

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** The Principles of Prosperity

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Ecclesiastes 11

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #1901

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) God wants us to prosper.
  - i) Psalm 1:3
  - ii) Joshua 1:8
  - iii) 3 John 2
  - iv) Psalm 35:27
    - (1) God takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servants.
  - v) 2 Chronicles 20:20
  - vi) Nehemiah 2:20
- b) God has a plan for us, and it is prosperity.
  - i) This does not mean we are going to be millionaires or live a life of luxury.
    - (1) Many times, we look at someone who has gone through several marriages, whose kids are rebellious, and who has a big bank account, and we say that he is prosperous.
      - (a) But he is not prosperous.
      - (2) A lot of people don't understand what real riches are.
- c) When we speak of prosperity, we are speaking about financial and fiscal responsibility and blessing.
  - i) This is doing more than just drawing our breath and drawing our salary.
    - (1) Some people are fighting to live while they are living to fight, and they are miserable in their lives.
- d) What is prosperity, and how can we have prosperity God's way?
  - i) The book of Ecclesiastes was written by the wisest man who lived, outside of the Lord Jesus.
    - (1) His name was Solomon.
  - ii) In today's message, we will look at eight principles of prosperity that come out of the eleventh chapter of Ecclesiastes.

2) THE PRINCIPLE OF INVESTMENT (ECCLESIASTES 11:1)

- a) He is talking about making investments.
  - i) That is what "casting your bread upon the water" is.
  - ii) Solomon knew much about investing.
    - (1) And how he invested was by casting his bread upon the waters.
- b) 1 Kings 10:22-23
  - i) Solomon was a trader and an investor.
    - (1) He invested money in ships and set them to sail out across the sea.
      - (a) He would "cast his bread upon the water."
      - (2) The ships would go out and stay out for as long as three years.
      - (3) When they came back, they came back with incredible riches.
- c) The Lord Jesus taught us to invest.
  - i) Jesus gave us the parable of the talents.
    - (1) Matthew 25:14-30
    - (2) A man gave his servants talents.
      - (a) He gave five talents to one man.

- (b) He gave two talents to one man.
- (c) He gave one talent to the other man.
- (3) The man with five talents invested them and got five more talents.
- (4) The man with two talents invested those two and got two more.
- (5) The man who had one talent refused the principle of investment.
  - (a) He simply hid his talent in the ground.
  - (b) Matthew 25:24-25
    - (i) God will not be satisfied with us if we give back to Him simply what He gives us.
      - 1. That is not good stewardship.
  - (c) Matthew 25:26-30
    - (i) He should have invested the money and made it grow.
- d) We are stewards, and the responsibility of a steward when his master entrusts to him goods is to make those goods grow.
  - i) He is to invest them.
    - (1) We are not simply to hold our own.
- e) Many of us think that if we hold our position that we are being Biblical.
  - i) We are not.
    - (1) We are stewards.
      - (a) We are to invest and see our investment grow.
- f) Principles for investing:
  - i) Examine your motive for investment.
    - (1) If your motive is greed or pride, then may God have mercy upon you.
    - (2) 1 Timothy 6:6-9
      - (a) If we have Jesus, then we are rich.
        - (i) To whom little is not enough, nothing is enough.
      - (b) This doesn't say "they who are rich;" it says "those whose determination is to be rich."
    - (3) 1 Timothy 6:17
    - (4) Investing does not mean to feed your greed.
    - (5) We are to manage what God has given to us.
      - (a) As good stewards, we need to make it grow.
        - (i) Therefore, we need to take what God has put into our hands and prayerfully ask the following:
          - 1. How much of this shall I use?
          - 2. How much of this shall I give?
          - 3. How much of this shall I invest for the glory of God?
  - ii) Get wise counsel.
    - (1) Proverbs 13:20
    - (2) Proverbs 15:22
    - (3) Proverbs 14:15
    - (4) In investments, we need to be wise, not shrewd.
      - (a) If we are around a shrewd person, then we need to get away from him and walk with wise men.

- (5) Any counsel that we get can only guide us.
    - (a) We are the ones who must make the decision.
    - (b) We shouldn't let anyone else make our decision for us.
      - (i) Let them guide us, but we make the decision and we pray.
  - (6) James 1:5
  - iii) In every investment beware.
    - (1) Beware of any get rich quick schemes.
      - (a) Proverbs 28:22
- 3) THE PRINCIPLE OF DIVERSIFICATION (ECCLESIASTES 11:2)
- a) Another translation of this verse says, "Take shares in several adventures; you never know what will go wrong in this world."
  - b) Diversify as you make your investments.
    - i) Don't put all your eggs in one basket.
    - ii) Put some here and some there.
  - c) Be open to new ideas and new opportunities.
  - d) Let God speak to you.
  - e) Don't invest everything in one thing.
- 4) THE PRINCIPLE OF PREPARATION (ECCLESIASTES 11:3)
- a) Get ready, for sooner or later there is going to come a storm.
  - b) We need to get ready for the foreseen and the unforeseen.
  - c) Some say that they will just trust God.
    - i) We should trust God, Scripture teaches that we are to make preparation.
    - ii) If we don't make preparation, then that is not trust but presumption.
      - (1) The Bible says, "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins."
        - (a) Psalm 19:13
    - iii) The devil tried to tempt the Lord Jesus to do exactly this when he told Jesus to jump off the pinnacle of the temple and that God would take care of Him.
      - (1) Matthew 4:5-6
      - (2) Jesus knew better than that.
        - (a) Jesus said that we shall not tempt the Lord our God.
          - (i) Matthew 4:7
  - d) We can learn a lesson from the ant:
    - i) Proverbs 6:6-11
    - ii) No one has to tell the ant to work.
    - iii) One of these days, we are going to have trouble.
      - (1) If we don't make preparation, then the circumstances of life will come upon us.
    - iv) The ant and Solomon (Ecclesiastes 11:3) tell us to prepare for a rainy day.
      - (1) Are you saving?
        - (a) You should be.
      - (2) Proverbs 21:20

- (a) Save some of everything you make.
        - (i) The ant is known for wisdom and work.
    - (3) Some say, “Well, I’m trusting God.”
      - (a) Faith and prudence are not in competition with each other.
  - v) Some people will have to look to someone else to take care of them because they didn’t learn the lesson of the ant.
    - (1) Few people understand this principle of preparation.
- 5) THE PRINCIPLE OF VENTURE (ECCLESIASTES 11:4)
  - a) The Bible encourages us to take a risk.
    - i) This is not like gambling.
  - b) Every farmer who puts his seed in the ground takes a risk.
    - i) The farmer is not guaranteed a good crop every time he sows.
      - (1) He has to take a risk.
        - (a) There may come a flood or a drought.
        - (b) There may come some pestilence and wipe him out.
    - ii) If the farmer becomes a part of the society of wind watchers and cloud examiners, then he is not going to plant.
      - (1) Ecclesiastes 11:4
    - iii) If we don’t sow, then we are not going to reap.
      - (1) We have to take a risk.
  - c) What is the difference between taking a risk and gambling?
    - i) All business involves risk.
      - (1) We have to venture.
    - ii) A legitimate business is win-win.
      - (1) I make a widget.
        - (a) You need a widget.
      - (2) I sell you the widget for a dollar.
        - (a) I get the dollar.
        - (b) You get the widget.
          - (i) You win, and I win.
            - 1. That is win-win.
    - iii) All gambling is built on win-lose.
      - (1) There can be no winners without losing.
      - (2) Gambling is a fraud.
        - (a) It is pleasure and profit at someone else’s loss and sorrow.
        - (b) It is completely antithetical to the spirit of the Bible.
    - iv) The Bible encourages risk, but the Bible is totally against gambling.
      - (1) And the spirit of love is against gambling.
        - (a) Who wants to profit at someone else’s loss?
    - v) Legitimate business is “I help you, you help me, and we both gain.”
      - (1) But there is a risk.
  - d) The man who hid his talent in the ground hid it because he was afraid.
    - i) Matthew 25:25

- ii) We have to get out on the limb because that is where the fruit is.
  - e) To preach the Gospel, we have to take a risk.
    - i) Acts 15:26
      - (1) They risked their lives to get out the Gospel.
  - f) The principle of venture is not talking about foolish chance.
    - i) It is not an inordinate gain to get rich quick.
      - (1) If we do this, then we are going to get into trouble.
    - ii) Proverbs 14:18
    - iii) Proverbs 21:5
    - iv) Proverbs 27:12
    - v) Proverbs 28:22
  - g) Look around and see that there are opportunities.
    - i) Don't be afraid to step out and to venture.
- 6) THE PRINCIPLE OF TRUST (ECCLESIASTES 11:5)
- a) There are some things we don't know.
    - i) Who knows the mind of the Spirit?
    - ii) We don't know the ways of God any more than we can understand how a baby is formed in his mother's womb.
  - b) There are some imponderables in life that are under the sovereign control of Almighty God.
    - i) Therefore, we have to trust Him.
    - ii) There comes a time when we have to acknowledge that it is in God's hand and that we will trust Him.
  - c) Isaiah 58:11
    - i) This is a good recipe for prosperity.
      - (1) It is God's guidance.
  - d) Psalm 32:8
  - e) Psalm 37:23
  - f) Proverbs 3:5-6
  - g) People worry about their finances.
    - i) There comes a time when we have to say the following:
      - (1) "Lord, it's in Your hands."
      - (2) "I don't know what the future holds, but I know You and that You love me."
    - ii) Psalm 127:2
  - h) We don't know, but God knows.
    - i) He will take care of us as we obey Him.
- 7) THE PRINCIPLE OF WORK (ECCLESIASTES 11:6)
- a) The principle of diversification is married now to the principle of work.
  - b) There are people today who want someone to just give them this or give them that.
  - c) Proverbs 14:23

- d) Proverbs 20:4
  - e) Proverbs 28:19
  - f) 2 Thessalonians 3:10
  - g) There is something terrible happening in America today.
    - i) We are encouraging people not to work and to stay on welfare.
      - (1) This is a crime against the person who is paying for welfare and against the person who is receiving it.
      - (2) We are teaching and depriving young people of the joy of honest employment.
      - (3) Even those who receive welfare ought to have something to do.
    - ii) We have failed to understand God's Word.
      - (1) This is not talking about those who cannot work but those who will not work.
      - (2) The Bible says that they should not eat.
        - (a) 2 Thessalonians 3:10
      - (3) They need the dignity of work.
      - (4) They need the joy of work.
      - (5) They need the reward of work.
      - (6) They need to learn how to work.
  - h) We need to get the principle of work back in our hearts and minds.
  - i) We have substituted work for credit.
    - i) For many, their salary is precommitted before they get it.
    - ii) They're called credit cards, but we ought to call them debt cards.
    - iii) Proverbs 22:7
    - iv) Using debt to buy some things that will accrue in value, like a house, is certainly permissible.
      - (1) But if we think that we can have instant gratification by using credit cards to buy consumer goods thinking that it will bring happiness, then that is like trying to put out a fire with gasoline.
- 8) THE PRINCIPLE OF PERSPECTIVE (ECCLESIASTES 11:7-8)
- a) Enjoy life, but remember that bad days are coming.
    - i) Remember that sooner or later, we will get sick; we will die.
      - (1) Just keep that in perspective.
  - b) God wants us to enjoy life.
    - i) If we have good things, then we should enjoy them.
  - c) Jesus was not a recluse.
    - i) Jesus was a man of joy.
  - d) Ecclesiastes 2:24
    - i) God showers us with blessings.
      - (1) If God prospers you and gives you a home, then enjoy it.
      - (2) When you sit down to a Sunday dinner, thank God for it and eat it.
      - (3) If you are surrounded by your family, then rejoice.
  - e) God is good.



- i) Don't forget that.
- ii) Psalm 84:11
- iii) 1 Timothy 6:17
- f) This is not all there is.
  - i) Ecclesiastes 11:8
  - ii) If in this world only we have hope, then we have all been most miserable.

9) THE PRINCIPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY (ECCLESIASTES 11:9-10)

- a) We are stewards.
- b) We should grow up, put away pessimism, put away sin, and live wisely because we are stewards.
- c) We are going to stand before God.
  - i) He is going to ask us what we did with what He entrusted to us.
- d) We need to pray and ask God the following:
  - i) How much of this do I need to use?
  - ii) How much of this do I need to save?
  - iii) How much of this do I need to invest?
  - iv) How much of this do I need to give?
    - (1) None of it is ours; it is all the Lord's.
- e) What we call our own is not ours.
  - i) We are stewards and managers.
  - ii) Owners have rights; stewards have responsibilities.
    - (1) God is the one who has the rights.

10) CONCLUSION

- a) The wisest one who ever walked this Earth said: "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"
  - i) "What should a man give in exchange for his soul?"
    - (1) Matthew 16:26
- b) Your soul is worth more than all the stocks, bonds, rubies, and diamonds put together.
- c) You die without Jesus; you die in poverty.
- d) If you have Jesus, then you are already rich.
- e) Acts 16:31
  - i) The word "believe" in this verse means "trust."
    - (1) Trust Him right now.
- f) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- g) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) John 3:16