



The Prosperity Trap

MAIN THING

Faithfulness Gives Birth To Prosperity, But The Daughter Soon Devours The Mother

SCRIPTURE

Judges 3:7-9 Judges 4:1, Judges 6:1, Judges 10:6, Judges 10:10-16, Colossians 1:15-20, Luke 14:31-33, Ephesians 2:1-5

ICEBREAKER

Cats or Dogs?

OPENING THOUGHT

The history of Israel was basically one of a nation caught in a feedback loop/cycle. They would have hard times, they would repent and return to God, God would bless them and things would be great, they'd forget and rebel, then the hard times would come back. For them, as well as it is for us, it is simply so hard to stay faithful to God during the good times. We tend to only cry out for God when things get terrible. A wise observer once noted, "Hard times create strong men, strong men create good times, good times create weak men, weak men create hard times." Looking at this cycle, it's amazing that God would ever bless anyone when He realizes that His blessings will create complacency, lukewarmness, and eventually rebellion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the one thing that you heard this past Sunday that stuck out to you? Why did it resonate with you like it did?
2. The sermon identified seven stages of the Prosperity Trap: 1) Suffering and Trials, 2) Repentance and Turning to God, 3) God Delivers from Suffering and Trial, 4) Peace and Prosperity, 5) Complacency and Forgetting, 6) Rejection of God and Rebellion, 7) Suffering and Trials. Which stage do you see our nation in right now?
3. The sermon identified three things we can do to keep from slipping into Stage Five: 1) Never Forget God's Absolute and Total Glory, 2) Never Make Peace With A World In Rebellion Against God, 3) Never Forget What God Has Saved You From and Where You Would Be Without Him. Which of these do you do well? Which of these do you need work on?

LIFE APPLICATION

Sugar Ray Leonard said, "Once you start wearing silk pajamas, it's tough to get up early." He was referring to his boxing training regimen. God's blessings on us- prosperity, peace, etc- can work like those silk pajamas, keeping us from our sense of urgency for sharing our faith, getting comfortable with sins, moving God's blessings above Him in our lives, etc. If you are so willing, what's one area that you have grown complacent in that you used to be very vigilant? (For example, if you once were very good at getting up early to start the day in prayer but you have not kept that fervor. Or if you once were passionate about missions and you've let that slide, etc)

CHALLENGE

Understand that the Prosperity Trap is nothing new, and we as a people are not immune to it. The challenge for God's church and God's people is to never allow peace and prosperity to lull us into compromise and lukewarmness. God will allow hard times to bring us to repentance and return. If His blessings on us cause us to rebel against Him, He will remove those blessings from us. It's happened many times in history. Learn from the mistakes of Israel- make your own mistakes, don't make theirs.