

Sermon Notes

Lessons Learned: Part 13

August 28th – 29th, 2021

- **This Week: From Misery to Prosperity**
- It's been kind of a journey that my wife and I describe as going from the misery gospel to prosperity.
- When I got saved it was quite a shock. I'd describe it as a violent paradigm shift in my thinking.
 - o In my atheistic upbringing I was taught: to take personal responsibility, and if someone needs help you should help them.
- When I got saved I carried these life lessons with me.
 - o I understood and desperately wanted to live by Scriptures like **1 Cor 9:19-23, Matt 10:37-39**.
- That all sounds good and noble, but I also needed a course correction.
 - o There are different ways to miss the mark. **Joshua 1:7-8**
 - Don't turn to the left or to the right. We can miss too far one way or the other.
 - One way to miss the mark in following Jesus is to be lazy...to not really try.
 - That wasn't my problem, but I've identified 3 flaws in my thinking. One was theological, one practical, and one was a character flaw.
- The Theological Flaw: I assumed that following Jesus meant sacrificing this life for the next.
 - o Truth: Most of the promises of God in the Bible are about making our lives better...this life!!!
 - Let's look at **Proverbs 3:1-18**.
 - What an amazing list of promises! Long life, honor, riches, peace, prosperity!!!
 - Now, don't miss to the left or the right. There were responsibilities in there too!
 - o Submit to God's ways, honor the Lord with your wealth, embrace discipline.
 - Another one that I didn't understand was **Matthew 11:28-30**. More on that one next week!!
- The Strategic Flaw: You can't get much done without any resources.
 - o It's hard to change the world for Jesus when you're putting groceries on the credit card.
 - Financial resources are needed to get things done AND for most people to take you seriously.
 - o Our missions giving at Good Hope is more now than our entire budget was 10 years ago! That's ok.
 - o Now that I'm old I see it another way too: When we starve our pastors they dry up, seeing that demotivates the next generation of pastors, and that sabotages the whole movement.
- The Character Flaw: Pride in the form of pure self-reliance.
 - o "I don't need anyone's help. In fact, I don't need anything at all. I'll be fine."
 - Of course, this is obviously inconsistent with the Biblical idea of the Body of Christ.
 - I had an underlying fear: rejection. I didn't want to be dependent on tithes and offerings.
 - o Truth: we need to walk by faith and let God be our source!
 - Similar dynamic to fear of tithing 10%. Not really trusting God but looking to ourselves.
 - o The Crazy Thing: my fear of being dependent on tithes and offerings caused financial hardship!!!
 - Again, similar dynamic to fear of tithing 10%. Remember **Prov 3:9-10**.
 - Now I do both (tithe and depend on God) and I'm better off than when I was bi-vocational.
- What is the Lesson Learned? Living well for Christ is more fun AND gets more done.
 - o I was oversteering and making unnecessary and even unhelpful sacrifices.
 - o Do you want to "become all things to all people so that by all possible means you might save some" then start with being a living example of abundant life in Christ!
- Don't turn to the left or to the right.
 - o Prosperity is a topic that Christians seem to go too far one way or the other on. Let's find wisdom.
 - o It took me a while to sort this out in my heart. But one verse really helped. **1 Timothy 6:6**
 - This means that we can have both. We can fully follow Jesus and be content.
 - Prosperity is a state of the heart first and foremost, rather than about material possessions.
 - o Having Jesus in your heart is the true treasure. **Ephesians 3:16-19**
- Get personal prayer by emailing prayer@goodhope.ag.