

Created for Impact—Prosperity with Purpose
1/7/18

I. Created for Impact

1. God created us with a purpose! Genesis 1:28
2. Genesis 9:1; Luke 4; Matthew 28; Luke 10:19

Action Steps—

1. Prosperity with Purpose

Manuscript—Created for Impact

Good morning. The first Sunday of the New Year, I hope your New Years Eve was spectacular. Last week I spoke on living under an open heaven, which was really encouraging to me, and next week we are going to begin a study on the book of Joshua. But this week I want to talk about the fact that we have been created for impact and how we can do that. I believe the year 2018 is the year where we are called to make a huge impact on this world and the kingdom of God. Read with me **Genesis 1:27-28**. Here we read that we were designed in God's image and the very first mandate God gave was threefold. We were told by God that we are to be fruitful, which means prosperous in whatever we do, we are to multiply, which means have kids, and we are to subdue (Rule) over the earth. As God's creation, made in His image, we were charged with making an impact here on earth. We were called to make all things better. We were given wisdom, authority, and power by God to rule and manage all things on earth.

But here is the kicker. God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden, a perfect place. But the garden was not the whole world and Adam and Eve were not the first creations on earth. Scripture teaches us that Satan had been cast out of heaven and thrown down to earth, and this was before Adam and Eve. Why would God place Satan on earth? Did you ever consider that? I believe the answer in scripture is because God wanted humanity, with freewill to worship and serve God, and through His righteousness counter evil. We read in Genesis 1:28...that God gave man the authority and power to subdue the earth, which included defeating evil. If this is true, when God placed humanity, He did so to enjoy and manage His creation and represent Him on earth and counter evil. You were born to solve problems. You were designed by the Lord to be problem solvers. We are designed to affect the entire world with light and truth. But when Adam and Eve obeyed Satan they came under his control and they handed over the keys of authority of the earth. They no longer had the ability to subdue, that is rule. Read with me **Genesis 9:1** right after the flood. We read, after God flooded the earth and saved Noah, His commission to Noah was again to be fruitful and multiply but what was left out? There was no mention of subduing or ruling over the earth. Why? Because authority had not been taken back yet by Christ. Satan still had the authority. Look at **Luke 4:5-7**. Here we read that Satan offered all authority to Jesus if He just worshiped him. That was Satan's ultimate goal, to be like God. But where did Satan get that authority? Back in the garden when Adam and Eve sinned they gave up their rightful place of authority to make an impact over to evil. But the good news is that when Jesus arose from the grave He defeated Satan and took back all authority. In **Matthew 28:18-20** we read that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Jesus' defeated sin and took back what Adam and Eve gave up. But it gets even better. Once Jesus, took back authority, just as God gave authority to Adam and Eve, Jesus tells His followers to go out and make an impact. We read in **Luke 10:19** Jesus tells the disciples that He has given them all the authority and power to overcome the enemy. Again, when did the subduing get restored...after the cross and resurrection.

To often, when we face trouble we are looking for God to get us out of it and we cry out for the quick return of Jesus. To consider that going to heaven is the only solution it is degrading to the cross and the blood of Christ, which has empowered His

people to make an impact. We have been created for impact. God created Adam and Eve and sent them to make an impact. So too, Christ has sent us to make an impact.

This may sound crazy, but in one sense we were designed for problems and difficulties. Think about it...God has placed us to be lights, but where...in dark places. Think about Daniel who was placed in dark place of Babylon to change the environment. He was surrounded by the worst of people, but God used him to be a light...to make an impact. You were created to make an impact. Many of you right now are in some very dark places, some in your families, some at your work or school and you want nothing more for God to take you out of that dark place, when God wants nothing more for you to light up that dark place. You were designed by the Lord to be problem solvers. We are designed to affect the entire world with light and truth. That was lost through sin but restored through Christ. Listen to **Isaiah 60:1-3**. We are called to bring the light to darkness and hope to despair. We are people born to be problem solvers and shine for the light of Christ. But here is the thing...we have to arise by faith in believe in God's promise. Amen!

And we do that by becoming the best we can be, fruitful at all levels, the best in our families, in our jobs, and in all of our resources. In the next few weeks, as we study the book of Joshua we will be exploring through the book of Joshua how we have been created to make an impact and usher in the kingdom of God through our daily lives, our families, and relationships, and our jobs. But today I want to begin by looking at how God has designed us to make an impact through our financial resources. Did you know that scripture states that God wants us to financially prosper so that we can make an impact? It is prosperity with purpose. God wants us to be fruitful/prosper in our families, in our jobs, and in our finances. Often due to so many charlatans who have sold/pedaled a gospel based on the notion that all God wants is for you to have more money and wealth that has become God's primary role, like a Santa Claus God. Thus, Christians have become weary of the teaching that God wants to bless us financially. In addition, scripture warns us of the pursuit of riches to be our goal, for the love of money is the root of all evil. In fact, Jesus spoke more about money than any other subject...crazy huh. But this is not because wealth is bad but because the love of money is detrimental to our lives spiritually. That being said, it is equally detrimental to ignore our responsibilities to be good stewards of what God has given us or expect less than the best from God, because God's best is a witness to His character and that witness is what creates an impact. The warning regarding pursuing riches is a heart issue, for where our heart is, for there our treasure will be. God wants our heart to be focused on Him and His righteousness and then treasure will be used as a healthy tool.

That being said, I find it interesting that Christians love the theology of sacrifice and humility but resist the theology of blessings. We are happy when people give in secret but are not so sure when God rewards in public. God says, humble yourself and in due time He will exalt you. We love the theology of humbling ourselves, but become uncomfortable in when God exalts someone in His due time. We love when people seek out His kingdom and His righteousness, but we are uncomfortable when God adds all things unto them. Do you see what I am saying? If we are going to make an impact, we must have a healthy understanding of prosperity with a purpose. If we live as though God does not want to prosper us we are neglecting a key piece of God's plan to make an impact. Let's look at scripture.

God's first commission was to go and be fruitful, that is prosperous, but why? So that we can manage His world and take care of it. The main goal of God is not that we are wealthy but that we are His and He has our hearts, but wealth in itself is not evil it simply a tool to make an impact for His kingdom. Jesus clearly taught that spirituality is not measured by what you own or the income you have. But neither is spirituality measured by poverty. Poverty is no more spiritual than wealth. Again, it is the love of money that we read in scripture that is the root of evil. With God the issue is never about the dollar amount, the issue is always about the condition of the heart. God sees money as a tool to bless, to make an impact. He desires that we are prosperous, that is be fruitful, so that we can make an impact. We are called to be prosperous with a purpose.

Read with me **Deuteronomy 8:17-18**. Look at verse 18 again. We read that God gives us the power to make wealth to confirm His covenant. What is His covenant? The covenant in which is referenced is in Genesis 12 where God makes a covenant with Abram to bless him and use him to bless the entire world. Again, God gives prosperity for a purpose—to confirm His promise and use it for the purpose to bless others. The power of wealth is to use it to solve problems and be a blessing, attesting to God's goodness. God has given us, as His kids, the ability to create wealth, which is meant to be a tool to bless others and contribute to the world...to make an impact. We are called to live to make life better for everyone around us.

So how much money does God want us to have? Or how much money is too much money...the amount that replaces trust in God. Again, God is not concerned with the dollar amount. Solomon had more riches than anyone ever, but it wasn't until his heart strayed from God that it became a problem. God longs to bless us and have us be fruitful in all areas of our lives, including financially, but He will never give us a gift that will harm us. Did you ever notice that God gave the Israelites gold and all sorts of riches when they left Egypt? But what happened? The Israelites left Egypt with all the gold but they turned it into a golden calf. Immaturity will always take a blessing and turn it into a golden calf. God desired that they were blessed but they were not ready for the blessing and ended up turning what God gave for a blessing and worshiped it. So God sent them through the desert to learn to trust in God. God has blessed many believers with an incredible amount of wealth, but the danger is that many believers have begun to place their confidence and security in their own hands and wealth instead of the God who gave them the wealth. They have forgotten the blessing was to make an impact.

Some of you are going through your own metaphorical desert. I have heard many testimonies of believers struggling financially. But I also see God providing daily for them, just as He did for the Israelites in the desert. Think about it, during the journey of the 40 years in the desert God only provided enough to get them through the next day. They were nomads without a home, but God still provided for them. But that 40 years in the desert came with the purpose. The miracles of manna and others were always meant to sustain them and teach them to trust in God. But God's daily provision for them in a miraculous fashion was never God's ultimate goal. His desire was to make them prosperous with a purpose of being a blessing. Remember, the desert of 40 years was never God's final destination for the Israelites. Where was the destination...the promise land. Some of you are in the desert learning to trust in God. Many Christians are in financial deserts, but remember, the desert is never the final destination...it is the promise land. God's desire is that we are fruitful in all areas of our lives including wealth so that

we can impact others. Once the Israelites entered into the promise land they were meant to go beyond mere sustenance and into prosperity as mature people of God. They were meant to know how to handle prosperity to be a blessing to others. The concept of us barely making it is not God's goal or where He is taking us. He allows us to go through survival/desert stages to train us but not to keep us there. His ultimate goal is the promise land so that we can be blessings to the entire world. When the Israelites went through the desert they had to trust in God to daily provide for them, so they learned to trust in God. When they entered into the promise land they began to plan crops and harvest in abundance. They were meant to have more than a daily portion but were meant to still trust and look to God as their provider.

Read with me **2 Corinthians 9:6-15**. This is such powerful passage on prosperity with a purpose. Here we read that when we are generous and use the wealth God has given us to bless others, two things happen: we are blessed even more and others praise God and see the character of God. Remember God wants us to reap generously and bless us abundantly, but it is prosperity with a purpose. Not to serve our own greed or further our own agenda, but to make an impact. Look at the impact that happens when we are prosperous with a purpose. In verse 11 we read that we will richly blessed so that we can bless others and that our acts of service will bring praises to God. When the Lordship of Jesus is intact all blessings are attributed to Him and blessings are a true blessing. But when we see our blessings based on our own merit or abilities our prosperity becomes a hindrance to worship. Again, how much prosperity is too much...the amount that replaces trust and worship in God. God desire to richly bless us in everyway so that He can share His character to all people on earth; for we have been created for impact.

I believe God wants us to move beyond fear and anxiety of God's blessings. Satan wants to deceive us missing out on the blessings of God. He can only do that by lying to us. He lies to us in several ways. The first is when we turn God's blessings into the object of worship, just as the Israelites took the gold that God gave them and turned it into a golden calf for worship. Worshiping wealth takes our eyes off of God and robs us of the true blessing. The second lie is that wealth is bad and unholy. Another lie we face is the fear of not having enough. Satan is constantly seeking to rob you of blessing by getting you to doubt God's promises. He tells you that God is a stingy God and does not want good things for you and does not want you to prosper so you must hoard all things. When we fail to tithe and give generously, what we are really saying is that we are living in fear of not having enough. When this happens we cease to make an impact and because God loves us He will often take us into a time of a desert to teach us to trust in Him and not our own self. Each of these lies: worshiping wealth, fear of wealth, and a lack of faith in God cause us to be fearful and distracted so that we lose our impact.

Perhaps today, you are here believing that God has forgotten you and you do not believe that God wants to bless you. That is a lie from Satan and you need to step out in faith and believe the goodness of God. You must stand on His Word that which states God longs to richly provide for you all that you need when you seek His kingdom and righteousness. He longs to bless you so that you can make an impact. Maybe you are here struggling with worshipping money and riches, in which case, God is longing for you to get your heart right and understand who is your provider and why He has richly provided for you. If not, then God will surely lead you into a time of desert to teach you

this. Fear is agreement with the devil, faith is agreement with God. The Lord is not trying to create people with big wallets but with big hearts that can make a great impact.

I want to close with **Psalm 67:1-7**. Here we read that we are asking God to shine His face and blessings upon us...so that He may be known and that there may be salvation upon all nations. You see it is not enough for us to tell people that God is good and has a plan but we need by faith to move into the blessings of God so that we can show people He has a good plan.

Lets pray.

Scriptures for Created for Impact (Prosperity with Purpose)

Genesis 1:27-28—See Bible

Genesis 9:1—See Bible

Luke 4:5-7

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ If you worship me, it will all be yours.”

Luke 10:19

I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you

Isaiah 60:1-3

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. ² See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. ³ Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” ¹⁸ But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

2 Corinthians 9:6-15—See Bible

Psalm 67:1-7—See Bible