

The Prosperity Gospel

God does not promise health, wealth and prosperity in this world. On the contrary, God's Word warns us Christians that we will have our share of trouble, disease and hardship during our brief pilgrimage towards the eternal City.

We know that "our outer self is wasting away" but we do not lose heart since we know that our sufferings are only temporary. "This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Corinthians 4:16-17). The glory in heaven comes only after the affliction during this brief life on earth.

Prosperity teachers are very popular, as can be expected, and they deceive many people. Others seek Christ for the wrong reasons – to get rid of their troubles and to become rich and prosperous. This isn't anything new. As in the early church, there are people today who imagine "that godliness is a means of gain." However the Bible warns that "those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction."

Such people become wealthy and enjoy the pleasure of this world for a while, but this they do to the detriment of their spiritual well-being. "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs" (1 Timothy 6:5, 9-11). After all what will it profit us if we gain the whole world and lose our soul?

It is our privilege as God's children to pray to the Father for our daily bread, and to seek his face in our sickness and sorrows. Moreover we should be grateful for his generous providence and we should be thankful for giving us food, clothing, family, health and so many other gifts.

However we should also patiently bear the burdens and sorrows of life, knowing that God the Father is in full control of every situation, even in the midst of tragedy and sickness. Though our eyes may be clouded with tears, we can find strength in the assurance that he is always with us; he has promised never to leave or forsake us.

Job had the right attitude. He had received abundant material blessings from God. But when the time came that God allowed him to forfeit everything, Job did not despair. "Shall we receive good from God," he said, "and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10). Everyone is willing to do the former, but only genuine believers are willing to embrace trouble from the hands of God.

We may not understand God's purposes; we may not see any good coming out of it; we may be pushed to the brink of despair, and yet we continue to trust and worship God. "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

In the darkness of adversity and misery, this kind of faith sparkles like a diamond. God's children remain absolutely certain that God is good but not because all is going well for us. On the contrary we continue to magnify God's sovereign grace despite and in our sufferings. God is glorified in the child-like trust of his children. May he give us grace to trust him like that.