

Separation from the world, prosperity, health?

The debate is on the interpretation of the separation from the world and the doctrine that is being preached about prosperity and health. Pastor Walker and Pastor Payden discuss the problem....

"...This clearly shows the subtle way in which many in the American church are deceived by this heresy.

Your answer reflects the 'shift' of our churches away from the accurate application of truth. Our churches are diseased and in need of the 'health' of sound doctrine applied accurately. Thanks again, ...hjp"

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"Rev Payden,

The writer asks us to study John 17

Chapter 16 ends with the statement that in the world we would have tribulation, but we can take courage, because Jesus has overcome the world

John 17:2-3

2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. 3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You, NASU

In chapter 17 Jesus identifies the nature of his victory over the world-this victory consists in eternal life. Eternal life is the basis upon which we must "take courage". Eternal life is the life of God which we enjoy in the midst of the world. We have a citizenship that is not of this world Php 3.20. Every believer exists within two kingdoms: we rest in the heavenlies with Christ Eph 2.6, and we exist in the kingdom of this world, which is the dominion of the devil John 16.11. Like Jesus and the disciples of that day, we are to an extent subject to the conditions and realities of this world which is fashioned out of the Fall.

The implications of this reality are recognized by Jesus Himself in this prayer and elsewhere:

John 17:11

11 "I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world,

NASU

John 15:18-19

18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. NASB

The person that makes health and wealth the possession of the believer as a result of the atonement has greatly erred, neither understanding the scriptures nor the power of God. The great victory of the cross was the success of the plan of God in the midst of human and demonic opposition. In eternal life God has granted the believer access to divine omnipotence while engaged in conflict with the world, the devil and even his own flesh.

The entire point of the Christian life is to demonstrate the righteousness and justice of the plan of God in the midst of injustice, opposition, pain and personal catastrophe. The person who denies this has learned nothing from the salvation of Adam after the fall, learned nothing from the victory of Abraham from fear to faith, learned nothing from Jacob in his midnight strivings with the Lord, or from the gross injustice in the life of Joseph, learned nothing from Moses in his rise from murderer to deliverer, from Sampson in his victory over his own carnality, or of the repentance and forgiveness of wicked Manasseh, the imprisonment and death penalty of John, the stoning of Stephen and of Paul, or the disgrace and death of the humanity of Jesus under capital punishment on the cross. All of these persons were believers (save Jesus), who found the victory not in their possession of prosperity or health, but in their possession of God.

Jn 17.3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You, NASU

God is not glorified merely by giving health and luxury to believers-this belief betrays a total ignorance of what God is accomplishing in the world. God has arranged the complete defeat and humiliation of Satan by empowering weak, sinful human beings to triumph by faith while in the world, while in the very midst of its cruelty, injustice and apparently meaningless suffering.

In this victory, Satan is revealed as culpable for his own revolution against God, and God is revealed as just, holy and gracious in His administration of His creation Eph 3:9-13. Through us God brings victory from the midst of defeat, without even once compromising His holy character.

Yes, God wants and very often gives both health and prosperity to his people. Yes, salvation in itself places the believer under the logistical grace of God for his daily needs. However, when the believer makes this health and prosperity a deity in itself, by making it a right rather than a blessing within the providence and plan of sovereign God, that believer has overthrown the plan of God and has committed the same kind of rebellion (if not the same degree) as when the devil claimed spiritual status and authority as a right rather than an undeserved privilege.

rich walker "