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Genesis

Chapter 26 - God's Blessing to His Beloved Children

A Blessing Unnerving to the World (vs. 12-17)

Genesis 26:12-17: Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. And the LORD blessed him, and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy; for he had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him. Now all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines stopped up by filling them with earth. Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are too powerful for us." And Isaac departed from there and camped in the valley of Gerar, and settled there.

I think a lot of preachers would like this particular passage because it talks about the blessings of God and about it being about money. What a wonderful passage this is. The blessings of God just pouring out all of those dollars and dimes from heaven. As we look at this passage, clearly, it isn't without its problems. And though he has the blessings of the monetary realm, he is dealing with other issues.

The Old Testament is written in such a way that its purpose is to reveal the limitations of the flesh; of doing things in the physical realm. And so, it points to the fact of something greater. There needs to be something better than this. So, the Old Testament really is about works. It's about deeds. It's about things in the physical realm. It's about performance. It's about all those things that we do in this physical world; to do that which is good. And we try to do good. So, the Law is, in the Old Testament, man trying to do good. We always come up kind of empty, and that's the purpose of the Law. And that's why Galatians 3:24 says, "The Law is a tutor to lead us to Christ." The purpose of the Law is to push us in a better direction

because no matter who you read about, no matter how great they are, whether it is Adam, Abraham, or David, or Moses, or whoever, they just come up short. And so, we realize that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. There is a kind of emptiness. We have an individual such as Solomon, who is the smartest guy that's ever existed, as well as the wealthiest guy that ever existed. And he writes this book called Ecclesiastes, and he goes, "I'm not happy." I mean, if you ever read the Book of Ecclesiastes, it's full of phrases like "Vanity! Vanity! All is vanity! There's nothing worth doing anything for." And so, he begins to reveal that under the sun, by virtue of pursuits, no matter how grand and glorious your pursuits are, you can't seem to find any kind of fulfillment in that.

We come to this passage, and we realize that there is a blessing of God that is physical. But the blessing of God that is physical still comes up short in that realm, whereas God has far greater things for us.

If you'll go all the way into John 15 in the New Testament, you realize that there is a prosperity that goes beyond the physical prosperity. And so, we come to this passage

making reference to the fact that there is going to be a blessing in the Old Testament, and really, what it does is it demonstrates in a physical way the limitations of tangible blessings. So, is it a bad thing to have good things? No.

I oftentimes think of, in the New Testament, 1 Timothy 6, if you look there with me. You come to the end of the chapter, and Paul writes to Timothy, and he obviously is making mention of those who have money. He is warning Timothy that he can't love money, especially being in the ministry. Unfortunately, I don't think a lot of people in ministry have read that text.

Nevertheless, if you look in 1 Timothy 6:17, it reads this way,

(1 Timothy 6:17) "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy."

Now, I just want to make note of something, that Paul is understanding that as Timothy is in this realm of Ephesus, and there are a lot of wealthy people in this city of Ephesus in which he's a pastor in that particular church;

he wants him to understand that the wealth in and of itself is not the bad thing. He doesn't say, "Tell all the rich people to not be rich anymore." He doesn't say that, does he? He just says, "Just don't be conceited. And don't put your hope in this thing because it's very uncertain. It's not something that is really stable. The time is coming when it's not going to be able to save you at all." Although Ecclesiastes will say, "I know money has an answer to everything." And that's one of the big problems with money is that when you have it, you actually go to it for the answers rather than to God. So, it's one of the pitfalls that we fall into. Nevertheless, at the beginning of this passage, he's warning Timothy, "You can't love these things, and these things can't consume you." So, once again, the context- it's not a bad thing, but if you love it, it is.

And so, the statement is, if you read, of course, he states in verse 7,

(1 Timothy 6:7) "For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either."

So, once again, it shows the transient and the inability of the money to really do anything for you of any eternal value.

(1 Timothy 6:8) "If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

(1 Timothy 6:9) But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

(1 Timothy 6:10) For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it..."

Once again, love for it and longing for it seem to be the key words in that text.

"... have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

In other words, they put their trust in the money rather than God. That's how they wander away from the faith.

And so, he goes on and says in verse 11,

(1 Timothy 6:11) "But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness."

If we would just pursue those things more than we pursue money, wouldn't that be a grand thing? So, Scripture is making reference to the fact that money in itself is not bad. In fact, God will oftentimes bless with tangible, physical things in your life. Those are some of the blessings. However, they are limited blessings in and of themselves, and the Old Testament in this particular passage is going to demonstrate the limitation of tangible things to bless us. So, as we come to this, we begin to realize that wonderful truth.

(Genesis 26:12) "Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year..."

Now, we have to put this in the context of the beginning of the chapter.

And the beginning of the chapter was,

(Genesis 26:1) "Now there was a famine in the land..."

This is a pretty interesting statement. And the tendency is, of course, and was the tendency of his father, "We have to move." And so, God visits Isaac at this juncture, and He turns to him, and He says, "Don't go down to

Egypt. Just stay where you are. Stay where you are." And he's in Gerar, which is in the land of the Philistines, and basically around the area where his father had settled in. And so, God just says, "Stay." Now, when things are difficult, the tendency is to want to move; when things aren't going well. He says, "No, just stay. I'll take care of this." So, God wants to remind Isaac with this particular statement, "Blessings come from you obeying." So, He makes this statement at the beginning of this chapter. He says, "Your dad obeyed Me. Therefore I declared to him blessings." And then you see in the next few verses, it goes, "So, Isaac stayed." Isaac realized that blessings come from obedience and it comes from doing the Lord's will. So, we're really seeing the reaping of the blessings of obedience. And here he is in the midst of a famine, and he's sowing. And let me just add one other thing- he's not a farmer. He's a herdsman. His dad was a herdsman. This is what they do. So, the very fact that he's farming and he's successful in the same year is, well, nothing short of a miracle. And Scripture wants to convey that.

(Genesis 26:12) "Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. And the LORD..."

And that's the key phrase,

"... the LORD blessed him."

It was the Lord that did it.

(Genesis 26:13) "and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy."

I mean, Scripture seems to want to exaggerate this to the point of, "Wow, this man became great and powerful," which actually are some of the words used within the passage.

(Genesis 26:14) "for he had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household..."

Uh-oh, here's the problem. His neighbors started envying him. Isn't that the way your's reads? Verse 14. Well, they didn't just envy; they did something about it. They started stopping up all the wells.

So, here he is with all these possessions and now being envied by his neighbors,

(Genesis 26:15) "Now all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines stopped up by filling them with earth.

(Genesis 26:16) Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are too powerful for us."

"You're too great. You're too numerous for us."

There was a growth of not only his servants, but his livestock and all the things that he had. You almost feel like... Remember, at the very beginning when Abraham was with his nephew Lot and they were in a particular region and both herds started getting big and it actually says in the passage that they started having conflicts because of that. The Scripture is making reference to the fact that you might have tangible blessings that bring relational problems.

(Genesis 26:17) "And Isaac departed from there and camped in the valley of Gerar, and settled there."

He goes into this valley in which, from what we understand, is a torrent bed, and it's during a time of a

famine. So, if you dig in a torrent bed, you might be able to find more water in those particular regions.

If you go back to Chapter 13, once again, is Abraham with his nephew.

It reads this way,

(Genesis 13:5) "Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.

(Genesis 13:6) And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together."

Can you imagine that success would actually cause people to be divided?

(Genesis 13:7) "And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock..."

Strife over success. You wouldn't think that would be the case, would you? Success in the monetary realm or in the physical realm can bring a lot of problems. And though that success can clearly be from God, God just might be

revealing something to you through that, that goes beyond the success of the monetary.

We come to this passage and we realize that God will work in these areas to reveal certain things. And if you go back to the very beginning of the call of Abram as well as that blessing that is going to be handed down to Isaac, it is the same call and it is the same blessing. We'll just put it in a synopsis, "I'm going to bless you, Abraham," ultimately Isaac, "and I'm going to make you a blessing to all the nations." Now, just a simple question I'm going to throw out: Is he being a blessing to his neighbors at this juncture? And you have to come up and go, "No."

Now, why does God bless us? That's an interesting question. Why does God bless His people? And the answer is, so that we might be a blessing. So, what we begin to see is the beginnings of the physical, and we think in terms of, "Well, I know the reason why God has blessed me. I build storehouses. I tear down my barns. I build bigger barns, and I just store up stuff for myself." And God goes, "That's never been the case. The whole purpose of Me blessing you is to be a blessing to others."

It is bizarre when you think about it that it's possible that blessings could hinder being a blessing. I don't know if you ever thought of it that way, but it is possible that prosperity and riches will often stir up hostile feelings for one another. As you look at the Book of James, you see in Chapter 4, there's a real possibility of the whole issue of jealousy and envy to stir up all kinds of fights and quarrels and just a mess.

Chapter 4 reads this way,

(James 4:1) "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?"

(James 4:2) You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

(James 4:3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures."

In other words, it's very easy for us to perceive that having a windfall or having large amounts of money

would be the blessings of God. And I would say it is the blessings of God, but it falls short of what He really wants for you. Now, this doesn't mean that God doesn't use money. We know that He does, and I'm going to show you examples throughout Scripture. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that wealth can at many times cause more problems than good. And I think when you go through Scripture, you begin to realize that having a lot of money sometimes actually builds walls.

The way that it's put in Proverbs 18:23 is,

“The poor man utters supplications, But the rich man answers roughly.”

What it's fundamentally saying is that when people get a lot of money, they have a tendency to be more demanding. And in that more demanding, if in fact you were to try to talk to somebody that is extremely wealthy, you find yourself becoming very reluctant, very restrained in talking with him because of the fact that he does have so much money. I mean, it kind of puts a wall between the two of you. And I would say this, that conversations tend to be more superficial.

Scripture says in Proverbs 19:4,

"Wealth adds many friends..."

What kind of friends?

Well, it actually goes on to say,

(Proverbs 18:24) "A man of too many friends comes to ruin..."

In other words, you don't want those kinds of friends that it adds.

A man of many friends will not only come to ruin,

(Proverbs 19:6) "... And every man is a friend to him who gives gifts."

Start giving stuff around and just watch how many people you will hear say, "You're my friend." And it won't be because necessarily they like you, but what it does is it stirs up a sense of superficiality. People are no longer conversing on a deep level and it begins to build walls and God will use this to reveal that in many respects. Why doesn't God make everybody rich? That's the question we have to ask ourselves. Why isn't everybody rich? Because we know, according to 1 Timothy 6, that there are some

people that are rich, and that's okay. But there's a lot of us that aren't. And we go, "Everybody should be rich. I mean, those are the blessings of God." And God goes, "No, those are a blessing, but there are greater blessings." Luke will actually tell us that God will use money, and he'll use the term "unrighteous mammon" to test you. And the test is, how will you use it? "Will you be faithful in using...", He uses the phrase, "unrighteous mammon? Are you faithful in that?" He says, "If you'll be faithful in this, I'll give you greater things."

So, in many respects, money is a stepping stone to something greater. We realize that it doesn't bring the great results that we had hoped for. Once again, you go to Ecclesiastes, you have the richest man on the face of the earth, and he goes, "You know, I bought everything I wanted. Everything my eye could see, I purchased. And I said to myself, 'I feel unfulfilled. I'm not happy.'" He comes to the end of Ecclesiastes 2, and he says, "I realize that the only way that I'm going to be happy is if God gives me joy because I'm not getting it this way. I can't buy happiness." That's an interesting phrase, isn't it? Even

the world knows that. Now, they don't live that way, but even the world knows that. You can't buy happiness. And so, you have, strangely enough, God working through this and God revealing these things. And God will begin to work in such ways that really surprise us in the sense that God will take us into realms that seem to go counter to blessings; that is to say that sometimes He doesn't let us be rich so that we might experience greater "wealth."

Paul will make a statement in Philippians 4, "I've learned to be content in whatever circumstance I'm in." He then states, "I've had a lot and I've had very little. But I found contentment is a means of great gain."

And so, let's go to Acts 18, and we'll see Paul dealing with the whole concept of, in this particular point, not having money. Now, this is kind of unusual because we have this individual who was a Sanhedrin at one time. And we know, as Luke tells us, that Pharisees were lovers of money. So, they had a lot of it. And if you're a Sanhedrin, that is a supreme court justice, you would probably be extremely wealthy. Nevertheless, as he had given his life to the Lord, he now finds himself not too wealthy. And as

he travels from Athens and goes to Corinth, he finds himself not having any money. So, he has to take up this trade that he has. Now, all the Sanhedrins, as they were growing up, had to learn a trade for themselves. And so, his trade was tent making.

He finds himself in Chapter 18, as he leaves Athens and he goes to Corinth,

(Acts 18:2) "And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them."

In other words, Claudius was fed up with the Jews and he kicked them out.

(Acts 18:3) "and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers."

Now, Paul's having to work. He's a minister of the gospel. He's an apostle of Christ. And he's having to work at this point. It almost sounds like, well, God let him down. I mean, once again, if you listen to most preachers out

there, shouldn't Paul be extremely wealthy? Shouldn't God be blessing him at every turn? But now, we almost see him in some kind of poverty and he's having to make his living.

Now, as the passage goes on,

(Acts 18:4) "And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks."

He doesn't stop his ministry, but if you look in verse 5,

(Acts 18:5) "But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia..."

They come down with funds.

"...Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ."

So, it wasn't like he was going to remain in the realm of making his own tents, but he was going to do it if it was necessary. What's interesting about the whole scenario is that we look at this and we almost feel like Paul was a victim of circumstances. The guys hadn't come in with the money, his support hadn't arrived yet, so now he has to make the tents and we say to ourselves, "Why doesn't

God just bless him? Why doesn't God just give him a lot of money?" And I would say this, the only purpose for money is so that you can be a blessing. So, if that money hinders you being a blessing, God will take it away. And in this particular case, it would have hindered his ministry. You say, "Why is that true?" Well, the main reason it's true is because he's got to minister to the Corinthians. Now, this is a strange point, but oftentimes God, when He sends us to rich people, makes us poor to do it. And the reason is because oftentimes wealthy people put their trust in those things, so they've got to see somebody that doesn't put their trust in them. I think sometimes people think, "Well, in order for me to minister to wealthy people, I've got to learn to play golf or I've got to take them out to dinner or something like that." And God seems to work just the opposite of that. The kings of Israel, the upper echelon, were going to be ministered to by a sheep herder by the name of Amos. He says, "I'm not even a prophet. I'm not the son of a prophet. Why am I being sent?" And God goes, "Because you're poor." And so, He sends him to all these rich people. Why is that true? Because Amos's message of blessing is, "You cannot

rely upon your wealth." If he came with all that wealth, the message would be lost.

So, the same thing is true with Paul at Corinth. He sends him to Corinth, and He goes, "Paul, you can't have any money because these people love it. And they're all about outward appearance." In fact, one of the statements Paul makes about them in 2 Corinthians 5:12 is, "You take pride in appearance. And the problem is, you don't take pride in the heart. You're just concerned about how you look and the money that you spend." And then, of course, their statement towards him and the way that they perceive him as he comes into their presence is, he says, (2 Corinthians 10:10) "... his personal presence is unimpressive..."

"You look a mess, Paul. You're not impressive at all." Does it remind you of our Savior? He had no stately form or majesty that we should look on Him. Why? Because it would get in the way of the ministry. God has a calling for all of us. We think in terms of, "Well, you're successful if you have money." No, God has just given you that for your ministry. The way that James puts it in James, he

says, "Don't you know that the poor are rich in faith?" So, what God does is He puts some, and He says, "This is your ministry. You're going to be rich in faith." Others, "You're going to be giving in this way. But don't perceive that the blessing is the money. Because money will cause all kinds of bad problems if in fact it becomes your desire and you long for it and you love it. But if you understand that I use all things for ministry... Because what's the goal? You're going to be blessed for the purpose of blessing others."

Now, when you realize this, you go to a passage like 1 Corinthians 4, if you turn there with me; Paul begins to describe himself to the Corinthians, and once again, what's one of their problems? They're wealthy and they know it. And they're superior, and they know it because I mean, quite frankly, if you have money, you must be superior, right? Psalm 49 makes reference to that, "You boast in your money. What do you think? You're just going to die like the animals. Don't boast in the things that you have." He goes on and he says in Psalm 49, "Though you congratulate yourselves for having this, don't think for one moment that makes you great." But

the Corinthians were feeling pretty great at this particular juncture.

So, he writes this in verse 6,

(1 Corinthians 4:6) "Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.

(1 Corinthians 4:7) For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

(1 Corinthians 4:8) You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you."

In other words, "It sure would be nice to benefit from you kings."

(1 Corinthians 4:9) "For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because

we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

(1 Corinthians 4:10) We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor.

(1 Corinthians 4:11) To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated..."

You just imagine Paul coming into the land of Corinth, you know, I truly believe that his speech was contemptible, as they say, "He's unimpressive and his speech is contemptible," probably because of the fact that his mouth was distorted because people would beat up on him or throw rocks at him. And there he is, poorly clothed, and he goes, "Boy, have I got good news for you." And they're going, "It's not money, is it?" And he goes, "Right, it's not money. It's not money." Because at this juncture with these people, had he come wealthy, they would have got the wrong message. And it's all about the message. That's the whole reason.

(1 Corinthians 4:12) "and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;

(1 Corinthians 4:13) when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now."

And then he goes on in the next paragraph, and he goes, "I'm sorry, I just have to say this because you guys are thinking so superficially." It should not surprise you that what we'll go into in this particular letter is 1 Corinthians 13; that reminds us it doesn't matter how much you have, it doesn't matter how great you are. If you don't have love, it's all worthless. So, God has sent him to declare this message. And this message has to be declared in a certain way that they don't rely upon money or perceive it as something that would be great.

Now, there's another time that Paul doesn't have a lot of money and that's with the Thessalonians. And when you get into 1 Thessalonians in Chapter 2 in particular, and in chapter 3, you begin to realize that in fact his statement is, "When I came to you, I didn't take a dime from you

because I wanted you to know that I wasn't here to take from you. I was here to love you." And so, he purposely worked hard with his hands while he was with the Thessalonians, lest they think that he was there to try to get something from them. Now, there are times in which he receives great benefits from the different ones.

An example of that is in Philippians, if you turn with me to Philippians. You didn't think you'd be all over the New Testament from the Old Testament, did you?

In Philippians 4, Paul will write this,

(Philippians 4:10) "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity."

And he's actually talking about monetary concern.

(Philippians 4:11) "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

(Philippians 4:12) I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity..."

Some people don't do a good job doing that.

"... in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

(Philippians 4:13) I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

Sometimes people just quote that verse, and they don't quote it in the context. What is he talking about? What he's talking about is, "I've learned to be content in whatever circumstance I'm in. And I've learned that God is using sometimes poverty in my life, sometimes wealth in my life, to do the work that He has called me to do."

He states this in verse 14,

(Philippians 4:14) "Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

(Philippians 4:15) You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

(Philippians 4:16) for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift..."

I wonder why they sent a gift to Thessalonica. Because he wouldn't receive any money from them. Because he couldn't. It would have hurt his ministry. It would have hurt his relationship with him.

(Philippians 4:17) "Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account."

(Philippians 4:18) But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

(Philippians 4:19) And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

What does he mean, "will supply all your needs"?

Everything you need to finish your job. Because if it's just about abundance, abundance by itself will not only not make you happy, but it will also sometimes make enemies. But according to Proverbs 10, it is the blessings of God that make rich and He adds no sorrow to it. And God is going to give you a wealth that not only will help

with the ministry but will complement the ministry. And sometimes, that wealth is not having things.

2 Corinthians, if you'll turn there with me, reminds us as well that God is more than willing and ready to supply us with what we need.

And so, if you look in 2 Corinthians 9, it reads this way, (2 Corinthians 9:6) "Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

(2 Corinthians 9:7) Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

(2 Corinthians 9:8) And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed."

In other words, God's going to take care of whatever you need to get the ministry accomplished. You say, "Well, I hardly have anything." God goes, "That's exactly what you need to get the ministry accomplished. Because it's in

your poverty that you're going to speak to these people. And that's how you're going to minister." And you wake up, and you go, "There's an abundance." And this is where John 15 comes in. Jesus says, "I came that your joy will be made full. So, this is what's going to happen. You're going to bear fruit, and your fruit's going to remain. You're going to be prosperous." In other words, you're going to start producing stuff that lasts and that fulfills that void in your heart. And God goes, "That's what it's for. See, that's what these blessings are for."

We're going to have to take this drive through the Old Testament to see the problems with the monetary. Because the Old Testament is all about the physical; it's all about the monetary. And you're going to have to see. You're going to go, "Wow, he was rich. Abraham was rich. He says he was really, really rich. Isaac was really, really, really rich. And look at the blessings." And God goes, "Not so much." And He's going to reveal what needs to happen in order for Isaac to start having some kind of peace throughout this. The text will ultimately leave us feeling kind of short because it doesn't want us to think that the

monetary fulfills, because it doesn't. When you go through Scripture, you begin to realize that even the prophecy of Christ humanity, physically, doesn't make any sense. I mean, Micah 5 says that the Messiah, the One who has always existed, from all time is going to come to earth and He's going to be born in a little village that is a shepherd village. Now, why would He do that? I mean, if you think about it, that doesn't make any sense that the Messiah would be born in a lowly village. It doesn't make any sense that He would live in a region called Nazareth in which Nathaniel would say, "Can anything good come out of this place?" Why would He be raised in a particular village such as this? And why would He actually, according to Isaiah 53, have no stately form or majesty that we should look on Him? Why would He be born into a family of indigents? Why would He do that? It doesn't make any sense at all. He should be the wealthiest.

Unless you read Hebrews 2. Let me read the verse for you. Now, this is talking about the Messiah; this is talking about Christ.

(Hebrews 2:17) "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

In order that He might become a High Priest that could sympathize with our weakness. "God, You haven't made me rich." Oh, He's made you rich. You just don't realize He's given you more than enough to do what you need to do for the ministry He's called you to do. Don't waste it on yourself. Don't waste it on your own pleasures. Because the only thing that's going to do is stir up animosity and hatred and envy and strife. God has given you whatever He's given you for that purpose. And how wonderful it is that He's working in our lives to fulfill the mission. Just to let you know, there are monetary blessings that hinder blessings, if in fact they're misused.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and our desire is to live as You. We know that You placed us on this earth for a reason. It is not to spend our life fulfilling the pleasures of our lust and our desires. It is that others might come to know You and have life everlasting. There's truly a greater blessing than the monetary things that we could have on this earth, and You're calling us to that. Lord, help us not to look around at what everybody else has, because each one has been called to a particular ministry that is unique to themselves. But help us just to look to You, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, that we might be willing to give it all up if called to for the sake of ministry and for the sake of greater joy, or that we might use what we have to help the weak, those that are in need. With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, you pray...