

Title: The Way of Prosperity

Text: Genesis 39:1-6 (Part I)

Will you take your Bibles, please, and turn to Genesis chapter 39. You will find notes in your bulletin. And I would invite you to use them as we study God's word together.

Needless to say, Prosperity is a common word that we throw around about how we are living these days. I wanted to quote you examples this morning; but because of time I decided not to; but I will refer to it in general.

According to a magazine entitled "Israel" there was an article about Americans who have chosen to go to Israel to live. There was a family from Ohio, for example, who had a very expensive home with a swimming pool and a four car garage. And prosperity was just abundant. The husband had a great job and it seemed they were doing fine. But they were unhappy people and they went to Israel. Now, they and their five children live in a little apartment driving a car that just barely makes it. They are having a hard time making ends meet because of the sky rocking economy. And the article was talking about your standard of living. What is a higher standard of living? And in their way of thinking it wasn't material at all. With all their material possessions, they were still unhappy. And they were so glad to be in Israel because there were new challenges and they were thrilled about being there. And on and on it went with many examples. ~~And they did a great selling job.~~

And I thought again as I was preparing for this message, Prosperity is really a term that must be defined and described.

And there isn't a chapter in all the Bible that talks about it more than Genesis 39. Because it concludes with this statement, "The Lord made it to prosper. God wants you to be prosperous. But it may not be the kind of prosperity that you had in mind *or the world has in mind.*"

You may acquire everything that the world has to offer in the way of material possessions and still be quite unhappy. You will discover that even though you have a lot of things that doesn't help you to love somebody more. Even though you have a lot of things, it doesn't help to solve the discouragement that may be in your life or the meaninglessness, or the lack of purpose. Just because you have a lot of things, that doesn't guarantee that you will wake up in the morning with a song in your heart and a smile on your face. As a matter of fact, Solomon said, "with much wealth there is much sorrow." So, you may wake up crying instead of laughing.

But, I want to take this morning about "Prosperity." What is the Key to prosperity? Genesis 39....Will you take your Bibles and turn there please.

Genesis 39:1-6, 23

Shall we pray

Father we thank you for your Word which is able to discern our thoughts and check out our motives and show whether they are right or wrong. We thank you for the Prosperity which the Lord has promised. We know that we have a difficult time even understanding the term. And we know that we have been programmed to think a certain way as to what prosperity is all about. Teach us your truth about prosperity so that we may prosper according to your will. For we pray this in the name of Jesus our Lord, Amen...

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(1C) There are always obstacles in peoples ~~lives~~ lives in finding God's will and in finding real prosperity. There were three in the life of Joseph and they are all found in Vs 1. Three obstacles which he could have held up to anyone and said, "Listen, I don't care what you say. My road is a tough one. There are ~~two~~ ^{too} many things in my life to even hope to be successful; and I am therefore regulated to a very unhappy life. Three obstacles. And they may fit your circumstances just as much as they fit Joseph's.

(1D) The first obstacle in Vs 1 says he was taken down to Egypt. So the place he found himself was his first obstacle. Egypt was no friend of God's. The Bible says, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt. Who trust in her for help." Egypt was no friend of God's. It was a friend of the worlds. And is a type of the world.

And Joseph could have easily argued, "Lord, I am down here in Egypt against my will. I am a slave. How can I possible serve you."

Maybe you are saying, right now, Pastor if you only knew where I worked and the kind of people I have to work with, you would understand.

Not one of us has the excuse of our environment. No matter how bad it is. The obstacle is not a factor in knowing prosperity...Even though it involves the place where you find yourself. And even though that place may not be very encouraging to christian growth...The place where he found himself *was the first obstacle*

(2D) Secondly, I notice the person under whom he was serving was called Potiphar, the captain of the guard. This faced him with a second obstacle. I wonder if you know that the captain of the guard was the chief executioner in Egypt. Now, how would you like to have a boss who was the chief executioner?

So, Joseph ~~who~~ was serving this man, could have easily said to God, "Lord, you don't know what kind of man I serve?" And maybe you have said the same thing. "You don't know the kind of people I work with. You ~~know~~ don't know what my parents are like. You don't what my children are like. You don't know what my relatives are like. And on and on it goes. Obstacles to knowing the prosperity of God.

(3D) And there was a third obstacle in this verse. And that is by the phrase which says, "he was bought from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there." This ~~third~~ obstacle has to do with his position in life. He was a slave. He was bought.

He could have said to God, "Listen, how can I be prosperous and

effective and fruitfull and really live for you when I am in this position of being a slave?"

A slave had no rights of his own. He couldn't open his mouth. He had to do just what his master said or he would lose his life.

So, these are obstacles to prosperity. Here he is, Joseph, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. And he is down in Egypt under an ungodly captain of the guard, a chief executioner. He is in his home and he is a slave.

Now, we might look at all of that and conclude: "Yes, that is pretty much my circumstandes, also. I am just like that. You ought to see where I work. You ought to see the kind of people I have to be involved with. And you ought to see what position I have in life. God can't use me. Obstacles to prosperity.

(2C) But, I would like you to notice in verses 2-6 the opportunities that were facing him. Wonderful opportunites were facing him. And wonderful opportunites are facing us, and we may not even know it. We may not even see it. It may not have even crossed our minds that there are tremendous opportunities ever day of our life.

The obstacles, you see, may seem so great that we fail to see what God wants to do...

(1D) Now these opportunities are bases, first of all, on the resources of God. And there are two vaital facts that you must see about these opportunity ~~and~~ God is at work in peoples lives. And it is God who does things. And it is looking to the resources of God, not to myself, in seeing the opportunites. ~~the~~

She situation looks bad. Joseph is down there in Egypt and he is a slave. It looks bad. But there was a tremendous opportunity. And God was behind it because ~~he~~ ^{Joseph} knew something about the resources of God. And there are two kinds of resources found in Vs 2. And everyone of us here today have the same two resources. And it makes a glorious opportunity no matter how big the obstacle.

Resources

(1E) Number one is the ~~very~~ presences of the Lord.

Vs 2 says, "The Lord was with Joseph".....The presence of the Lord. Don't be afraid. Don't look at the obstacles and immediately decide that it is not worth the fight. To give it all up because it might be too hard. No, the Lord was with Joseph. The presence of the Lord.

Assumed

Hebrews 13:5 says "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

God came to Moses and said: "Moses I want you to lead my people out of slavery." And you know what Moses did? He did the same thing you and I do. He started making excuses. "Now, Lord you know that I am not a good speaker. I am not good with words." And on and on he went.

Listen, God is with us. No matter what the obstacle. And

And then one day God called a little water boy called Joshua who used to follow Moses around. And he said: "Listen, Joshua, you are going to take over for Moses."

And his knees started to shake and he starting to think up some excuse. But God comes to him in Joshua 1:9 and says, "Listen, Joshua, be not afraid. Neither be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

You know, a lot of us don't see the opportunity because we forget that God is with us....

I am often called upon to bring the prayer for various functions. The other ^{Day} night I was ask to bring the invocation at a ^{Prayer Workshop} ~~Rotary~~ banquet. And there are many so called Christians in Rotary as well as a few believers. And when I was ask to pray, there were shuffling of the feet and people coughed. Have you noticed how people do this...It is amazing thing. Some of them give a big yon...and put their hands over their face...It is fantastice how they do it. Others ~~shuff~~ sort of turn to the side and look away. You know they are afraid.....What is the matter? Have we forgotten that the lord is with us. ~~And~~

Listen, I didn't pray a short prayer. I took advantage of the opportunity And I used the microphone so all could hear.....

And I learned something through that experience. I found myself scared. That is right. I was nervous. Sometimes I find that the devil wants me

keep ~~at~~ quiet. He is pressuring us to keep quiet. We will be a silent believer, today....

Oh, listen, I know what the obstacles are like. We are faced with pressures. We are faced every day of our life with circumstances which cause us to say, "how could God possibly use me here." And the tendency is to be quiet and not to say anything.

at those times we need to remember that

~~Listen~~, the Lord is with you. He said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Men's Prayer Time

The other morning I was called to Seirra View Hospital. It was 4:30 in the morning. And when I walked into the Hospital a man explained that his mother was not expected to live. And he ~~said~~ ask, "You believe in prayer don't you?" And I said that I did...And he said that he had been told that I believed in prayer. And then he ask if I would pray for his mother.....So, we prayed to the glory of God.....

Listen, are you trying to hid things. Christian, ~~listen~~, are you trying to hide things? Joseph, down as a slave in Egypt could have said, "~~Listen~~, "God, this is too much for me. I can't take it anymore." Oh, my friends, God is with us. And if you know anything about the life of Joseph you will realize that this is the story of God not just Joseph. This is the story of God. In Chapter 50 Joseph's final remarks to his brothers about this whole thing..."You meant this for evil, but God meant it ~~for~~ good."

You see

~~Oh~~, my friends, this is a story of what God can do in a life. That is the key to prosperity. The Lord was with him. And that was a wonderful promise.

(2E) Now, secondly, in terms of resources the power of God was with him.

It says in Vs 2 that he was a ~~pros~~ prosperous man. The end of Vs 23 says, "whatever he did, the Lord made to prosper."

You see, this had nothing to ~~do~~ with Joseph. Joseph didn't make himself prsoper. The Lord caused Joseph to prosper. He did ~~it~~ all. This is the story of what God can do in a person's life. Praise the Lord. ~~It is his~~

It is ~~his~~ power behind a life. God will ~~make~~^{cause} your life ~~to~~ prosper the way he wants it to prosper. And even though the obstacles are great there are tremendous opportunities ~~seeing~~ before us, *IF we will take the stake seat and let God's power flow through us*

(2D) Now secondly, under this matter of opportunities I would like you to see the results. The results that will come to your life. And there are four I would like you to see. When you are being made prosperous by God there will be four results *in your life*

(1E) Number one, notice in Vs 3, it says, "his master saw that the Lord was with him." His master saw that the Lord was with him. You know one of the first results when God is blessing in your life, no matter what the obstacles...is ... that the people around you begin to notice it. Here is an unbelieving man. Yet, he knew that God was with him. That slave...God is with him.

Do you think that Joseph was going around preaching all the time to Potifphar? I doubt it because a slave couldn't open his mouth without permission. But he knew that God was with Joseph.

Reminds me of Acts 4 where Peter, James, and John uneducated men amazed the learned leaders with their wisdom. And they concluded that these men had ~~been~~ with Jesus.

Say what you want to. They were dumb fishermen. They hadn't been to the Hebrew university. But they knew one thing about those men. They had been with Jesus. They knew that. The Lord ~~was~~^{is} with ~~the~~ us. His power is with us. And the result is fantastic.

(2E) The second result is in Vs 4. It says that Joseph found favor in his sight. This reminds me of Jesus. Luke 2:52..."Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

Joseph is a type of Christ. He found favor in his sight.

(3E) Number three, in terms of results. ~~1/18/78~~ In the middle of Vs 5 it says, "The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the Lord's blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field

Now, that Egyptian was probably saying to himself, "boy, look at how things are going. This is fantastic." *and Joseph you are the Key.*

You know, a lot of people read this story and see only Joseph. People hear messages on this and see only Joseph. I hope you have your eyes on Jesus not Joseph. God blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. God was doing it. All the blessings this Egyptian was getting, God was causing it. Tremendous...

(4E) Number four, we read at the end of Vs 6 that Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. Literally it reads, he received the favor of the lord in a good manner. God was blessing him with the beauty of himself. Not simply in the external which is in the first phrase. Handsome and favored in a good manner. Or "favored well" or Well favored."

Now, let's get one thing straight. God created all of us just like we are. *and God makes no mistake* And we can't do much about that, can we?...You know that nose.... Those ears.....That stomach....Whatever it is.....

Now, we might do something about some of that. You know we can change some things. Praise God.. But there are some things we can't change. God made us just like that and he wants us like that.

Some people say, "Well, why did God give me such a big nose? I would like to change that."

You know God gives us many things that we might say is a little weared. But he gives it to us so that we might know something about the grace and loveliness of Christ. You see, a lot of us have the idea that it is external. We think external. All the time we think external

No, Joseph was favored well or in a goodly manner from the Lord. He was favored. God did it to him. God made him beautiful. Not only external but more than that. He was favored of the Lord..

God can make you beautiful no matter what your outward appearance is. He really can....Beautiful people....Why....Because God is working in the life.

There is a little song which says, "May his beauty rest upon me as I seek the lost to win. And may they forget the channel, seeing only him."

God can make you beautiful...

Listen, God made you as you are because he has a wonderful thing that he wants to do through you. He wants to show folks what Jesus is like.

Don't you know that God wants to make some of us hurt here and have a deasea there and limp here, and all of that. Why? ..Because he wants to favor us. He wants to put his beauty on us. He wants folks to see Jesus, not you and not me.

That is God's plan.....Wonderful results occure when we forget the obstacles and take advantage of God's opportunities.....

And you know, I think we would have far fewer problems if we would just get turned on to Jesus.....

How about it christian? What are the obstacelses or the sins in your life which keep the beauty of Christ from coming through?

Unlimited oppourtunities are ours if we would confess our sin and seek God's forgiveness. Wf we would let Jesus cleanse us from the gosspe, the envy, the strif, the walls that separate us...."If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive our sin and cleans us from all unrighteousness.

And if you have never accepted Christ, the Bible says that as many as receive him to them he gave the right to become his child. Would you accept Christ, today"?

Shall we close with prayer

God will put his beauty in your life, if you would turn that life over to Him