

Righteousness Results in Prison

Genesis 39

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God blesses those who strive after righteousness, but not always in the way we expect.

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar... (Matthew 1:3)

I. Success comes from the hand of the Lord. (v. 1-4a)

II. Success also comes from being faithful with the opportunities one is given. (v. 4b-6a)

The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

“I will make you into a great nation,

and I will bless you;

I will make your name great,

and you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you,

and whoever curses you I will curse;

and all peoples on earth

will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

¹⁹ After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.

²⁰ The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

²¹ His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

²² The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

²³ His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

²⁴ Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

²⁶ “*His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?’* ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. ²⁸ “*So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags.* ²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ (Matthew 25:14-30)

for an adulterous woman is a deep pit,
and a wayward wife is a narrow well. (Proverbs 23:2)

III. Success often breeds opportunities for temptation to sin. (v. 6b-7)

For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey,
and her speech is smoother than oil;
but in the end she is bitter as gall,
sharp as a double-edged sword.
Her feet go down to death;
her steps lead straight to the grave. (Proverbs 5:3-5)

IV. All sin is ultimately against God. (v. 8-10)

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge. (Psalm 51:3-4)

For your ways are in full view of the LORD,
and he examines all your paths.
The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them;
the cords of their sins hold them fast.
For lack of discipline they will die,
led astray by their own great folly. (Proverbs 5:21-23)

V. Wise people avoid circumstances where they might be tempted to sin. (v. 11)

Keep to a path far from her,
do not go near the door of her house,
lest you lose your honor to others
and your dignity to one who is cruel, (Proverbs 5:8-9)

Now then, my sons, listen to me;
 pay attention to what I say.
Do not let your heart turn to her ways
 or stray into her paths.
Many are the victims she has brought down;
 her slain are a mighty throng.
Her house is a highway to the grave,
 leading down to the chambers of death. (Proverbs 7:24-27)

VI. Wise people don't linger, they flee swiftly from temptation. (v. 12)

Blessed is the one
 who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
 or sit in the company of mockers,
but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
 and who meditates on his law day and night.
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
 which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
 whatever they do prospers.

Not so the wicked!

 They are like chaff
 that the wind blows away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
 nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked leads to destruction. (Psalm 1:1-6)

Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22)

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

VII. Doing the right thing may cause others to persecute and revile you. (v. 13-18)

For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. (1 Peter 4:3-5)

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5:10-12)

VIII. Joseph was unjustly punished for the sins of another. (v. 19-20a)

**IX. Though things had gone from bad to good to even worse, Joseph remained faithful.
(v. 20b-23)**

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. (James 1:2-3)

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. (Romans 5:3-4)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)