

## **To Be A Blessing**

### **Genesis 12:1-3**

Good morning church. So good to be together today as we kickoff a new 6-week series this week called BLESS. What our goal is with this series – is to try and put language around what it looks like to live our lives for the glory of God and the good of other – to live on mission. Trying to put language and strategies around what it looks like, to live on mission.

And here's the main idea for us to consider, really for the entirety of this series, not just for today: If God has blessed you, it is for you to be a blessing to others. Blessed to be a blessing.

Years ago, Victoria and I were part of a mission team to Trinidad and Tobago, and at one of the church services the local band sang this song "Blessed to be a blessing in this world." And that's what we'll consider over the next few weeks as we try and put language and specific action around living on mission.

Turn with me if you have a Bible, turn to Genesis 12:1-3. I'm going to read from the CSB

The Lord said to Abram:  
Go from your land,  
your relatives,  
and your father's house  
to the land that I will show you.  
<sup>2</sup> I will make you into a great nation,  
I will bless you,  
I will make your name great,  
and you will be a blessing.  
<sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you,  
I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt,  
and all the peoples on earth  
will be blessed<sup>[a]</sup> through you.

## **PRAY**

Now, to be certain, this is a specific promise of God to a specific person (Abram then Abraham). And we can't twist these verses and try and get them to apply to us in crazy ways like some have tried.

God was calling Abram to believe in Him, to call out a people for Himself, and that God would make a nation for Himself – to point all of the nations to the greatness of Abraham's God. To point the nations to worship the God of Abraham.

Abraham wasn't a God-fearer – he was a pagan. But God called him, and what I want us to see, the first thing here, is that the blessing of God is a Gift of Grace.

## **I. The Blessing of God is a GIFT of Grace**

We have to see the blessing of God as a Gift of Grace. In these scriptures, there's 6 times where it says I WILL. I WILL, I WILL, I WILL. God took the initiative, to call Abraham into a special relationship with Him. It was a gift. Certainly not because Abe was awesome. Because if you've read the book of Genesis, you know Abe wasn't awesome.

But God chose Him, freely, and graciously. See, God doesn't choose people, God doesn't save people because of who you are. He saves wicked and evil people, in spite of our sin. We see this all over the Scriptures, perhaps most powerfully in Ephesians 2:1-5

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>3</sup>We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. <sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, <sup>[b]</sup> <sup>5</sup>made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!

The blessing of God is a GIFT of Grace. Grace – God's unmerited favor – poured out on undeserving people.

And, the primary blessing of God, the greatest blessing of God for a Christian, the greatest blessing of God is life with Christ! It has nothing to do with the size of your bank account, the size of your home, your portfolio's performance, your report card, your sports achievement, or the compliance level of your children.

## **II. The Greatest Blessing of God is Life with Christ!**

We are so jacked up when we miss this. We look at things like good jobs, nice homes, compliant kids, whatever – and we turn around and think of how blessed we are. Here's what Paul thought about all of the things of this world:

Philippians 3:7-10

<sup>7</sup>But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. <sup>8</sup>More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, so that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ<sup>[a]</sup>—the righteousness from God based on faith. <sup>10</sup>My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death

Our worship of Jesus, can't be contingent, or dependent, on anything but CHRIST in YOU! When we come to Jesus, we get the right to be called Children of God, with access and privilege that being God's child entails. As Paul said, sons of Abraham, recipients of the spiritual blessing of Abraham, through faith.

Don't mishear me – everything in your life is under the sovereignty and providence of God. Everything. And God provides good things for his children – James tells us that – that every good thing is from God. But where we get all jacked up is if/when we consider God's primary blessing to us in stuff.

Ephesians 1:3

Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ.

**We have to fight this mindset that limits the blessing of God to more stuff.** Because it's not. If we have Christ, we have all that we will ever need. Because everything else can be taken from you, like that. Don't believe me? Just read the book of Job. I'm working through the book of Job in my personal study right now, and it says Job's buddies came when they saw all that had happened to him and they sat with him and didn't say a word for 7 days and 7 nights because of Job's suffering. Even his own wife told him, curse God and die.

Everything can be taken from us. Health, success, family, assets – but Jesus will never, ever leave. Never. He promises to be with HIS people, every moment of every day. From the moment you believe, all through eternity.

### III. TESTING or Blessing?

I was talking to a good friend of mine – and his ministry had just been given a major financial gift. And he was simply saying how God was blessing this ministry. And I rejoiced with him – but then because he and I are good enough friends, I asked him – what if God is testing this ministry. Testing to see how you will use what God is entrusting you to? They had fallen into this terrible line of thinking that the blessing of God was limited to a bank account or a major financial gift.

See, when we view material things as the primary blessing of God, rather than life with Christ, we miss it – that yes God can and sometimes does bless us with material things – but every thing we have is a test. Are we going to be content to build bigger barns, or are we going to pursue the glory of God and the good of others.

Luke 12:16-21

<sup>16</sup> Then he told them a parable: "A rich man's land was very productive. <sup>17</sup> He thought to himself, 'What should I do, since I don't have anywhere to store my crops? <sup>18</sup> I will do this,' he said. 'I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones and store all my grain and my goods there. <sup>19</sup> Then I'll say to myself, "You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.'" <sup>20</sup> "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared—whose will they be?' <sup>21</sup> "That's how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

**I don't ever want us as individuals, as families, and as a church, to simply be content to build bigger barns.** See I believe the Bible teaches that everything God has entrusted you with, He expects faithfulness. From your ability to earn a living, to your home, to your children, to your intellect, to your job, to whatever – **God's desire is faithfulness.** And here's the thing – God doesn't expect me to be faithful with your gifting, and he doesn't expect you to be faithful with my gifting. He expects each of us to be faithful with what He allows for us.

Paul write to this jacked up church in this wicked city called Corinth. All kinds of crazy stuff in the church, and all kinds of wickedness in the city. And Paul writes to them about faithfulness:

#### **READ 1 Corinthians 4:1-5**

A person should think of us in this way: as servants of Christ and managers of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup> In this regard, it is required that managers be found faithful. <sup>3</sup> It is of little importance to me that I should be judged by you or by any human court.<sup>[a]</sup> In fact, I don't even judge myself. <sup>4</sup> For I am not conscious of anything against myself, but I am not justified by this. It is the Lord who judges me. <sup>5</sup> So don't judge anything prematurely, before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts. And then praise will come to each one from God.

Paul knew – that behind everything he had been given by God – was a test of his faithfulness. How he would use, what he had been trusted to manage.

And what Paul knew, what God promised to Abraham, was that the blessing of God was never and is never intended to stop with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Peter, Paul, Timothy, you or me. The blessing of God was never intended to stop with any of us.

#### **IV. The Blessing of God is NEVER intended to stop with you**

God's promise to Abraham – and you will be a blessing – and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you – of course we know this is to point us to Jesus. And that through faith in Jesus we inherit the blessing of Abraham – the spiritual blessing promised to Abraham.

Hear me – the blessing of God is NEVER intended to stop with us.

Illustration: Cul de sac VS. I-75 – Now, anyone live on a cul de sac? Man I wish our house was on a cul de sac. We live right on a main street in our neighborhood – and yes I'm the grumpy old man that's always telling people to slow down. Sometimes they stop their cars and yell back at me. It's awesome. Cul de sacs are great to live on because they don't go anywhere. And your young children can play freely without worrying about some lunatic driving their car too fast down your road while their texting their kids about the Starbucks order.

Where we get into trouble is when we view the blessing of God like a Cul de sac.

**READ** Psalm 67:1-2

<sup>1</sup> May God be gracious to us and bless us;  
may he make his face shine upon us *Selah*  
<sup>2</sup> so that your way may be known on earth,  
your salvation among all nations.

The blessing of God is never intended to stop with you. So, when we started today, I told you that what we're trying to do with today and the next 5 weeks is to put language around what it looks like to live on mission – to seek to be a blessing to people. And we're going to use BLESS as an acronym.

B – Begin with Prayer – 2/13

L – Listen – 2/20

E – Eat (just so happens we'll be at church at the beach this day, and planning for food afterward) – 2/27

S – Serve – 3/06

S – Story – 3/13

Just a simple tool, or acronym, to point us how to be a blessing to others.

**PRAY.**