

Be a Blessing

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes that God's blessings are meant to be shared, encouraging believers to be conduits of His love and goodness to others.

Duration: 22:42

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-3, Matthew 7:2, Luke 6:30, Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Topics: "Blessing"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the promises made by God to Abraham in Genesis. The four promises mentioned are: making Abraham into a great nation, blessing him, making his name great, and making him a blessing. The preacher then challenges the audience to consider which of these promises apply to them and which are specific to Abraham. The sermon also touches on the concept of being a leech and emphasizes the importance of giving and resembling God the Father. The preacher concludes by sharing a personal story about a man who had to leave what he liked in order to serve Jesus Christ and ended up marrying the woman he loved.

Transcript

Who's the man in the Bible that's called the father of everyone who believes? Who's also the father of the Jewish people? But Paul says he's the father of everyone who has faith. The first words that God ever spoke to Abraham, the first words, the first two of what we call verses, are very interesting verses. Because although they were spoken to Abraham, it's God's plan for every one of his followers, i.e., believers.

The promise made to Abraham was unique for him, but it incorporates God's plan for Evelyn and the women tomorrow, and the deacons and the deaconesses and everybody from Connecticut and Michigan and wherever else you're from. Let's look at it just for a second. The Lord had said to Abraham, I'm going to refer to him as Abraham even though his name hadn't changed yet, the Lord had said to Abraham, leave your country, your people, and your father's household, and go to the land I will show you, and I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

Listen again. The Lord had said to Abraham, past tense, and it happened sometime in the past, leave, these are the first words God ever spoke to Abraham, leave, leave your country, your people, and your father's household, and go to the land I will show you. Now notice that's the command, although there's a

promise in it.

Notice the promise, and go to the land I will show you. What's the promise? I will show you the land. What's the command? Leave and go.

That's a command. The promise, the first promise was, and I will show you where you're supposed to go even though you don't know where you're going. Now here are all promises, four of them.

Number one in verse two, I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, that's promise two. Promise three, I will make your name great, number four, and you will be a blessing. Let's just analyze those four promises and try to think, which ones are just for Abraham, and which ones could apply to us? Which ones are just for Abraham, and which ones are just for us? Someone could say in a way they're all for us, but let's analyze them.

First promise, I will make you into a great nation. Well, God was speaking of from your loins is going to come the people of Israel. I will make you into a great nation.

We could say God has made us into a great nation because we are now a holy people. God has put us, how many are citizens of heaven, right? We got heaven on our mind, so we're part of a great nation, but we're not the forefathers of it like Abraham was, so that's more for him than us. Promise number two, I will bless you.

How many are claiming that one? Lift your hand up high. I will bless you, that's a promise. And I will make your name great.

Well, somebody could say we belong to the body of Christ, and we are the bride, and God has made us who are nothing into a name that's going to be shown to principalities and powers what he has done, but it's more for Abraham than for us. But the fourth one, and you will be a blessing. Let's put it together.

That's for all of us. Number, second promise and the fourth promise in verse two, I will bless you. I will make you a blessing.

Say it with me. I will bless you, and I will make you a blessing. Come on, everyone say it.

I will bless you, I will make you a blessing. That's God's plan for Wanda, for Karen, for Pam, for James, for Felipe, for every of the sopranos, all the tenors, for the prayer band, everybody. I will bless you because I love you.

I will bless you. Did you know that God was waiting for us before we gathered here tonight, and he's not here to judge us. He's not here to hurt us.

He's here to bless us. Why? Why does he want to bless us? Because whoever you love, you do not go in, you go out to help and bless. Because when you love, you're saved from selfishness.

Selfish people, proud people can't get involved in others because they're wrapped up in their selves. By the way, there's an interesting article today somewhere where I saw it, one of the newspapers. A recent survey has shown that this Facebook phenomena and addiction, did you know that people are so now addicted to Facebook and texting and all of that, that if they go on vacation and something should break, they have worse withdrawal than crack or heroin.

No, no, no, you're laughing. It's not a joke. I'm saying they can't exist.

You know, it would be very nice if some of you, I wonder how some of you would get closer to God if you just took your cell phone and everything else and just locked it up somewhere and locked it away for 48 hours. Could you make it? That's right. Some of you, you can't make it without that.

You can't live without that. Doesn't that drivenness tell you that this is not good for you? You're not driven to read the word. You're not driven to pray for somebody.

No, you're driven to just trivia, nonsense. I'm taking a shower later. Good.

God bless you. Take a shower. But what they're saying is this is true.

This is serious. What they're saying is it's making everyone a narcissist because all they do is they're dwelling on their life. Sometimes they'll send a birthday greeting to someone that they're connected to, but it's a narcissist.

And now some people are saying I'm going into depression and I'm feeling all down because God made a law for all of us. The more you think about yourself, the more you go down, the more you think of him and others, your spirits are lifted. Come on, everybody say amen.

So someone prayer for deliverance, they want prayer for deliverance from their depression and all of that. But there is no prayer unless you change your ways. That's what repent means.

It means change it. Stop it. Stop it.

Just stop it. And if you can't stop it, then really stop it. Then really call out to God and say, I'm bound by the thing.

I'm bound by the thing. All I can do is think about myself and new things to say about myself. Doesn't it get tiring just to think about yourself with all the needs around us and people coming from Uganda with a heart condition and all you're thinking about is what? Yourself? Give it a rest.

So how did I get off on that tension? I have no idea. But anyway, I will bless you and I will make you a blessing. That's God's plan for everyone.

Because love blesses. But notice this. The reason God blesses is not that you would be happy, that you would be a blessing.

This is the secret that so many people have not found. And they wonder why they don't have more from God. Because God says, I will bless you and make you a blessing.

Oh, you don't want to be a blessing? Then I won't bless you. Why waste the blessing? I'm looking for people who will pass on the blessing. I shower you with love, then you can bless somebody else with your love.

I show attention to you, now you show attention. I give to you, now you give to somebody else. I lift you up, now why don't you go and lift somebody up.

Didn't I bless you by lifting you up? Then what, you're not going to lift somebody else up? Then why should I keep lifting you up? Doesn't that get old? Lift me up, lift me up, lift me up. For what? Just to lift me up. I'm

not going to help anybody else.

No, this is very serious. This is very serious. This is God's plan for all humanity.

I will bless you and make you a blessing. God is not a God of cursing. He's a God of blessing.

That's his natural act. Judgment is his strange act, the Bible says. So he wants to bless us.

He wants to bless me. Well, of course, he's love. Love blesses.

Love doesn't take joy in cursing, punishing. Whom the Lord loves, he does chasten. But that's not what love delights in doing.

Love delights in blessing, giving, going. Why? That you can be a blessing. So some of you have to come to your senses today and God has to open your heart.

Do you want to be a blessing or you just want the blessing for yourself and your family? Or do you want to be a conveyor, a conduit, so that the world can be blessed? This is why God most often does miracles and acts in works of power when you're reaching out to others. Not when the churches circle the wagons and we're just talking to ourselves. The same 40 people in some churches, week after week, month after month, year after year, bless me Lord, bless me Lord.

And I say in Spanish to you, por qué? Why? Why would God bless us? If you don't want to pass the blessing on, why would he bless you? It goes against his nature. God is reaching out, blessing, loving for us to love the world that he gave. And here we're saying, bless me, give me, give me.

Why? Until I have my next problem, then bless me again and give me. And God says, no, Abraham, I will bless you and I will make you a blessing. You don't even know what God could do through some of us here if we would just open up the tap and say, God, bless me so that I can bless others.

Give to me so that I could give more. There was a millionaire man back when a million dollars was a lot of money, who took care of my then girlfriend's family, Carol's family. Her dad was in the ministry, left pastoring and was traveling around the world.

And this man from Switzerland, God bless him, he's still alive. Precious, quiet man, had some greenhouses that just kept multiplying, getting bigger. And he supported, I think, my behind the scenes, unknown to anyone.

He basically put food on the table for my wife's family for about five years. And what he did was, he wanted to be a blessing, but he did it, he supported ministries he believed in. He did undercover stuff, helping people.

And what he did was, he said, God, I want to be a blessing. So I'll give you 90%. I'm not going to give a tithe.

I'll live on the tithe. You have 90. And he made a covenant with God.

I'll give 90% and I'll live on the 10. And when God saw it, he couldn't stop it. If you met him and his wife, you'd say, what, just a little couple from Switzerland? I mean, what's that about? And then you would go on his property and his greenhouses and all the businesses.

Because when God sees someone who's going to bless, he says, I will pour out my blessing on you. Why? Because that's the reason for the blessing. Remember that verse in 2 Corinthians, the father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all of our trouble.

Why? So that you'll feel better? No, so that you can comfort others with the same comfort that you were comforted with. There's a lot of hurting people. So when you go through something and Pam doesn't know how she can take another day of life, and then God comes and comforts her and strengthens her.

Why? Just to help her and deliver her? No. So that Pam can go and her husband and their family can go and comfort others with the same comfort that God gave them. It's pass it on.

You want more? Pass it on. You want less from God? Hold on to it. That's the rule.

Boy, this is good preaching for a Tuesday night. It's incredible. I'm only kidding.

I'm only kidding, but it's true, isn't it? Is it not true? And why some of you aren't clapping so loud, you're under conviction because your life is me, myself, and I. That's all your life is. I meet people who should know better. I say, do you tithe? No, I'm struggling with it.

I'm a little bit. What are you struggling with? Tithe. If you don't love God, then don't tithe.

And if you love God and want to honor him, tithe. I don't get what the mystery is here. No, but what it is, it's about me, myself, and I. God's cause is in the back seat.

Me, myself, and I, what I need, my family needs, that's front and center. And that's the way to lose out with you and your family. You want the blessing of God on your family? Just say, God bless me so I can bless others.

No, now bless me more so I can bless more. Thank you, God, but now I need double blessing so I can double bless other people. See how God starts to work in your life.

See how much lighter you feel. See how much more joy you have in peace. But some of us, we have no outlet in our life.

We're like the dead sea. You know the dead sea is the deadest sea. Why? Because there's no outlet for that sea.

Did you know that you naturally float there even if you don't know how to float? The water is so heavy. And you just lay on the top of it. Why? It's corroded.

It's the dead sea. Why? Because nothing goes out. It just stays there.

And God says to Abraham, I'm going to bless you, but I want to make you a blessing. Isn't that the plan for the Christian church? I've saved you. Now go tell somebody else how I saved you.

No, I got to just keep it to myself and rejoice. No, tell somebody else. I healed you.

I once came through for you when your back was against the wall. So tell somebody. So their back against the wall won't be their downfall, but they'll call on me because they see what I did for you.

Pass it on, speak it on, love it on, give it on. And you know why it's quiet here? Because there's conviction here. That's why.

But you know why? I'm still going to preach that because that's the truth, and that challenges me. I don't want to be a leech. You know, the Proverbs says there's three words a leech has, more, more, and more.

Those are the three words a leech has, according to Proverbs. You ever meet people who are a leech? They have nothing to say to you if you're in need, but if they're in need, more, more, and more. They're leeches.

I didn't say that. The Bible says that. Leeches, just more, more, and more.

But God says, that's not planned for my people. I want my people, my children to resemble my Father, Jesus said. You resemble, you give, and it shall be given unto you.

Forgiven, you should be forgiven. It's a law, brothers and sisters. The more you go out and bless, the more God says, I will bless you.

I'll bless you so you can be a blessing, then I'll bless you more when I see there's a conduit going out. Oh, God help us. Help us as a church.

Help us as people. What are we going to sit and thank God we're saved for the rest of our lives? Are we going to open our mouths and open our hearts and start loving people? Now, the last thought. Well, let me ask you this before we close.

How many want more blessing from God so you can pass on the blessing? Come on, lift up your hand if you've been convicted. How many have heard God speak to your heart today? Just wave from this little I've said. Come on, is that not true what I've said? Now, what was the only command that God gave Abraham? Leave.

Why leave? Because the place of blessing is always a place that you have to go to by leaving something. You got to leave your sin if you want to walk under God's blessing. You can't be involved in fornication and adultery, homosexuality and then say, but bless me, God.

No, no, you got to leave that to get to the place of blessing. It's a pure blessing from God, but you got to get to where the fountain is. And that's why God said to Abraham, I'm not blessing you where you are.

You leave and I'll make you a blessing. You leave. There's always a leaving.

There's always a leaving. Maybe it's also leaving the plans that you have for your life. You want to know the real blessing of God? Leave the plans that you have for you and your marriage and what you're planning to do with your life and what you like.

Leave it and see what God will do. Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to inland China. I've been reading his two volume biography.

Oh my goodness. I'm going through boxes of Kleenex with that thing. Just weeping the hardship he endured.

But to get to be this great man of faith, he had to leave comfortable England. That was his leaving for him. Not everyone has the same.

He left England and the comforts of home to go out. And when he got there, the blessing of God started to come. Were there difficulties? Yes, but the blessing of God came.

He fell in love with this beautiful girl, this woman. He fell in love with her and there were hardly any people he could relate to over there. But he was the first missionary, by the way, to wear Chinese dress.

He was a revolutionary. He was fought against and they backbite him and wrote bad letters about him that he was a fanatic because he dressed. He said, if we're going to reach a Chinese, I got to dress like the Chinese.

So he learned Chinese and he cut his hair off here and wore the Q and he wore Chinese garb. And then he met this girl over there who was part of another mission. And there were so few missionaries then.

We're talking 1855, 1858 before the Civil War here in America. And he met this girl and he falls in love with this girl, but he now doesn't know how to approach her and all of that. And she's under the care of a very stern missionary woman who runs a tight ship and is a woman of faith.

And finally, he conveys to the girl his feelings, says, I care for you. I would like to be able to see you. So she goes to this woman who's kind of over her and says, he wants to go out, you know, take, be with me.

And the woman says, what? He's a nut. He's dressed like a Chinaman. He's much too unstable for you.

I forbid you to ever see him again. And she being submissive to this woman has to convey now back to him, I'm sorry, I can't see you. And he's in love with her and he's trying to do missionary work and all he can do is think about this girl, you know, the stuff that he went through, you know, you have to leave what you like to serve Jesus Christ.

Praise God. He ended up marrying her. Oh, I got to tell you the end of the story.

He ended up marrying her because when you're blessing others, God just works everything out for you. You know, maybe you have to leave your plans. God's called you to be a missionary.

God's called you to do something. I know I had to leave because that's the last thing I want to do is be a minister. I had a plan for my life.

I had a plan for my life. Work in the business world, work for the airlines, travel around, take vacations, married to a pretty girl and that's it. And God said, no.

And I said, no. How about that? God says, no, something else. No, not interested.

You have to leave. You have to leave your comfort zone. You have to leave your laziness.

You have to leave the things that take you away from the Bible. Come on, the Holy Spirit right now just address all of our hearts. You got to leave the thing that blocks you from communion with God.

What is the thing that blocks you from deeper communion with God? Maybe that's what God is saying. If you'll just leave, you will come under a faucet of such blessing. And that blessing will then flow out to others.

But you first got to leave. So that's why surrender songs are so important in the church. It's wonderful to praise God and say hallelujah and your grace is enough.

Your grace is enough. All of those songs are biblical and they're right. But the deepest worship you can ever give God is when you say, God, here I am.

Where you lead me, I will follow. I'll leave wherever you tell me to leave. Maybe it's location.

Maybe it's attitude. Maybe it's your prejudice. You got to leave that.

How in the world would God bless you if you're black here tonight and you got prejudice toward white people or other races? How would God possibly pour the blessing or if you're a white racist? And how could you claim that promise when you're sitting in that house of prejudice? And God says, no, leave it and just go out. I'll show you where to go. But I will then, when you leave, I will bless you and make you a blessing.

Leave your security. Leave the thing that you're depending on other than God. Leave that idol that you have that has competition.

Even it makes competition for God. Leave it. But you know what? The Holy Spirit has to do it.

Close your eyes with me. We're just going to sit and pray for a while. We've made noise.

We've had clapping. We've had a lot of good things happen. Sometimes though, you know, to surrender and let God talk to you, you got to go into a different kind of mode of prayer.

I just wonder if there's some people who God was talking to while I was talking. And you're saying, pastor, God has spoken to my heart. I feel him drawing me.

He wants to bless me to make me a great blessing. But he's dealing with some things in my life. They're unspoken.

You make your confession to God, to Christ. Anybody here who says, pastor, God's calling. I'm supposed to go and leave something, whether it's a place, an attitude, or whatever.

But I want the full blessing of God so that I can be a blessing. I just don't want to do in the bless me club. I want to be blessed so I could be a blessing.

Come out of your seat and just stand with my friends. Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive tonight everyone who has trespassed against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory.

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