

Keeping the Heart in Prosperity

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Date: 03 February 2019

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- [0 : 00] Well, how many of you were here when we had a Sunday school class on John Flavel's book, *Keeping the Heart*? Anybody remember that? I'm seeing a few bashful hands.
- How many of you? That was 1996. How many of you were alive then? Okay. Most of you. How many of you remember the biblical principles that Flavel set before us?
- Well, all that just to say we're going to revisit this Puritan classic written 350 years ago, *Keeping the Heart*.
- A couple things have led me to this decision. My own trial has taken me back to this book. He's got a section in here on helps to keep the heart in times of affliction.
- And I have found great help from that. And then our recent studies of Romans 7 reminds us that we have an indwelling enemy who's constantly there.
- [1 : 06] Well, if that enemy is in our hearts, then how much more do I need to keep a suspicious watch on my heart? And so I thought that, too, is a reason for us just to revisit this study.
- My plan is not to study the whole book. I have two weeks this week and next week. And then I'm gone for a couple weeks, Lord willing. So just two weeks. Just two sections.
- One this week and then the next. Two special seasons in the Christian's life that require special diligence in keeping the heart. And the whole book is written off of the text Proverbs 4.23.
- Above all else, keep your heart. For out of it are the wellsprings of life. So we need to do this all the time. But there are special seasons in our life that require special guarding of the heart.
- And those two seasons that we'll consider are seasons of prosperity and seasons of affliction. Now, no season of prosperity is without its afflictions in this life.
- [2 : 17] And no season of affliction is altogether without its prosperity and blessings. We usually have a foot in each one of these situations.
- But there are times when overall things are going well. And we're cruising down the road and the wind's behind us, the sun on our face. And it's a good time for us.
- And then there are other times when the wheels fall off. And we grind and we go slow. And each of these times carry their own danger. So I want to dig in then.
- And I'll be quoting heavily from Flavel and his book. Season number one then. The time of prosperity. Flavel describes it as when providence smiles upon us and pampers us upon its knee.
- Some of you grandparents know what that's like. That's what prosperity season is. Providence. God's ruling of events in our lives.
- [3 : 20] Smiling on us. And pampering us on its knee. Now, the problem with this whole lesson on time of prosperity is that nobody here is in a state of prosperity.
- At least that's the way we feel, isn't it? We would say, well, prosperity, not me. I'm not on the Forbes list of the richest men in America.

But compared to the rest of the world, probably every one of us would have to find ourselves in what an honest observation would conclude.

That, yes, most of us are in prosperity. But Flavel's not just referring to monetary prosperity. It's a much broader application.

Yes, many of the texts and references will be to those who are rich and prosperous in monetary things. But that only stands as a symbol of those who have things going well for them.

[4 : 22] And so it's a life of relative ease. A life of good health. Of good relationships. Of freedoms. Privileges.

Opportunities. Favor. Reputation. So he's speaking of seasons when things are generally going well for us. So please don't take yourself too quickly out of this category and say, well, it's not talking about me.

I have to say I spent most of my life in this category. Not perfect prosperity with no affliction, but basically things going well. So what are some of the dangers in prospering circumstances?

I wonder if we could just quickly throw out a half a dozen that maybe you've observed in Scripture, that you've sensed in your own heart, in life. What are some of the dangers of having things go well with you?

Yes, Mickey? Not being sympathetic with those who don't. Not being sympathetic with those who don't have things going well.

[5 : 28] We can look down our noses even, can't we, at others with things going tougher. Jim? When you're doing well and you don't. Thank you. Hmm. We lose a sense of desperate need, don't we?

And Roger? Good. Just settling in.

Diane? Becoming complacent. Yes, Becky? Good.

We take a bow at our prosperity. What else? Dangers. Yes, Carol? Okay. Not desperate for that word of life that we need.

Yes, David? Assume this way things should be and always will be. Just assuming it should be this way. I deserve to have things like this happening. And that it will continue.

[6 : 49] Somewhat presumptuous upon God's goodness. I deserve this. Well, what else? Anything? Chuck? Thank you for asking the things of this earth.

Okay? Okay? So there's the temptation that if the things of this earth are available to you, they're not all available to everybody, but if they're available to you, that we lay hold of them rather than hold them with an open hand.

Good. Okay. We can tend to forget the leveling effect of death that's coming to every one of us.

That all that we have is going to be left behind. Naked we came into the world. Naked we depart. Nothing could be more obvious. And yet, there is this danger in prosperity to think, to forget that.

And perhaps to think that we'll have these things for many, many years to take advantage of. Yes, Scott? It can make us weak pilgrims.

[7 : 59] What do you mean by that? Well, our eyes kind of go through. It keeps us. The things that make us good pilgrims. Things of this earth. Not heavenly mindedness.

Good. Earthly mindedness focuses our attention down here rather than on our destination. Well, this is good. You all have been watching and guarding your hearts.

You're aware of the danger. And that's really most of what Flavel is going to do for us in these seven helps. He says, seven helps to keep the heart from the dangerous snares of prosperity.

And you've really hit them on the head. But now, number one. Help number one. Consider how few in this class are saved from hell.

Now, if that seems like some strong medicine right up front, it is. And Flavel and God knows that we need that kind of medicine. And so the very first help is consider how few in this class of prosperity are saved from hell.

[9 : 03] Why did the rich young ruler walk away from Jesus? It wasn't that he didn't want eternal life. That's why he ran to him and fell down before him and asked him, What I must do to have this eternal life.

Why did he walk away sad then? He loved his stuff. He wanted to hang on to that stuff that he had.

And so he loved it more than the kingdom of God. He loved it more than Christ. And so we see that his prosperity was a real snare to him when Jesus said, Sell all you have.

Come, follow me. Jesus put his finger on the man's idol. And the man could not and would not let go of it. As he walked away sad, what did Jesus turn and say to his disciples?

How difficult is it? It's impossible. Okay? You're going ahead. That's right. But how did he describe the impossibility?

[10 : 11] A camel to go through the eye of a needle. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Okay? That ought to cause us to pause. Because as Scott said, that is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. I know, perhaps you've heard, I've heard of a supposed gate in Jerusalem that's a little narrow low gate.

And any camel that gets through there must be unpacked and the burden's taken off. And he must get down low and squeeze through the gate. The eye of the needle, it was called the eye of the needle.

How do we know that's not what Jesus is talking about? Even if there was, I don't know if there is such a place, there was such a place. But how do we know that's not what Jesus is talking about, Mark?

He goes on to say, with man, this is impossible. Impossible. It's not impossible. Camels were crawling through that hole, evidently, with their burdens off.

[11 : 17] But what Jesus is talking about is the impossibility of a rich man entering the kingdom of heaven. He makes that clear. With man, this is impossible.

And so, that too ought to sober us as we begin to think about a prosperous state.

Brothers, think what you were when you were called. 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Not many of you were wise by human standards. Not many were influential.

Not many were of noble birth. These are the movers, the shakers, the landowners, the wealthy, the ones who could push their weight around. We may think of our politicians and rulers.

Chrysostom said of the rulers in his day, I should wonder if any of the rulers are saved. Again, there is this sense of prosperity carries great dangers.

[12 : 15] Paul says, not many of you were in this privileged and prosperous class. God chooses the foolish, the weak, the lowly, so that no one will boast except in the Lord.

James says, God's chosen the poor of this world, those to be rich in faith. And heirs of the kingdom promised to those that love him. Flavel says, how many have been coached to hell in the chariots of earthly pleasure, while others have been whipped to heaven by the rod of affliction?

Or again, as it's been said by many, I don't know who initially said it, affliction has killed her thousands, but prosperity has killed her tens of thousands. So there's no guilt in being prosperous, but there is danger.

And that's where we're starting out, help number one. If you were going through a dangerous stretch of the Oregon Trail back in the day, and you knew that only 10% of people made it through alive, what would that do for you?

Well, you would be on guard, wouldn't you, as you traveled through that section? You might travel as a pack and not be alone and make sure you had your ammo and guns.

[13 : 36] And it would change the way you traveled through that. You'd be on the lookout for danger. And that's what Flavel is wanting us to see at the outset. Not many in a prosperous state make it to heaven.

Well, that ought to stir us to know the dangers and then to guard our hearts against them. You guys listed those dangers very precisely.

Help number two. Consider that even among believers, many have been the worst for prosperity. That among believers, they have not always prospered in their soul from the prosperity that they're in.

Hezekiah was sick. He's told, you're not going to get better. Put your house in order. You're going to die. He greatly humbled himself before the Lord, sought his mercy, and he received another how many years?

15 years. Extension on his life. That's Isaiah 38, 15. I will walk humbly all my years because of my anguish of soul.

[14 : 49] What anguish of soul when he knew he was going to die cut down in his strength. And so under that anguish of soul, he cried out to the Lord and the Lord heard him.

And so now he says, I will walk humbly all my years. That's chapter 38. Who knows what happens in Isaiah 39? He's better now.

He's moved from a state of affliction into a state of prosperity. He's prospering in his health now. And the envoys from Babylon come down to congratulate him on his restored health.

What does he show them? Everything. All of his riches. All the riches of the kingdom. He goes from room to room. And these guys' eyes are getting bigger and bigger as these Babylonians are coming and seeing this.

He's showing off. It's pride. Pride in what he had. And so the word of judgment comes to him that these very Babylonians will be back.

[15 : 53] And they are going to take all that they have seen. They're coming back with an army. And they'll take not only your wealth, but they'll also take your children to serve in their kingdom. So Hezekiah did not do so well in prosperity.

He's humbled in affliction, but grew proud in prosperity. Bernard said, to see a man humble under prosperity is one of the greatest rarities in the world.

Maybe you've collected rare coins. Maybe you look to find rare birds. Here's a rare man. Prosperous and humble.

The Israelites were warned about proud forgetfulness of the Lord under prosperity. In Deuteronomy chapter 8, verses 7 through 14.

The Lord your God is bringing you into a good land. A land with streams and pools of water. With springs flowing in the valleys and hills. A land with wheat and barley.

[17 : 02] Vines and fig trees. Pomegranates. Pomegranates. Olive oil and honey. A land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing. A land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.

When you've eaten and are satisfied. Praise the Lord your God for the good land He's given you. Be careful. Guard your hearts. We would say. That you do not forget the Lord your God.

Failing to observe His commands. His laws and His decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied. When you build fine houses and settle down.

When your herds and flocks grow large. Your silver and gold increase. And all you have is multiplied. Then your heart will become proud. And you will forget the Lord your God. Who brought you out of Egypt.

Out of the land of slavery. Now, several of you mentioned this danger of prosperity. And as they're making their way into the promised land.

[18 : 01] God sends this warning of this very danger. The way it can puff them up. And cause them to forget. To praise God. God said of King Uzziah.

That as long as he sought the Lord. God gave him success. When we seek the Lord. We're humbled. We're saying. I don't have it Lord. What I need is in you.

And so. He sought the Lord. And as long as he sought the Lord. God gave him success. But after Uzziah became powerful. His pride led to his downfall. 2 Chronicles 26.

Remember how he went in to perform the work. That only a priest should do. And again. Thinking. Well. I have privileges. I can do this. I'm important.

Never mind. That's not the role of the king. And only to be done by priests. And his pride gets the best of him. And he's struck. With leprosy. Prosperity.

[19 : 01] Fed his pride. Led to his downfall. You see the same in Solomon. Right. And all the wealth. And fame. Fame. Gave him privileges. That he took advantage of. 700 wives.

300 concubines. And his wives. Led him astray. Turned his heart. After other gods. So. Flavel says. Will it not keep your heart humble in prosperity.

To think how dearly many godly men have paid for their riches. It's a reason for us to pray. Lord. Don't give me any more prosperity. Than what I can handle by your grace.

Than what I can remain humble. Godly. And godly. With. So. Not only. Do few make it to heaven.

In a state of prosperity. Even. Godly people have suffered greatly. From. Prosperity. Help number three. Keep down your pride by considering that God values no man a jot more for these things.

[20 : 01] Flavel's just saying God's not impressed by the things that impress men. Men are impressed. We know that. Who do they put on the front of their magazines and the news?

And it's just the big shots. The wealthy. The. The movers and shakers. But. God is not impressed in heaven.

One jot. Flavel says. With what they've got. And their prosperous condition. Remember when Samuel was choosing. A king. To anoint. Oh.

This son of Jesse. Would make a nice king. Look at him. And God says. Man looks on the outward appearance. God looks on the heart. Man is impressed with. With what is seen.

Outwardly. A prosperous state. Not so God. He's looking at the heart. Not outward excellencies. But inward graces.

[20 : 58] In first Peter three. He tells wives. It's not their outward beauty. That the Lord esteems. But it's the adorning of the inner self. That beauty. Of a gentle and quiet spirit. Which is of great worth.

In God's sight. So should this not. Keep our hearts. Humble under prosperity. To know that it. God's not impressed by it.

Even though. The world around us might be. A dying man. Who also held a degree. And as a doctor of theology. Said. As he was dying.

I shall not appear before God. As a doctor. But as a man. No big thing to God. That I'm a doctor. That I've achieved this. Prosperous. Level of learning.

Help number four. Consider how bitterly. Many have bewailed their folly. When they came to die. And wished that they had never known prosperity. Here. Flavel draws upon.

[21 : 55] History. Quotes. Pope Pius V. Cried out when he was dying. When I was in a low condition. I had some hopes of salvation.

When I was advanced to cardinal. I greatly doubted it. But since I came to the Popeton. I have no hope at all. The more he was elevated in prosperity.

The more he was sucked in. To his sinful desires. Lord Acton. You've heard his quote. Often. Power tends to corrupt.

And absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad. Bad men. Even when they exercise influence. And not authority. Still more when you super add.

The tendency of the certainty of corruption. By giving them authority. So. Power and authority. Has often corrupted men. So. To bring them down.

[23 : 01] To where they. Wished that they had never. Known prosperity. Don't have time to read another example. That he quotes. But again. He's trying to awaken us.

To our danger. That. Though the world says. This is really sweet. To be in a state of prosperity. When we. We find ourselves there. We ought to. Just pause.

And reflect. Just how dangerous. This condition is. Help number five. Consider what a clogging nature. Earthly things are. To a soul. Heartily engaged. In the way to heaven.

Some of you have spoken of this already. The clogging nature. Of earthly things. To a soul. That's heartily engaged. In his pilgrimage. To heaven. And. Prosperity can shut out.

Much of heaven. From us now. Even if it doesn't. Shut us out of heaven. At last. If you consider yourself. A stranger in this world. Flavel says. Traveling for heaven. And seeking a better country.

[23 : 59] You have then. As much reason. To be taken. And to be delighted. With these things. As a weary horse. Has with heavy saddlebags. And then he says.

There was a serious truth. In that atheistic scoff. Of Roman Emperor Julian. When he confiscated. The estates of Christians. So there's Emperor Julian.

I believe it was Julian. The apostate. And he knew. The scriptures. So he was able to. Really throw it. In the faces. Of the Christian. And so as he.

Confiscated their. Houses and lands. He told them. It was to make them. Fitter for the kingdom. Of heaven. And Flavel saying. There's some truth. To his atheistic scoff.

Because. Earthly. Prosperity. Can clog. Us. In that pursuit. Of heaven. Didn't Jesus say. That one of the things. That chokes out.

[25 : 00] The influence. Of the world. Of the word. In our life. Is the cares. Of life. The deceitfulness. Of riches. The troubles.

That we have to go. To get it. And then to keep it. And to maintain it. And to protect it. Those things. Can. Can crowd in. The influence. Of God's word.

That's. That's drawing. As Christ's word. And heaven word. Can be choked out. Altogether. In the lost person. But it's the same danger. In the. Hearts. Of believers.

So. Consider the clogging nature. Of earthly things. To a soul. Engaged in the way. To heaven. Then number six. Consider that. To whom much is given.

Much will be required. Those are the words. Of our savior. In Luke 12. 48. And those. Words. Should chase out. Pride. Should chase out.

[25 : 53] Self indulgence. By sobering us. With the fact. That we have an account. To give one day. So if God's given you much. In the way of worldly prosperity. Of health. Of things.

Of money. Of freedom. And opportunity. And blessings. Then you have a lot more. To answer for. In the day of judgment. He's placed it in your hands. As a steward. And he wants you to use it for him.

And he's coming back. Jesus is coming back. To see what you've done with it. How have you used it for me? What he's coming back. To bring his servants.

Before him. In judgment. So. We might. Forget about that. But he doesn't. He remembers everything.

He's given us. Every blessing. That adds to our prosperous state. In whatever way it be. And he's coming. To see what we've done with it. Again. This is stiff medicine.

[26 : 49] But the Lord knows. We need that kind of thing. To wake up to. The danger. And how much more. Living in the West. Where we live. And in a day of. Prosperity in America.

Compared to the world. How much do we need this. This wake up call. To the danger that we have. To guard our hearts. And then lastly. Help number seven. Compare your response.

To prosperity. With those who have been humbled by it. Rather than puffed up with pride. And here. Flavel's just reminding us. That. That the Bible has both.

Good and bad examples for us. Those that. That responded to prosperity poorly. And suffered for it. And those who responded to it. Correctly. In a godly way.

And just that. The fact that there are such examples. In. In scripture. Should encourage us. There. There is grace. For. The one in. In a state of prosperity. There's grace to be had.

[27 : 46] To. To avoid these dangers. And to walk with God. Right through this. This neck of the woods. Called prosperity. So. We need to learn how to interpret our prosperity.

That's one of the ways we. We walk humbly. Through prosperity. Is. How do we interpret it? Your achievements. Your successes. Your prosperity in life. The blessings that you have.

Well let's take a negative example first. Nebuchadnezzar is walking. On the. Roof of the royal palace of Babylon.

And he's looking over. The city. How does he interpret. His. His prosperity. Remember. Sorry. Yeah.

The hanging gardens. We know of all the. The glorious things that he was singing. But how does he interpret. All of that blessing. What does he say about it? Look what I have done.

[28 : 42] Is this not. The great Babylon. That my hands. Have built. What's he doing? He's being lifted up with pride. And so. He goes out.

The Lord humbles him. He must. Graze. In the fields. With the animals. Kingdom taken away from him. For seven times. Until he learns to say what. What does he need to acknowledge.

And how should he interpret. The blessings. He had. God rules. God is sovereign. And he gives the kingdoms.

To him. Whomever he wishes. That's the right interpretation. Of prosperity. So here I am. Looking out on. My successes in life. And my prosperity. I must learn to interpret them.

As gifts from God. Not just. Well this is what. I put in the hard work. This is what I get. For it. We acknowledge him. And his choice.

[29 : 40] That's given to us. What we have. Now. The good examples. Of this sanctifying grace. That can actually make us. More humble. By the prosperity.

That God gives us. There's Jacob. And he's coming back to Canaan. And he's been away for 20 years. Running from his brother Esau. Now he's going back. To meet his brother Esau.

He had nothing. When he came. Now he's got great abundance. And Jacob says to God. In Genesis 32 10. I am not worthy.

Of the least of your mercies. And faithfulness. That you have shown. To your servant. I only had my staff. When I crossed the Jordan. The first time. But now I have become.

Two groups. Remember how he sent. Divided them up. Into two groups. He had so much. And thought. Well if Esau. Slaughter's the first group. I'll have a second group. To maybe spare. Not worthy.

[30 : 37] That's how he interprets prosperity. Something God has done. And something that is undeserved. So. Never look at your blessings.

Without seeing them as mercies. Mercies. Filled with a sense of unworthiness. Then you see. With everything that God gives. If I say.

Oh God. How good you are. I didn't deserve this. You see. Rather than it being a clog to you. It lifts you to God. In praise. For his mercy. So. There's King David.

And. And he's just heard. From the prophet Nathan. That God. Is going to build a house for him. David wanted to build a house for the Lord. The Lord says. No. It will be your son. I'm going to build a house for you.

By which he meant. A dynasty. Of kings. That would follow. David. Your house. And your kingdom. Will endure forever before me. Your throne.

[31 : 33] Will be established forever. Second. Samuel 7. Verse 16. Talk about prosperity. Your throne. Is going to go on forever.

And your family. Will always have. Someone to sit upon. That throne. And David said. It's about time. I get some recognition. And rewards.

For all I've suffered. And endured. For all my righteous. This is Second Samuel 7. And all the effort. I've put into your kingdom. No. That's not the way it reads. He went in before.

The Lord. And sat before him. You almost get the picture. Of him being stunned. And what he says. I think. Pushes us to come to that conclusion.

He went in and sat. Before the Lord. And said. Who am I? Who am I? Sovereign Lord. And what is my family.

[32 : 32] That you've brought me. This far. You see. He's humbled. Under the prosperity. Isn't he? Who am I to be treated this way. To be raised from.

A shepherd boy. Watching some sheep for my father. To becoming the shepherd. The king. Of God's people. Israel. And so he interprets God's. The prosperity.

As God's doing. That you should treat me this way. That you brought me this far. And. He goes on to say. And as if this were not enough. In your sight. Oh sovereign Lord.

You've also spoken now. About the future. Of the house. Of your servant. Not just. Bringing me to the throne. But. But saying that. I'll always have a descendant. On the throne.

That will last forever. Is this your usual way. Of dealing with man. Oh sovereign Lord. No. You've. You've treated me. Way over the top. With this blessing.

[33 : 25] In my cup. Not only making me king. But promising an everlasting. Dynasty. Lord. This is grace. Upon grace. Upon grace. This isn't your usual way.

Of dealing. With people. So he sees his own. Unworthiness. To be treated with such lavish goodness. And he goes on. What more can David say to you.

For you know your servant. Oh sovereign Lord. For the sake of your word. And according to your will. You have done this great thing. And made it known to your servant. Again. Acknowledging.

This is something you have done. How great you are. Oh sovereign Lord. There's no one like you. And there's no God. But you. As we've heard.

With our own. Ears. So David's receive this. This blessing. Promised blessing. And he's not singing.

[34 : 23] How great I art. Remember how Lou would tell us that. He's not singing. How great I art. How great thou art. Maybe you didn't know where that verse. That song came from.

That's. That's verse 22. How great you are. He's humbled. Under prosperity. He sees his smallness. He sees God's greatness. Great in mercy. Great in kindness.

Great in grace. And so he deserves all the praise. And that's what David gives him. So. It's. A dangerous thing to be. In prosperity. But it's not a hopeless thing.

God has had. Men. And women. To go through this. Part of life. With prosperity. And to. Survive.

Not just to survive. But even to thrive. To be made the humbler. Because of the gifts. That God has given. So. We should cry for that grace. And know that. There is such grace. To be found.

[35 : 19] In God. Such that. Prosperity doesn't make us forget him. But it leads us to him. With praise and wonder. For his kindness. Moses.

Again. When he was warning the Israelites. Before they go into the promised land. And said. You're going to be tempted. To grow satisfied. And proud. And to forget the Lord. Under your prosperity.

And you may even say to yourself. My power. And the strength of my hands. Have produced this wealth for me. But remember the Lord your God. For it is he who gives you the ability.

To produce wealth. And so confirms his covenant. Which he swore to your fathers. As it is today. So. At every bit of prosperity.

We can see. The Lord is the one. Who has enabled us to achieve this. There's a wonderful verse in Isaiah 26. 12. Israel.

[36 : 16] Crying out to the Lord. Lord. You establish peace for us. You establish shalom for us. Blessedness. The way things should be. You establish peace for us.

All that we have accomplished. You have done for us. And that's the way we interpret then. The prosperity. In a way that leads us to God. Rather than forgetfulness of him.

It was that way with Hannah. Barren. God gives her a son. And her song of praise. She says. My soul rejoices in the Lord.

Not merely rejoices in the mercy. Mercy of the Lord. But in the Lord of the mercy. And that's the. That's the key isn't it. To trace our. Our mercies. Our blessings.

Back to God. And to rejoice in his goodness. In giving. That's Psalm 103. David not forgetting. All the benefits of the Lord. Not letting them swell him with pride.

[37 : 14] But coming back to the giver. And worshiping him. For. And praising him. Who satisfies his desires. With good things. So that his youth is renewed. Like the eagles.

So mercies of God. Have been melting mercies. To the saints. In prosperity. Let them melt us. To rejoice in him. Let his gifts.

Lead us to the giver. With humble praise. And thanks. And greater love. And obedience. To him. Someone mentioned. One of the dangers.

Of. Of prosperity. Is to think. That we deserve this. We get an entitlement. Mentality. And we think. That it should always be this way. And. And. And I think.

One of the things. That. Is helpful. Against that. Danger of prosperity. Is just to remember. What we deserve. Remember. What you deserve. What do I deserve?

[38 : 12] I deserve. To be in hell. Forever. I should already. Be there. Today. And I should be there. Forever. Forever. And that.

That surely. Is the teaching. Of the Bible. If we understand. Anything. About. Our sin. And the holiness. Of God. And that should be. The baseline. By which we.

We. We. We view anything. In life. I deserve. To be in. I should be. Not only weeping. In my sorrow. And my afflictions. I should be. Weeping. And wailing. And gnashing.

My teeth. Without hope. In hell. Now what does that do? Okay. So I. I. Come. And I see. Prosperity. In my life. And I see. What a vast difference.

I say. Who am I Lord? That instead of. Giving me what. I deserve. That you would. Give me this. So. Let's start. With the baseline. Before us. Let's start. With the base note.

[39 : 07] And then. Be able to see. What blessings. There are. And just. How precious. They are. To one. Who is unworthy. Of them. John. Gershner.

Was R. C. Sproul's. Seminary. Professor. And. He wrote a book. To counter. A lot of the nonsense. About the problem. Of pain. And. I'm not saying.

We should be callous. To. To pain. In the world. But. But often. People would like. To ungod. God. And. And just say. He can't be God. He can't be the God. Of the Bible. Because. He's allowed.

Pain. In the world. How can God. Be a loving God. If there's such pain. In the world. And. Gershner. Just turns it up. On his head. Says. The. The problem. Isn't. How can there be pain.

In the world. But. If. We. Have been made. By God. And. God. Was so. Good. To us. And.

[40 : 00] We. Turned. And. Thumbed. Our. Noses. In God's. Face. And. Rebelled. Against him. And. Went. Our. Own. Way. And. Deserved. The. Curse. That is. Upon. Us. In our.

World. How. Here's. The. Problem. It's. The. Problem. Of. Pleasure. How. Can. There. Be. Any. Pleasure. In. This. World. For. Us. Who. Were. Under. The. Curse. And.

You see. It's. The. Starting. Point. Where. Do you. Start. From. Do you. Start. With. Well. I. Deserve. To. Be. In. Hell. Well. Then. Any. Pleasure. In. This. World. Should. Be. Cause. For. Praise. Thanksgiving.

Marvel. Amazing. Grace. So. Let's. Keep. Things. Straight. And. Appreciate. God's. Goodness. And. Mercy. And. The. Prosperity. He. Gives. May. The. Lord. Help. Us. To. Guard. Our.

Hearts. Any. Questions. Comments. Before. We. Conclude. Church. Is. Powerless. When. We're. Like. The. World. We. Think. We. Can. Influence. The. World. By. Becoming.

[40 : 53] Like. Them. And. We. By. Virtue. Of. What. We. Become. Like. Them. We. No. Longer. Have. Anything. To. Offer. Them. The. Distinctiveness. Of. The. Gospel. Let's. Pray.

We. Stand. Before. You. Our. Good. And. Gracious. Father. As. Those. Who. Have. Been. Treated. In. Mercy. And. Grace. It.

Has. Been. Grace. Upon. Grace. Who. Are. We. That. Out. Of. All. The. Condemned. Race. Of. Humanity. That. You. Should. Have. Chosen. Us. Before.

The. Creation. Of. The. World. To. Be. Saved. Through. The. Sanctifying. Work. Of. The. Spirit. And. Through. Belief. In. The. Truth. Through. The. Work. Of. Our. Savior. You. Should. Have. Given. Him. Up. For. Us.

All. You. Should. Have. Come. To. Us. When. We. Were. Dead. In. Our. Sins. And. Given. Given. Us. New. Birth. And. Day. By. Day. We. Should. Meet. New. Mercies.

[41 : 48] Do. Humble. Us. Under. Your. Mercies. Do. Make. Us. To. Melt. With. Thanksgiving. And. Praise. Satan. Would. Like. To. Take. Your. Very. Blessings. And. To. Twist. Them. To.

Ruin. Us. But. Rather. Lord. Protect. Us. Teach. Us. How. To. Guard. Our. Hearts. And. And. May. Your. Goodness. Is. To. Us. And. The. Prosperity. That. We. Find. Ourselves.

In. Lead. Us. To. You. With. Humble. Praise. Do. It. Today. As. We. See. Wonderful. Things. In. Your. Word. We. Ask. In. Jesus. Name. Amen.