

BLESSED

Matthew 5:2-12

INTRODUCTION: Suppose I knew a secret that was guaranteed to take the knob of **blessing** in your life and turn it up to the maximum setting? Would you want to know the secret? If your answer is, “**yes**” don’t feel bad. You see, I am firmly convinced that God **hardwired** humanity to desire blessing. As a matter of fact he uses our desire for blessing as an *incentive* throughout the Bible.

1. A Biblical Overview of Blessing

A. **In the Beginning** - God created the Heavens and the Earth and placed Man and Woman in a garden that He himself planted. Then we are told that He blessed a day and made it Holy, the seventh day or the sabbath. Then soon after we are told that God blessed Adam and Eve that they may bear children and their progeny fill the Earth.

There in the Garden two trees were planted - one a tree of blessing (the tree of life) the other a tree of cursing (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil). Man was warned not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, lest the day he eat of it, he will surely die. You know the rest of that story. But notice here that even before the fall - Blessing and Cursing is set before mankind.

B. **The Giving of the Law** - We see this strategy continue when God gave His Law through Moses. **Deuteronomy 11:26-28 (ESV)** ²⁶ “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, ²⁸ and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known.”

C. **The Mount of Blessing and Cursing** - We read in the book of **Joshua** that when the 12 tribes of Israel entered into the promised land that they came to two mountains. **Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal** - one lush and fruitful, the other a barren wilderness. Joshua read the law of God, then from one mountain Blessings were proclaimed for him who keeps the law, from the other mountain curses were proclaimed for him who fails to keep the law.

D. **Jesus** - Then as redemptive history progresses to it’s climax, we see Jesus, the Messiah comes onto the scene. It is no accident that his first sermon was concerning the blessing and curse. In the sermon on Mount Jesus gives a road map that contrasts the path to blessing in the **beatitudes** and the path cursing in the Woes included in Lukes rendering - blessing and cursing.

It is very human of you to desire to live the blessed life. As a matter of fact, over 115 Million of your fellow humans have used this the hashtag #blessed in recent days.

It is human of you to desire that your children be blessed after you. As a matter of fact no one in all of scripture was rebuked for wanting the blessing of God.

Now before we go anything further lets get clear on what it means to be BLESSED.

- Does it mean an extra chicken nugget at McDonald's #blessed?
- Does it mean the person in front of you at Starbucks paid for your drink #blessed?
- Does it mean that you have natural Curley hair unlike some of your friends? #blessed?
- Does it mean you get a close parking space at Target? #blessed?

2. A Biblical Definition of Blessing

Well according to scripture **BLESSED** has a very clear definition.

- The OT Hebrew word translated Blessed is the word - BARUK.
- The NT Greek word translated Blessed is the word - MAKARIOS.

In the Greek, the word was never used of humans outside of the Bible. It was only used in reference to the Pantheon of Greek Gods, "The blessed gods".

Both the OT and the NT usage communicates three basic things:

A. Blessing = Provision

Now this is the rarest usage of the word blessed. As a matter of fact in the NT the word blessed is NEVER, not a single time, used to denote material prosperity.

We are told in the OT however that - **Proverbs 10:22 (ESV)**

²² The **blessing** of the Lord makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.

That is there is a kind of material prosperity that is more of a curse than a blessing. But when God gives, it is not mingled with sorrow, it is good.

The book of **Psalms** opens with a promise that, "**Blessed is the man who avoids wicked counsel, but meditates in the law of God day and night...**" Whatever this man does will prosper.

It is FAR more important that our sons and daughters who are going to college understand how to secure the blessing of God than letters after their name.

You see,

- The blessing of God is not threaten by a recession.
- The blessing of God can't be destroyed by a hurricane.
- The blessing of God doesn't depend upon which party is in office.

The blessing of God equals provision... secondly...

B. Blessing = Power

Remember in the garden, before man was able to fill the Earth and subdue it... God had to BLESS him.

Remember the Patriarch Jacob, dressing up like Esau that he might steal the blessing of his father? Why was that so important? Because you see to be blessed was to be empowered. Later Esau begged for the blessing, but it had all been emptied into the life of Jacob.

Deuteronomy 28:1–8 (ESV)

¹ “And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. ² And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God. ...⁷ **“The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you. They shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.**”

Psalm 67:1–2 (ESV)

¹ May God be gracious to us and **bless us** and make his face to shine upon us, *Selah* ² that your way may be known on earth, your saving **power** among all nations.

C. Blessing = Presence

The Shema - was the blessing that Moses commanded the Priests of Israel to speak over the worshippers.

Numbers 6:24–26 (ESV)

²⁴ The Lord bless you and keep you (**Provision** - As Adam Kept the Garden) ; ²⁵ the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you (**Presence** - God smiles upon you); ²⁶ the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

The greatest of all blessings in that God is present in your life experience.

As a matter of fact in the OT when Moses was trying to decide what to do with the Ark of God's presence. God said, “Place me outside the camp, lest you be consumed”. Moses answered and said, “I'd rather you kill us now, than to be apart from your presence”.

NOW - all throughout scripture we are told two things are set before us BLESSING and CURSING.

We know what blessing it, let's talk for a moment about Cursing.

Cursing is basically the opposite of blessing.

A. Blessing means GOD provides, Cursed means YOU provide

Remember after the curse in Genesis 3, Adam had to work against the earth to eat?

Have you ever felt like work is harder than it is supposed to be?

Have you ever felt like Murphy's law has decided to permanently camp at your place?

Some people have a cursed cubical.

B. Blessing means GOD empowers, Cursed means God Destroys

The Curse of God is described in Deuteronomy 28:20–24 (ESV)

²⁰ “The Lord will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in all that you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken me. ²¹ The Lord will make the pestilence stick to you until he has consumed you off the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ²² The Lord will strike you with wasting disease and with fever, inflammation and fiery heat, and with drought and with blight and with mildew. They shall pursue you until you perish. ²³ And the heavens over your head shall be bronze, and the earth under you shall be iron. ²⁴ The Lord will make the rain of your land powder. From heaven dust shall come down on you until you are destroyed.

C. Blessing Means GOD is present, Cursed means the enemy is present

The Prophet Malachi warns of a time when the people were in the grip of greed and they refused to give....what happened? The curse was amplified. **Malachi 2:2**, even your blessings will be cursed. The home you worked so hard for, will become a curse to you. The marriage you begged God for, will become weary and difficult.

We are told that God send a Devourer upon you.

- Could it be that the difficulties that you encounter in life right now are unnecessary
- Could it be that by greed you have amp'd them up?

NOW - MAJOR QUESTION: How do we avoid being cursed and experience being blessed?

3. A Biblical Path to Blessing

The answer is basically the same as the key to real estate. If you walk up to any real estate agent and explain that you are looking to make an investment in land they will tell you that there are three keys to making a wise land investment - **LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.**

Well the same is true for the Blessed Life.

You are either living on **BLESSING ground** or **CURSED Ground.** Simple as that.

Well Pastor, how do I live on BLESSING GROUND? I'm so glad you asked and that is what this series is all about.

How can you live with the face of God smiling upon you?
 How can you live with the windows of Heaven opened over you?
 How can you live with God's presence rebuking the devourer for you?

The scriptures show several keys to the blessing of God and we are going to unpack those in the days ahead. **The Key Answer is the ATTITUDE of your HEART.**

Your heart is either attracting the Blessing of God or the Curse of God. There is no neutral ground.

I want our church to be as blessed as it can possibly be. The key to a blessed church is families who live on blessing ground. The key to families living on blessing ground is for each member of that family, and in particular the husband to keep the attitude of his heart in a way that God will be pleased to bless it.

How do we do that? For that answer we turn to the words of Jesus. The words written in red. In scripture they are called, "Beatitudes". I divide these beatitudes into three categories.

1. The **Humility** of the Heart (vrs. 1-5)
2. The **Desire** of the Heart (vrs. 6)
3. The **Action** of the Heart (vrs 7-12)

Why is the focus on the attitude? Because it's not so much about what happens TO us, but what happens IN us that determines whether we are blessed or cursed.

The Beatitudes are the Attitudes that ATTRACT God to us.

You heart attitude is either attracting or repelling God from your life.

ILLUSTRATION: The story is told of two mischievous grandkids who spent the weekend at their grandparents home. They noticed that every evening about the same time grandpa laid down for his evening nap. One particular evening the two boys went into the kitchen and found their grandmother's Limburger cheese and brought it and rubbed it all over their grandfather's handlebar mustache. In a few minutes granddad woke up.... And sniffed. "This room stinks he said". Then he went into the kitchen and said, "This Kitchen stinks". Thinking some fresh air might do him some good he went outside and declared, "The whole world stinks".

May I ask you - do you tend to think the whole world stinks? If you do - it's not so much about what has happened to you, but what is happening within you.

John Maxwell was right - *your attitude determines your altitude.*