

To Receive From God

Something burns in me which I wish to teach on here; it is nothing new but that which I have written and preached about here and there.

Recently a man died, a good man and a Christian at that, and people were contemplating how such things could happen. A young woman was contemplating the matter also and she said something to the effect that this is the reason why she takes the work of God seriously. In saying the work of God she was referring to working in church. Her reasoning was that if you are doing the so-called work of God, the Lord will not permit anything of such to happen to you.*

This mindset is quite common among Christians and it is unfortunate; it shows they do not understand God at all. I want to explain something again about how we get things from God in this short teaching. The popular doctrine in the Christianity of today which implies that we are rewarded by God for our works as the basis of getting things from God is unfortunate as it does not reflect the true character of God. People are taught that God blesses them because of what they supposedly did for Him. You hear statements like “nothing leaves God’s hands until something leaves yours,” implying therefore that all that ever left God’s hands in our direction are those things that we initiated by our works. If you give to God, He will be compelled to give back to you, it is taught. Now what do we see? People show seeds to stay alive, to get healed, to get more money, to get children, etc. Though these things started as applications of certain true biblical principles, eg the biblical truth of sowing and reaping, however our application is mostly erroneous and does not correctly express the truth of the grace that in to be found in Christ Jesus.

Let us get this thing called the grace of Jesus clear. The basis of God’s blessings in your life is not because you worked for Him or because you gave to Him. The basis of His blessings is the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. As old fashioned as it may sound, the truth remains unchanging that Jesus actually paid it all.

Please don’t get me wrong as many people often do at this point, I am not saying Christians do not need to work for God or give offerings. I am only saying that they are not to do it thinking it gives them anything as these are not the basis for the blessings of God in our lives. These things, when done with the proper spirit, are the external proofs of the genuineness of their faith. They are *not* the basis of blessings. Like I say all the time, a true believer is a giver. He doesn’t give because he wants to be blessed but gives because he is blessed. He recognizes that God has blessed him in Christ Jesus and holding on to what he has is nothing but denying the security for tomorrow that God guarantees him. He gives because he loves people and because his faith is in God. He does not trust in money or any material thing and so he doesn’t hold them tight. He sees money as the tool with which he can spread the goodness of God into the lives of other people.

A Christian who works in church or volunteers in ministry of the word work is only showing that indeed he loves the word and desires to have the word prosper. He doesn’t ever think these

things are the sources of blessings in his life. It is just like I provide for my children because I am supposed to be a good father, not because I think providing for them will make me get promoted. This is simply my duty as a father and an effect of my love for the children.

The basis of the blessings of the Christian is the whole of the promises of God which are confirmed in Christ Jesus. The reason why you are blessed and will be blessed is not because you worked for God in church, helped the poor or gave plenty money as 'seed;' He blesses you because He promised He would, Jesus activated the promise, and you believed both in Christ and in the promises.

*For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes... 2 Cor 1:20***

... by him all the words of God are made certain and put into effect... 2 Cor 1:20 BBE

The reason God gives to you is because you are found in His Son, Jesus Christ

...to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. Eph 1:6

God's love

God is love, and this means that He loves to give to His creatures and His children. God's blessings were purposed and decided before we were born, and we were given life to partake in His goodness. God gives things to us, not because we deserve them but because He promised. His word is alive and His promises desire fulfilment.

Sin came and separated us from the garden of blessing into a place where we were alienated from the reach of His blessings. Now Jesus entered and reconciled us to God and into the centre of His blessings. All the promises that God made for mankind which no one could attain to were obtained by Jesus and given to us who believe. This is why we are joint-heirs with Him.

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. Rom 8:16-17

Christ is not just a name or a person; Christ is also a principle. Christ Jesus is the personal summary of a whole eternal working of God. Christ is the summary of all that God does for anyone. Christ is the basis for the fulfilment of God's promises in this life. No one but Jesus deserved these blessings because only He is the author and perfecter of faith (Heb 12:2). But having obtained the blessing, He freely gave to all according to the eternal plan of God. We are blessed because we are in Christ. That is the summary of it all.

We are not blessed because we know spiritual tricks and know how to use a lot of spiritual laws. Please it is vital that we understand that some of these things are accurate when operated outside Christ. When a non-believer in Christ operates some of those our spiritual laws they may work for him because indeed they are laws. But in Christ we operate a law that is far higher. Yes there is a spiritual law of giving and receiving but we, who are in Christ, do not give so as to receive. In Christ, all our efforts at giving so as to receive have come to an end (Heb 4:10); we

receive simply because we believe and because we are children of God.

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Rom 8:32-33

Giving for us is a product of blessing. We are blessed for a purpose – so that we may be blessings to others. That is the Abrahamic and Christ order; our faith implies that we must spread the blessings. The blessing did not come because we activated any other principle beyond believing.

I am emphasizing this because I see a lot of people behave as if God already owes them something for what they have done while many are labouring so as to put Him into their debt. But these are not the laws of Christ; they are the inferior laws of the realm of the spirit (For more on the different realms and their laws read my sermon, “The Highest Heavens”). These laws are not false but they are not of the realm of Christ where God expects us to operate from. This higher place is where all accusations against you by the devil die. If you operate at a lower level you are giving the devil power over your life.

How to receive a blessing

If you want a blessing in life, you take hold of the promise of God in that area and make demand on it. You speak to the Lord to confirm that word in your life as it is already released and legally yours by the sacrifice of Jesus. Your only claim to the blessing is your faith in that sacrifice of Jesus. That is how to walk in the realm of Christ. Remember, Christ is not just a person; it is a realm of the spirit that is higher than all else.

Sons and Servants

There is often confusion about whether we are sons or servants. Yes, the scriptures make it expressly clear that we are sons of God by virtue of our faith in Christ. John 3:16 makes it all clear and John says now are we sons, and heirs. However what people often forget is that there are two kinds of sons.

A man had two sons... Matt 21:28, Luk 15:11.

Reading through the many proverbs of the Lord Jesus teaches us that there are serving sons and there are prodigal sons. Those are the two kinds there are. You are either one or the other. We are supposed to be sons that serve.

"They will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." Mal 3:17

Now this is the point: when we are looking at our lives as servants of God, we do what we are supposed to do and we do not make any claim for them. The proper word actually used for servants most of the time in the New Testament is slaves. We are slaves of Christ in our working for Him in this life; we belong to Him and we are not allowed at all to make any demands by reason of what work we have done. If we must make any demand that seem tied to this, it must

be as a promise already made as the portion of sons that are servants (e.g. Is 54: 17). We cannot make demands from him as a reward for serving. And it is unnecessary anyway because the provisions of sons are ours.

The provisions of sons are fully ours because we are actually sons, and we make our demands based upon those provisions. Whenever we want to ask God for something, we ask because we are sons, and the father loves us. We never claim that we have done anything to deserve anything. The only deserving we claim is that we are in Christ and all the promises of God are now ours. That is what it means to pray in the name of Jesus.

Praying in the correct name

To pray in a name speaks of the authority or grounds upon which we approach a matter. Many people just utter the name of Jesus in prayer but their hearts are praying in the name of their good works. They approach God with a record of their tithes, their offerings and a background knowledge of all they have done for God and for other people. They think that if I help pay other people's hospital bills, then God will not allow me or my children to be sick. If I help the poor I should never be poor. I actually heard a man who lost two sons in one day lament that there he was, helping other people's children, paying education fees etc; how could God allow that to happen to him? He was doing those things and expecting a blessing in return because he went to a church where they are taught to make a covenant of blessing with God. Listen to this: there is no covenant of blessing that you can make beyond that which is already made by simply having faith in the finished work of Christ.

When you look to your good works to get you blessings from God you are not praying in the name of Jesus, but you are praying in the name of your good works. You have stepped out of the realm of Christ into a place where the devil can accuse. I imagine that was why that man lost two sons in one day. Many think they will live long just because they are working hard for God. They do not realise that God almost killed Moses even though he had just commissioned him into the ministry and he had just set out to do the work, having forsaken everything else (Ex 4). Moses was however walking out of the protective covenant of God. Labouring for God does not guarantee long life; only His promises in Christ Jesus do that. We need to consciously make a demand on that if matters come up (and in these perilous times, they come up all the time).

Only one covenant

I hear people all the time saying they have made a covenant with God that they will do something for Him and in return He should do something for them. One woman said, "I have made a covenant with God; He will take of my children as I take care of His." These things sound so holy and noble but sadly they are not right. You are not allowed to say to God you will do this for Him and so He will do that for you. All you are allowed to say is that you will obey Him in everything.

And all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do!" Ex 19:8

...everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak. Jer 1:7

... and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. 2 Cor 5:15

The only agreement you can make with God is that of total commitment to obey and to serve Him in everything. If you want to get anything from Him, go and pray on the basis of the promises He made in His word. Derive your expectations for life because of the discoveries of His promises. You are free to demand a fulfilment of those promises because Jesus paid for them all. God is okay with giving you anything simply because you asked in faith.

Many Christians are labouring every day to get what God said 'just ask' concerning. They are giving so as to prosper. Wow! That is not what the Bible teaches. Giving is a faith-habit of a Christian while prosperity is a promise. I have heard it said that it is not a promise, but the scriptures teach that it is. It is part and parcel of what Jesus died for. How can we say it is not a promise when it is so clearly stated that it is. Here are a few references:

But remember the Lord your God is the one who makes you wealthy. He's confirming the promise which he swore to your ancestors. It's still in effect today. Deut 8:18 (GOD'S WORD translation)

THE LORD is my Shepherd [to feed, guide, and shield me], I shall not lack. Ps 23:1 (Amp)

The Lord says, "I will bring you lasting prosperity; the wealth of the nations will flow to you like a river that never goes dry. Isa 66:12 TEV

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. 2 Cor 8:9

Prosperity is a promise; it is part of the grace of Christ. You *can't* claim it because of your giving—that would be the gospel of works; you can only claim it because of your faith in Christ. Let us wake up.

Beware how you copy old things

Sometimes we take examples from the Old Testament without bearing in mind certain important differences in application. It is true that those things were recorded for our learning but bear in mind that they teach principles and *not* acts to be simply repeated. The baptism of the Old Testament differs from that in the New even though we learn about the latter from the former. Their rock was physical but our Rock is both mystical and a person—Christ (1 Cor 10). For this reason we must be careful when we are transposing Old Testament practises into today. For example, if we want to offer sacrifices like Abraham and Jacob we must bear in mind that times have changed and so have sacrifices. The watershed point is the cross of Christ. Our sacrifices must therefore be New Covenant approved sacrifices. The blood of sacrificial animals is no longer acceptable, and this is clearly because Jesus' death has occurred and put an end to that. They were fore-shadows of the real thing. *Jesus is the once-and-for-all sacrifice that washes away sins and removes ancestral curses.* The real has come and so the old had to cease.

He takes away the first in order to establish the second. Heb 10:9-10

In many areas we need to be careful when copying Old Testament acts. They are types and shadows, and they have their limits. Sometimes we want to make vows and promises to God like Hannah (1 Sam 1) and like Jephthah (Judges 11) forgetting that those people didn't have the blood of Jesus shed before for them. They did not have the knowledge of the righteousness that is by faith in Jesus. We must learn to vow only to obey the word of God continually. It is important that we vow to forsake everything that is not in accordance with obedience to Christ. Other than that, please forget trying to get God to give you things because of your vow. I am sure no one wants to enter into the same quagmire as Jephthah. Our vows must be a dedication to following the word of God and the purpose of God for our lives. It is just an affirmation of what is supposed to be. The Christian's life is totally owned by the Lord and we should be totally sold out to obeying Him.

...and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. 2 Cor 5:15

Why do good works?

We do not do good works because we are trying to get something; we do them because we have faith. For us, doing works is the ventilation for our faith. There is no true believer that will not do good works. Good works is the nature of Christ that is in us. If you are not doing works it is either you do not believe yet or you are ignorant of the kind of spirit you have.

You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good... Acts 10:38

We do not say because we are prosperous by His promise we will stop giving. No, no! That is senseless. It is the same as saying we should continue in sin so that grace may abound (Rom 6:1,2). Paul said, "May it never be!" Giving has never been for us a way to get out of lack; we give because we are the instruments of God for the dissemination of His goodness on the earth. Do not forget we are sons that serve. Serving is for us being faithful to the life we are living here. This life has a purpose.

Live your life by purpose.

So we see that we must live life according to divine purpose. God will keep us on the earth only for His purpose. If we are not willing to do that we may as well return home and be with Him. However, we are not doing good works so as to stay alive; if we pursue good works just for that purpose we may even find ourselves not doing the specific reason He gave us life. We will start running up and down just trying to do something and then we miss our own purpose. Many are pastors today who should be out there building industries or getting involved in politics, but they think they have to do something special for God.

As Christians, we do our good works naturally and as much as we have opportunity. We are also

careful to pursue our specific purposes in life.

Why this sermon

This message is similar to the one I wrote titled "Works or Faith, the doctrine of mercy." The main difference here is that this sermon actually seeks to emphasize how to actively claim the blessings of God. I seek to correct the notion in the heart of many Christians today that they should expect some things in their lives just because they have been of service to God. I want to point that you will be disappointed if you reason like that. God has made abundant provisions ready for anything you will ever want in life, but it is not tied to your works but to your faith. I want to emphasize that fact that we must strive to claim what is ours according to the promises of God which are ours in Christ, rather than to sit passively, erroneously thinking that God owes us when indeed He has freely given us more than we can imagine.

...He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature... 2 Peter 1:4

To partake of divine nature means to experience the power of God for transformation of all sorts including healing, prosperity, long life etc.

I remember the story I heard about a certain man (details elude me now since it has been a while since I heard it). This man was very sick and was bitter toward God because he felt God allowed tuberculosis or some other wasting disease to eat him up. He was a man who had laboured all his life as a preacher, serving God faithfully and living a life of righteousness. Yet this disease came. He was surprised and he became bitter. He would have died with the bitterness except that God showed him mercy (and let us never forget to hope in his mercy at all times). He learnt the lesson, repented, and when the prayer of faith was said for him, he was healed.

What should this man have done?

He should not have thought that he was immune to troubles simply because he was labouring for God. Labouring for Him is a slave's duty and we must do it. That is the servant side. Healing is the children's bread; it is on the sonship side and is guaranteed by the promises. He should have held on to that by knowledge and by faith, He should have demanded it independently of his labours in the vineyard. It is a labour of faith in His promises.

Sonship rights

I perceive that it is actually our sonship duty to keep our provisions alive by faith. We are to demand complete fulfilment of promises by virtue of our place in Christ and our rights as sons, and then use these things to perform our duties as sons. After all we are sons that serve. We use sonship to serve. We take our promises, demand the fulfilment and use the results to serve Him.

We claim a healthy body by faith, and then live to preach the gospel. We don't say we have lost weight and eat a good diet as the basis of health. We take the word and say, '*He took my infirmities and my diseases, and by His wounds I am healed*' (Is 53:5; Matt 8:17). With this we

demand health and long life.

With a long life I will satisfy him, and let him behold My salvation. Ps 91:16

Long life is a promise. We claim the fulfilment because Christ says it is ours. Long life is not in the genes or in the exercise of the body; it is in the promise of God.

We become rich by faith, and then use the money to help the poor and sponsor the gospel. We always go to the supply house as sons but to the field as servants. Prosperity is a promise as we saw earlier. We should claim those promises.

Study

*They do not know nor do they understand;
They walk about in darkness. Ps 82:5*

Ignorance of the promises of God can be as devastating for us as if the Lord never made those promises. It is our duty to put in the effort to know the promises. Instead of making up your mind that you will do a work or give something to get something out of the Lord, it is better to go to pray and study to know what His promise is concerning that thing. Whatever He did not promise, your 'seed' cannot force it out of Him, and if He promised, only faith is needed to activate the promise. Your effort should be to discover His promises and to hold on to those in faith.

It is our duty to labour to enter into the rest of God

It is our duty to pray and demand the fulfilment of the promises. That is what prayer actually is. It is a time to lift up the promises of God and ask for the fulfilment. Prayer is also a time of seeking greater understanding of what we are yet to know.

The real seed

We must know how to sow the right seeds in life. Giving and claiming something for the offering is not at all Christianity. All gifts given to Him are seen only in the light of the purpose in the heart of the giver. If the motive is for selfish ends, it doesn't count towards your needs. The real seed that works in getting your need met has to with His promises.

The seed is the word of God. Luk 8:11

It is your duty to sow divine promises into your life—all around you and into your future. Sow the words into your family, into your business and into your ministry. Sow the word of God into all that concerns you.

How do you sow it?

Know and declare it!

Declare the promises of God over everything.

Say to your body. You are well because Jesus died to make me free. The spirit of Him who raised Christ Jesus dwells in me and is giving life and health to my body (Rom 8:11).

Declare to your business and to your pocket, “prosperity flows toward me like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream.”

Conclusion

God doesn't owe us anything more than the fulfilment of His promises. Remember,

...He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature...



**To learn how to truly work for God, please read the book “How to Work for God” by Pastor Bankie*

***Unless where otherwise indicated, all Bible references are NASB*

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