

October 30, 2016

Prosperity #4
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What is prosperity? Prosperity is the ability to use Gods power to meet the needs of mankind in any realm of life, to be successful you must know God in a personal and intimate way and be able to share your relationship with Him to others, so keep your eye on Jesus, just don't focus on the riches, remember that God is the reason that you have anything and that He never ask you to give something without giving you something better in return.

The teaching today is a continuation of the series on prosperity. We have learned that God wants His people to prosper and have increase in all they have, but we have also learned that there are conditions in order for these blessings to benefit those in the church and the believers. In order to reap a harvest there must be a time of sowing or giving. Many times churches are reluctant to mention money because of how the people will receive the message, but the people need to know how to sow in order to receive a harvest.

The following scripture is Paul apologizing to the people for not receiving an offering that would benefit the believers in Jerusalem.

2 Cor 12:13 "For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong." KJV

We must establish Gods plan and will for us in life, in order for us to receive His blessing, His desire is that we all prosper and increase in what He gives to us. He is not against us having wealth, but is against us taking our eyes off of Jesus and becoming greedy.

Pro 3:9-10 "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: 10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." KJV

Deut 8:18 But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day." KJV

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

In 2nd Corinthians chapters 8 and 9, the entire chapters are speaking of money. It is very unusual for this to be found anyplace else in the bible, but money is the main topic in these two chapters. Jesus made reference in the book of Luke that sometimes He will prove us with financial blessings before blessing us with the true blessings from Him, referring to His anointing, to see if we will able to handle the anointing of God, He proves us with our faithfulness and our money. He said that if we can't be faithful to what belongs to another man, how can He bless us with what is our own?

2 Cor 8:1-14 "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; 2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; 4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5 And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. 6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. 7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. 8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. 9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. 10 And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. 11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that

which ye have. 12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. 13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: 14 But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality." KJV

Paul is talking about the churches in Macedonia and Achaia, how they were poor and didn't have a lot to give from, but the church had decided to give an extremely large offering to the church in Jerusalem. The trip that was taken was a long distance, and they sent it with Titus and some men, those who could be trusted. This event could be looked at, in comparison to Ezra who was given an offering from the king in Babylon to take to Jerusalem in order for the people there to rebuild the walls which had been torn down. (Read the book of Ezra in the Old Testament to understand the full story of what happened.)

Pro 13:22 "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just." KJV

We cannot limit God's resources to what we have, God owns everything in the world, we can enter into rest because of what He has laid up for us and all believers. His covenant is still working today as it was in the Old Testament with the children of Israel. When they came out of Egypt they came with much silver and gold.

2 Cor 8:1-14 " Now, friends, I want to report on the surprising and generous ways in which God is working in the churches in Macedonia province. Fierce troubles came down on the people of those churches, pushing them to the very limit. The trial exposed their true colors: They were incredibly happy, though desperately poor. The pressure triggered something totally unexpected: an outpouring of pure and generous gifts. I was there and saw it for myself. They gave offerings of whatever they could—far more than they could afford!—pleading for the privilege of helping out in the relief of poor Christians. This was totally spontaneous, entirely their own idea, and caught us completely off guard. What explains it was that they had first given themselves unreservedly to God and to us. The other giving simply flowed out of the purposes of God working in their lives. That's what prompted us to ask Titus to bring the relief offering to your attention, so that what was so well begun could be finished up. You do so well in so many things—you trust God, you're articulate, you're insightful, you're passionate, you love us—now, do your best in this, too. I'm not trying to order you around against your will. But by bringing in the Macedonians' enthusiasm as a stimulus to your love, I am hoping to bring the best out of you. You are familiar with the generosity of our Master, Jesus Christ. Rich as he was, he gave it all away for us—in one stroke he became poor and we became rich. So here's what I think: The best thing you can do right now is to finish what you started last year and not let those good intentions grow stale. Your heart's been in the right place all along. You've got what it takes to finish it up, so go to it. Once the commitment is clear, you do what you can, not what you can't. The heart regulates the hands. This isn't so others can take it easy while you sweat it out. No, you're shoulder to shoulder with them all the way, your surplus matching their deficit, their surplus matching your deficit. In the end you come out even. As it is written, Nothing lacking to the one with the least, nothing left over to the one with the most," MESSAGE

When pressure comes, we find out what we are made of, these people from Macedonia had entered into some rest. When we sow more than we can afford, we get into the arena of faith, out of the natural realm. God is looking on the heart and what our intentions are. Jesus did not become spiritually poor, how could He have healed the sick, raised up and delivered the poor. God's grace was, He stripped His son in order that we might have all our needs met. It is God's plan that all get involved so that all may be blessed.

2 Cor 8:3 "For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;" KJV

2 Cor 8:5 "And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." KJV

Matt 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." KJV

2 Cor 8:9 "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." KJV

A person who desires a bountiful harvest will plant or sow bountifully. God loves a cheerful giver, not grudgingly but as each has determined in his own mind, not being pressured and then later regretting his decision to give anything at all. The people in the churches in Macedonia had determined to give bountifully, in return their harvest was great because of the blessings that God bestowed upon them. God wants happy cheerful givers. What is God's plan for us? What did He have in mind when He ask us to give? It could be money but it could also be other things as well, seeing our families being born again, health issues settled and freedom from oppression in our lives, needing no aid or support from others, but able to bless those who might be in need. We are sowing for our future.

2 Cor 9:6-10 " Remember: A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop. I want each of you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your own mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and arm-twisting. God loves it when the giver delights in the giving. God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways so that you're ready for anything and everything, more than just ready to do what needs to be done." MESSAGE

2 Cor 9:7-10 "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: 9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. 10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)" KJV

2 Cor 9:7-10 "Let each one [give] as he has made up his own mind and purposed in his heart, not reluctantly *or* sorrowfully or under compulsion, for God loves (He takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, "prompt to do it") giver [whose heart is in his giving]. 8 And God is able to make all grace (every favor and earthly blessing) come to you in abundance, so that you may always *and* under all circumstances *and* whatever the need be self-sufficient [possessing enough to require no aid or support and furnished in abundance for every good work and charitable donation]. 9 As it is written, He [the benevolent person] scatters abroad; He gives to the poor; His deeds of justice *and* goodness *and* kindness *and* benevolence will go on *and* endure forever! 10 And [God] Who provides seed for the sower and bread for eating will also provide and multiply your [resources for] sowing and increase the fruits of your righteousness [which manifests itself in active goodness, kindness, and charity]." AMP

Pro 3:9-10 "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: 10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." KJV

God will supply seed for the sower and will multiply the seed sown. He will increase the harvest we receive and if we don't have seed to sow, He will supply that as well. He will provide anything and everything that we will be needing. Planting and harvest can sometimes be over a period of time. It doesn't always happen immediately. We may just now begin to see the harvest of the seed that we have sown many years ago, but the Lord is faithful to see that we will receive.

God gave His best, He gave His son, He gave us His ALL in order for us to receive.