

The Power of a Blessing

We have just taken ‘communion,’ which 1 Corinthians 10:16 calls “**the cup of blessing**.” In it, we remember the words of Galatians 3:13-14 that state that the cross was the place where Jesus became a curse for us so that we could receive the blessings of Abraham. The word **blessing** is from the Hebrew root word *bless* or *barak* which means “to invoke divine favor, to empower, to prosper, or to make successful.”

Proverbs 10:22: *The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, And He adds no sorrow with it.*

Ephesians 1:3 also 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.*

Galatians 3 speaks of the blessings of Abraham, travelling 4000 years through time and reaching believers in Christ, the church, today. I want us to have a look at that blessing and how it manifested in the lives of 3 of Abraham’s immediate descendants (Isaac, Jacob and Joseph)

1. Isaac: Blessing in the middle of famine

Genesis 26:1-6 - *There was a **famine** in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. ² Then the Lord appeared to him and said: “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. ³ Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and **bless you**; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be **blessed**; ⁵ because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”*

12-13 - *Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and **the Lord blessed him**. ¹³ The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous;*

The context of Isaac’s experience of the blessing was famine. The context of Abraham’s experience of the blessing had also been during a famine. Clearly famine couldn’t stop the blessing! To be blessed doesn’t mean we will never experience adversity. What it means is that His word is going to make a way for us, it will defy the odds, and everyone will know that God did it.

The blessing of God doesn’t mean we will live exempt from trouble and adversity. What it means is that we will stand to see His favour. We will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! – all because of His blessing.

This story is here to show us, among other things,

1. How God comes to us precisely in those difficult stations of life when we may experience, lack, a life-threatening situation, imminent loss etc.
2. How He comes to guide us (he told Isaac in which land to dwell)

3. How God always speaks about the future we have in Him (He told Isaac about the blessing reaching into his posterity).
4. This story shows the tangible results of the blessing (verse 12-13)

12-13 - *Then Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and **the Lord blessed him**.¹³ The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous.*

Isaac experienced blessing in the middle of famine. His son Jacob, experienced blessings in the middle of struggle:

2. Jacob: Blessing in the middle of struggle

We can say that Jacob experienced 'struggle' right from birth. The story of his life, right up to the encounter in the Valley of Jabbok is full of deception, running and fighting. Jacob struggled with men and eventually with God Himself. In the valley of Jabbok he took hold of a Man (capital M – perhaps an angel, or maybe God Himself) and told him: ***I will not let you go until you bless me!*** (Genesis 32:8). That was to be his last fight.

Genesis 35:9-12 - *Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and **blessed him**.¹⁰ And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel.¹¹ Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body.¹² The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land."*

Jacob's blessing came to him in the middle of struggle. Neither famine nor struggle, can stop the power of the blessing of God!

3. Joseph: Blessing in the land of affliction

Joseph had it tough: he was rejected and hated within his own home by his jealous brothers, he was sold to slavery, he was falsely accused and put in prison (in spite of the integrity of his character). However, nothing stopped the power of the blessing. He experienced the blessing wherever he went:

Genesis 39:2 - *The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.*

V. 5^b: *the Lord **blessed** the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and **the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had** in the house and in the field.*

Later on, Joseph becomes prime minister of Egypt:

Genesis 41: 50-52 - *And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him.⁵¹ Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For God has made me **forget** all my toil*

*and all my father's house.”⁵² And the name of the second he called Ephraim: “For God has caused me to be **fruitful in the land of my affliction.**”*

The blessing of God kept manifesting in spite ‘affliction’. He was fruitful.

Look at verse **49**: *Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable.*

We are not promised that in this world our lives will be trouble-free. However, the blessing of God is an unquestionable fact when we walk with Him, believe Him, and do what is right to the best of our ability!

- a) God made him forget the hatred of his brothers, their murderous intents and all that he went through.
- b) God made him fruitful in the land of his affliction – 13 years of affliction were not able to cancel the blessing of God!

Joseph was blessed with fruitfulness even in affliction. That is why he named his second son Ephraim. The word Ephraim means “**double fruitfulness**”.

- God is a God of **double fruitfulness**,
- God is a God of **double portion**,
- God is a God of **double honour**,
- According to Joel 2:23, He is a God of **double rain** (the former and the later rain in the same month)
- **Isaiah 61:7** - *Instead of your shame you shall have **double honour**, and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore, in their land they shall **possess double**; everlasting joy shall be theirs.*

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph experienced famine, struggle, rejection, affliction but in the middle of all that the Blessing of God worked! Nothing can stop the blessing if we stay faithful, faith-filled, if we keep running after God and never give up.

Concluding words

We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places! This blessing cannot be overruled nor overturned. Circumstances cannot alter it or remove that blessing. In Numbers 22, we read the story of a king that hired a false prophet to curse Israel. He couldn't!

Numbers 22:12 - *And God said to Balaam, “You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for **they are blessed.**”*

Believe the power of the blessing of God in your life!

1 Peter 3:14 - *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, **you are blessed.** “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.”*

Luke 6:22 - ***Blessed** are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake.*

Even in persecution, incomprehension or the hatred of others, the blessing cannot be removed from our lives. Believe the blessing of God in your life!