

# Are we “more blessed”?

Lesson for January 21, 2024

## INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ DISCUSS: What is the most unbelievably verse or passage in Scripture? The miracles? Red Sea, Jonah and the whale? The Resurrection? What about a passage of personal application like, “love your enemies and bless those who curse you”?
- ⇒ The verse we are focusing on today has been called the most unbelievably beatitude! Definitely “very unbelievably” in modern day America! Read Acts 20:35.
  - This verse is very interesting because in this verse Paul quotes Jesus with a quotation not found anywhere else in the Bible.
  - (It’s important to remember that the Bible does NOT contain all the words and works of Jesus. See John 21:25.)
- ⇒ CONTEXT: These are Paul’s last words to the Ephesian church. He reminds them about the role of the pastor, the power of the Word and an important practical lesson to be applied.

TEACHER NOTE: Don’t get bogged down on points 1 & 2. These are given more for context.
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## OUTLINE:

1. The Role of Pastors: Keep watch over yourselves and the church (vs. 28-31).
  - a. The responsibilities of the pastor (vs. 28).
    - i. They are to “oversee” the work of the church.
    - ii. They are to “feed the church.”
  - b. The warning regarding false teachers (vs. 29-30).
    - i. They can come from both outside and inside the church.
    - ii. Their purpose is to draw away disciples (30b).
  - c. The example of Paul (vs. 31).
2. The Power of the Word: Live for God and Follow His Word (vs. 32).
  - a. God’s Word will build you up. The Bible is not like any other book. It should be read and obeyed (see also Hebrews 4:12).
  - b. God’s Word will give you an eternal inheritance (see also 1 Peter 1:4).
    - i. God, as the “inventor of the human machine” has graciously declared to us how we can all obtain an eternal inheritance.
    - ii. The teaching of the Bible is about how to prepare for the next life.
3. The Practical Instruction: Labor and give, rather than covet and take (vs. 33-35).
  - a. Guard your heart to not covet the things of the world (33).
  - b. Be willing to work in order to bless others (34-35a).
  - c. Focus on giving. Paul shares Jesus’s countercultural teaching in verse 35.
  - d. The teaching: It is more blessed to give than to receive (35).
    - i. Notice the words Jesus chose: More blessed or more happy.
    - ii. Being more blessed is NOT a “prosperity gospel” appeal that teaches the more you give then the more you will get.
    - iii. More blessed is the satisfaction and contentment that results from when you see the Lord use the money that you give in eternal ways.
    - iv. This is the most unbelievably beatitude! Do we believe it?
  - e. DISCUSS: How is it true that it is more blessed to give than to receive? Consider:
    - i. Giving blesses 3 people rather than just 1.
    - ii. When we give we are blessed, the recipient is blessed, and God is pleased.

- iii. We will never be content when all we do is consume.
- f. DISCUSS: How many blessings have we robbed ourselves of in the last year by failing to give as we could have?
- g. Things to consider in our giving:
  - i. Make sure your giving is consistent with your convictions.
    - 1. It seems everywhere we go people ask for our money! Billboards, radio and online ads, constantly calling to us buy what they are selling.
    - 2. ILL: Round-up to help fireman at Firehouse; donate to the Feed the Children fund at Wal-Mart; fast food places now asking for tips, etc.
    - 3. Christian giving should be FOCUSED, INTENTIONAL and LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.
  - ii. You must have giving priorities:
    - 1. Financially, the tithe belongs to the Lord through your local church.
    - 2. Offerings are extra opportunities above the tithe.
  - iii. Consider your giving to your family. DISCUSS: How do we give to our families? If we give to our families in the following ways we will be more blessed!
    - 1. We give them a spiritual heritage.
      - a. Train them, lead them and have them in church at every opportunity.
      - b. Show them that nothing is more important than worshipping the Lord. This requires you to say, 'no' to family activities that cause you to miss church. ILLUS: Remember the story of Eric Liddell in Chariots of Fire?
    - 2. We give them financial support. These are the real needs that should come first in our family budgets: food, shelter, clothing, medical, transportation, education, etc. This would also include, long term needs such as insurance of various types, emergency fund savings so your family does not end up in a crisis, long-term savings like retirement.
    - 3. We give them the gift of genuine relationship. Don't allow your interests or activities to waste the time you have with your family. Nurture your marriage. Develop your children. Both of these take TIME.

#### DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

- ⇒ How can we be MORE BLESSED specifically in our stewardship as it relates to our church?
  - Tithing is a tangible, financial way to enjoy the benefits of knowing that you have contributed to something that is eternal.
  - Serving by giving your time and talents. At FBT, we are blessed because of the many people who volunteer their effort and talents. Some have served for decades and now must step down. Will you pick up the baton of faithful service? What are you doing? Pick up the baton and begin to meaningfully serve.
- ⇒ Is there a more powerful testimony of the difference that Christ makes in one's life than how we manage our money? Our culture teaches to "get paid" or "get your money" and lavishly comfort yourself. Do you believe true blessing/happiness actually comes from giving and service?