

# Poverty is a Curse

## I. Prosperity is a Blessing

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The first mention of prosperity in the Word was when God blessed Abraham. God blessed Abraham because He knew Abraham would be a blessing. Abraham's first priority was other people, but by the time he entered into the Promised Land, he was one of the wealthiest men on the earth.

We often think God's riches are limited. How can God continue to give? His riches in glory are inexhaustible. We can give to missions, evangelists, and other ministries, and still have more than enough for ourselves because we seek first His kingdom and God wants to bless us.

### 3 John 2

*Beloved, I wish above all things thou mayest prosper and be in health as thy soul prospers.*

Three types of prosperity are mentioned in this verse: prosperity in our natural life, physical healing, and prosperity in our spiritual life. The Greek word for *prosper* means *to have a good journey, or a good trip*. It refers to starting from one place and going to a final destination. Prosperity is a trip, a journey. When we embark upon a trip to an unknown place, we pull out a map to guide our way. That is exactly what the Word of God is — a map to help guide us to that destination.

Prosperity doesn't come overnight. As we learn and continue in the Word of God, it begins to take root and to grow and build inside of us, line upon line and precept upon precept. Mark 4 says when the seed is sown, first comes the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Prosperity comes a little at a time, but God wants to bless us throughout our entire lifetime. Satan will send persecution, but God's blessings are always greater than any attack or persecution the enemy may bring.

Not everyone understands that prosperity is a blessing and poverty is a curse. Religion has taught us that there is no Satan or that Satan is nothing more than our own conscious thoughts about evil. Religion also teaches that God controls all good and evil, and good and evil are simply the two

sides of God. In other words, God can bless us at one moment and curse us another. That is completely contrary to the Word of God.

If every good and perfect gift comes from above from the Father of life, then we can turn that verse around and say that every wicked, perverted, and stupid thing comes from below from the father of darkness. Satan always lies, he is always shifty, and he never keeps his word. We have to acknowledge the fact that the true and living God from heaven and the one who would be god on this earth are opposed to one another. The war going on between them was won at the Cross, but that victory will ultimately be established once and for all at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the meantime, the victory of the Cross has been given to the Church so we can enforce Satan's defeat as we tread on serpents and scorpions, over all the works of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt us. (Luke 10:19) We will go through hard times, but Jesus promised we would always come out victorious on the other side. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. (Psalm 34:19)

## **II. Blessed in the City and in the Field**

### **Deuteronomy 28:1**

*And it shall come to pass; if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:*

*And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.*

Notice there is a blessing that comes upon you, and there is a blessing that *overtakes* you. The blessing that comes *upon you* comes directly from God. God wants to pour out blessings on us, but there are blessings that God wants to have *come upon us* and *overtake us*. We do not need to pursue blessings. We pursue God and blessings pursue us. We are not to chase after finances. We pursue God. We get to know Him. When we draw close to His heart and obey His commandments, blessings will pursue us.

An old expression says, "If you chase after a butterfly, you'll never catch it. But if you stand still, the butterfly will come to you." When we stand still and obey God's commandments, we will watch the deliverance of the Lord in our behalf and His blessings will come upon us and overtake us.

## Deuteronomy 28:1

*Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.*

Many have said we need to go where the prosperity is, but this verse says you will be blessed no matter where you are. This isn't just a North American gospel that works only in the United States. This is *the* gospel that works in the city and in the field.

Some are called to go into small communities because of their job, or to pastor small churches. Often they think they are leaving a place of prosperity to go to a place where there isn't much available. The Scripture says prosperity will chase you down when you follow after God.

God told Abraham to leave a rich country and go to the land God would give him and his children. When he entered the Promised Land, it was in the midst of a drought. This was not a land flowing with milk and honey; it was a land of poverty and desert. Abraham trusted God. God blessed him and made him one of the richest men in the world. God can bless you in the desert and in the city.

### **III. Blessings Follow Obedience to God's Word**

## Deuteronomy 28:8

*The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

Notice the word *storehouses* is plural. Throughout the Old and New Testaments, farmers had storehouses for their grain. First, the storehouses represented blessings for their family. Secondly, it represented next year's crop because they would plant from the storehouse. Thirdly, it represented profit because they could sell what was in the storehouses. The storehouses in your life represent so many wonderful things, including blessings on your bank account, your job, and your future.

Notice it says, *in all that thou settest thine hand unto*. It does *not* say all you do while you idly sit. God will bless you when you follow His Word and whatever you begin to set your hand to will prosper. When God begins to pour out blessings on your work, you can do a little work and God will do a

lot of work with you. There is a great blessing when you begin to work according to what God instructs you to do.

## **Deuteronomy 28:15, 38-39**

*But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:*

*Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it.*

*Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them.*

*Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit.*

When your outgo exceeds your income, you are headed down the wrong path. Verse 14 tells us we will sow a few seeds and come back with a multitude of seeds. However, if you don't hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, you can take the whole storehouse out there and come back with very little.

Throughout the Old Testament, and especially in Deuteronomy, it seems to imply that God is taking blessings from you. However, the Hebrew text implies that God does give, but if your heart is not right, God will permit Satan to steal from you. It is much like having your house unprotected. If you forget to set your house alarm and a thief breaks in, you can blame the alarm company all you want, but it is ultimately your fault for not setting the alarm. In our Christian lives, we leave the door unlocked through our own disobedience and when Satan comes in and steals from us, we blame God. But when God gave us His Word and His Spirit, He gave us every provision. When we leave the door standing wide open for Satan to rob us, we can't blame God, only ourselves.

Throughout the Book of Job, it looks as though God is giving Job something one minute and taking it away the next. But in the opening of the book, we find that Satan was stealing from Job. God was pouring great blessings on Job's life, yet Job left the door standing wide open.

## **Job 1:4-5, 10**

*And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.*

*And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.*

*Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.*

### **Job 3:25**

*For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.*

It was the fear for his children that opened the door for Satan to enter. However, when Job got rid of the fear and operated in forgiveness, his latter end was greater than his beginning.

## **IV. Redeemed From the Curse of the Law**

Galatians 3:13 says Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us for it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree." Verse 14 tells us that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. There has been much debate about this because the word *curse* is singular. We know there are *curses* in the law, but that verse says Christ has redeemed us from the *curse* of the law. The curse of the law was, simply, that we were incapable of keeping the law. Through the new birth, God has enabled us to keep the law through the daily operation of the Holy Spirit in us. The Holy Spirit has made us free from the curse of the law. It is not a matter of *trying* to keep the law. If we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

The *curses* found in the Old Testament are wrapped up in this one word, *curse*, in the New Testament. Rather than delineate all the curses found in the Old Testament under the law, they are simply incorporated into one word. Christ has redeemed us from the *curse* of the law.

The curse of the law can be found under three categories:

**1. Sin:** When Jesus went to the cross and died, He redeemed us from the curse of sin. He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21) He gave us His righteousness by becoming our sin. By becoming our sin, He can remove it and redeem us from it. This is something we couldn't do for ourselves. I call it the *divine swap*.

**2. Sickness:** Jesus took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. (Isaiah 53:5) By His stripes we were healed. (1 Peter 2:24) Through the work of Jesus on the cross, we can become the very health and healing of God the Father.

**3. Poverty:** Deuteronomy 28 says poverty is a curse, but Galatians 3:13 says Christ redeemed us from the curse. Jesus went to the cross to redeem us spiritually *and* naturally. Though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor, that through His poverty, we might be rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

Jesus became sin so we could be righteous. He became sickness so we could have His healing. He became poor that we through his poverty might be rich. That is speaking of the three-fold curses we find in the Old Testament, but wrapped up in that one word, *curse*, in Galatians 3:13.

### **III. What Happened When You Became Born Again**

If you are born again, you are not a sinner trying to get saved, you are already saved. Therefore, you are already righteous. We are righteous people resisting the temptations of sin. The moment we became born again, we became righteous. Many Christians think they are still sinners. They say, "I'm a sinner just saved by grace." No! You are saved by grace, you are the righteousness of God, and you have the right to resist sin.

If you are born again, you are healed. You are not a sick person trying to get healed. The moment you were born again, you were healed. You are a healed person resisting symptoms of disease and sickness that try to attach themselves to you. When you are walking in communion and fellowship with God, sickness and disease are like water off a duck's back.

If you are born again, you are rich! You are not a poor person trying to get rich, you are a rich person resisting the poverty and lack that tries to come

into your life. You are the prosperous. Quit seeing yourself as poor or as having lack. Quit seeing yourself as suffering the conditions of life. Instead, see yourself as an overcomer. You became an overcomer the minute you were born again; therefore, you can overcome.

If I am righteous, I can walk in righteousness. I can resist the temptations of sin. If I am healed, I can resist the sicknesses and diseases that try to come my way. Whenever lack tries to rear its ugly head, I can say, "No sir!. I am prosperous! By the stripes of Jesus Christ, He has made me to be rich in this earth the moment I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior."

You are rich whether you ever walk in it or not. You are healed whether you ever walk in it or not. You are righteous whether you walk in it or not. It was all given to you the moment you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Throughout Proverbs, the Bible says He's made unto you wisdom whether you are ever wise or not. You can act dumb all you want, but He was made wisdom unto you.

## **V. Receiving the Blessings; Resisting the Cursings**

How does all this fit into Deuteronomy? The Hebrew meaning for *Deuteronomy* is *to say it again*. The Book of Deuteronomy is a repeat of what is said in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. What was quoted to the first generation has to be repeated to the second generation. Deuteronomy is saying the same thing to a brand-new generation who is about to step over the shores of the Jordan River and go into the Promised Land. It says we are to instruct our children in the Word of God when they rise in the morning, when they walk during the day, and when they sit around the dinner table. (Deuteronomy 6:7) It isn't enough for us to simply know the Word; we are to pass it on. Knowledge doesn't come by osmosis. A child has to be instructed and taught through the years, and they are to teach their children so it is passed on from generation to generation.

### **Deuteronomy 11:29**

*And it shall come to pass, when the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.*

They were going to come into the land and stand between two mountains. One mountain would be the blessing mountain and the other would be the cursing mountain.

### **Deuteronomy 27:12-13**

*These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin:*

*And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.*

Both of these mountains still stand in Israel today. Gerizim was the blessing mountain. It is a beautiful mountain, full of trees. Mount Ebal is a bare mountain with no trees, and was the cursing mountain.

Jacob had two wives and two handmaids. Those who were to stand on the blessing mountain are the sons of the wives. Those who were to stand upon mount Ebal to curse are the children of the handmaids. Although Reuben came through a wife, he was cursed later on because of sin in his life.

It took five chapters in Joshua for them to cross the Jordan River. In Joshua 6, they conquered the city of Jericho. In Joshua 7, they were conquered by the little city of Ai, then they had to go back and conquer the city again. After they conquered these cities, they came to this place between mount Gerizim and mount Ebal.

### **Joshua 8:30**

*Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal.*

Remember mount Ebal is the cursing mountain. Joshua didn't put an altar on the blessing mountain; he put one on the cursing mountain because Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. Jesus didn't redeem us from the blessing! The blessing still stands intact.

### **Joshua 8:31**

*As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings.*

*And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the Law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.*

*And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges; stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.*

After all this, Joshua read the blessings of the Law and everyone on mount Gerizim would shout, "Amen!" He would then read all the curses and all those on mount Ebal would shout, "Amen!" Can you imagine a million people on each mountain shouting in unison and Joshua and the high priest standing in the valley between with the Ark of the Covenant? After Joshua read all the blessings and cursings, they offered a sacrifice on the cursing mountain. This represented Christ redeeming us from the law.

The good news is that after Christ accomplished our redemption on the Cross, only the blessings stand. How do we receive the blessings? We receive them by faith. Faith is based upon the promises of God. The promises of God should become a part of your heart, your mind, and your lips. When you begin to speak the Word of God and believe the Word of God, whatever you put your hand to do will prosper greater than ever before. Where your hand used to produce little, it will now produce much. Where it once seemed like you spent more than you brought in, you will see God begin to bring in more than you can even imagine or think. Are you ready for some of those blessings which God promises exceedingly, abundantly above all you could ask or think? Get ready for the windows of heaven to open up in your life! It's time!