

Growing Together Campaign – Lesson #2

A Wrong Understanding Of Prosperity Corrected

Sunday, May 5, 2013

Psa. 73:1-3 Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked

Psa. 73:12-13, 17 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

Until I went into the sanctuary of God then understood I their end.

Psa. 73:23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.

Psa. 73:27-28 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.

- Here we have a Psalm written by Asaph. A music leader under David.
- This Psalm starts well, talking about God's goodness but then tells of some misconceptions about prosperity and godliness that Asaph had struggled with before.
 - It is because of what he put his sight on.
 - We often are guilty of gauging success on money and things.
 - "He who dies with the most toys win."
 - If that were true many of God's choicest servants were failures.
- The Psalm ends as it begins with a confession that God is good and that godliness pays dividends.

1. His Wrong Understanding About Temporal Prosperity

a. He thought prosperity is measured in what we have.

v. 3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

- He envied the foolish, those who don't have God but have this world's substance.
- His problem is a definition problem. Prosperity is not measured by what we have.

- Ill- Missionary who's told dad of calling to the field. Dad took him for a ride by some of the finest homes in town, "If you're a missionary you'll never have a home like this." Then drove him by car lots of nice cars, "If you're a missionary you'll never have a car like this." Then took him to a parking lot with a Goodwill bin. "If you're a missionary this is where you'll shop for clothes." Missionary said "He was right about all three!"
- Some of the most miserable people in the world are some of the wealthiest.
- This misconception birthed others.

b. He thought prosperity shielded men from problems

v. 5 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men

- This comes from the notion that money has the ability to solve all our problems. Usually the opposite is true, it causes more problems.

1 Ti. 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

- Prosperity usually causes us to forget about God.

Deut. 6:12 Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage

c. He thought prosperity made a person content

v. 7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.

- People who live for things are usually never satisfied.
- Very few people, unless they know the Lord, think they have more than they can wish.

Phil. 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be **content**

- It is something that we must learn.
 - Paul had very little of this world's good and yet was content.
- Contentment is understanding that I have all I need for my current joyfulness.
- Be content that our basic needs are met.

1 Tim 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content

d. He thought prosperity mattered more than godliness

v. 12 & 13 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

- When he judged his life by the lives of the prosperous unsaved, he questions the value of a godly life.
- Comparison will always do that.
- We have a warped mindset.
- The Bible tells us to have the opposite mindset.

Col. 3:1-2 If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Set your affection on things above, not on things *on the earth*

2. His Right Understanding About Eternal Prosperity

- The key word is “until” in verse 17.
- This is where his whole view on this changed.

a. Real prosperity isn't about this life

v. 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

- There is an eternal reckoning coming.
- This life only lasts for a few years compared to the length of eternity.
 - Ill- Remember the treasure principle. You can't take it with you but you can send it on ahead.
- How many people will live this life getting what they wanted without know Christ? They are losers on two fronts, the temporal and eternal.
 - Ill- Christian I met who said that a unsaved ought to be the best heathen he can and live it up on earth because that is all he's got. I don't believe him. Living that kind of life doesn't pay in this life either.
- He found this out when he went “into the sanctuary of God.”
 - We need church to keep our perspective staright.

b. Real prosperity is about our relationship with God

v. 23-25 23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.

Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

- He realized that he had something that money can't buy, a close relationship with God.
 - That is something you can't put a price on.

c. Real prosperity is knowing that God is good

v. 28 But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.

v. 1 Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

- He can be trusted.
- He is just and fair.
- Anything I do for Him is worth it. He is good.
- The very people that we envy are the people who Him most, that is why we declare His good works to them.