

~Other Speakers S-Z: James Smith:

"I will bless you!" Genesis 13:2

God had called Abram to perform a difficult duty. He was required to leave his country and his kindred, and to go to an unknown land, simply because God bade him do so. This required a simple faith, and a strong stimulus--both of which the Lord gave him. The one was wrought in his heart by the Holy Spirit, and the other was contained in this promise, "I will bless you!" Abram believed God, and found him as good as his word; and so shall we, if we exercise confidence in him.

But to be a little more particular, and to enter into the Stimulus, let us ask three questions:

First--WHOM Will God Bless?

Those whom he has blessed before, for he has blessed all His people, with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world; and because of this, He blesses them in, and all through time. Every one may claim this promise made to Abraham, who has already been blessed with FOUR THINGS.

First, a broken heart for sin. This is one of God's choice blessings, and by it, He distinguishes His own people from all around. By the application of His law, and by the revelation of Christ--sin is discovered, hated, and mourned over. The law for a time seems to harden the heart--but the Gospel, when attended by the power of the Spirit, breaks it. Then there is true repentance, godly sorrow for sin, and deep heart-felt grief--because God has been dishonored, and the Lord Jesus tortured, and put to death. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."

Repentance lies at the root of all experimental religion, and characterizes the true believer all the days of his life. Religion without repentance, abiding repentance, is false. Repentance begins at the Cross, and accompanies the Christian to the gates of the Celestial city. Repentance, or brokenness of heart for sin, is a blessing of the new Covenant, and a gift bestowed by our exalted Redeemer.

Second, faith in his son. Faith and repentance always go together. They spring from the same root, about the same time, and grow up together. Nothing will break the heart--but a sight of Christ as bearing our sins, and carrying our sorrows: and it is only by faith, that such a sight of Christ can be enjoyed. Faith brings the soul to Christ, strips the soul before Christ, clothes the soul with Christ, and commits the soul to Christ. Faith takes Christ to be a perfect Savior, to do all, and give all, that is necessary to salvation. Faith interests us in Christ, entitles us to all the wealth of Christ, and warrants us to expect all blessings through Christ.

Third, a spirit of prayer. This also is the gift of God. No one really desires to pray, or knows how to pray--until taught by God. The Holy Spirit is the author of true prayer. He discovers to us our needs, reveals the fullness of Jesus, and awakens desires in the heart, and leads out the soul in confessions, petitions, supplications, and thanksgivings. He teaches us to feel the need of the blessings provided for us, excites ardent desires after them, and stirs us up diligently to seek them.

Fourth, a sense of the value of the blessing, and a fervent desire to possess it. God never shows us the value of any blessing, and produces ardent desires in our hearts to possess it--in order to disappoint us. His work within us, answers to his word outside us; and our sense of the need of any blessing, and a desire to obtain it, is a proof that it is intended for us. If then God has already blessed us with a broken heart for sin, faith in His beloved Son, a spirit of prayer, and a sense of the value of His blessing, accompanied with a desire to obtain it--the promise is ours, and our God speaks to us when he says, "I will bless you."

Secondly--With WHAT will God bless?

He will bless us, in general, with salvation; or a deliverance from sin, the law, death, and hell. Our sins He will pardon. Our natures he will sanctify. Our state He will change--so that we shall not be under the law--but under grace. From death he will deliver us, so that we shall only sleep in Jesus. From hell he will preserve us, and raise us to Heaven. But to be a little more particular:

He will bless us with special comforts.

The comforts of love. Comfort that comes from Heaven and raises the soul to Heaven. Comfort that flows

from Jesus, and leads the soul to Jesus. The comforts of the Holy Spirit, which he produces, by applying the word, exciting our graces, brightening our evidences, cheering our prospects, endearing the Savior, and raising our affections from earth to Heaven.

Comforts in trouble. Comforts in sickness. Comforts in the prospect of death. Special comforts, for seasons of special weakness, special conflict, and special trials.

He will bless us with necessary trials. God's blessing does not exempt from trouble--but often brings it, and always sanctifies it. It is not more needful to plow the field, to prepare it for the seed, in order to the harvest, than it is necessary for us to be tried, in order that we may value the word, exercise our graces, prize the Savior, and glorify God. The frost of winter is not more needful for the soil--than trials and troubles are necessary for us. Because the Lord loves us, therefore he sends afflictions upon us; and among our choicest blessings, we shall have to place some of our severest trials.

O believer, do not forget, that when you ask your Father in Heaven would bless you--you pray that he would send troubles and trials to you, for it is often so!

He will bless us with needful strength. We know not what a day may bring forth; but we know that as our day--so shall our strength be. We know not what privations we may be called upon to endure, or what crosses we may have to carry--but we know that the grace of Jesus is sufficient for us. He who appoints the trial, ordains the grace to enable us to bear it. He who lays on the cross--gives the strength to enable us to carry it. In all the past God has been faithful, and has not laid upon us more than he has enabled us to bear; and in all the future, God will be faithful, and will with every trial make a way for our escape, that we may be able to bear it.

He will bless us with sufficient supplies. Enough is provided in the covenant, and enough shall be handed out to us day by day. We never have been neglected, or left destitute--and we never shall be. Bread shall be given us, and our water shall be sure. Food for the body, and food for the soul, are guaranteed us in the precious promises. The Lord knows what we shall need, and he has already provided for all our needs. He will give us grace and glory--and no good thing will He withhold from his children. With such an assurance, we ought not to be anxious. With such an assurance, we should let the peace of God rule in our hearts, and be thankful. Our resting places are appointed, and our supplies are deposited there, so that we shall go from strength to strength until every one, of us appears in Zion before God. "My God," said Paul, "shall supply all your need, according to His glorious riches, which are in Christ Jesus."

He will bless us with increase of knowledge. Of spiritual knowledge. The knowledge of himself, of His word, of His ways, of His purposes, and glorious designs. We shall grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Long has He been teaching us--and yet such dull scholars are we, that we know but little very little yet. Still He will keep us in His school, still He will instruct us by His Spirit, still He will make Himself known unto us more clearly and more fully. "We shall know, if we follow on to know the Lord." By His Word and ordinances, by his Spirit and providence, by our trials and troubles, by our joys and sorrows--will He teach us knowledge, even the knowledge of Himself.

He will bless us with usefulness to others. This is our life. We live unto the Lord. We live for others. For us to live is Christ, to make known Christ, to bring souls to Christ, to exalt and honor Christ. It would not be life, if we could not labor for Jesus, and be useful in the cause of Jesus. He has used us in a degree already, and He will use us yet, He will use us to the end.

We are only--what He makes us. We can only act efficiently--as He enables us. We are of no use--but as He blesses us. O Jesus, precious Lord Jesus, make us useful, more useful than ever we have been! Your blessing would not be complete--if usefulness were not included in it, if usefulness did not form one prominent part of it! Now, gracious, gracious Lord, in all my future days--bless me. Bless me with special comforts--necessary trials--needful strength--sufficient supplies --an increase of spiritual knowledge--and with usefulness, great and lasting usefulness to others. Bless, O bless me, with complete deliverance from sin, the law, death, and hell!

Thirdly--what will be the RESULT of God's blessing?

If God blesses us--then Satan will try us. The old serpent will sneak near us--and try to injure us. He will watch us narrowly, that he may adapt his temptations to our constitutions, to our circumstances, and to our besetting sins. He hates us, because we love Jesus, and seek to honor him; and the descent of God's blessing upon us, stirs up his infernal enmity and spite, and enrages him to the uttermost. So that we must expect that he will, if permitted, cast out a flood of waters to drown us; or bring down fire upon us to consume us. Just in

proportion, as the effect of Gods blessing, we resemble Jesus, breathe the spirit of Jesus, and strive to honor Jesus--must we expect that Satan will try by all means to injure us.

If God blesses us, the world will oppose us. The enmity of the world against God is as great as ever. It may be concealed--but it is not destroyed. If we were more godlike, it would hate us more, oppose us more, and persecute us more: for "All who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution!" We have not much persecution, because there is so little in us to awaken persecution. Our light is so dim. Our salt has lost so much of its savor. Our approximation to the world is so great. If instead of being conformed to the world--we were transformed by the renewing of our minds; if instead of getting as near to it as we can--we were to stand afar off from its pleasures, amusements, fashions, and spirit; if our lives were a daily testimony against it, and against its works as evil--it would soon oppose us with a deadly hatred.

If God blesses us--the conflict will rage within us. The flesh will lust against the spirit more desperately. The old man will fight against the new with fresh vigor and determination. The law in the members, will war against the law of the mind, with deadly courage. But, receiving more grace--we shall be enabled to crucify the old man, to mortify the flesh with its passions, and lusts, and to bring the body into subjection to the spirit. The conflict will only cease with death, and it generally increases as we grow in grace, and become more devoted to God.

If God blesses us--our principles will be tried--tried more than ordinarily. Tried as with fire. Tried as gold is tried, that they may be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

If God bless us--weaning will take place. We shall be weaned from the world, and cease to draw our nourishment from things earthly, fleshly, or natural. Our affections will be in Heaven. We shall live by faith, walk by faith, fight the good fight of faith, and prove that this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

May God bless us, though as the result of His blessing:

Satan will try us;
the world will oppose us;
the conflict will rage within us;
our principles will be sorely tried;
and our souls will become as a weaned child
weaned from self, the
present world, and everything out of Christ.

Observe, where God blesses in time--He blesses forever. His blessing draws us into union with His Son, and through the Son into union with Himself; and once united to Himself, we are united to Him forever. Nothing can sever from His love. Nothing can separate us from His Son. Once in Christ, in Christ forever. The blessing in time is the effect, and proof that we were blessed before time began; and the blessing in time, is the proof that we shall be blessed, when time shall be no more.

Observe, God's blessing exceeds in value everything else: for the blessing of the Lord, makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it. Man's blessing is limited, God's blessing is illimitable. Man's blessing is weak, God's blessing is powerful. To be blessed of God--is to be rich, honorable, and eternally safe.

Observe, if God blesses us--we shall persevere, and end our race well. The blessing that sets us going, keeps us going. The blessing that brings us into the field of battle as soldiers--will lead us out of it more than conquerors. The blessing that leads us out of the world--will land us safe in Heaven.

Without God's blessing--we shall be wretched in time, and more wretched in eternity!

Man, woman, are you blessed of God? Did you ever feel your need of it, desire it, and seek it?

You are either blessed--or cursed.

If the former, O how happy! If the latter, O how miserable!

Cursed of God! What is that? It is to have all the threatenings of His word pointed at us, as so many pieces of heavy artillery. It is to have God's justice, holiness, and faithfulness, pledged to punish us! It is...

O what is it? What tongue can tell? What heart can conceive?

The Stimulus

O reader, reader, seek God's blessing! Flee from God's curse! Flee to Jesus--no curse can reach you there. Flee to Jesus--every blessing of God is to be found there. Flee, O flee to Jesus--and then God, even our God, will bless you!