

Articles and Sermons :: Draw from The Bank of Heaven by Zac Poonen

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Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." Notice there that all these blessings are spiritual, not material. Earthly blessings were what the Israelites were promised under the old covenant. We can read that in Deuteronomy 28. This is what distinguishes the grace that Christ brought from the law that Moses brought. If there were a verse like this in the Old Testament, it would have read like this: "Blessed be God Almighty (not our Father) Who has blessed us with every material blessing in earthly places in Moses." So those believers who are seeking primarily for physical healing and material blessings are really going back to the old covenant. Such "believers" are actually Israelites and not Christians. They are followers of Moses, not of Christ.

Does that mean that God does not bless believers materially today? He does "but in a different way. As they seek His kingdom and His righteousness first, all their earthly needs are provided for them. Under the old covenant, people sought only these earthly things and they got plenty of them " many children, much property, a lot of money, victory over enemies, honour and position on earth, etc. But under the new covenant, we seek for spiritual blessings " spiritual children, spiritual wealth, spiritual honour, spiritual victories (over Satan and the flesh, and not over the Philistines or human beings). Our earthly needs, like the health and money we need to do the will of God, are added to us. God will give us as much money as He knows will not ruin us.

The words "spiritual blessing" in Ephesians 1:3 could be translated as "blessing of the Holy Spirit". God has already given us every blessing of the Holy Spirit in Christ. We have only to claim them in Jesus' name. Imagine a beggar girl sitting begging by the roadside. A rich prince comes by and decides to marry her and puts millions of rupees in to a bank account " an account from which she can draw money freely any time she wants. What a lucky girl she is! Once she had nothing but a little tin can with a few coins in it. But now she lives in grand style with the finest of clothes. She can withdraw any amount of money from the bank, because she has so many blank cheques signed by the prince. This is our picture, spiritually speaking.

We can now go to the bank of heaven and claim every single blessing of the Holy Spirit because they are all ours in Christ's Name. Everything of heaven is ours in Christ if we remain in this bridal relationship with Him, if we can say, "Lord, I want to be true to You all my days on earth as Your bride." Then every blessing of the Holy Spirit is ours. We don't have to try and convince God that we deserve any of them " because we do not deserve any of them. Can you imagine that beggar girl imagining that she deserves all the wealth she got freely? Not at all. All that we receive is by God's mercy and grace. We can take everything of heaven because they have all been given to us freely in Christ. We cannot earn them by our fastings or our prayers. Many do not receive the blessings of the Holy Spirit because they try to earn them in these ways! We cannot receive them like that. We must accept them all through Christ's merit alone.

I remember how the Lord taught me this lesson when I was praying for some earthly need once. I said, "Lord, I have served you for so many years. So please do this for me." The Lord said, "No, I won't do it, if you come in your own name." That day I understood what it means to pray in the name of Jesus. That day I realised that the new believer who was just converted, and I who had been converted in 1959, had both to come to God on exactly the same basis " in the merit of Jesus Christ alone. He has to come to the bank of heaven with a cheque signed by Jesus Christ. I too can come there only with a cheque signed by Jesus Christ. If I come to God saying that I have been faithful to Him for so many years, then I am coming to heaven's bank with a cheque signed by me. And heaven's bank will reject it. That's the reason why many of our prayers are not answered. We are not going in Jesus' name. We are going in our name. We think that because we have sacrificed so much for God, He should answer us. Even if we have lived faithfully for 70 years, when we come before the Lord, we can come only on the same basis as a new convert " in Jesus' name. I thank God for that revelation, because after that I never took a cheque to God signed with my name!! When I am tempted to do that I say, "That cheque will never be cashed. Let me go in Jesus' name and because of His merit alone." So, every blessing of the Holy Spirit is ours in the heavenly places in Christ.