

BLESSED BEYOND MEASURE

*“I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”
—PHILIPPIANS 4:12-13*

In the above verse, Paul is describing what living a blessed life is about. Jesus used the word ‘blessed’ in each of the eight beatitudes. That may not excite us too much because the words ‘bless’ and ‘blessed’ are vague words, often used without much meaning. For instance, we get up in the morning and say, “Lord, bless us today.” At meals, we say, “Bless this food,” and when someone sneezes, “Bless you,” or the dog has eaten the steak thawing on the counter – “that blessed dog!” Sometimes when we pray for someone, we do not know what to say, so we simply say, “Bless them,” and are basically asking God to fill in the blank.

In Scripture, the word ‘blessed’ actually has a very profound meaning. In Greek it is the word ‘makarios’, which literally means to be happy; not a sunny day, cold drink in hand kind of happy, but a deep inner sense of lasting peace and well being, regardless of our circumstances. This is exactly what Paul knew when he wrote to the Philippians from a prison in Rome. He said, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4). He goes on to say, “The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present

your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (4:5-7).

In the beatitudes, Jesus is talking about being happy ‘makarios’ style, and He tells us, “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33). Many people get so wrapped up in “these things”; food, clothing, length of life, that in their pursuit of happiness, they strive for material wealth, thinking that will make them happy, but they have it backwards.

Human beings are the only living species God created with the capacity for spiritual life. Our spiritual side is the part of us that reaches outside of ourselves for answers to life’s most profound questions, such as those concerning creation, our futures, why we are here and where are we headed. It is not nourishing our bodies or even our souls that are most important, but nourishing our spirits that needs to be the priority. Spiritual life is found in Jesus Christ, and He said, “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10). In Him, we are blessed beyond measure for He is the life that empowers us to live it to the full.

PRAYER: Thank You, Lord, for giving us yourself and being the answer to all of life’s turmoil and struggles.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I living a ‘blessed’ life or simply happy from time to time?