

SOWING PROSPERITY Living Church Study Guide

There is no other way to have a harvest of something without sowing to that. You cannot have roses without planting roses. You cannot have oranges without planting oranges. You cannot have apples without planting apples. You cannot have money without planting money.

Now, what I want to emphasise today is you cannot have a harvest of prosperity unless you sow prosperity. Just sowing finances is not enough for a harvest of prosperity because prosperity is much more than finances.

For years the church has been teaching us how to successfully sow finances, and it works. People are sowing financial seed, dying to the money – more than putting in the basket – but dying to it in their heart, and believing God for a return. And I believe most people in the Tree of Life Family is that they know how to sow. We have a very generous church. Sowing finances is simple – you take the money and you give it to the kingdom of God.

But it is my opinion that most of you KNOW how to SOW. This is a really generous church. You sow by taking money AND giving it to the kingdom of God in a way that you die to it. The ability to sow resources and finances is one of the first lessons every Christian must learn, it is actually one of the first tests God has for anyone. Adam was given every tree of the garden of Eden but had to die to his rights to the fruit from one of the trees. Joshua had been given the entire land of Israel but had to die to his right to benefit from any treasure inside Jericho. Abraham had been given a blessing that made him exceedingly rich, but he had to die to his right to benefit from 10% of it – his tithe.

If you are not a tither, you should really consider that – not because Tree of Life wants your money, but because we desire you to be fruitful. You need to sow consistently, diligently and faithfully if you want to reap that way, and tithing is the God designed way to make that happen. Tithing did not start under law, it started when God spoke to Abraham a man of faith and showed him how to prosper. If you are a man of faith, looking how to prosper, tithing is the first step.

But today, I want to go deeper than just discussing the tithe and how to sow money. I know most of you can do that – churches our size should not be able to have the media ministry we do, we should not be able to host Andrew, we should not be able to do a lot of things we do – you are an amazing, generous, faithful church!

But I also reckon many people in the Tree – most people in fact – are sowing money regularly and consistently, and I want to take you deeper so you reap more than you ever have. I want to help you reap more than money, I want to help you reap prosperity. If you are here and not tithing and sowing consistently, do that. There you go, that's your word from God today.

But today's study is for the consistent givers and the generous hearted and the big sowers and it is how to sow prosperity and reap prosperity. To learn this, we must learn how to define prosperity.

Prosperity includes finances but it is more than that – it is having enough in every situation, it is seeing the promises of God manifest in your life, it is having enough and extra no matter what you do, it is having your dreams come true, it is having nothing broken in your life. It's a lot more than having money.

I define prosperity with 4 words, all beginning with P. The 4 "P"s of prosperity.

Prosperity is more than just money. How many of you know that you can have money and be poor? If you had £30 million in the bank but only had one week left to live, you would be poor. If you had £30 million in the bank but could not get to sleep at night, had no peace in the day, you are poor. The first "P" of prosperity is precious. You are prosperous when the things in your life are precious to you. What is in your life, you would not swap. I see pastors looking for new churches, people looking for new spouses, people looking for new jobs, new everything – they are not prosperous because what is around them is not precious. So, to have a precious harvest, we have to sow a precious seed. The seed must align with the harvest! It's not about casually putting money in the bucket, it is about being specific and precious.

At Christmas this year, a lady in the church gave Amanda and I a personal gift, a thank you for helping her this year, and her story touched our heart a great day. The preciousness of that gift was far more than the cash value, it was the encouragement, the gratitude, everything behind the gift that made it very precious to me. It was her precious seed, but in my hands that money was also precious – it was more than the cash value, it was the appreciation, it was the revelation that I am helping people doing what I am doing – and that money was so precious to me. So, Amanda and I put it all in the offering the next week. We sowed a precious seed. You need to get into the habit of sowing precious seed. If you want a life surrounded by precious things!

Besides God offering Jesus, I think the most precious thing offered as a sacrifice in the Bible was Abraham offering Isaac. There was nothing Abraham and Sarah wanted more than a child – that was all they wanted. They had money, they had businesses, they had servants, they had everything but a baby. They were rich, but the gaping hole in their life because of their lack of baby meant they were not prosperous. They tried doing it man's way, but that never produced fruit. But finally, they decided to do it God's way, and they submitted to not just God's plan but God's way of doing it and suddenly they held Isaac in their hands – and that was more than precious, that was promised. Read Genesis 17.4. Isaac was the fulfilment of the promise that Abraham would be the father of many nations.

This is the 2nd "P" of prosperity, it is a promise. It is a promise from God to you. I was once promised a TV by God. It was a particular brand and make, and God promised it to me. The TV came, and it was the exact one God promised to me, and it was not long before I gave that TV away. Why? Because I have some very big promises from God about changing nations, far bigger than a TV, and to have a promised harvest, I want to sow some promised seed.

Read Genesis 17.6. These are huge promises, I mean just huge. They are the blessing of Abraham, so you can claim them in your life. But Abraham claimed it – the man who could

not have a baby married to the woman who could not have a baby became the father of nations through faith. So Isaac was very precious, but he was also their promise.

The path they had gone through to have him – God had done the impossible – and given them the desire of their heart. Isaac was the firstfruits of a promise so huge, it could be described as a promise of Biblical proportions. God told Abraham to count the stars, that would be how many children he would have. That is huge – Isaac was truly Abraham's prosperity – more than finances, more than cash – Isaac was their ability to rest, to have peace, he was their dream, he was what they wanted more than anything. Precious and promised.

Read Genesis 22.1-2. Now, remember this is about seedtime and harvest. To harvest outrageous prosperity, there must be a significant seed – something more than a tithe, more than cash, more than valuable – it must be precious and it must be promised.

Most people do not realize the power in God's Word! If God says it, it will be truth. Whatever God says it truth. God cannot lie. If you were wearing a blue jacket, and God says "What a nice yellow jacket" your jacket is changing colour. God is not lying! In the middle of the darkest dark ever in history, God said "LIGHT!" and it was light. That's what happens when God speaks: reality bends to His Word. His Word touches the molecules that make up reality and changes them – they have to bow to His voice. Your organs might be failing, your body might be riddled with disease, you feel weak – but God says you are healed. Every cell in your body must line up with the Word of God. Words are seeds and words bear fruit, and God's words are perfect seeds and bear perfect fruit.

When it comes to your reaping prosperity, God has to keep His Word. God's word is so powerful, God has to keep it Himself. God cannot break seedtime and harvest, because God has spoken seedtime and harvest. Nothing is more powerful than God's Word. Yes – God told Abraham to kill His Son, but God also knew He had said that Abraham would be the father of many nations, with descendants like the stars, God cannot break His Word. God knew that when He spoke to Abraham.

God told Abraham to offer Isaac because He knew how precious that seed was – He knew that offering Isaac would make Abraham prosperous, that it would mean His legacy would last for generations, that He would walk into having children like stars, and influence every family on the earth.

God knew what He spoke to Abraham, He knew the exceeding great and precious promises He had made Abraham. But He also knew that to walk in that kind of promise and harvest would take a very powerful seed. And that leads us to our 3rd "P" of prosperity. It is "purposed". There is something very powerful about taking something with a purpose and changing that purpose and dying to that original purpose. For Abraham to sacrifice his son, a son more precious than his own life, a son that was promised, Abraham is also sacrificing the purpose of Isaac. God said to kill Isaac, and that was not his purpose. His purpose was to grow up, to get married, to have children, to be part of the tribe of Abraham, to bless every family on the earth.

God was asking Abraham to give up something that has a purpose. That would make it impossible for Abraham to fulfil his purpose on the earth, to cut short the plans for the future. That is a higher level of giving – it is above paying tithe certainly. Now you never start at that level, it was not that God spoke to Abraham on the first day they met and asked him to give up his son. No-one gets saved day 1 and God says sell your car and lands (unless riches are your idol, but that is a story for another day). No – God sees you and thinks I want to make you prosperous, and He leads you to start tithing and giving, and God sees that and thinks I want to make you really prosperous – nation-changing prosperous – and I want to make you a father of many nations. So, God then, at that point, asks you to sow something precious, promised and something with purpose.

Isaac was so precious to Abraham, Abraham was looking forward to watching him grow up, watching him get married, watching him have children – watching God's promise come to pass, and watching Isaac fulfil his purpose. God has asked Abraham to give up something that means he is giving up on the dream. Sometimes God asks us to sow something that we cannot see the dream happening without it!

God speaks to you and says to you to give up something so precious – so part of your promise, so part of your purpose and destiny – that to give it up is to give up the dream – even the dream God gave you! That is when you cross over from sowing finances to sowing prosperity.

I know talk like this makes some people nervous, but I am not going to tell you what to give or when. No pastor – no man – can touch this. No man knows what is your precious, and God is not stupid – He knows exactly what is. Read Genesis 22.2 – God said take your son, whom you love. God was not ignorant of how precious Isaac was, or what his purpose was – God knew it all, but still said to offer him up as a burnt offering.

You see this offering was more than precious, it was promised, and it was purposed. God knew it, He knew who Isaac was, but asked for him anyway!

And now the final “P” of prosperity – part of what makes a man truly prosperous is that his possessions and his life and his surroundings are peculiar. To be truly prosperous, you need to have things around you that are not just things but your things. More than precious, more than promised, more than purposed – they need to be peculiar to you. Personal to you, different from what everyone else has.

I could have a dream home, but it would not be prosperity for you because it is my house for me, not your house for you. I wonder at this stage in his life, how many sacrifices Abraham had made. It would be countless – he had offered bulls, and goats, and birds, and so many more. But never ever had he offered a child. Not even someone else's – certainly not his own. That idea would never have entered his mind, so it is something very peculiar. But to live in unparalleled prosperity – your life has to be peculiar – some people have to think you are weird.

And to have a harvest that is peculiar, you must sow a seed that is peculiar. A prosperous harvest is when what surrounds you is precious, promised, purposed and peculiar. To live like that, you will have to sow something that is precious, promised, purposed and peculiar.

Can you imagine what was happening to Abraham at this moment of his life? For him to offer Isaac as a freewill, love offering? The most precious, most promised, most purposed, most peculiar thing in his life – Abraham has to lift his faith to a whole new level. And he did – he did everything God told him to do by faith. He had come to a point where he knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that God could be trusted with everything, even the most precious thing in his life. That God could be trusted with the dream! That God is always faithful!

All the circumstances said sowing Isaac is not smart, it is self-destructive, it is immoral behaviour. But God said do it – and Abraham did what God said, and Abraham and Isaac, with Isaac carrying the wood in his arms, climbed Mount Moriah. This was precious. This was promised. This was purpose. And this was very peculiar indeed.

Sowing prosperity is not just about chucking money in the bucket – it is a divine tool where we learn faith, we learn obedience, we learn wisdom, we learn to trust at a higher level. In fact, Mount Moriah means the Mount of Teaching!

God told Abraham to give, because He wanted to take Abraham to the top of that mountain to bring him to a higher level. And then, Abraham has the knife, ready to give up his precious, his promised, ready to divert Isaac's purpose, and about to do something peculiar. And Abraham looks and sees God provided a ram in the thicket. A ram with his head stuck in the thorns.

God provided a substitute to save Isaac. Just like God provided the ram with his head stuck in the thorns for us – Jesus! God always provides the seed. Now, Abraham was – in his head – ready to sow his seed, but God provided the ram, God provided the seed.

Not only does Abraham get Isaac back, he gets so much more in return, but the greatest thing he gets is a new understanding of God. It is impossible to sow great seed and not learn more about God.

Abraham now understands something he never grasped before: provision is not just something God does once in a while, but providing for us is God's nature and name! Read Genesis 22.18. God's name is Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord will provide.

Now, when God speaks to Abraham about promises – about multitudes, about kings from his loins, about blessing every family in the world, about children like stars, to prosper in every way, Abraham could not doubt again. He knew that he knew that prosperity was in the heart of God, and now Abraham had the faith to receive it all. The faith that sows the great seed of prosperity is the same faith that receives unusual, peculiar harvests.

YOU WANT TO RECEIVE SOMETHING PRECIOUS, SOW SOMETHING PRECIOUS

YOU WANT TO RECEIVE SOMETHING PROMISED, SOW A PROMISED THING

YOU WANT TO WALK IN YOUR PURPOSE, DIVERT THE PURPOSE OF SOMETHING YOU HAVE

YOU WANT TO REAP A PECULIAR HARVEST, SOW A PECULIAR SEED.

We are moving into Ephesians 3.20 as a church – more than you can ask or imagine – you are going to have abundance beyond your wildest dreams. To walk in that sort of victory, of abundance, of prosperity, you need a harvest of the revelation of God being your personal Jehovah Jireh, and if He has provided Jesus, how much more will He not provide all things?

On Sunday I gave three appeals – for people who are not ready to receive the message because they need to start tithing and giving consistently to do that. God will still love you if you never give, but you have to realize that giving is an exercise of faith and we need to give to build our faith muscle. You need to be strong in faith to receive all that God has for you.

Secondly – for those who have genuinely heard God speak to them about a precious seed they have in their hands, and to step up in faith and sow that precious seed. Whatever that seed is, it will take you to a new level of receiving. Give it and give it with joy!

Thirdly – maybe you are still waiting to hear God, you are believing for Him to share with you what that seed is. Stand in faith because you are ready for God to speak, and when He does, you will go beyond sowing finances and start sowing prosperity and reap the prosperity in a new way.

SOWING PROSPERITY Living Church Questions

1. What is the only way to have a harvest of prosperity?
2. What are the 4 Ps that distinguish prosperity from mere finances?
3. Give an example of an instance where someone might have lots of money but could not be considered prosperous.
4. Give an example of a seed that would be considered precious.
5. Give an example of a seed that would be considered a promise.
6. Give an example of a seed that would be considered redirecting a purpose.
7. Give an example of a seed that would be considered peculiar.
8. What dreams would sacrificing Isaac mean Abraham would have to give up on?
9. Give an example of a seed that would mean someone would have to give up on a dream.
10. If you feel comfortable, please share a testimony when you gave a seed that was precious, promised, a redirected purpose or peculiar. What led you to give it? What happened next?
11. What about this message inspired, encouraged, and challenged you the most?