

The Life God Blesses

by Jim Cymbala

The blessing of God is the favor and power of God that is bestowed upon individuals, churches, and ministries, bringing joy, peace, and prosperity.

Duration: 34:25

Scripture: Ephesians 1:15

Topics: "Blessing Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the book of Genesis and the story of Jacob before his death. Jacob speaks about his 12 sons, recounting their actions and experiences, even the unpleasant ones. The speaker then relates this to ministers and their journey in preaching the word of God. He emphasizes the importance of finishing well and not losing one's first love or relying on past successes. The speaker shares a personal experience of feeling overwhelmed and unable to preach, leading to a moment of prayer and surrender to God's will. He expresses his deep love for the congregation and desires for them to experience God's blessing above all else.

Transcript

In the book of Genesis, there's a place where Jacob, before he dies, leans on his staff and he speaks about his 12 sons. But when Jacob in Genesis speaks about those sons, he talks about what they've done, what went down in their life, and some of it's not pretty at all. But he kind of like tells it as it is.

It's a picture of how we stand under the law. All of us would be embarrassed if all of our deeds and words would be laid out here in the light according to God's word. How many say amen? But then in the end of Deuteronomy, when they're just on the verge of going into the Promised Land, Abraham, on the eastern side of the Jordan River, after he writes a song and teaches it to the Israelites, he begins to pray, slash, prophesy, slash, predict, slash, encourage.

He begins to speak and pray in a prophetic way, God's plan and will and purpose for these sons. And they're all different. So when you read Deuteronomy 33, you find out that, and then Moses, the servant of the Lord before he died, prayed these prayers or prophesied.

It doesn't say what he did. It says he proclaimed these words and he spoke these words over them. Now, these words are of blessing.

This is like a picture of grace. This is not according to what those sons deserve, but this is according to God's grace. Everything God does for us is by grace.

We don't get what we deserve. That's justice. We do not want justice.

How many want mercy and grace, not justice? So everything God does for us is on the basis of mercy. No one ever earns anything from God. So this is a different slant on these people.

And people who have messed up, those sons who messed up hundreds of years before, because now this is after slavery in Egypt. The tribes have multiplied. They're about to go in and possess the land under Joshua.

And now Moses speaks these blessings. And you can go home tonight before you go to bed. In fact, I found you can't read these quickly.

You've got to analyze and say, what does it mean to the tribe that he said this to? And then, is there anything for us? And I hope to bring something to you out of this. And this is the blessing that was spoken to Joseph. Now there were twelve tribes of Egypt, and in case you get confused, those were the twelve tribes that possessed the land, because Jacob had twelve sons.

But it's not exactly the twelve he had that possessed the land. They lost one in Levi, because Levi never got any land. So Levi was taken away.

So that leaves it to eleven. Then Joseph was not given land, but his two sons that he gave birth to in Egypt, when he was raised to the right hand of Pharaoh, those two sons, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Ephraim, they are the two sons that replaced Levi and Joseph. So you've got the twelve again.

Now God puts this in the Bible for a reason, and now we have Moses speaking this over Joseph. Listen to what he said over the tribe of Joseph. About Joseph he said, see it's partly prayer, part prophecy.

May the Lord bless his land with the precious dew from heaven above, and with the deep waters that lie below. With the best the sun brings forth, and the finest the moon can yield. That of course is poetic language for day and night.

Blessings at day, blessings at night, blessings on him when he sleeps, when he's working in the field, whatever they're going to do, the blessing of God. Then verse fifteen, with the choicest gifts of the ancient mountains, and the fruitfulness of the everlasting hills. Not only he be blessed with the land he possesses, not just the flat land, but the mountains, the hills, with the best gifts of the earth and its fullness.

And now to sum it all up, and the favor of him, God, who dwelt in the burning bush. With the best gifts of the earth, hills, fruitfulness of hills, mountains, day and night, and with the favor, love in action, of him, God, who dwelt in the burning bush. And what must that have meant when Moses said that? Because he was the one who heard God.

It all began from Moses when he heard God calling him out of the burning bush. Now that verse has reminded me yesterday, and I've been meditating on this, of something that a lot of ministers don't know, and a lot of Christians don't know, but I want to tell you this, I want to declare this in front of many witnesses. That there's no group of people that I love more, a group, a collective corporate group, there's no group of people I love more than you folks that are sitting in front of me.

I don't know all your names, but I feel your spirit, I see you reaching out to God, I believe you're sincere. Why would you be here in a prayer meeting in these kind of numbers to the top of the balcony if you weren't serious about God? So because I love you so much, this is a very important few words I'm going to say to you, because this is what I want for you more than anything else in the whole world. I want it for the background singers, I want it for all of you, the staff, everyone.

And that is something called the blessing or the favor of God. The blessing of God on a pastor, the blessing of God on a church, the blessing of God on a deacon, the blessing of God on a family, the blessing of God on a believer is the most precious thing to have in the whole world. Because when God's blessing is on you, when His favor is with you, is it because you're perfect? No.

Read about Judah by the way, we won't even go into it, and his little episode with Tamar, we won't go into that here, because it's not fit for some of the children that are here. So it's nothing that you earn, because Judah acted like at one time a degenerate in the book of Genesis. No, this is the blessing of God by grace.

It's the blessing and the favor of God. Will there be battles if the blessing of God is on you? Yeah, there will be problems. But somehow, somehow, God will always supply and get you through it.

Even though you walk through the valley, He'll bring you up to the mountain. Even if tears are for the night, joy will come in the morning. Now one thing that people miss is that not everybody has the blessing of God on them.

I want to establish that with you. Not everyone has. Not every church has the blessing of God.

Well of course not. Brooklyn is the borough of churches. You know how many buildings around here, even with this great mission feel, don't have fifty people gathering on a Sunday morning, don't have thirty, some eight.

I just was telling the staff about a certain minister that I know who took a church, when he took over for it, the minister who had built it up left, had four hundred people, and before long between him and the guy who succeeded him, they ended up with eight people meeting in an office from four hundred in a sanctuary. Did they have the Bible? Yes. Did they believe in it? Yes.

Did they pray? Was there any false doctrine? No. Was the blessing of God on it? No. No.

That's why the Bible says in Acts, certain men from Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch in Syria, and this was the first interracial, integrated, Jew-Gentile church. Even some of the leadership was people of color, which wasn't the way it started in Jerusalem. Niger was called black, and probably from Africa.

And what the Bible says is, the hand of the Lord was with them, and multitudes turned to the Lord. The city of Antioch was visited by God. Did everybody get saved? No.

But man, the church exploded. Why? Because the hand of the Lord was with them. Now in the Bible, hand means power or favor or authority.

Especially in this case, favor and power. And right hand speaks of that, a special place of blessing. You'll sit at my, well not my left hand, you'll sit at my what? My right hand.

And those people turned the world upside down in Antioch, and a great church was built. So there's different styles of preaching, there's different doctrinal nuances on secondary matters, there's all these

different church cultures, but that's not the thing that's important right now to all of us. It's this.

We want the blessing that God told Moses to put on Joseph. The blessing of God. When you sleep, when you're awake.

No matter what you're doing, the blessing of God. That special blessing. It's not on all Christians, because how could the church in Laodicea that Jesus was going to vomit out of his mouth, was the blessing of God on that church? How could the blessing of God be on a church that he's going to spit out of his mouth? Is the blessing of God on every minister that I run into and when I travel? Is the blessing of God in every church I go to? No.

And do I walk in places where I don't even take three steps and I go, what in the world is this? The blessing of God is in this place. His presence. There's a joy.

There's a spirit of life, not death and just argumentativeness and factions and fighting and all of that. Even though the Bible is being thumped, there's no sense of blessing in life. No conversions.

Nobody getting baptized. Nothing going on that would bring, much going on that would bring Christ's glory. What it's lacking is the blessing of God.

And sometimes when I try to talk to pastors about the importance of this, they get very squeamish because they think that through their education and their knowledge and the techniques that they've learned about how to quote, do church. How do you do church? People ask me that when I travel. They go, Pastor Simba, what are you into? How do you do church? I go, read the new Testament.

That's what I'm trying to do. How many want to do church? Like it's in the new Testament. Preach the word, love the people.

Now is every Christian that I know got the blessing of God on their life? No, no. I know Christians. I have to admit this.

I know Christians, even from this church, they bounce from one bad situation to another, one bad decision, another one, no wisdom in this one. You think they would learn? No, they make another one. Are they not Christians? Yes, they're my sister.

They're my brother. I'll fight for them. But do they have the blessing of God on their life? Is it the kind of thing that that favor that was resting on Joseph and his two sons? Is the one who spoke out of the fire with them and blessing them and helping them? And this means so much, brothers and sisters, because the blessing of God on your life, those of you who are in your 20s, 30s, 40s and beyond, don't you understand that the blessing of God on your life, when you secure it, it affects your children and your children's children because the blessing is passed on.

Come on, from one generation to another, the blessing comes. So my children have come to understand that it's possible to enjoy the blessing that maybe came upon their mom and dad, and it can go down to their grandchildren. I was in a certain city in South America.

We'll leave it just as that. And I was working with a number of churches and groups that had invited me and I really got a great love for Lima. Like I have a love for China.

I got my heart is like divided in a hundred pieces. Sometimes I say to God when I'm sitting over there, God, if I only had two other bodies, one body could be here with you all, but then the two other bodies could just go and try to help people elsewhere. So I was in this place and Sylvia, what happened was I would go and there was one church, 40 people, 80 people, 30 people, 50 people, midweek service, eight people just struggling.

It's a hard mission field in a certain way. A lot of superstition and the gospel has tough sledding there, it seems for some reason. But then there are some places that are more blessed than that and life is there and joy.

And a well-known evangelist from another era once made a visit there, would that be the 70s, late 70s, early 80s? And he held a big crusade there and he preached the gospel, right? Although he ran into later problems. And he got, I think it was the number just comes to me, he took \$250,000 and he bought a theater in downtown of the capital city of this city, Lima, Peru. And he gave this church, which had about 80 people in it, this building, this theater.

And when I heard about it, I went, wow, that was generous, that was gracious, but he wanted us to do something. But buildings don't bring the blessing of God. Buildings are just something you use.

So I checked in about three or four years later, the 80, 90 people that were in the church were now 78 people in the church, in this mammoth theater. Did the brother mean well? Yes, he did. But what was the problem? There was no blessing upon the work, something was missing.

So I'm doing that and suddenly I'm in a hotel one day at the Lima Sheraton and I get a call, someone wants to meet me named Pastor Rosas, R-O-S-A-S. And Pastor Rosas meets me and he's the pastor of the mother church of the Alianza in Spanish, the missionary alliance movement in Lima, Peru. And he meets me and I'm having a little cafecito with him and we're talking and he says, you know, your book has been, your books have been put in Spanish.

One of your books has become required reading, this is some years ago, required reading for every missionary in South America by the missionary alliance. Everyone, Chile, Chile, Argentina, Ecuador, wherever, and we've all read this book. And I want to ask you, would you come and visit our church and will you speak at our conference? I went, yes, I'm just talking to you, I feel this is something God wants me to do.

So I go to his church and I go to this place on another visit and I walk into the church. I'm not even five steps in and they're worshipping God and I'm just looking around this mammoth building that seats about 2,000 people, 1,800 people, packed, people praising God, spirit of life. So I'm with my interpreter and I turned to him and I said, do you feel what I feel? He said, don't even say anything more, we'll talk later.

So then I meet, they got five or six churches like that all just in the capital city and in all of Peru, the alliance churches are the most prosperous by far. In fact, someone told me if you lined up all the other denominations and you made a stack like this in Peru, right? And then you just next to it, one denomination, the alliance, like this. So I know a little bit how these things work, a little bit.

So I'm sitting with some of the leaders during that week and I say, hey brothers, how'd this all begin here? He said, oh, I know why you're asking that. You want to know the heritage we come from. I said, listen, God is with you.

I just want to know how this came about. He said, well, we don't have churches like this in Chile to the south, up north in Ecuador, Alianza, no, just Menzalmenz, small churches, but in Peru. So he told me, yeah, some missionaries came to Peru and they were just resolute.

God, we need your hand with us. You're going to bless this work in Peru. You're going to bless it.

Not if, not maybe, you will bless this work or we will die. And somehow they secured a blessing. And this man was very honest with me.

He says, look, we're doing our best. We need help. Would you come back and encourage us some more? I've been there many times.

And he said, because we're living off of a blessing that someone else secured and we just do a little something and God just multiplies it and blesses us. That's the blessing of Joseph. How many want that blessing, kind of blessing on your own life, on your family? Listen, let me close on your finances, on your children.

This is a thing that's not just vertical where there's an overflow of grace and power and ability and gifting from the Holy Spirit, but it goes horizontal too. It comes to your children. It comes to your finances.

It comes if you're single to your personal relationships. The blessing of God is the thing that's most important because when the Bible says it's God for somebody, listen, he's for every believer in the sense that we're saved and our sins have been washed away. But if you say that the church that he was going to vomit out of his mouth, was he for that church? No, he was at the door outside that church.

Knock, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I'll come in. He's challenging that church.

He's not with that. He's with that church. It's a Christian church, but is his hand of blessing on that church? No, his hand of correction is on that church.

And I have learned a long time ago because I came to the place myself, brothers and sisters. When I first came to the Brooklyn Tabernacle, I noticed I got some wide-eyed response from the staff today. The second Sunday night that I was the pastor of the Brooklyn Gospel Tabernacle on Atlantic Avenue, on that second Sunday night with less than 15 or 16 people there in that evening service, it was so dark.

It was so polluted in the spiritual atmosphere of the place. It was so oppressive. I was new.

The pastor just took off kind of suddenly. The pastor that was there, there were \$2.87, something like that in the checking account. That's the truth.

And worse than that, he told me, I didn't tell you this to the very end, but something's wrong in the offerings because the money, the total amount of the offering doesn't even add up to the envelopes that have been filled out. In other words, the envelopes come out to like \$48 and then loose money would be put in. The whole offering is \$35.

So I said, well, how could that be? He says, well, the best I know is one of the ushers, we only have four. One of them is stealing money out of the offering. But Pastor Simba, God bless you.

I'm leaving town now. You take over here and you roll with this, okay? That's the truth. So on this second Sunday, I got up as God is my witness.

And I took the microphone and I had some little humpty-dumpty little sermon planned with my little notes and all of that so that I would feel secure. And I couldn't get five sentences out. I started the first two, the darkness on the place, the oppressiveness of the place.

It overwhelmed me. My voice broke and I stopped and I said, listen, I can't preach in this. I can't preach.

Something's wrong here. I know I'm the pastor of it, but something's wrong. And I know I'm new and I'm inexperienced, but something is really wrong here.

And I can't preach. Something has to break. Something has to change.

Anybody who wants to come up and pray, and maybe half the people came up and we prayed for a season. But it wasn't long after that one walking one afternoon, I did say to God, God, if you're not going to break through and bring your blessing on this, then take my life. I got one child, beautiful Chrissy, my wife, I know you'll take care of them.

But if I'm going to live in failure, if I'm going to live with no blessing on my life, what's the point of living a long life? We're going to live forever in heaven. What's the big thing about living 70, 80, 90 years? My mom is here tonight. She's going to be 97 in November.

But what's 97 years? Whenever the Lord calls her home, she's going to live forever. We're going to live forever. Long life has nothing to do.

That's a promise on the old covenant, not the new. We got eternal life here. We're not talking about three score and 10.

We're talking about 3 billion times 10 billion times 10 trillion. Come on, let's put our hands together. We're going to be with the Lord forever.

So you could say, well, you're just being melodramatic. Well, the truth of the matter is that I meant that the best I could that day, because I was desperate. I was desperate.

I wanted the hand of God with me. I wanted the blessing of God, because I know enough about the history of the Christian church to know that some churches are just pieces of dead wood. They don't do anything for anybody except fuss and fight and argue with other churches.

Am I right or wrong? Come on. And then there are churches and people down through church history, boom, boom, explosions. Why? Because they're perfect? No, if you get close to some of those people, I have gotten close to a lot of people that God has had his hand on.

They're not perfect. They're far from it, but they still have somehow secured the blessing of God on their life. And that for you, if I drop dead while I'm speaking that I want for you more than anything else, the blessing of God, the favor of God on your life in every area of your life, you'll have an influence.

You'll leave behind a sacred memories. Your children will benefit from it. All right, so how do you get the blessing of God on your life? I'm talking now to Christians.

If you're not a Christian, you need to get saved. But as we've shown, there are disobedient Christians. There are lukewarm Christians.

There are Christians who have lost their first love. I'm talking about, I believe that a lot of us want the favor of God on our lives. How many want it when you're sleeping at night, that God is doing things on your behalf while you're sleeping? And when you're working in the post office during the day and Sylvia's working, God's arranging things and working behind the scenes.

Sylvia doesn't even know. She's not even straining. She's not even trying.

It's just flying open. It's just happening. If God before us, who can be against us? Okay, now, first of all, you got to conquer unbelief.

You have to believe that what I'm talking about is true. No one secures that special favor and blessing of God who doesn't believe it exists. You have to believe there's an invisible something that you can't show to anyone.

And it's called the blessing of God. Haven't you ever met people? Listen, our late pastor Bogstaff, when he got up to speak or pray, how many knew the blessing of God was on him? Would you just lift your hand? No one had to put a sign and I didn't have to introduce him and say, here's one of our associates. You got to respect him and all of that.

A person's gift and favor from God makes room for themselves. So you got to believe. Do you believe I'm asking you again? Do you believe that there's a thing called the favor of God? There must be, or else Moses wouldn't have prayed for it over Joseph.

If it happened automatically, why would he pray for it? Why would he speak about it? If it's something that just comes with salvation and we see in the new Testament as chosen as those old Testament saints were, new Testament saints, you see Paul asking that they would live at the fullness of God's blessing and grace. So you got to believe. The second obstacle to this is pride.

You have to want this enough that it means everything to you. For you shall seek me and you shall find me when you seek for me with all of your heart, Jeremiah 33.3. And what do I mean by that? Proud people, and they can be dirt poor or they could be wealthy. Proud people could believe this and even ask for it once or twice, but they got a fallback plan.

Even if God doesn't give me his favor, what do you think? I'm stupid. I can't make it through life. What do you think? With my seminary degree, I can't make it through.

You think with my degree in teaching, I can't find my way through life? I'd love the blessing of God, but I'm not going to get crazy about it. You have to believe today. You and I have to believe God.

Without your blessing and fullness of favor on our lives, life will never be what you intended it to be for us. My education, my money, my connections, my family, my culture, nothing can substitute for the hand and blessing of God on my life. It's invisible.

I believe in it, and I humble myself. God, I want it. I want it more than anything.

I want it more than life, because with it comes so many beautiful things. It goes from generation to generation. It's like a stream.

You can't stop it. It's just like a river. It just flows, the blessing of God.

And when God blesses you, what demon can stop when God says, I'm going to bless that person? Come on, can we put our hands together? No weapon formed against us, no demon, just the favor of God, the favor of God. That's what we were praying as I close with the folks going to Malawi. What were we praying, really? All of those anointed prayer that Pastor Delina prayed, really it was for the favor of God, the blessing of God on them.

In that blessing, there's everything you need. You need wisdom? It'll come with the blessing. You just look for it.

So you've got to believe, you've got to humble yourself and really want it. Number three, once you secure it and God begins to work in your life, you have to treasure it and protect it. The blessing of God is invisible, but it can be lost.

Why? Because the spirit of God can be grieved. When the blessing of God is on you, and you start to get involved in stuff that's against God, let's say you start to gossip and slander and just talk baba with people about stuff that is not even, has anything to do with you. Why are you talking about those people? You're not them.

Why are you talking about them? Why is your opinion so important? So God will warn you, do you want my blessing or do you want to indulge your tongue? And to guard that blessing, you have to say, God, help me, forgive me, give me victory over this tongue here. I don't want that because if I practice that, if I practice that pornography, if I practice that anger, if I get sloppy, I'm going to end up like Samson. Was Samson anointed? Was he chosen? Did he end up having his eyes gouged out? He didn't treasure the blessing.

He wasn't careful. He's fooling around with Delilah, and she's doing little quizzes on how do you get your strength, and he's talking to her. What are you talking to her for? And then the saddest verse, and then he got up like he had before, and he didn't even know his strength was gone.

This happens to a lot of ministers. I'm speaking now to myself. I want to finish well and preach, do what God wants me to do.

A lot of ministers start out with the blessing of God, but they're like the church at Ephesus. They lose their first love. They stop studying the Bible.

They stop being careful. They live off of their past laurels. They think they're famous.

They believe their own advertising, and the next thing you know, the blessing of God, and now they're talking, and they're ranting, and they're raving, and they're snorting, and they're yelling in the microphone, but it's empty. It's just empty. Why? Because the blessing of God's lifted.

That's what I've always prayed for this church. I'm no great shakes of a pastor or a preacher, but I'm happy because I don't want people to come here because I can preach. I want people to come here because they say, God is in that place.

Come on. Are you with me on that? God is in that place. Come on.

How many want that testimony for our own assembly here? God is in the place. Not the choir, not the preacher. Pastors come, pastors go.

They're so overrated. They're so overrated. There's no superstars in the kingdom.

There's only Jesus. Jesus is the superstar. One more time, just for Jesus.

Come on. Let's say it. Just before I ask you to pray with me, I'm thinking now about before this church was started on Atlantic Avenue, and there were two or three pastors before me, and a lot of problems.

My mother-in-law, my late mother-in-law met with some interracial group of about six women, and they rented a room in the post office, which is still there, that post office building on Atlantic. You know that building there on Atlantic between third and fourth? And they rented a room, and every Monday night, they would just pray, God, birth a church, birth a church, birth a church. Who knows that they secured something that has affected my life? When God hears cries go up to him and people want his hand to favor, God's going to respond.

Close your eyes with me. Anybody here just desperate? Now, I don't care if two of you come. Numbers of people coming to the altar, what does that mean? It means nothing.

Anybody here, pastor, those words were like, they were like a hot fire in me. I felt a burning while you were talking. That's what I want.

Maybe you feel called to the ministry. Maybe one day you're going to be a full-time missionary, or maybe you just, God, I want him to use me in the gifting and the calling that he has on my life right here in New York City. Just get out of your seat and get up here, and we're going to flat-out pray.

God, we believe tonight. We believe in that thing called the favor of God, the blessing of God. It's invisible.

I can't prove it to a soul, but we know your word is true. God, not only do we believe in it, God, we want that. We can't live without that blessing.

We want to bear fruit so that your name would be glorified. We want to see a blessing on our children and our children's children. We want to see an impact on New York City and other parts of the world.

How can we do it without your blessing, Lord? Lord, we ask you to give us the grace and wisdom now to guard that which you impart to us, that we won't be sloppy and carnal and shallow and lazy, but that by your grace, we will walk humbly and carefully before you. And if we offend you by something we say, if we do something that would hurt you, Lord, just quicken us immediately. Convict us so that we can stand on first John.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. But God, we got to live under your smile. How can I bless anyone else, Lord, unless your hand of blessing? We plead the blessing of Joseph.

When we sleep, when we're awake, the hills, the mountains, the earth, everything we touch, everything we touch, every endeavor, every effort, every plan prospered and blessed and anointed by God. That's what we're asking for in ourselves. We don't deserve it.

We can't do it, but we're not looking at that. We're looking at you.

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