

Finish What You Started

by Jerry Savelle

You know how full of love and kindness our Lord Jesus was: though he was so very rich yet to help you he became so very poor, so that by being poor he could make you rich.

I want to suggest that you finish what you started to do....

Now that speaks to many people in churches today. Many Christians began to live by the principles of God's Word, but then they came under pressure from the world, from Satan and from those who oppose this message. They were deceived into giving up on sowing and reaping. The deception is not in teaching people how to give; it is talking them out of giving.

I am not going to be misled by anyone who claims that this Biblical principle does not work. I am going to keep on doing what I have been practicing for two decades. I am going to finish what I started 25 years ago.

I want to suggest to you that you also "finish what you started." You may have come into this revelation some time ago. Maybe you began to prosper and grow, only to become disillusioned and discouraged by the abuses you saw within the movement and the criticism you heard about it from without. You may have been tempted to give up and to decide that perhaps it is not God's will for you to prosper after all.

You may have allowed certain negative reports and personal experiences to turn you away from believing in and practicing God's abundance. You may have turned back toward the old belief that God's will for His children is poverty, lack and want. If so, I believe it is time to re-evaluate your situation. Complete what you began so well. Finish what you started.

Having started the ball rolling so enthusiastically, you should carry this project through to completion just as gladly, giving whatever you can out of whatever you have. Let your enthusiastic idea at the start be equaled by your realistic action now.

Don't ever lose your enthusiasm for giving and planting seeds. The greatest joys you will ever experience in your life will come in seeing God bless you so you can bless someone else.

That's also the reason the devil doesn't want you to prosper. Because if you don't, you can't be a blessing to anybody else. We must quit being "need-conscious" and become "seed-conscious."

Needs Are Really Opportunities To Prosper

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that

is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. (1 Kings 17:1-4, 7-9).

Notice what the Lord said to the prophet in both these instances: ...I have commanded... the ravens to feed thee... a widow woman there to sustain thee... Past tense. The Lord had already made provision for Elijah before He sent him on his way. In the case of the widow, even before God commanded Elijah to go to Zarephath, He had already given the woman orders to meet his needs.

So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. (1 Kings 17:10-14)

So this woman had already been instructed to care for the prophet. When he arrived, he asked her to feed him. But she was not "seed-conscious." She was "need-conscious." She said to him: "Oh, but you don't understand, prophet. I only have a few provisions which my son and I are about to eat and then die."

That's what many people are saying today. But that is not what God says about our situation.

I once heard Mike Murdock, a dynamic minister and musician, make a potent statement which I think bears repeating. He said, "Every time God gives you an opportunity to give, He is also giving you an opportunity to increase your income."

In this case, the Lord was giving this woman an opportunity to give because He wanted her to have an opportunity to have her needs met. But because she was so need-conscious, she couldn't recognize the wonderful opportunity that was being offered to her.

Every one of us has needs. Great needs. Pressing needs. And the Lord has many opportunities for us to give so we can have those needs met. But if we are like this poor widow, if we are "need-conscious," we will not recognize those opportunities for what they really are, opportunities to reap an abundant harvest.

The prophet told that poor woman to feed him first, promising her that if she would do so, then her provisions of meal and oil would not run out until the day of famine was over. Was he telling the truth?

And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah. (1 Kings 17:15-16)

I believe God is giving us an opportunity right now to prepare ourselves for what lies ahead down the road. He is commanding us to keep planting seeds, assuring us that if we do, our resources will not fail during the hard times to come. He is telling us to become "seed-conscious" rather than "need-conscious."