FOUNDATIONS: CERTAINTY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES
LESSON 1

Intro. Tonight we’re beginning a three week series called Certainty in Uncertain Times.

1. Even though the times are uncertain, as believers we can have a certainty about our lives

2. Jesus told us not to worry
   a. In Matthew 24, Jesus told us the last days would be tumultuous

Matthew 24:6-8 (NLT)
6 And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won’t follow immediately.
7 Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world.
8 But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.

Matthew 6:25-26 (NKJV)
25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?
26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Philippians 4:6 (NKJV) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

- All these verses present us with a real challenge in uncertain times like these
- Don’t panic, don’t worry, don’t be anxious
- If we’re going to have a sense of certainty we must have an understanding of what is promised us in God’s word
- God promises to take care of His own

3. Over the next 3 weeks we’re going to look at the promise of God’s prosperity
a. When some think of prosperity all they can think about is money
b. Biblical prosperity is about money but also a whole lot more
c. The truth of God’s word is our protection from anxiety

I. A ________________________ OF PROSPERITY

A. WE HAVE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN _____________________ OF PROSPERITY AND THE WORLD’S

1. The world’s definition of prosperity has to do with _______________
   a. It has to do with the “bottom line”; balance sheets, assets, and acquisitions


   b. Basically, the world defines prosperity in terms of dollars and cents
   c. The limit of the world’s concept of prosperity is often the balance in someone’s checkbook, their stock portfolio, the homes they own, the cars they drive, etc.

   • Biblical prosperity is a whole lot more

Luke 12:15 (NKJV) 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."

   2. God’s prosperity concerns _________________
       a. That’s not to say Biblical prosperity is just about spiritual things, it deals with money but a whole lot more

3 John 1:2 (NKJV) Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

   • 3 John verse 2 is foundational to our study of prosperity
B. BIBLICAL PROSPERITY IS ______________________

1. To understand what God means about prosperity we’re going to have to ________________
   a. In 3 John 2, John doesn’t say, “I pray that you may prosper materially- financially” alone
   b. He doesn’t say, “I pray that you prosper spiritually or in your soul” alone
   c. He doesn’t say, “I pray that your physical health prospers” alone

again, 3 John 1:2 (NKJV) Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things
and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

2. Biblical prosperity is all inclusive, “that you may prosper in ______________________
   a. It covers our finances, our health, our spiritual life; all things

1Thessalonians 5:23-24 (NKJV)
23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
24 He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

   b. This portion of scripture deals with God’s faithfulness in every area of our life; body, soul, and spirit

• God’s promise is to help us prosper in every area of our lives

C. WE ARE NOT MEANT TO LIVE OUR LIVES UNDER THE DOMINATION OF ______________________

1. The Christian life is a ______________________
   a. Our lives are meant to be lived above and beyond natural living
   b. God’s Word is full of promises to help us prosper beyond our natural abilities
Beyond our own abilities to earn a living, beyond having bodies controlled by sickness and disease, and beyond our natural weakness toward temptation and sin.

c. Through Christ's sacrifice we are provided with supernatural assistance to prosper in every area of life

2. The Bible is full of examples of God intervening and altering the laws of nature so that His people could ________________

**Genesis 26:12-13 (NKJV)**
12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him.
13 The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous;

a. Isaac obeyed God's command to stay in the Land of Promise even though in the natural it seemed a mistake
   1. there was a famine
   2. Isaac planted his crops and God "nudged" the laws of nature in His favor

- God's prosperity involves supernatural assistance in our finances

3. The Bible is full of examples of God supernaturally ________________
   ________________

**Mark 1:40-42 (NKJV)**
40 Then a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."
41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."
42 As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

- God's prosperity involves supernatural assistance in our physical health

4. God's prosperity includes ________________
**Mark 5:15 (NKJV)** Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

a. Our emotional problems may not have been as extreme as the demoniac of the Gadarenes but nevertheless God has helped restore emotional stability in our lives

b. That is God *prospering our souls (emotions)*

5. God’s Word promises supernatural assistance over __________________________

**Romans 6:13-14 (NKJV)**

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

a. All of us have experienced God’s help in delivering us from the power of sin and our own weakness to temptation

b. That is God helping us to *prosper in our spirit*

**D. GOD’S PROSPERITY HAS TO DO WITH __________________________**

1. Everything includes, __________________________

**Definition:** The word *prosper* in the New Testament is the Greek word- “yoo-od-o'-o” it means “to grant a prosperous journey; be successful.”

a. Our life with God is a journey

b. God has given us promises that it be a prosperous one

**Deuteronomy 28:8 (NKJV)** "The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you."
Joseph was a prosperous man. His story is found in Genesis Chapters 37-50.

Genesis 39:2 (NKJV) **The LORD was with Joseph**, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

- When he was a slave, he was a “successful slave”, and was made the head of his master’s house

Genesis 39:21 (NKJV) **But the LORD was with Joseph** and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

- In prison, he prospered, and ran the whole prison
- Finally, when the time was right, he ruled all Egypt
- Prosperity is a spiritual matter that transcends all other natural limitations

John Wesley, “It is impossible to keep my converts from becoming prosperous.”

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

- When we put God first, He will cause us to prosper

II. WHAT DO TO WHEN WE FEEL _________________________

A. THE REALITY OF TIMES OF _________________________

1. Whenever the subject of prosperity is taught, we run the risk of making some people feel _________________________

2. No matter what we may believe about prosperity, some of us may be experiencing a _________________________
   a. Some may be going through a time of sickness or emotional turmoil
   b. We have to clarify something about the reality of times we experience lack
   c. Sometimes that’s just a part of the Christian life
Matthew 17:24-27 (NKJV)

24 When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the temple tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?"
25 He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?"
26 Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free.
27 "Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you."

ex. Peter and taxes; the reason for the miracle of the coin in the fishes mouth was, he had a need.

Acts 3:6 (NKJV) Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

ex. This is of the most famous lines in the book of Acts. Peter & John are going to pray and a crippled beggar puts his hand out.

- This crippled man was healed. They probably weren’t broke but they didn’t have any money on them; “Silver & gold have I none…”

ex. Paul wrote about prosperity and lack.

Philippians 4:11-13 (NKJV)

11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:
12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.
13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

- This is one of the most powerful verses of victory in the New Testament, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
- What “all things…” was Paul talking about? Things like suffering need!

B. IF WE FIND OURSELVES FEELING LESS THAN PROSPEROUS, THERE ARE TWO THINGS TO ___________________
1. Don't be __________________
   a. Times of lack and need are a normal part of life
   b. Even the “super-stars” of faith had them at times

2. Don't accept them as _______________
   a. We shouldn’t feel that it’s our “lot in life” to be in constant financial turmoil or to suffer sickness the rest of our natural life
   b. God does want to prosper us; He makes promises to provide, to bless, to heal
   c. We can’t settle into a pattern of thinking that we'll always be suffering lack

Philippians 4:19 (NKJV) And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
   
   - Prosperity covers every area of our lives and we must contend for all that is promised us through Christ
   - Our understanding and contending for this promise will insulate us from being overwhelmed with worry in uncertain times

3 John 1:2 (NKJV) Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

PRAYER AND CONFESSION: Jesus, thank You for Your promise to prosper me in every area of my life. I won’t panic, I won’t be afraid, but I will look to You. You are my source and my hope. You are my certainty in uncertain times, in Your name, Jesus, Amen.

FILL IN THE BLANKS FROM LESSON #1

I. A _**(BIBLICAL DEFINITION)**_ OF PROSPERITY

A. WE HAVE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN _**(GOD’S DEFINITION)**_ OF PROSPERITY AND THE WORLD’S
1. The world’s definition of prosperity has to do with *(money)*
2. God’s prosperity concerns *(more than money)*

**B. BIBLICAL PROSPERITY IS *(ALL INCLUSIVE)***

1. To understand what God means about prosperity we’re going to have to *(enlarge our focus)*
2. Biblical prosperity is all inclusive, “*that you may prosper in *(all things)*”

**C. WE ARE NOT MEANT TO LIVE OUR LIVES UNDER THE DOMINATION OF *(NATURAL LAW)***

1. The Christian life is a *(“supernatural” life)*
2. The Bible is full of examples of God intervening and altering the laws of nature so that His people could *(prosper financially)*
3. The Bible is full of examples of God supernaturally *(healing diseased bodies)*
4. God’s prosperity includes *(restoring emotional health)*
5. God’s Word promises supernatural assistance over *(temptation and sin)*

**D. GOD’S PROSPERITY HAS TO DO WITH *(EVERYTHING)***

1. Everything includes, *(money, health, emotional stability, and our spiritual life)*

**II. WHAT DO TO WHEN WE FEEL *(LESS THAN PROSPEROUS)***

**A. THE REALITY OF TIMES OF *(TEMPORARY NEED)***

1. Whenever the subject of prosperity is taught, we run the risk of making some people feel *(guilty, confused, or condemned)*
2. No matter what we may believe about prosperity, some of us may be experiencing a *(time of lack)*

B. IF WE FIND OURSELVES FEELING LESS THAN PROSPEROUS, THERE ARE TWO THINGS TO *(REMEMBER)*

1. Don't be *(condemned)*

2. Don't accept them as *(the norm)*