

“Whatever You Do Will Prosper”
(Psalm 1:3)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation. We’ve been looking at what the Lord promises to do for us, if we will walk with Him in holiness. Tonight, let’s consider another blessing He promises, one we would all like to have: success in everything we do.

1. I don’t think I need to spend much time on the fact that we all want to succeed in the things we do.
 - a. You who are college students, do you hope to get an A in your classes or an F? Do you want to graduate or drop out?
 - b. When you compete in sports, do you want to win or lose?
 - c. When you interview for employment, do you hope to get that job or not?
 - d. Do you invest money in stocks or mutual funds hoping they’ll go up or down in value?
 - e. And when you seek to minister the Gospel to your friends and family members, do you hope the Lord will work through your witness or not?
2. We all want to succeed.
 - a. We want things to work out well, not fall through.
 - b. We want the things we do to prosper, especially the things we do for the Lord.

B. Preview.

1. The Lord knows this is important, which is why He promises to bless you with success if you meet certain conditions.
2. Let’s consider two things:
 - a. First, what kind of success the Lord promises here and what He doesn’t.
 - b. Second, the conditions you must meet before the Lord will give you success.

II. Sermon.

A. First, what kind of success does the Lord promise to give you?

1. This promise isn’t all-inclusive – He won’t make you successful in absolutely everything you do.
 - a. What I mean by this, first, is that He won’t help you to do well in things that are wrong, that are sinful.
 - (i) Sadly, even as believers, there are things we want that aren’t good – because our flesh (sinful nature, corruption) constantly struggles against our new nature (the Spirit of God) within us (Gal. 5:17).
 - (ii) The things believers may try to get are just too many to list:
 - (a) The Lord will not bless your desire to find a spouse, if that spouse is an unbeliever. He forbids such a marriage (2 Cor. 6:14).
 - (b) He won’t help you to support yourself or your family if you try to do it through illegal means.

- (c) He won't help you to stop abortion by burning down abortion clinics?
 - (d) He won't help you to do anything sinful.
- (iii) This doesn't mean if you fight against Him long enough that He won't allow you to do these things to teach you a valuable lesson. He may – but He will never help you to do these things.
- b. There are other things – that aren't necessarily sinful – that He won't help you to do well in, if He knows they won't be good for you.
- (i) For instance, He may not help you make a lot of money.
 - (a) Not too many people can deal with a lot of money without becoming corrupted by it.
 - (b) Prosperity – with the opportunities it brings – was a large part of the reason David committed adultery with Bathsheba – it gave him the freedom and opportunity to do so. One commentator writes, “David could bear persecution without murmuring, but when he came to prosperity he could not turn away his eyes from vanity” (Sir Richard Baker).
 - (c) It was a large part of the reason Solomon married so many foreign wives, who eventually turned him away from the Lord to worship foreign gods.
 - (d) This is one of the reasons Paul tells us not to desire it. He writes, “For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Tim. 6:10).
 - (e) Again, one commentator writes, “Seldom do you see a man in a hurry to get rich, at the same time thrive in religion. Christ's message to John holds true; the poor are most forward in receiving and following the Gospel. If you love your zeal, beware of setting your heart on riches, lest your gain will test your godliness; beware of seeking to be someone great, since courts and great places stifle zeal . . . Peter, while he warmed his hands, cooled his heart” (Sir Richard Baker).
 - (f) Thomas Brooks writes, “Where one thousand are destroyed by the world's frowns, ten thousand are destroyed by the world's smiles. The world, siren-like, sings to us and sinks us.”
 - (g) And John Owen writes, “As men's diversions increase from the world, so do their entanglements from Satan. When they have more to do in the world than they can well manage, they shall have more to do from Satan than they can well withstand.”
 - (h) We have all too many “godly men” and so-called “prophets” who tell us that the Lord will give you wealth and worldly success, if you just have enough faith.
 - (i) But the fact is the Lord generally withholds these things from His children because they more often destroy them than make them godlier.
 - (ii) Each of us has particular gifts, talents and callings from the Lord.

- (a) Each of us is able to deal with some things, but not others.
- (b) The Lord generally won't give you things that will hurt you.
- (c) But sometimes if you want them badly enough, He may allow some of them to you to teach you a lesson.

2. This helps us to see what kind of success He does promise to give.
 - a. He may not help you in the things He forbids, but He will in the things He commands – in the things that will help you grow in godliness and those that will bring Him glory.
 - (i) He will help you to grow in your love for Him and in your devotion to His service.
 - (ii) He will help you to love your neighbor and minister to his needs.
 - (iii) He will help you to reach out to the lost – to bring the Gospel to them.
 - (iv) He will help you develop your gifts and talents to their best advantage, if you will use them for His glory.
 - (v) He will help you learn more of His truth, if it's your intention to use that knowledge better to serve Him.
 - (vi) He may even allow you to make a lot of money, if your purpose is to use it to serve Him.
 - (a) I once heard an account of a man who vowed that he would live on so much money and no more, and give whatever he had more than that to the Lord.
 - (b) The Lord blessed His business to the point where millions of dollars passed through his hands into the Gospel ministry.
 - (vii) He will entrust you with authority, if you will use it to serve His ends.
 - (viii) He may even assist you in other things, such as athletic accomplishments, if your purpose is to draw attention to Him and His Gospel.
 - (a) He allowed Eric Liddell to run fast enough to go to the Olympics and break the Olympic and World records for the 400 meter, since Liddell refused to compromise his faith and used his accomplishments to draw attention to the Lord.
 - (b) His last words were, "It's complete surrender," in reference to how we should serve the Lord.
 - b. The point is He will help you, if what you want to do is for His glory and honor.

- B. This brings us to the second point: the conditions you must meet before the Lord will grant success.
 1. They're listed in verses 1-2, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night."

- a. You must be one who turns from sin, and who delights in God's revealed will in His Law.
 - (i) He will not prosper the things you do if you have the world in your heart.
 - (ii) He will only help you if your heart is set on honoring Him.
 - (iii) As David writes in our mediation, "Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4).

- b. Don't forget what it means to be a Christian.
 - (i) As a Christian, you are called to die to yourself, to deny yourself so that you can serve and honor the Lord who saved you (Matt. 16:24).
 - (ii) As long as you seek your own fame, your own glory, your own gain, in the things you do, you can expect that the Lord will keep those things out of your reach, or make your attempts to gain them blow up in your face, until you seek what He's called you to seek: His glory.

- 2. If you are willing to seek His glory in everything, then you can expect the Lord to give you success, "He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers" (v. 3).
 - a. The Lord will allow you to bear good fruit and lots of it.
 - (i) I saw an apple tree one time that had so much fruit on it you almost couldn't see the leaves.
 - (ii) That is what He will do for you – whatever you put your hand to will prosper.

 - b. Is this what you want?
 - (i) Then make sure you want to do the right things – according to His Word.
 - (ii) Make sure you want to do them for the right reasons – for the Lord's glory and not your own.
 - (iii) And then trust that the Lord will grant you success as He promises in His Word.
 - (iv) You won't find the glory you want when you seek it for yourself from the world.
 - (v) But you will find that honor from the Lord when you put His honor and glory first.
 - (vi) To have this kind of desire in your heart, you need the Lord's help.
 - (vii) Let's prepare to meet Him now at His Table to renew our hearts in grace and devotion to His glory. Amen.