

The Prosperity Gospel Perversion or Fact

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The Lord moved us from Texas to Montana 10 years ago and shut us up in the wilderness with Him and He poured out revelation regarding the condition of the Church and churches almost daily. Because of our familiarity with the Dark Kingdom, He also began to show us there was a *false* church as well as the true Church. This false church is not new; it's been around since the days of the Apostle Paul. I call it the *ecclesiastical* church. Most prophetic dreams and visions we received during this time dealt with this subject.

Therefore, if there is a false church then it must be preaching a *false* gospel. Generally it's what I call a *hybrid* gospel, i.e., like the Catholic church it's a gospel that is part Word and part paganism or demonism and is a fulfillment of Paul's prophetic words to Timothy: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons ..." Notice to what he attributes this – "giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons." In 1985 as I was preparing to do our radio broadcast and was praying over the condition of America the Lord told me that the two most prevalent spirits in operation in the world today are "deceiving spirits and religious spirits." Their purpose is to get you to "depart from the faith."

"For the time will come [and it's here now] when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables." – 2 Tim. 4:3-4

When we started the church in Libby, Montana, the Lord had us preaching for 3 ½ years various themes from Rev. 18, "Come out of her my people." What is this scripture talking about? "My people" we should understand; these are the Lord's. What are they being exhorted to "come out" of?

Last year the Lord impressed on me to write another book titled, *Another Gospel*, which deals with this in depth. After I had written only 60 pages I came to the realization just how prevalent this problem is in the religious world of Christianity today. I came to the swift understanding that there are many, many *false* gospels being preached in churches and communities today.

One of these *false* gospels is what is called the *Prosperity Gospel*. Now don't get mad at me; the *true Gospel* is by its very nature a gospel of prosperity; however, unless we have understanding from God and revelation we don't know what true prosperity is. God's definition of prosperity and ours are not the same.

The prosperity gospel being preached today by many is a perversion of spiritual truth and I'm going to prove it to you from the Word of God. Remember, it's an important principle of Bible interpretation to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture.

Before I do that, however, I want to relate a personal testimony from two separate times many years apart when the Lord spoke to me about *Prosperity*. The first time was in 1982. I always do my Bible reading and meditation in the mornings – that is my time with the Lord. I was reading in Psalm 73 when all of a sudden I stopped and asked the Lord, “Yes, Lord, why do the wicked prosper?” He spoke immediately and said, “They don't prosper.” I replied, “What do you mean they don't prosper?” He repeated Himself only a little louder this time, “They don't prosper!” I said, “Well, what about so-and-so (a man for whom I was doing consulting at the time who was worth in excess of \$200 million dollars but was an unsaved Frenchman)?” The Lord replied, “He's not prospering.” I said, “You could have fooled me.” The Lord spoke again and said, “Any man who dies and goes to hell would hardly be considered prosperous.”

You see, my brother and sister, the idea that prosperity is money and material wealth is an idea we got from the world – it's not New Testament. Jesus had many confrontations with the Pharisees and others over money and we learn a hard truth – God places money and materialism at the lowest end of the spectrum of prosperity.

If you will study church history, you will find that the number one sign of a false prophet or teacher in the early church was a person who was preoccupied with money. There are

many warnings about this in the epistles as well. Do we find instances of Jesus saying, “Okay, before I begin to give you my famous Sermon on the Mount today we’re going to receive an offering for our ministry.” Do we see the Apostle Paul doing this or Peter? No!

Do we see this in the Scriptures – “Come to the famous Sermon on the Mount Conference; registration fee, \$100.” Or this, “The Apostle Paul, formerly known as Saul of Tarsus, invites you to his Mars Hill Conference, registration \$200. There will be call out rooms for personal prophecy available for \$100 per person.” Silly isn’t it yet this is what most of what is called Christianity has degenerated into today.

I was preaching in Akure, Nigeria, in December, 1989, when the Lord next spoke decisively regarding money. While ministering from 2 Kings 5, because I had been studying the prophet’s office for 4 years, I was struck by Elisha’s refusal to accept the large gift (about \$10 million by today’s standards) that Naaman brought to give him. I thought, “What ministry today would refuse such an enormous gift? They’d find some way to rationalize accepting it.” The truth is, of course, that the reason Elisha did not accept it was because God told him not to. But most ministries today would, because of the Balaam spirit, find a way to rationalize accepting it.

I thought about Elisha’s ministry and the Schools of the Prophets that he had to support and manage. They didn’t have a lot of money as evidenced by 2 Kings 4:1-7; Elisha might have prayed, “God why not let me have it to support these schools of the prophets?”

Then in 1999 when we were living in Elliston, Montana, I was writing *The High Calling of God* and *The Prophetic Voice* when the Holy Spirit again spoke to me about prosperity. He said, “The *highest* form of prosperity is to be in the presence of God.” This made perfect sense to me because spiritual things are of a higher order than are physical things – that’s exactly how a spiritual substance such as faith can dominate physical things; therefore, *true* prosperity in the eyes of God is *always, every time* spiritual.

God’s order is always the same – first the spiritual then the physical. If you are prospering spiritually, you will eventually also prosper physically and materially.

We see the example with Abraham, David and others. Yet we don't see them preoccupied with money or confessing Cadillac cars and bigger houses.

Now let's look at some scriptures to see what the Bible, and especially Jesus, has to say about prosperity and money. In the famous Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth .. but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven ... for where your treasure is there your heart will be also." (Mt. 7:19-21) Now let me ask you a question, what kind of *treasures* is He talking about laying up in Heaven, spiritual or material?

Now if you continue on and read vv. 24-33 you will see Him say, "You cannot serve God and mammon" (or money, materialism) in v. 24 "for either he will hate the one and love the other" and then He says very plainly in v. 25, "For this reason ..." or in some translations, "Therefore ..." In other words, *because* you cannot serve God and money – you must pick one or the other – a person cannot serve two masters – Jesus said I'm going to encourage you to serve God and seek spiritual things.

"Do not worry about your life ... food, clothing ... for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. (vv. 25-32). Now notice, first the spiritual then the physical, in v. 33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these [material] things shall be added to you."

In a similar account in Luke after Jesus says, "You cannot serve God and mammon." (Lk. 16:13), the Bible says in v. 14, "Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things and they derided [or ridiculed] Him." Now notice how Jesus responded and carefully read His words in v. 15: "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

"And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." – Luke 12:15

In the epistles also we find much about this subject, especially regarding the last days in which we are living. One key chapter regarding false prophets and false teachers is 2 Peter 2. Notice v. 2, “Many [not just a few] will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned” and v. 3, “By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words ...”

The key words we find here as well as in Jude and in Paul’s letters are *sensuality*, i.e., pertaining to the senses, and not spiritual. God does want to bless us but it’s through the Word that He blesses us as we mature in Christ and become conformed to His image.

We are called not to be sensual but to be spiritual, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Col. 3:1-2)

Finally, I want you to notice Jesus’ words to the rich young ruler in Luke 18:22,

“You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” Now Jesus may never ask you to sell everything you have and give to the poor; obviously this young man had a problem with covetousness. But you’ll notice that Jesus’ emphasis was on *selling* and *giving away* material possessions in order to gain Heavenly treasure. That is the Scriptural pattern, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

I received a letter from a *church* just this week with a paper handkerchief enclosed that I was supposed to return with my best offering so God would bless me. They said they were “instructed by the Holy Spirit to send it to me.” I guess they couldn’t afford a real handkerchief but I doubt that a paper one will work with Acts 19.

My counsel to you this month if you’ve gotten caught up in this Prosperity gospel is to forget it and concentrate on obeying the Great Commission. You do want to be a tither and a giver; that is New Testament. But don’t be conned into giving through promises of wealth by giving to certain ministries. It’s not God’s way. You should never give of finances out of an emotional appeal; you should pray about where the Lord wants you to give His money – the tithe. Offerings and alms you should pray about as well. You should be just as diligent about this as you are in making investments with your own

money because if you sow seed into the wrong soil you will not have a return on your investment waiting for you in Heaven. Concentrate on your spiritual development and gifting and helping people. You'll find that God will automatically bless you with material blessings when you are faithful in His work.