

Prosperity vs. Adversity

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2,3 Larry: R&R. Children's Min volunteers.
- B. Slide4 Temecula Help Center - Grad Opening offices for the Tem/Murr homeless outreach teams, resources for homeless individuals & families. This Thurs 6pm.
- C. Slide5 Freedom Gala - Destiny Rescue. [*note use this web site]

II. Slide6 Intro: PROSPERITY vs. ADVERSITY

- A. Which is more dangerous to us...*prosperity* or *adversity* in our lives?
Why does Paul quote this chapter of Hosea? Could you ever *forget God*?
Is God *sovereign* over *evil*? Has our world lost all *common sense*?

III. PROSPERITY vs. ADVERSITY

- A. Slide7a KISS THE CALVES (1-3)
- B. (1) Ephraim *was* a great tribe. It had a former place of prominence among the tribes of Israel. *But now* Ephraim would become *like* the *clouds, dew, chaff, & smoke...i.e. as nothing*. [Like comes up *17 times* in these last 2 chapters]
- C. (2) Kiss the calves - *Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him*. 1 Kgs.19:18
- D. Ephraim/Israel went from knowing they were to *Kiss the Son lest He be angry* (Ps.2:12) to bowing down & *kissing the golden calves*. [Early onset *relativism*]
 - 1. Israel had *lost its power, its strength, its way...& its common sense*.
- E. Slide7b That's a big problem *today*. We don't have *common sense* in our day & age.
 - 1. CS Lewis, in his allegory *Pilgrims Regress*, is about a man in search of meaning and answers. In it he talks about a man named **John**. He's going from Philosophy to philosophy and ends up at a mountain called **The Spirit of the Age**. Lewis described John as not free, in living for *the Spirit of the Age*, but his hands are bound in chains living for *the Spirit of the Age*. *All of a sudden* he's given his breakfast and his hands are **unbound** to enjoy

it. As he takes a sip of milk he describe how **delicious** and **nourishing** it is. The waiter that brings it to him representing *the Spirit of the Age* says, *ha, you call it **delicious and nourishing** but isn't it simply the secretion of a cow? The cows secrete **urine** & the cow secretes **milk**, you call it delicious & nourishing.* John doesn't know where to go from there, and then he made a big mistake, he commented on the tastiness of the **eggs**. (Pause) *Now you should hear what the waiter compare the eggs to (menstrual cycle of a fowl).* And he had no way to respond. But as he is put back in chains *reason comes riding on a horse* to lift him up & rescue him. And **reason** looks to him who runs *the Spirit of the Age* said, *Sir, you lie, because you don't know the difference between what nature has meant for **nourishment** and what nature has meant for **garbage**.* [Milk feeds calves and dung does not]

- a) *That distinction is lost today.* We have no understanding of what is **true, good and beautiful**; and what is **evil, heinous and destructive**.
- b) We consider all choices equally valid, because we no longer know the difference between *what nature has meant for **nourishment** and what nature has meant for **garbage**.* [Pilgrim's Regress, C.S.Lewis, ch.8 Parrot Disease]

F. **Slide8a YOU FORGOT ME** (4-11)

G. God would be to the people *like*: a **hungry lion**, a **stalking leopard** & a **ticked-off bear**.

1. The prophets regularly used **wild animals** to symbolize divine judgment.

H. He saved them from **Egypt**, He *could have very easily* saved them from **Assyria**.

1. **But** they trusted *their **wealth**, their **kings** & their **foreign policy**.*

I. *Being **prosperity privileged** made them **pride filled**.*

1. **Agur** in Prov.30 prayed that *he wouldn't be **so full** so as to deny the Lord; nor **so poor** that he would be tempted to steal.*

2. Deut.32:15 *But **Jeshurun** (Israel, the upright one) **grew fat** (prosperous) and **kicked** (like an animal kicks, here referring to kicking at God); **You grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese. Then he forsook God who made him, And scornfully esteemed** (scoffed at) **the Rock of his salvation**.*

a) The name Jeshurun (yeshurun) derived from the Hebrew word *yashar*, meaning **upright**. This word is used of **God** in Deut 32:4. **With deliberate irony, the writer uses *yashar*, which is normally used of **God**, as a pun on Israel, whose Hebrew pronunciation (*yisra'el*) sounds similar to *yashar*.**

J. **Slide7b** (5,6) 40 years of wilderness wandering summed up in this...I knew you in the **wilderness**, in the land of great drought. (*contrast with vs.6*) When they had **pasture**, they were **filled**; they were filled and their heart was exalted; Therefore they forgot Me.

1. **2 situations. 2 conditions. 2 responses.** (wilderness/Canaan)

a) God led them **from Egypt into the wilderness** (where He knew them/cared for them)

b) God led them **from the wilderness into the Promise Land** (where He fed them, *lit. pastured them. Describes sheep or cattle grazing peacefully*)

(1)**Yet** instead of *acknowledging Me & thanking Me...became proud & forgot Me.*

2. (vs.5) God You knew me **in my wilderness time** of life, my fallen state, my backslidden state, and still You choose me for Yourself.

a) When my *outward circumstances* completely tanked, and I found myself lost, Your sweet presence comforted me. Never once was Your light of love dimmed.

3. (vs.6) God You placed me **in a place of both good and plenty**, where I **lacked nothing**. *There was no shortage of Your love, grace, or protection.*

a) If I acknowledged You at the *worst of times*, **then** I should recognize You now *in my prosperity*.

4. **Prayer:** *Lord I'll follow You into the wilderness, bear my cross, even when the heat of my persecution burns hot. But I pray I wont forget you during the times of plenty. I've turned to you in the night watches...but help me to trust in the bright of day.*

a) *** Prosperity is often a more dangerous trial than adversity. Prosperity is a great teacher, adversity even greater.**

K. **Therefore they forgot me** – *unmindfulness of God.*

L. (10,11) God didn't want them to have a king, He wanted to be king over them. **But wasn't he sovereign to stop this?**

1. **If** He is not sovereign over all things, **then** He is not God at all.
 - a) By God ordaining all things, He does it in such a way that doesn't annihilate human decisions or the forces of nature. Yet at the same time the sovereign of God stands over every human event. R.C.Sproul [*whether by ordination or permission*]
 - b) Even if His **ordination** is by mere **permission**, for God to *let things happen*, He is choosing to allow them.
2. **In our limited parenting skills** we sometimes let our children touch the *hot* object, let them fall & bruise their knees, **or** let them suffer the consequences after we had warned them...*it was going to hurt*.
 - a) **God's parenting skills are not limited**. In fact they are **perfect** w/every individual, every creature, with nature, **&** with the unseen realm...*all together, at the same time, all the time*.
 - b) He uses **good & evil** to accomplish His bidding.
 - c) The **worse evil** man ever did (killing Jesus), was ordained by God Himself, *Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death*. Acts 4:28 then goes on to say, *whom God raised up...*

M. **Slide9 BABY ON BOARD** (12-16)

- N. (13) The *procrastinating nation* was compared to *a baby that wouldn't come out*.
1. NIV *Pains as of a woman in childbirth come to him, but he is a child without wisdom; when the time arrives, he does not come to the opening of the womb*.
 2. **Slide10** Here was a *baby on board* that wouldn't get **off board**.
- O. (14) Paul takes & expounds on this in 1 Cor.15:55 *O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?* (follows the LXX quote)
- P. (15) **Fruitful** – (Ephraim = doubly fruitful) *i.e. Twice fruitful* would be *fruitful* no more.
- Q. (16) What a **contrast** to Jesus statement in Jn.4:4 regarding **Samaria**, *He needed to go through Samaria*. (*i.e. To meet who? the woman at the well*)
1. **Result?** *And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." So when*

the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

R. I'm going to take the rest of the time on *Pauls commentary of 14b* in 1 Cor.15.

IV. Slide11 **THE DEATH OF DEATH** (*read* 1 Cor.15:50-58)

A. Slide12 **A GENERATION THAT WON'T DIE** (52)

B. There will be a generation that **does not die**.

1. **They will not** go into the **shadow** of the valley of death.

They will not taste the **darkness** of **death**. **But they shall be changed**.

2. *No dates are given, but it will be **at the exact moment** which is in the purpose of God.*¹ It could happen *before* this day is through.

C. Slide13 Remember *Dennis Tito*, the California tycoon, paid **\$20 million** to be *shot up* into space. Who now holds the title as *The 1st Space Tourist*. [went up w/the Russians in 2001]

1. **But** Christian, you don't have to pay to be **shot up**, *in fact for free you will be **Caught up***. Not propelled by any earthly effort **but** by the *powerful heavenly* magnetism of the Lord...*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet*.

2. **And**, you're not going to be called a **tourist** up there, **but a Local**.

D. Slide14 **CLOTHED WITH INCORRUPTION** (53)

E. Not only *will* but **must** (twice).

F. A redeemed **spirit**, without a **body**, will be awaiting that day of resurrection.

1. 2 Cor.5:4 *For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be **unclothed**, but **further clothed**, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.*

2. **Death** cannot touch the **soul** or the **spirit** of the Christian. It only touches the **body**...*but only for a bit*.

G. Slide15 **THE DEATH OF DEATH** (54,55)

H. Here is an assurance that comforts us...*Death is de-clawed*.

I. **Swallowed up** - to drink down. (down the hatch)

¹ Alan Redpath, pg.216.

J. (55) Here is where Paul dares to **laugh at death & the grave**.

1. He confronts an enemy which has held in its grip every human being throughout all history...*except 2*.

a) **Enoch** who went for a walk with God & **never came back**. **And Elijah** who was taken up to heaven as the real *1st space tourist* in his **chariot of fire**.

K. **Death** which swallowed up, will now be swallowed up.

L. **Deaths stinger is removed!**

M. **Sting** - represents **death** as *a venomous creature, a scorpion, or a hornet rendered harmless*.

1. **Death** for the believer is like a *de-clawed cat, de-fanged rattlesnake, or a scorpion w/o its stinger*.

2. Its like a **bee** which has already stung & now is left harmless to ever sting again.

N. **Note Death & Hades** - representing both the material & non-material world.

O. **Slide16 VICTORY** (56,57)

P. **Sin** is cancelled & the strength of the **Law to condemn us** is removed...because it has been **fulfilled in Jesus Christ**.

Q. **Death** is no longer our enemy then Christian, **but an instrument of freedom from the reign of sin in our body**.

1. There will always be **the human fear** of entering the valley of death...unless Jesus comes 1st.

2. **Death** for the believer becomes like **a friend** who leads you to **a drawn curtain**, which has been hiding the full Glory of the Savior from your eyes & then throws it open.

3. **Death** is like **the doors** at the back of our sanctuary during one of our weddings.

a) They are the only thing that stands between the **bride & her groom**.

b) Once they are **flung open** they both **behold each other** in all their **splendor**.

V. **Slide17 MEANWHILE...PERSEVERE (58)**

A. We end with **a call** that **challenges us** - Prepare for Victory...**How?** 4 things:

1. Be **steadfast** (firm), **Immovable** (Set your sail & stay on course), **Always abound** in the work of the Lord, **Knowing that your labor is not in vain.**
 - a) **Slide18 Did you know:** *A honey bee* visits 50-100 flowers per trip out of the hive. Flying at 15 mph. W/a wing stroke of 11,400 times per minute (thus making their distinctive buzz). Making approximately 10 trips per day. **And they do this each day** of their whole life, as a forager.
 - (1) Her life is only about 4-6 weeks. She literally works herself to death. **All this for...wait for it... 1/12th of a teaspoon of honey in their lifetime!**
 - (2) **Always abound in the work of the Lord** that He has set before **you**.
 2. **Know that your labor is not in vain** – (when it's *in the Lord*)
 - a) What do I receive for all my hard labor? well we are assured of the promise of **reward**. *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love.* Heb.6:10
 - b) **But be like the bee...**she **doesn't** do all of that hard work for **herself...***matter of fact Honey bee's are selfless.*
 - (1) It would only take approximately **1 ounce** of honey to fuel a bee's flight **around the world**. So they are not just making it for themselves.
 - (2) Much of the honey is **for the good of the hive** to survive doing the winter **when flowers aren't in bloom**. **And** for the **nurse bee's** to feed the **larva**. **And** for human's to steal to put on their toast.
- B. This Victory ahead is for **Christians**. Death is no friend to the **unbeliever**, it is an **enemy**.
1. Death becomes, not a **curtain** separating a bride & a groom, **but instead** it is like a **prison door**, that opens for the prisoner...only to be escorted to His execution.
 2. **It need not be so**. Look unto **Jesus** as the author & finisher of your faith.