

Let God Always Be Your Strength - Wedding

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God and His strength, rather than trusting in the arm of the flesh, in order to receive the blessing of God and avoid the curse.

Duration: 42:34

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:7, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:7, Matthew 15:14, John 2:1-10, Acts 9:1-22

Topics: "Wedding"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by praying for the presence of Jesus, just like at the wedding of Cana where the wine Jesus provided was better than the earthly wine. The preacher then references Jeremiah 17:7, which states that those who trust in the Lord are blessed. The sermon then shifts to Joshua 24, where the preacher asks the congregation what they desire and imagine for their marriage. The preacher emphasizes the importance of trusting in the Lord and not relying on one's own strength or feelings. The sermon concludes with the reminder that serving the Lord should be the priority for oneself and one's household.

Transcript

We pray, Lord Jesus, that you will be in our midst, just like at the wedding of Cana, where the end was much better than the start. The last wine, much better, the wine that you gave, better than the earthly wine that they had. Give us to hear not earthly words, but heavenly words.

Grant us that we may drink not human wine, but heavenly wine. Amen. Jeremiah 17, verse 7 Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.

Joshua 24 I and my house want to serve the Lord. So far. Now it's your marriage today.

Wonder what you desired and wished and imagined this day would be like. If we could just open your hearts to see what were you really expecting and what would be the most, the loveliest thing for you today. Maybe this meeting all the friends and family again.

Or maybe the photos. Or the reception afterwards. What would be the most precious to you? I phoned Klaus this morning early.

And I said to him, Klaus, how on earth did you find this text? Why did you choose it? There are so many pages in the Bible. How on earth did you find this text? Klaus chose these two texts. And I thought about it

last night and I said, Klaus, how did you happen upon this verse? How did you find it? Amongst so many verses and so many words in the Bible.

How did you happen upon this one? Yesterday we were on the way to Empangeni. Uncle Günther, Zig, Detlef, I was the only one there. We three went and we spoke about this word.

And I said that the bridegroom read a word and I said, I think it was Jeremiah 27. And Uncle Günther said, no, 17 verse 7. He said, that's what's written here. And then he told us this word.

And he told us the verses preceding this and the verses after. And Uncle Günther was there too and he was blind as well. And he said, we blind people see more than you do that can see with your eyes.

And I said, Günther, how did you think of this? And he said, that's my wedding text. Did you ask Uncle Günther? He said, no. He could have gone to Uncle Günther and said, tell me, what was your text and I'll use that text for my wedding.

Now back to this verse. Blessed, but blessed is the man. Here we have to do with the blessing of God.

There is much said about blessing in the Bible. This morning on the way to the funeral, I took along my Hebrew concordance and read it on the way. And I was astonished about how often it is said, blessed be God.

Blessed be the Lord God. Blessed be the God of Abraham. I was amazed to see how often it was said, blessed be the Lord, blessed be the Lord God, blessed be the God of Abraham.

God is a blessed God. And Abraham was a blessed person. When you read in the Bible about the blessing, God's blessing makes you rich without any problems.

Everything depends on God's blessing. And here it says, blessed is that man. So it depends on that.

That is the greatest thing for this day. In this new chapter of your life, if you go in with the blessing of God, then you are blessed. That is the best.

The cry in the heart for the blessing of God. If you lose that, then your future will not be good. If this cry in the heart after the blessing of God, if you should lose it, then your future won't be good.

Now we read here that, but blessed. This but refers to that which was mentioned previously. The verses that precede this one.

Something was said. And then you read, but, blessed is. What then was written before this? What is at stake here? What does God say? There we also read about a man.

But it is something else. Then it says, so says the Lord. Cursed is the one, not blessed.

Here we've got the curse and blessing. In the world we just find two things. Just two ways.

The one is blessed. And the other is cursed. A middle way.

And the third way does not exist. There is no possibility for anything else. Either the man is blessed, or he is cursed.

And if he is not cursed, then he is blessed. There is no middle way, there is no third way. Either the man is blessed, or he is cursed.

There is no other way. Now, according to verse 7. Blessed, but blessed is the man. The man that is blessed, things will never go wrong for him.

Spiritually it will never go astray. Because he is blessed. But if the blessing is not there, then the curse is there.

And if the curse is there, then it will be like a bush in the wasteland. Just like a bush in the desert. And will not see the prosperity or the comfort that is to come.

And how sad it is if there is no comfort ahead. And he will dwell in the wasteland, in the parched places. Just imagine a life like that, to live in the wasteland, in the desert without water.

In a salt land where no one lives. There live the jackals. There live the wild animals.

But he who is blessed, is like a tree planted at the water. Who has got his roots at the stream. And though the heat may come, he will not fear.

His leaves are always green. His spiritual leaves just don't wither. They always stay green.

And he has no worries, even in a year of drought. We don't know what the future holds for us. There can be some years of drought and times of want and drought.

Even in the marriage and with the children. But the blessed man doesn't fear and doesn't worry. He brings fruit non-stop.

And if you think about all this and you wonder now, how did Klaus come across this verse? If you desire this, then you are seeking the very best. There is nothing that is better than that in this world. And that this desire is not only on the lips and the words, but is really a desire of the heart.

How wonderful it is if in a desert, in a very dry land, there is a tree whose leaves are always green. Never stopping to produce fruit. We know what the fruits are, the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Love. Friendliness. Joy.

Patience. Never impatient. The works of the flesh are not unfriendly.

But the fruit of the Holy Spirit that never stops, never comes to an end. No. Not dry leaves of bitterness, of not forgiving, things like that.

Those are the fruits in the life of a person where there is a curse. Now where does the curse come from that we read about here? It says here, the sin of such a person is the one who depends on the arm of the flesh. Cursed is the one who trusts in man.

Let's have a closer look at this. One who depends on man. Maybe a good person, maybe a good friend, maybe a rich person and you rely on him and then the Lord says then you are cursed.

And he who takes the flesh as his arm of strength. And whose heart turns away from the Lord. And there is also a translation that says, who turns away with his thoughts from the Lord.

We find the Lord in the Bible. And if we turn away with our thoughts from that which the Bible teaches us, then we are turning away from the Lord. The person who builds on his own strength or on man or on the arm of the flesh.

So blessed is the man who does not look for his help with man. And not in the world. It is not a bad thing to have good friends.

The psalmist says that he has prayed to the Lord for one thing, that he may be in the house of the Lord all the days of his life. The Bible teaches us that God does not live in a house built with brick and stone. His house is built with living stones.

Those are the people who walk with God. So we can also say, blessed is the man that lives amongst the children of God, that lives in the people where God lives and where he has got his throne in their midst. But you must not build on them, you must build on the Lord.

I want to tell you a secret, but it is not a secret anymore, because I have been telling you for 20, 30, 40 years already. Those people that built on Erlose Degen, the people that spoke about Erlose Degen, that said everything about Erlose Degen, they were the first that stabbed me in the back. I fear the people, and this experience has taught me, to fear people that do not build on the Lord.

Even if they build on any man, even on Erlose Degen, they are the first that have left me in the lurch. My best friends are those that build on the Lord, that rely on the Lord. With them you can go into the future.

With them you can face anything that comes. The greatest is to put your trust completely in the Lord. That it is an absolute personal thing for you, Klaus, and for you, Ingrid, to build this and have this relationship and trust in the Lord.

It is very good to have friends and to be with friends. But I know of many AIDS patients that said to me, when we were doing well, we had many friends. But now that we are dying from AIDS, they have all left us.

But I know of many AIDS patients that said to me, when we were doing well, we had many friends. But now that we are dying from AIDS, they have all left us. When everything goes well, you have plenty of friends.

But when difficult times come, not so. Never let a man, a human being, be the arm on which you depend. Be it a man, be it a woman, you should rely on God.

Be it your child, you should rely on God and nothing else. Even if it is your husband, or your wife, or your child, do not put your trust in them. You are to trust on the Lord.

In Isaiah 53 we read, To whom has the arm of the Lord been made known? That is he who had a meeting with the Lord, and who trusts in the Lord, and who reckons on the arm, the strength of the Lord. In the Bible we often read about kingdoms relying on Egypt, relying on Syria, relying on people, the kings. And then it went wrong.

Then you are disappointed, then you despair, then the matter is hopeless. No confidence for the future. In the Bible we often read about kingdoms relying on Egypt, relying on Syria, relying on people, the kings.

And then it went wrong. Then you are disappointed, then you despair, then the matter is hopeless. And then another point, people can come and tell you many things.

Things that are true, things that are not true, and then you build on those. Now the Bible tells us not to go by hearsay, and to listen to tales. And that is a trick of the devil, to take your eyes away from the Lord, and then you do not have the right perspective about things anymore.

And then to another point, because it is the man who relies on man, and who relies on the strength of the flesh. There is still another danger, that we depend on ourselves. We may never, never rely on ourselves.

Maybe that is even the greatest danger. It is not the sin in somebody else that grieves the Holy Spirit in me, it is my own sin. I am the biggest danger to myself.

The Zulu Christians sing a song, your greatest enemy is your own heart. Peter said to the Lord, yes you can expect it of John, of James, and the other disciples, but I will never ever forsake you. Yes, you can expect it of the others.

They have got this weakness of character, but not I. I will stay true to you forever. How sure was Peter not, he was so very sure and confident about his own confidence. He said, yes Lord, the others may leave you, but I am prepared, I will go even unto death together with you.

And then a young girl came and confronted him, and he collapsed in her presence. He had just drawn his sword and tried to kill this man, who probably ducked, and he just cut his ear off. Cut his ear off so that the blood came out.

I will fight for you, I will go right unto death with you. And how terribly he failed very, very soon afterward. He did not trust in somebody else's strength, he was relying on his own strength.

That was because of his own wicked heart, which is very arrogant, and yet fails very quickly. Who can fathom the heart of man? He can try and soft-soap you this minute, and the next minute he will kill you, like they said to the Lord. Crucify him! Never build on your own heart, own strength, own experience, own feelings.

Today you've got these feelings, tomorrow you'll have different feelings. Once you're at the top, the next minute you're right at the bottom. Cursed is the man that trusts in the arm of the flesh, and not in the arm of the Lord.

Now may this text be like a precious necklace of pearls around your neck, that you'll never ever forget in all your life. Trust the Lord, trust the Lord. Then blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose confidence is the Lord.

There is not concerning people, the Lord is all that matters. At the funeral I reminded them of this, that Paul says, When it pleased God to reveal his Son to me, I didn't discuss it with people, and he didn't end up being a blind led by the blind, but he followed God. And then to the second word, I and my house we will serve the Lord.

Again we find this but, I and my house. He asked the people, who do you want to serve? Here too he asked the people, who do you want to serve? The Gods beyond the river, the Gods from Egypt, do you want to serve the Gods of the world? Do you want to do and be like they all are? He says, but I and my

house we want to serve the Lord. What's going to matter is what God says.

Then you Ingrid will be a blessed woman, and you Klaus will be a blessed man, and yours will be a blessed home. Now I ask myself, when I thought of this word Joshua, did you know your wife so well, that you could say that she would serve the Lord? Did you know that she was going to go this way? I ask myself, when I thought of this word Joshua, did you know your wife so well, that you could say that she was going to go this way? Now I ask myself, Joshua, did you know your wife so well? Did you know your children so well, that you could confidently say, even those children that are striving after the things of the world, not all men can say that. Some men say that I want to go the way of the Lord, but my wife won't.

My children don't want to. There's a lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, that's all world, John says. He says, and if the love of the world is there, God's love isn't in their heart.

John says, and if the love of the world is there, God's love isn't in their heart. Or maybe there was the possibility, that despite the lust of the wife and the children, he simply said, I and my house, my house he would serve. I don't know.

I think love, how nice it would be, if he could also speak for his wife, that she was also a decisive one. And his children, from the oldest to the youngest, a decisive Christ. Blessed is the man, blessed is the woman, and blessed is such a house.

Now maybe Joshua said, in spite of the rebellion of his children or his wife, he said, in this home we're going to serve the Lord. I don't know. But I would rather it be so, that Joshua could say, my wife is a determined Christian.

My children are decided and they're going with me in this way. Now I believe, Klaus, that you chose this word, because it's your desire and Ingrid's as well. And that this is for all of us, young and old.

There is the curse, there is the blessing. Only two possibilities. There is no other possibility.

The dry tree in the desert, or the evergreen one. What do you choose, friends? God decides what your answer is. May that be our choice.

And if we think of the two trees, the one in the desert and the one with the green leaves all the time, what is your choice, dear friends? God hears the answer.

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