



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“Outpouring: Prosper!”

Ps James Lowe – September 28, 2014

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- What's your most valuable possession? How do you care for it?
- What is some financial opportunity you wish you had invested in?
- Have you ever planted a garden? What was your favorite item?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at bethelbrentwood.org/media.

Genesis 1:28 ESV *And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

God's first word to humanity was to be fruitful, or in other words, to prosper. His command still stands.

Isaiah 55:9-13 ESV *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. “For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”*

Our normal thoughts and ways don't naturally align with God's. But God wants us to align our thoughts and ways with his. His thoughts and ways are expressed in his words. And his words clearly tell us he desires us to know joy, peace, and prosperity.

One of the important principles of prosperity involves the agricultural metaphor of sowing and reaping. When farmers enjoy a harvest, they must be sure to gather the seed and sow it in order to enjoy a future harvest. The farmer must not eat all the grain. The farmer must not eat the fruit *and* the seed. He must sow the seed. We also must be diligent to sow seed. The more we sow, the more we can potentially reap. The seed we sow involves many things: finances, time, material possessions, energy, and more. We must follow God's process which he designed to perpetuate and build prosperity.

We must listen to God's word of promise and instruction, *and* we must act on it. We must live according to his principles which bring his prosperity and blessing. Too many people are like the children of Israel in the time of Moses. They were cared for by God, since he provided food and drink and protection. But they did not prosper because of their unbelief. They never entered God's promised land. They never entered into the prosperity that God wanted them to enjoy.

Deuteronomy 8:1-10 ESV *"The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers. And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you. So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you."*

God sends the hard times to test our hearts so that we might know what is in our hearts. Then we can repent and align ourselves with God's thoughts and ways. The hard times are not meant to last. We are to learn that God is the one who sustains us and brings us into our prosperity and blessing.

We must remember what God has done for us in the past. Remember how he has been faithful and consistent. Remember how he has been merciful and blessed us even when we deserved judgment. Remember how in everything and in every way he has treated us as a great, mighty, loving father would treat his children.

Joshua 1:8-9 ESV *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."*

God commanded Joshua just as he had commanded Moses and Israel. His charge to Joshua is his charge to us today. God's word must fill our thoughts, shape our values, and guide our lives. We must obey God's words to prosper. For this reason we must fill our minds with it, so that obedience to it will come more readily.

As a church we must not be left behind or left out of what God wants to do for us and through us for the benefit of others. Now is the time to live as he commands, so that we might enjoy what he promises.

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- What are some practical things you can do to respond to God's word to bless & prosper you?
- What fruit (talent, resources, or opportunities) has God given to you? What are you doing to multiply it?
- When you ponder your life, what are you the most thankful for? How do you express that gratitude?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- That God would forgive us for any failure on our part to follow his process for prospering.
- That God would show us how to build a life of consistent generous sowing.
- That God would prosper us and bless us in order that we might bless many others.