

Blessed to Bless

by Jim Cymbala

God's plan for blessing is not just for personal gain, but to be a blessing to others, and this requires faith, generosity, and a shift in focus from self-centeredness to others.

Duration: 23:48

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-2, Genesis 49:22, Matthew 6:33, John 7:38

Topics: "Blessing"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of vital truths in the Bible. He explains that while all truths should be studied, there are certain truths that are more essential for Christians to know in order to grow spiritually. The speaker also emphasizes the importance of sharing the blessings and testimonies that God gives us with others. He references the concept of rivers of living water flowing from within believers, symbolizing the overflow of blessings that should be shared with others. The sermon then delves into the story of Abraham in Genesis 12, highlighting God's plan to bless and show favor to His people.

Transcript

At the beginning of the year, I began a series on vital truths, vital truths, with the idea that the Bible is full of truth, it's God's word, but there are concentric circles of truth, and there are really vital ones in the middle if you're gonna be a strong Christian and grow. And then there's other concentric circles of other truths, but not as vital as those truths. All truths, all should be studied, we should learn, but if you only had X number of weeks with some congregation and you were a pastor, what would you count on as the most important things they must need to know? And today is one of them, and it's off the beaten track a little, although it's a vital truth, and because it's not talked about much, people in the band, people in the congregation, pastors, choir members, we're missing so much because we have never been taught, or we never understood, or never read in the proper light God's plan for his people when it comes to blessing them, to show favor to them, to give them what they need, and then some, oftentimes.

So we go back to the Old Testament to a very critical chapter, chapter 12 of Genesis, which is the beginning of the Jewish people as we know it, the Israelites. Let's look at it, Genesis 12, verse one and two. The Lord had said to Abram, who later became known as Abraham, go from your country, your people, and your father's household to the land I will show you.

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. The Lord said to Abram, now Abram was living in Ur of the Chaldees, which is straight east of Israel, the land of Canaan, the land of promise, and why God chose him is in the sovereignty of God. He chooses whom he wants, but he chose Abraham to be the father of his people in the Old Testament.

This is the first transaction that we know between them. No scripture, no churches, no synagogues, no temple, no Moses, no law, no nada, nothing. God reveals himself to Abram and says, leave where you are, the food, the culture, what you're used to, where you feel safe, leave it, and go to a land I will show you.

Well, where is that? Don't worry, I'll show it to you. That takes faith. He leaves everything to go who knows where.

This is how God's relationship with Abraham began. Now, he makes some promises that apply only to Abraham, and then he makes some promises that always stand true for his people. Let's see if we can sort it out.

To leave your household, to leave your family, literally, it's not a promise for all of us. God is not saying leave where you live now and get to some other place. That is not applicable to us, although he does do that sometimes.

I will make you into a great nation. That's not for us. We're not gonna be the father of a people like Abraham was.

And I will bless you. How many claim that promise, say amen? I will bless you. Oh, that's all throughout scripture.

I will make your name great. No, that's not for us. That's for Jesus.

His name is the greatest name. He's the greatest man I know is what the choir sings. And that's the name, as we go through the scripture, that is to be lifted up.

God is to get glory. I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. And you have to couple that with the first phrase in verse two.

I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and you will be a blessing. I will bless you and you will be a blessing.

Say that with me. I will bless you and you will be a blessing. Say it again.

I will bless you. God's plan from the beginning to those who belong to him and who have put their trust in him, Old and New Testament, is this. Count on this and be sure.

I will bless you. I will help you. I will show my favor toward you because you trust me and you walk with me.

I will bless you. Every day we get up, we should be expecting the blessing of God. There are many cynical people, lacking faith, very narrow in their thinking, not biblically informed.

They wake up nervous, anxious. I don't know what's gonna happen in ISIS and this and the economy and whatever political, international trouble, North Korea, whatever, and all of that. But the believers are taught to wake up every morning and say, this is the day the Lord has made.

He's gonna bless me today. Can we all just put our hands together and affirm that together? God is gonna bless me. Now, for those of you who have been brought up around legalism, you struggle with that.

We struggle with that. But let's be honest. It's Mother's Day.

What mother would wake up her child and see that beautiful baby, boy or girl, that the mother loves so much? The mother wouldn't wanna bless the child that day? Wait a minute, the mother wouldn't wanna help the child. If the child fell and scraped her knee, you mean the mother wouldn't pick her up and try to help her? Well, of course she would. And if a mother wants to bless her children and a father, too, how much more does God, every single day, if we'll just get into the proper posture of receiving and faith and believing in him, he wants to bless us.

What does he wanna do, curse us? Is he blessing or cursing? What do you want? How many want blessing with me today? God's gonna bless me. Oh, but I'm not gonna. God didn't talk about that to Abraham.

He didn't say, here's a list of 11 things that you have to do. No, just trust me, go where I tell you to go, and I will bless you, period. I will bless you.

The Bible says in the New Testament that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. Everything you need, everything I need today, we have it in Christ Jesus if we'll just appropriate it and receive it. Why, because we've earned it, we've been good, we have a great track record? No, no, no.

It's because God is love, and love always wants to bless. Show me someone who is blessing someone, I'll show you someone who loves someone. Someone who isn't concerned about another person, I'll show you someone who doesn't love.

Love always blesses, gives, helps, strengthens, consoles, comforts, tries to lift up, and that's how God is. But here's where we miss on the blessing. The purpose of the blessing is not to make Natalie blessed.

That's not the purpose, ultimately. God wants to bless Natalie so that Natalie can be a blessing. The gift, the impartation of grace is never just for him.

Does he need it? Yes. Will he praise God for it? Yes. But God's plan is never I will bless you, but I will also make you a blessing.

With the blessing I give you, I want you to now go and distribute from that blessing to someone else so they can be blessed, so not only will you praise the Lord, but now they will praise the Lord because of the blessing I gave you. How many get it? Say amen. Amen.

And in a hedonistic, self-centered, life is one big selfie culture that we live in. Most of us are just thinking, help me, Jesus. Get me through this.

With no thought that the blessing is never supposed to terminate on me. Never. Even when you're down and out, there's a scripture that just comes to my mind, 2 Corinthians, the first chapter.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort. Listen, who comforts us in all of our trouble. Oh, thank you.

In all your trouble, loss of a loved one, your heart broken by someone, I'll comfort you in all of your trouble. Why? So that you can comfort others with the same comfort that I gave you. Never supposed to terminate with us.

And I wonder how many of us, to cut to the chase, are missing blessings from God because God says you don't get it. You just want it for yourself. That's all you think about is yourself.

I'm like a MasterCard in the sky for you. Just give me, help me, you don't know what I've been through. I had a phone call with someone recently who was so down and depressed and discouraged and shouldn't have been because anyone would have traded places with this person.

But you know how we are. We can have 1,000 blessings and two problems, what do we want to talk about? The two problems. Yeah, I have no time to talk about blessings.

Being thankful. This person was so depressing and complaining so much that I stopped him on the phone and said, stop it, person in another state. Stop it.

You're depressing me. You're pulling me down. I want to help you, but wake up.

Start praising God and thanking God. Don't tell me about your problems. I talk to people who are strung out on OxyContin, daughters who run away from home.

I get emails from around the country. I'm calling mothers, pastors, helping people. Saw two pastors this week who, with their wives, really need encouragement and direction.

And what in the world are your problems? Stop thinking about yourself for just 30 days and take what God has given you and start to share it with others. Make somebody else happy. I mean, get over yourself.

That's easier said than done because worry and the way we live and the ego of all of us makes us very self-centered. You can make your own spiritual growth an idol. Not to grow spiritually so you can be a blessing.

No, no, not at all. No, I want to grow spiritually so I can tell people I'm growing spiritually. No, I really am.

I am growing spiritually. That has never been God's plan. It's to be blessed so that you can bless.

Just like God has helped you, enriched your lives, take what he gave you and now share it. Like somebody gave me, this is true, \$50. And I thank God for this \$50.

Five \$10 bills, okay? But, that's great, but I'm gonna give 10 to her. No joke, you can keep it. Now, I just heard her say thank you.

Are you happy for that 10? So now two people are happy. Two people are thanking God. Don't you get it? Come on, let's say amen to that.

No more illustrations, I know. I know what you're thinking, like, no more illustrations, that's bad. Now, notice praise will go up double for the 50 I got and now she's praising God for the 10 she got.

How many of us here has God looking at and saying, what in the world am I blessing you for when you just hoard it, okay? Look at these two verses. One person gives freely, yet, this is from Proverbs, yet gains even more. Another withholds unduly but comes to poverty.

How about that? Opposite of Economics 101. Some people give and God says, oh, you're gonna give and share? I'll bless you even more than. Others, they're just tighter than a crab.

They're not gonna give up anything, right? I'm not giving a dime. You ever meet people like that? I was in the restaurant the other day in a diner. Three women were there and they were dividing the bill.

The bill came to like \$27, but they're dividing it. No, Helen, I think you owe \$8.54, not 51, 54 cents. I wanted to grab the bill and pay for it myself and say, just stop it.

Just treat someone, bless someone. Come on, can we say amen to that? That's what God does for us. And notice, a generous person will prosper.

Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed because God looks at us and says, now you got it. That's why I blessed you and I refreshed you anyway so you'd refresh somebody else. Don't you see all the people hurting around us? Don't you see, don't you walk out in the street? Don't you read the newspaper? Everyone's hurting in some area, including us, and when God helps us, we're supposed to pass it on.

That's real spirituality. Not to make a big thing about our own lives, if God gives you a test and he brings you through it, now you have a testimony. But what gives a testimony unless you share it with somebody? Look at this New Testament counterpart.

Look, whoever believes in me, Jesus said, as scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. Rivers, rivers, not a little trickle, rivers. Why rivers? So that others can get the overflow.

Don't wanna put in the vernacular here, but like God is saying to all of us, get over yourself. I'll give you rivers, but let the rivers overflow. There's one of the children of Jacob.

There's a prophecy about him after he was born, and as Jacob's leaving, he says about a certain, a boy who would be one of the tribes, he said that God will bless him and the branches of his tree will grow over the wall. What does that mean? The branches of his tree and the fruit will grow over the wall. It means I'm gonna bless you so much that when others walk by outside the garden, outside the wall, they'll just pluck something and they'll eat something from the blessing I give you.

Isn't that what you want your life to be? Listen, that's where fulfillment is. The best days of my life is when I forget miserable Jim Cymbala and what I want and what I need and I get lost in people, people's needs. Ministering to people, helping someone.

You can just say a word. Out of their belly will come rivers of living water. Does God grant you power? Has he ever in a place of prayer granted you power? What do you think he gave you the power for? So that you could say you have power? Use that power to bring blessing to somebody else.

Has God ever shown you mercy? Have you ever messed up like I have and God showed you mercy? Hello? If God has shown you mercy, why do you think he showed you mercy? Just so you would have mercy? No, that you could go show mercy to someone else. Forgive somebody else. How dare you hold something on someone after God showed you mercy? Or go to someone and say there's a place of

forgiveness.

You don't have to die now. Your life is not over. Well, how do you know? Because he did it for me.

Bring a blessing to them. Does God ever give you peace? Has God ever granted you peace? Do you walk around some days just filled with the peace of God? What do you think it's for you and me to just say, oh, I have peace? No, it's to go to some troubled soul and to say to them, I want to pray for you that God will give you peace. And your peace can actually be an encouragement to that person to look to God for peace.

But just to hold it for ourselves, our joy? Imagine all the people who say, oh, I thank God for joy unspeakable and full of glory. So why? You could just sing and run around the church. That's how I grew up.

People running around the church, the same 80 people. Gets old. 80 people, 100 people, no one hardly baptized, but all running around having a great time in the Lord.

Praise God we had church. Doesn't that get a little old? Just having church? How about all the multitudes that are outside? How about all the people that you meet, that I meet every day? I prayed in my office just now as God is my witness. The security people will back this up.

They weren't with me in the office, but I prayed, God, make me a blessing. Didn't we pray that? Didn't we pray that? I came down the elevator. I get off.

Usually people just make way for me and I walk in here. A woman stopped me right there, tiny woman. She's sitting in here and she said, you have to pray a blessing on me.

Pray for me. And I said, what's your problem? And she told me. I was half in the elevator, half out.

I'm laying my hand on her. And I could say something that would lift her. Brothers and sisters, if you're missing that overflow of blessing of God in your life, why would God give Carol a song unless he wants to bless others with the song? Why would he help Bradley Knight to do something unless others could be blessed? Everything God gives you should never terminate on you or me.

It's for somebody else to eat the fruit thereof. He grants you money, share it. Share it.

You want more money? Share the money you have. If you hoard it and hold on to it, you hold on to your testimony and just live in a little cocoon, how in the world does that represent the life of Jesus Christ who went about doing good and healing all them that were oppressed by the devil? What is the life of Jesus? Everywhere he went, he just said, yeah, I'll bless you. Bring me that baby.

I'll bless that baby. Just blessing, helping, and all of that. And we're gonna circle our wagons and go, oh, just pray for me, I'll make it.

You're gonna make it. You're gonna make it. Now what are you gonna do now that you made it? What are you gonna do with your life? I'm talking to people now who go to church for a long time because you can get into the worst rut and you think it's spirituality and it's zero, it's nothing.

It's nada. God blessed you so that you could be a blessing. Now, where do you get the blessing? Who? That's God.

God is a God who blesses, but where does the blessing come from? Let's go back to Abraham. Abraham, leave your country, leave your home, leave your family, leave the roti or whatever they were eating over there. Leave it.

Leave it and go to a land I will show you. Well, where's that? Abraham, trust me, trust me, but get out of the rut that you're in because I want you to live the life of faith and as you live that life of faith and follow me, I will bless you and you will be a blessing. So I wanna say to all of us, starting with me, let's leave wherever we are now, even if it has some good elements and let's ask God to give us more of a life trusting him.

Let's leave carnality and the world and just being caught up with all the things of this world. The world, it's dog eat dog out there. Dog eat dog.

People are your friends until it's not convenient for them and then they'll throw you overboard. We've all learned that, haven't we not? But God says, leave all that carnal thinking and all that carnal, I'm money hungry. Just me, myself, I, I. Just another picture, another selfie.

I gotta tell everybody, I'm in Target. Isn't this exciting? I'm in Target. Oh, how many get what I'm talking about? God says, I'll bless you, but you gotta get out of where you are.

That takes a step of faith. You think Abraham was sorry that he followed God? We're still talking about his name and he lived thousands of years ago. Everything God said happened, it's true.

But the one I want is this, I will bless you and you will be a blessing. How many, when you grew up in church, ever heard the song, no one would sing that anymore today. It's not considered cool and hip.

We're much more self-centered now, but how many remember the hymn, Make Me a Blessing? Lift your hand if you know it. Six people, that's great. Obviously, we can't sing that one.

You remember it, Bradley? Or no, you don't know it. Carol, you remember it. And the last line was that I just have, and I was little and I heard that lady sing it next to me, my mom, the last line was, make me a blessing to someone today.

Lord, we thank you that every morning we wake up, we can count on one thing, you wanna bless us. You don't wanna hurt us. You don't wanna destroy us.

You're the heavenly father that none of us could even dream could be so good and loving and kind. So we claim the promise that you made to Abraham, which you've given to us elsewhere, I will bless you. But we want the other part too.

I will make you a blessing. Help us not to live for ourselves, God. I've done that way too much in my life.

Just Jim Cymbala, just concentrating on me, what I want, what I feel, make us like our savior, Christ, who came not to satisfy himself, not to live for himself, but to die in a sense, even before the cross, so that he could lay down his life in many ways, washing people's feet. Even when he couldn't eat and he got tired, he kept ministering because he wanted to be a blessing. Get the focus off of us, God, and forgive us for our self-centeredness.

Forgive me for mine and make us a blessing today. Through a conversation, through a gift, through a treat, through a phone call, through a prayer, through just a kind look, just through an arm around

someone's shoulder, a hug, just help us to think of the other person and to try to make someone happy today. That's not hard.

We can do it in the street, we can do it in the subway, we can do it in Macy's, we can do it in church, we can do it anywhere we go. Just make someone else happy and think about them. And let your faith shine upon your people and give us shalom, give us peace today, God, and help us to be peacemakers so that we can be called the children of God.

Help us to bless each other now, even through a sentence, a prayer, an embrace, whatever, God, you lead us to do. We take your blessing and we share it with someone today. We do this in Jesus' name.

And everyone said. Amen. You may stand and would you hug somebody before you leave the building? Come on, hug someone, choir, hug someone.

Bless someone today.

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