

Is God's Blessing Dangerous?

Intro:

This is a strange title? What is this about?

1. Caution - danger ahead

Deuteronomy 8:1-18. Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers. 2 Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey.... 10 When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. 11 Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God..... 12 Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, 13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me 18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.

*Israel was about to inherit the promised land of abundance. V:1.

*Israel had learnt many lessons during 40 years of wandering. V:3.

*God instructed Israel not to forget Him. V:11.

*Wealth and abundance can cause people to forget the Lord.

V:12-14.

Australians are blessed – ‘The Lucky Country’:

Financial review July 12, 2019: Australia has the highest minimum wage in the world in US dollars. (Adjusted for a direct comparison)

Credit Suisse: In 2018 ABC reported - Australia has the highest median wealth per adult in the world. (Edged out Switzerland in 2018 – Switzerland is now back on top! – USA is #22).

* God warned Israel against thinking their own effort created their blessings. V:17-18.

2. A hard lesson for Paul

Paul writes to the Church in Corinth...

2 Corinthians 1:8-9. We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. (About AD 53/54)

- * We suffered great hardship and pressure. V:8
- * The pressure was beyond our ability to endure. V:8
- * So that – we despaired of life. V:8
- * We felt it was the ‘sentence of death’ V:9

<i>‘A judicial sentence decreed by God’</i>

* This happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead! V:9

<i>God was stripping Paul of his ‘self sufficiency’</i>

3. Paul learnt an important lesson

Philippians 3:3-10.4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:..... 7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (About AD 62/63)

Paul said...

* I had confidence in my heritage, education, skills & self-righteousness. V:4-6.

* All my personal achievements are absolute rubbish without any value. V:7-8.

* I now have no confidence in myself. V:7-9

* My only hope and value for now and my future is the person of Jesus Christ. V:8-10.

4. Jesus also warned us

John 15:1-7. “I am the true vine..... No branch can bear fruit by itself; Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me..... apart from me you can do nothing....

Jesus gave us a story about a viticulturalist and his vines...

* No branch can bear fruit by itself. V:4.

* Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain (live) in me. V:4.

* Apart from me you can do nothing. V:5.

Without Jesus we can do nothing!

I once read this important statement...

*It is impossible for me to live the Christian life!
(In and of my own ability I cannot live the Christian life)*

5. How shall I then live?

Galatians 2:20: *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (KJV).*

Galatians 2:20: *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (NIV).*

What is the difference between these two translations?

I live by the faith OF the Son of God (KJV, YLT, KJVS, etc)

I live by faith IN the Son of God (NIV, etc)

The difference: one has the “faith” as the possession of the Son of God, the other has “faith” as the possession of us.

* There is a strong argument for the original textual accuracy of the KJV translation: ‘the faith of Christ’

It is ‘His faithfulness’ as distinct from ‘our faith’

A powerful truth and experience

All that I AM, all that I HAVE and all that I DO is completely dependent upon the Grace of God and the Resurrection Life of Jesus Christ that is at work IN me and THROUGH me that produces GODLY FRUITFULNESS in my life!

Summary...

The danger:

If our focus is simply upon God's blessing – we can become blinded and begin to rely on our own ability and good works – a dangerous outcome!

The answer:

To learn that our effort is useless and to live in total surrender and dependence upon God's grace and The Power of the Indwelling Christ!

So - we can say with Paul...

I live, yet not I - Christ lives in me...

The life I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me!