

Abundance Defined



God's Abundance (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again.

My theme this week is rich and challenging: God's Abundance.

In my talk yesterday I explained that one distinctive aspect of God, as He is revealed in the Bible, is His abundance. God is not poor, He is not stingy, He is not limited. He is a God of abundance. His grace is abundant, His love is abundant, His provision is abundant. If we are to represent God accurately, and as He really is, to the world around us, then we must learn to represent Him as a God of abundance. Otherwise we will be misrepresenting Him.

I went on yesterday to establish certain basic facts. First, we can apprehend God's abundance only by revelation. But first, we must see the depth of our need. Only out of this can we receive the revelation of God's abundance. Second, this revelation comes from God's Word through God's Spirit. The carnal mind, no matter how educated or sophisticated, cannot receive it. Third, the purpose of abundance is God's glory. That's the purpose ultimately of everything God does for us.

In connection with this promise of restoration and abundance that God gave to Israel through the Prophet Jeremiah, we looked at the closing verse of that section, Jeremiah 33:9 which unfolds the purpose for which God promises abundance. Jeremiah 33:9:

> "It shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it." (KJV)

So you see, God's abundance bestowed upon His people is going to bring glory to His name before all other peoples. They're going to be amazed, overwhelmed, they're actually going to fear and tremble at the demonstration of the abundance that God purposes to procure for His people.

Now today I'm going to explain exactly what abundance means. It's very important that we understand precisely the meaning of this word. There are a number of words in that

general area which are related, with which we're familiar, and yet their meanings are not identical. I want to just give you a list of these words and then try to show you where abundance fits in. The words that I have in mind, that are all in some way related and yet distinct, are as follows: rich and riches, wealth and wealthy, prosper, prosperous, prosperity, and abound, abundant, and abundance.

Now, let's consider those in order. Take the first two pairs, rich and riches, wealth and wealthy. Both those two sets of words indicate the possession of large amounts of money and other material possessions. They definately imply that the person has large sums of money, owns large properties, and other valuables.

The next set of words, prosper, prosperous, prosperity does not necessarily indicate that, particularly if you go to the root meaning of the word used in Scripture. I think the central meaning is success. This word occurs, for instance, in 3rd John, verse 2:

> "Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers." (NASB)

To prosper is really to accomplish what you intend to do successfully. There's an interesting example of this. In the first chapter of Romans, Paul tells the Christians at Rome that's he's praying that he may have a prosperous journey, by the will of God, to them in Rome. And In Acts, chapter 27 and 28, we have a description of the journey that Paul actually took. Now, it's interesting to see how it was prosperous. He did not travel first class; he traveled as a prisoner in chains. They experienced a tremendous storm which lasted about two weeks without ceasing. They were thrown up on an island as castaways, and when Paul was gathering sticks to make a fire, a viper bit him and hung onto his hand but the supernatural power of God kept him from any harm. And after that, there was a tremendous move of the Spirit of God on that island, which proved to be be Malta. And so, ultimately, Paul arrived at Rome. He had a prosperous journey but he didn't travel first class. It was prosperous because he accomplished God's purpose which was much higher than human purpose would have been. So when you think of prosper, especially when you're reading in the Bible, think of it not so much in terms of owning a lot, as in terms of succeeding in what you're commissioned to do.

And then we have the word, which we're particularly focusing on, abound, abundant and abundance. Now again, that word does not necessarily indicate the possession of large sums of money or other material goods. Abundance means basically you've got enough for all your own needs and something to spare for others. Abundance is always associated with a thought of having something for others as well as yourself.

Let me give you just a little simple example from daily life. Suppose a woman goes to the grocery store and she needs twenty dollars worth of groceries. Alright, she only has fifteen dollars with her; she's shopping out of insufficiency. She goes to the grocery store for twenty dollars worth of groceries. She has precisely twenty dollars with her. She's shopping out of sufficiency. But suppose she has twenty-five dollars with her and she needs twenty dollars of groceries. She's shopping out of abundance. She has all that she needs and something left over but it may not be a large amount that's left over. That's abundance.

Now, in order to understand these words more clearly, let's look at the opposite because one way to understand the meaning of words is to find out what their opposites are. I would say if we take all the words that we've looked at, rich and riches, wealth and wealthy, prosper, properous, prosperity, abound, abundant, abundance, take them all, I would suggest the following is a list of words that generally express the opposite. Poor and poverty, want, need and lack and fail and failure. So we're talking in terms primarily of abundance. We're talking in terms of something that does not necessarily indicate the possession of large sums of money or property but something which is the opposite of poor,and poverty, of want, need, and lack and also of fail and failure.

As an example of abundance, as I've been trying to define it, I want to turn to know one other than Jesus Himself. Jesus, I believe, in His earthly ministry, exemplified abundance. Many people have failed to see this. They've pictured Jesus as poor. In the truest sense, He was not poor. He had abundance. He didn't have large amounts of cash or material possessions, but He had abundance. He had nowhere to lay His head but He had abundance. He had nowhere to lay His head; he depended on others to provide Him with a sleeping place. Yet he was never without one. Yet out of that, He was able to feed about 10,000 people, men, women and children with five loaves and two fishes. That's not poverty. Anybody who can do that is not poor. Another time when the question arose of His paying tax, instead of sending Peter to the bank with a check, He sent Peter to the Sea of Galilee with a fish hook and said, "Just cast your fish hook in, don't put a bait on it, just cast the hook in, and take up the first fish that comes, open its mouth; you'll find the tax money." Now that's an unorthodox way to pay your taxes but He wasn't in need. He had all the money He needed for His taxes. You understand, this is abundance; it's not necessarily wealth in the normal sense, nor riches, but it's abundance. And Jesus remarkably enough, imparted this to His desciples. When He sent them out, He said, "Freely, you've received; freely give." He didn't

send them out to get, he sent them out to give. That's the essence of abundance. Its ultimate expression is giving.

Then, afterwards, right near the end of His ministry, in Luke, chapter 22, verse 35, He checked on how they'd experienced when He sent them out, not to receive, but to give. This is what the record says:

> "Jesus asked them, 'When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?' 'Nothing,' they answered." (NIV)

That's abundance. They didn't have a lot of equipment, they didn't have spare clothes, they didn't carry a bag with money in, but they didn't lack anything and they gave freely out of what Jesus had imparted to them. It's important to see because you can have abundance without being wealthy by this world's standards and that theme that I'm dealing with is not how to be rich; it's God's abundance, and God's abundance is manifested in ways that this world sometimes wouldn't expect. Just think about Jesus for a moment feeding a crowd of 10,000 persons in a desert place without any large amount of resources. That's not wealth but it's something much more exciting. It's abundance. Jesus never lacked at any time. Any time anything was needed by Him orHis desciples,it was always there and yet they were always giving of themselves, ministering to the needs of others. That's abundance.

Well our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. I'll continue with this theme of abundance. I'll begin to explain the principles on which our faith for abundance must be based.

Radio Program

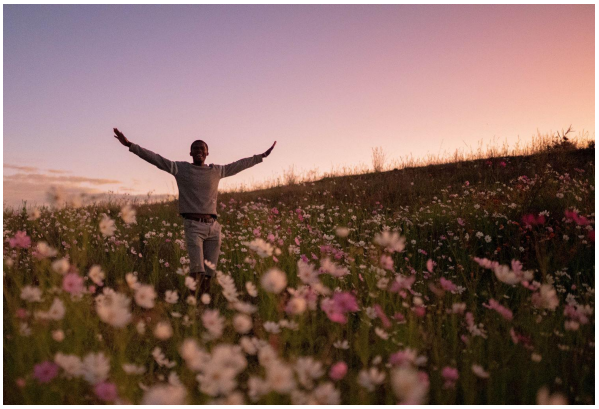
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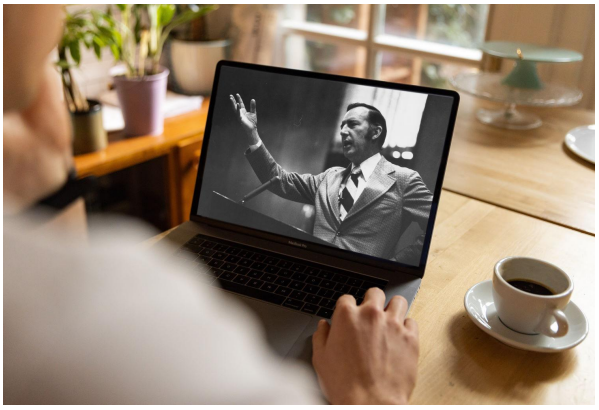
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