

The Way of Prosperity

Scripture Reading — Matthew 25:31-46

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”
Matthew 25:40 —

The sun was setting as I arrived in Kinshasa, Congo, to help officiate at a graduation ceremony of Bible study students. As we drove to the hotel, we passed a large stadium. Paul, our French ministry leader, commented that the stadium had been full that day with people who gathered to hear a popular preacher of the “prosperity gospel”—the notion that health and wealth come to those with the faith to claim it.

I said I would have thought the prosperity gospel could only gain a foothold in societies where people are more likely to grow wealthy. “Ah,” said Paul, “you are wrong. It is when people have no material hopes that the prosperity gospel best takes root.”

I’ve thought a lot about that conversation. Paul is right. And I have a responsibility to help people turn away from such a blatant twisting of the true gospel of Christ. So do you.

We have a calling to speak the truth of the gospel plainly. Faith in Christ, for all its blessings, is not an automatic ticket to great wealth or perfect health. We also have a second responsibility. We must come alongside those who are in poverty and offer our help in creating healthy communities where both physical and spiritual needs are met and life in all its dimensions can flourish. After all, Jesus reminds us that as we serve “the least” among us, we serve him.

Prayer

Lord, help us to care for others in such a way that we show the truth of the gospel in all we do. Help us to serve you. In your name, Amen.

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