

The Dark Side Of Blessing

Lamentations 5:14 The elders no longer sit in the city gates, the young men no longer dance and sing. 15 Joy has left our hearts; our dancing has turned to mourning. 16 The garlands have fallen from our heads. Weep for us because we have sinned. 17 Our hearts are sick and weary, and our eyes grow dim with tears. 19 But Lord, you remain the same forever! Your throne continues from generation to generation. 21 Restore us, O Lord, and bring us back to you again! Give us back the joys we once had!

I. There is Danger in the Comfortable life - The Danger of Forgetting God

Deuteronomy 8:1 “Be careful to **obey all the commands** I am giving you today. Then **you will live and multiply**, and you will enter and occupy the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors. 2 **Remember** how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands. 3 Yes, **he humbled you** by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. **He did it to teach you** that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. 4 For all these forty years your clothes didn’t wear out, and your feet didn’t blister or swell. 5 **Think about it: Just as a parent disciplines a child, the Lord your God disciplines you for your own good.**

6 “**So obey** the commands of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and fearing him. 7 For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land of flowing streams and pools of water, with fountains and springs that gush out in the valleys and hills. 8 It is a land of wheat and barley; of grapevines, fig trees, and pomegranates; of olive oil and honey. 9 It is a land where food is plentiful and nothing is lacking. It is a land where iron is as common as stone, and copper is abundant in the hills. 10 When you have eaten your fill, be sure to **praise the Lord your God** for the good land he has given you.

11 “**But *that* is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the Lord your God and disobey** his commands, regulations, and decrees that I am giving you today. 12 For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in, 13 and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else, **be careful!** 14 **Do not become proud/exalted/lifted up** at that time and **forget** the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. 15 Do not forget that he led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with its poisonous snakes and scorpions, where it was so hot and dry. He gave you water from the rock! 16 He fed you with manna in the wilderness, a food unknown to your ancestors. He did this to humble you and test you for your own good. 17 **He did all this so you would never say to yourself, ‘I have achieved this wealth with my own strength and energy.’**

18 **Remember** the Lord your God. **He is the one who gives you power/strength/ability to be successful**, in order to fulfill the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath.

19 “But I assure you of this: If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods, worshiping and bowing down to them, you will certainly be destroyed. 20 Just as the Lord has destroyed other nations in your path, you also will be destroyed if you refuse to obey the Lord your God.

1. We can lose the fear of God in times of abundance

Psalms 106:6 Like our ancestors, we have sinned. We have done wrong! We have acted wickedly! 7 Our ancestors in Egypt **were not impressed** by the Lord’s miraculous deeds. They soon forgot his many acts of kindness to them. Instead, **they rebelled** against him at the Red Sea. 8 Even so, he saved them—to defend the honor of his name and to demonstrate his mighty power.

2. Stubborn, unthankful hearts can develop toward God in times of abundance

Psalms 78:5 For he issued his laws to Jacob; he gave his instructions to Israel. He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children, 6 so the next generation might know them... 7 So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands.

10 (But) They did not keep God’s covenant and refused to live by his instructions. 11 They forgot what he had done—the great wonders he had shown them.

3. The Danger of Trusting in Self and in Material Things

Luke 12:15 Then he said, **“Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own.”**¹⁶ Then he told them a story: “A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. ¹⁷ He said to himself, ‘What should I do? I don’t have room for all my crops.’ ¹⁸ Then he said, ‘I know! I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. ¹⁹ And I’ll sit back and say to myself, “My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!”’²⁰ “But God said to him, ‘You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?’

²¹ **“Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.”**

— God’s actions - the good and the bad - are ALWAYS redemptive. **Our ability to learn contentment comes from the challenges of *both* deprivation and blessing.**

Philippians 4: 11...for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. ¹² I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. ¹³ For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

II. We are sufficient only in God, because God alone is sufficient.

A. Sin Takes Us to a Place Where We Need God: Only God is Sufficient to Save Us from Our Sins

Colossians 1:19 For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, ²⁰ and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross.²¹ This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. ²² Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

B. Suffering Takes Us to a Place Where We See Again Our Need for God: Only God is Sufficient to See Us through Our Times of Suffering.

1. When you suffer for His sake

Philippians 1:29 For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him.

2. When life brings its share of suffering and sorrow

James 5:10 For examples of patience in suffering, dear brothers and sisters, look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ We give great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the Lord was kind to him at the end, for the Lord is full of tenderness and mercy.

3. When suffering keeps us humble and trusting in God

Hebrews 4:15 This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

4. When suffering teaches/enables us to be empathetic toward others when they suffer

2 Corinthians 1:4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

C. Not Knowing Where to Turn Takes Us to a Place Where We Need God: Only God is Sufficient to Guide Us with His Truth

Psalms 73: Yet I still belong to you; **you hold my right hand.** ²⁴ **You guide me with your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny.** ²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth. ²⁶ My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but **God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever.** ²⁷ Those who desert him will perish, for you destroy those who abandon you. ²⁸ But as for me, how good it is to be near God!