha said, "Go borrow vessels, not a few."
4. She could have thought, "OK a few is maybe 3, so I'll borrow 6."
5. Oh, no. It doesn't say, but I believe she borrowed every empty vessel in that town.
6. You have the same kind of promise from God that she had; read it: "and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."
7. Dream big...as long as it's good, honest and right, God is going to bless it; so why not go for lots of vessels!

8. Don't tell God how big your problem is; tell your problem how big your God is!

Conclusion:

God has an incredible journey for every one of His children. He also has the good news of prosperity for every one of His children. My desire, and I know also the desire of the Lord, is exactly the same as the Apostle John expressed in

3 John 1:2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Fall in love with God's Word; start learning the rules and the principles and go out there and get you some of that prosperity God has for you! Get saved, if you are not already, get planted in the Church, and start working on bearing some fruit.