

INI Hymns:

14th Sun. after Trinity **Psalm 35:27**

Sermon 23-44

9/10/23

“Let them shout for joy and be glad, who favor my righteous cause; and let them continually say, ‘Let the LORD be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.’”

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Isn't that amazing, God takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servant. He delights in prospering those who love Him and serve Him. That is the next theme in our summer series on God's Providence in our Lives.

God Prospers His People

There are many passages that talk about how God will prosper us or give us prosperity. God truly does delight in prospering His people. However, this is a truth of Scripture that has been so terribly misused by preachers of the so called Prosperity Gospel. They make it sound like this prosperity is primarily a physical and especially a financial prosperity. They say God always wants all of His children to prosper financially and physically. Worse yet they make such material and financial success the primary goal of our life with God. Faith and trust in God and doing His will (especially giving to their church) is seen as a means to get rich. It's like a contract with God, if you do His will, God will deliver security and prosperity.

That's not to say that God doesn't want to bless His people and make them prosper. There is a great deal of comfort and joy in knowing how and in what ways

God Prospers His People.

The Prosperity that God gives does include physical and financial prosperity. God does love to bless us so that our life is pleasant and enjoyable. We can see the goodness of the Lord in all these things.

There are many examples of this in Scripture. God made Abraham a very wealthy, powerful man. Then we read about Isaac his son, “Isaac planted grain in that land, and in the same year he reaped one hundred times as much as he had sown, because the Lord blessed him. The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous. Genesis 26:12-13 Do you remember how Jacob had to flee from his home because he had cheated his brother Esau out of his birthright and so Esau swore that he would kill his brother. Jacob left home with literally only the clothes on his back and the staff in his hand. He went to work for his uncle Laban for 14 years for the privilege of marrying his daughters. After that he continued to work for Laban and they agreed that for his wages, Jacob could keep all the spotted and speckled lambs and goats and the rest would belong to Laban. God blessed Jacob by causing the flocks to bear spotted and speckled lambs. When Laban saw that, he changed Jacobs wages to be only the streaked sheep and goats. So God made the flocks bear streaked sheep and goats. Laban changed Jacobs wages seven times, yet whatever Laban changed it to, God caused that to work in Jacob's favor.

God made it clear to all of us that He is the one who prospers us physically and financially. It is interesting that even a heathen Egyptian could see this truth. Potiphar bought Joseph to be his servant. We read in Genesis 39:3-5 “And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. 4 So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. 5 So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field.”

So yes, God does prosper us physically and financially. Therefore any job or business adventure that you might undertake, entrust it to the Lord as Psalm 37:5 says, “Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.” Don’t let your work or business become more important than God. Put God first and let Him bless your work.

It is also true that God does bless us when we give to Him. God says through the prophet Malachi “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field.” 3:8-11 Notice God can prosper us by opening the windows of heaven and causing His blessings to fall upon us, and also by “rebuking the devourer.” In other words, by preventing things from destroying or using up what we do have. However, this is not a formula for getting rich. God wants to show you that you don’t have to worry that if you give too much to God you won’t have enough for yourself. It’s just the opposite. So then we should receive all our blessings with thanksgiving and praise, and trust Him to provide, but don’t think of wealth and prosperity as the goal. That is such a small part of what it means that God prospers us.

In fact, by itself, physical wealth can hinder our prosperity. You remember what Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” Matt. 19:23-24 Jesus taught a parable about the rich fool who stored up riches for himself, “But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” Luke 12:20-21 So in His love for you God may not bless you with abundant wealth. We should learn to pray as Agur did in Proverbs 30:8-9 “Give me neither poverty nor riches —Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, and say, “Who is the

Lord?” Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God.”

God has much greater things to prosper His people with than physical wealth. The Hebrew word in our text that is translated prosperity is a form of the word Shalom. It is often translated with peace. It describes a complete wholeness and wellness inwardly and outwardly. It is a state of tranquility and a sense of everything being the way it should be.

True peace and prosperity begins with a greater knowledge of God which give a greater trust and confidence in God. Paul prays for the believers in Colossae and everywhere that they may attain “to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Col. 2:2-3 These are treasures so much greater than money. And we can only receive those treasures in His Word. King David describes the treasure we have in God’s word in Psalm 19:7-10 “The law of the Lord is perfect. It revives the soul. The testimony of the Lord is trustworthy. It gives wisdom to the inexperienced. 8 The precepts of the Lord are right. They give joy to the heart. The commandment of the Lord is bright. It gives light to the eyes. 9 The fear of the Lord is pure. It stands forever. The just decrees of the Lord are truth. They are altogether righteous. 10 They are more desirable than gold, even better than much pure gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the honeycomb.”

You know, we can be so foolish sometimes. Most of us would do just about anything for an extra \$100, that is if it’s legal, yet we can leave the greatest treasure in the world lying on the shelf and not have time to open it. Right here are riches far greater than gold. In here lies riches that will truly make you prosper. As Jesus describes in our Gospel reading, when we treasure His word in our heart, then the Father, Son and Holy Spirit come to us and make their home with us. That is when we truly prosper.

One of the greatest earthly blessings from God that causes our hearts and lives to truly prosper is our family. As God said of Adam, “It is not good that man should be alone.” God has created us all in families. Family is a place where we are loved and cherished and where we can give love. Whether rich or poor, it’s that love and security that makes us truly flourish and prosper. It is truly sad when you see families that are not a source of love and security. For many people, family is the source of great pain and suffering. For the most part that is because they don’t know God. They haven’t known or experienced God’s love. Even when sorrow and pain come into our own homes, it is because of our own selfish motives and not living in and expressing God’s love. So continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and His love will grow in our lives and He will prosper us all the more.

Our text is very interesting. In Psalm 35 King David is praying for God to deliver him from his enemies. He talks about how his enemy has attacked him, speaks against him and is trying to kill him for no reason. David said that he had often prayed for this enemy asking God to bless him, yet this enemy turned against him and sought his harm. It sounds like he is probably talking about king Saul who wanted to kill David even though

David never did anything against Saul but was always a faithful servant.

Remember that King David is a type of Jesus Christ. Many of his psalms are prophetically speaking the words of Christ. Jesus was attacked without a cause both verbally and physically by the religious leaders of the people. Jesus longed for their salvation and prayed for them. He patiently taught them, yet they hated him and wanted to kill him, which they finally did. Now think of our text as if it was Jesus speaking. “Let them shout for joy and be glad, who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, “Let the Lord be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.” We truly do favor Jesus’ righteous cause. His righteous cause is providing us with His righteousness. He cleanses us from all our sins and covers us with His righteousness. In that we can truly shout for joy and be glad. We rejoice that God did delight in the prosperity of His Servant Jesus. He made sure Jesus accomplished what He came to do.

Now God delights in prospering all who put their trust in Christ for their forgiveness and salvation. God’s promise of blessing and prospering always comes through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Without the forgiveness of sins in Christ, there is no blessing that we can receive from God. Without God’s grace and forgiveness in Christ no one will prosper. God says, “He who covers his sins will **not prosper**. But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” Proverbs 28:13

God does truly find pleasure in the prosperity of His servants. He prospers us in all our ways. He does prosper us physically and financially with exactly what is best for us, whether much or little. If God has prospered you with more riches He instructs us: “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.” 1 Tim. 6:17 Also Psalm 62:10. “If riches increase, Do not set your heart on them.” But above all rejoice that God has prospered you spiritually giving you all the riches of Christ, caring for you now and guaranteeing you a place in the mansions of heaven.

Let us truly shout for joy and magnify the Lord “Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.”

Amen.