



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“The Blessed Life is the Consecrated Life”

Ps James Lowe - January 3, 2016

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- Who do you know that especially exemplifies wholehearted love to another person?
- What is one blessing in your life for which you are especially thankful?
- What is something you valued yet were willing to give away?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 ESV

“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

When Moses spoke these words, he surely remembered how the nation had shrunk back from going and taking possession of God's blessings of the Promised Land and the life he planned for them there. Only Moses, Joshua, and Caleb had believed God and wanted to take possession of it. Now another opportunity for the people to enter into God's blessings and purposes had arrived. The prior, unbelieving generation had died, and a new generation had arisen. Moses was challenging this new generation, challenging them to succeed by trusting God and moving forward.

We are likewise challenged to believe God and continue to follow God's plan for our lives. We are not to be content and shrink back. We are not to fear the challenges and shrink back. We are to trust God and take possession of God's blessings *for his purposes*, not merely our self-satisfaction. God's blessings are never only for our own benefit. God blesses us so we may fulfill his purposes which extend beyond us and include others, even to the ends of the earth.

Luke 6:20-23 ESV

And (Jesus) lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.”

Jesus did not say that the blessed life is free from trouble. Instead, he acknowledges that his disciples may experience poverty, hunger, sorrow, and even hostility. Yet in spite of these hardships, God's blessing is still with them, sustaining them and strengthening them with the hope of God's assurance of the rewards that they will inherit.

We should not think we are not blessed just because we experience hardships. We need to see God's blessings around us, and by faith believe God's promises of future blessings that will come to us not only in this life, but also in the life to come.

Deuteronomy 30:1-6 ESV

“And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, and return to the Lord your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. And the Lord your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”

Moses foresaw that the nation would not faithfully follow the Lord their God, but would stray. Yet in spite of the sufferings they would inevitably endure for their sins, Moses also foresaw the people returning to the Lord. God promised to restore the people when they turn to him again with all their hearts. In fact, God promises to bless them even more than their forefathers had been blessed. They will not only enjoy exceeding prosperity, but they will be changed in their hearts by God so that they will love the Lord their God wholeheartedly. Consequently, they would experience abundant life.

God waits on high to bless us. If we go astray, we will suffer consequences. But if we return to God with our hearts, he will bless us and do so lavishly. He takes no delight in punishing us, but instead delights in blessing us, for he made us to bear his image.

The Bible tells us in the first chapter that God blessed humanity in the beginning (Genesis 1:28), while the last chapter speaks of God's blessing coming to those who obey him (Revelation 22:7, 12). It has always been God's desire and plan to bless us. Let us embrace him and experience his greatest blessing, which is enjoying his presence both now and forevermore in the age to come.

DISCUSSION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- What moves your will to want to serve God wholeheartedly? What are some of the more noble motives for serving God?
- What biblical promises help you endure hardships?
- How does God want you to use the blessings in your life to further his purposes this year?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Pray that God would turn our hearts to him to love him wholeheartedly.
- Pray that God will help us see his blessings in our lives, and be fully persuaded of the rewards we will receive in the life to come.
- Pray that God will help us perceive how the blessings in our lives are to be used for his purposes.