

Jeremiah Contrasting the Two Options on Trust

by Bob Hoekstra

The sermon contrasts the two options of trust: trusting in man, which leads to a curse, or trusting in God, which brings blessedness.

Scripture: Psalm 146:3, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 26:3, Jeremiah 17:5, Jeremiah 17:7

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Spiritual Blessings"

Description

Bob Hoekstra preaches on the critical choice between trusting in man or God, as highlighted in Jeremiah 17:5-8a. Placing trust in man leads to a curse, resulting in spiritual barrenness and a departure from the Lord, while trusting in the Lord brings blessings and grace. Dependence on human resources leads to a cursed spiritual existence of carnal desolation, like a shrub in the desert, devoid of vitality and fruitfulness. However, those who trust in the Lord experience the blessedness of His grace and abundant life.

Transcript

Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited. Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD." (Jeremiah 17:5-8a)

Jeremiah also offers insight into living by grace as he contrasts the two options on trust. When it comes to where we will place our trust, there are basically only two choices: man or God. This choice is a critical one, because one is a curse, and the other is a blessing. "Cursed is the man who trusts in man . . . Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD."

The natural mind of fallen humanity places its confidence in man (usually, in themselves). The flesh of every born again believer in Jesus Christ is tempted to place trust in the same direction. This brings a very serious spiritual curse. "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength." When we exercise dependence upon man, we can only draw upon fleshly resources for strength. This amounts to a departure from the Lord in whom we are to trust: "whose heart departs from the LORD." The Lord is the only source of all true blessings. Consequently, to trust in man results in a curse.

The curse that results from depending upon human resources (ours or others) is barrenness of life, spiritually speaking. "For he shall be like a shrub in the desert." A desert shrub represents the antithesis of abundant spiritual life. It is the picture of a plant that is barely surviving. Desert shrubs are typically sparse in growth and lacking in fruitfulness. A person who trusts in flesh is like this shrub. Also, he will not see good days of bountiful vitality. "For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes." People who trust in the fallen resources of man never do really see days that God's word would call good. Rather, they dwell in spiritual conditions that are like salty soil, wastelands, scorched land, incapable of habitation: "but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited." Such living is a cursed spiritual existence of carnal desolation.

Yet, there is a fully effective option by which such barrenness can be avoided. "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD."

Dear Lord, I confess that I have often trusted in myself. I agree with Your word that the flesh always brings the curse of spiritual barrenness. I have found the same is true when I place my hope in others. Lord, teach me to trust in You, that I might know the blessedness of having Your grace as my resource, Amen.

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