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Genesis

Chapter 12 - God Chooses for Blessing A Promise to Bless (vs. 2-3)

Genesis 12:2-3: “And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;
And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

Well, this may surprise you, but I don't think we're going to finish today. I understand it's just two verses, but sometimes it's just a lot of territory to cover. I believe we all want the blessings of God, don't you? I mean, who doesn't want God to bless them? It would be ridiculous to say you didn't. I think one of the big problems in that is we like to define for God what blessings are.

When you look at James 4 in particular, and at the end of James 3, you realize that man pursues his selfish ambition and then, by virtue of that, desires that God meets those desires. If you look at the very beginning of James 4, the only thing that really happens or comes out of that is misery. Man knows exactly how to make himself miserable. He doesn't know how to make himself happy, but he does know how to make himself miserable. Strangely enough, he somehow equates what he wants with blessings. So, oftentimes when he prays for blessings, he's praying for the very things that would make him miserable. God's not going to do that. Those are prayers that He's not going to answer. How do we know that? Well, He says that in James, "You were asking after your own lusts. This is why your prayers aren't answered."

We come into this passage in which God desires to bless Abram, and it comes out of Abram coming out of his land, his country, his relatives, his father's household. God is calling him separate. He's calling him to be distinct. This is a theme throughout Scripture that really the prerequisites

for the blessings of God actually begin by separating yourself from the world. That's why at the very beginning of the message of the gospel is the word “repent”. Repent is really you taking yourself out of the way that you normally think and putting yourself in the realm of God's thinking. You're abandoning the things of your desires, and you're calling Him Lord. You're saying, “You're in charge now, not me.” This is where blessings come.

We see this in Psalm 1. If you look there with me. He says it in such a simplistic way, and yet once again, it's easy to just say, “Yeah, but where are the blessings?”

Psalm 1 begins this way,

(Psalm 1:1) “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked...”

So, what is he telling you to do? Stop walking in the counsel of the wicked.

He goes on and says,

“... Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!”

In other words, you're hanging out with the wrong people. Bad company corrupts good morals.

(Psalm 1:2) “But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

(Psalm 1:3) He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams
of water...”

Whatever you do will prosper.

So, his emphasis is that the reason why you're not happy, i.e. blessed, is because you're hanging out with the wrong people.

If you look with me in 2 Corinthians 6, Paul will write something similar as he quotes out of Isaiah 52.

(2 Corinthians 6:14) “Do not be bound together with
unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and
lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

(2 Corinthians 6:15) Or what harmony has Christ with
(that which is wasteful) Belial, or what has a believer in
common with an unbeliever?

(2 Corinthians 6:16) Or what agreement has the temple of
God with idols? ...”

Now, really what he's talking about throughout this is that He's calling upon His people to come out and be separate.

In fact, He states this,

(2 Corinthians 6:16) “... “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM;

AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

(2 Corinthians 6:17) “Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord.

“AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you.

(2 Corinthians 6:18) “And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty.”

You want the blessings of God? You're going to have to come out. You're going to have to be separate. You're going to have to be distinct. Now, what He's talking about here is, of course, not the fact that you're taken out of the world. We live in the world and we're to be a part of the world in the sense of we evangelize the world. But what

He's talking about is that you have separate pursuits; you have separate purpose in your life. Your fellowship is going to be different.

In fact, one of the statements that Peter makes in 1 Peter 4 is that the wicked are really surprised that you don't run with them in the same dissipation that they run into, In other words, you don't want to live your life the way they want to live, in waste. So, they're surprised, "Why don't you want to just live this way?" and you go, "Well, that's just not something I'm pursuing. It's not something that I love. It's not the affection that I have. You love different things than I love." Does it mean that you'd never talk to them? No, it's not talking about that. It's talking about fellowship. "What fellowship have righteousness and lawlessness," as the passage says. What partnership? What harmony? You're not thinking the same. So, there's a distinction in purpose, and there's distinction in fellowship, and there's a distinction in what you depend on and what you're devoted to, or who you're devoted to. God is calling us to be separate.

Ephesians 5:3 reads this way,

“But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you...”

So, you're with a bunch of people and they're pursuing certain things, you shouldn't be in that mix. In any way, people shouldn't perceive, “That guy is part of that group.” You have to be separate, and really at the very beginning of Genesis 12, that's exactly what the Lord does. He calls Abraham out and we know according to, once again, Joshua 24, that his father was immersed in other worship of other gods, other idols, as it is recorded within Joshua. So, He's saying, “You've got to come out from among that influence.” The bottom line is that God longs to be gracious. I think sometimes people perceive that God's just wanting to hold back that blessing from you, and He's just wanting to make you miserable. But God longs to be gracious. We know that according to Isaiah 30:18, and what a wonderful picture that is, isn't it? The Lord longs to be gracious. He waits on high to do this. So, you have this wonderful picture that is given to us of God just almost at the edge of His seat, longing to give us blessings. He wants to do that, and what are the blessings

that He longs to give us? Well, obviously blessings that the things that we oftentimes pursue can't and won't give us. In fact, oftentimes they'll give us very opposite of those things. God wants to give us peace. He wants to give us a sense of harmony, and He wants to give us security. He wants to give you confidence. He wants to give you joy. I mean, you can go down the list of all the wonderful things, fulfillment, satisfaction, all of these things come from God. In fact, we oftentimes sing the *Doxology*, which starts off this way, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." And James will put it so succinctly, "Every good and every perfect gift come from above." So, God desires to do this, and yet, oftentimes we go to the wrong sources, or we try to define to God what those sources or what those blessings are all about. The bottom line is that blessing you is actually God's idea. I know that our thought is, "Well, I've got to remind God to bless me." It's God's idea. You don't see within the text, Abraham sitting around going, "I wonder when God's going to bless me. I wonder when God is going to bless me." God just comes out of the blue, and says, "I'm going to bless you." And I can just see Abraham going, "Wow,

that's a novel idea." If you think about those different ones that God calls out, none of them were really looking for those things that God was going to give them. I mean, Moses is out there with the sheep for 40 years, trying to figure out what he did wrong and how he got where he is and God just comes in a burning bush and goes, "Ok. Now, We've got some great things in store for you." And you know, by the time you're 80, you're going, "Ok. I think we've already lived our life." And He goes, "Oh, you've got about 40 more years." So, God has some gracious things in store for us, things that we wouldn't ask or think. Jeremiah the prophet was not looking for something that was going to be a place in which he was going to be used in a great way. Nevertheless, God calls upon this young man that tries to talk Him out of it. In almost every case, as God begins to lead in life, you realize, "Hey, that was God's idea." Good was God's idea.

So, as we come to this, once again, what He's stating at the very beginning, if you look with me in Chapter 12 is, (Genesis 12:1) "Now the LORD said to Abram,
"Go forth from your country,

And from your relatives

And from your father's house..."

So, once again, what is He calling him out of? Well, He's calling him out of society. He's calling him out of trends and the pressures of the society that he's in, the familiar. He's called him out of a place of traditions. When you think about family and you think about your father's household, I can't help but think about expectations. Everybody has their expectation, "I want my kid to do this." God says, "Why don't you come out? Stop listening to them. Come and listen to Me." So, He's calling us literally out of the influences and demands and the allurements that these sources have. Once again, whether it's societies or whether it's a kinsman, whether it's your own household of parentage, God is calling you out of that and He says, "Now, listen to Me." And He begins to describe to us the very things that He wants us to do. Once again, you realized that his father was immersed in was really polytheism, as well as idolatry, and he's got to come out of this to solely put his trust in God.

We talked about two things in particular last week and that is that sense of distinction and devotion to God that God has called us to, and a total dependence on Him. Once again, the world is going to tell you, “No. You need to depend on this; you need depend on that.” You've got to come out. Now, once again, you said you wanted the blessing. So, what you have to do is you have to let all of those things go. I mean the world has its methodology. It has its philosophies as all of these things that it perceives to be the road to good, and you've got to say, “You know what? I'm not listening to that.” People wonder sometimes, “Pastor Gary, why do you always just get your answers out of the Bible?” Because there's no other source. I mean, if you listen to all these other sources, they're just going to confuse you. Ultimately, the dependence and devotion upon all these other things are going to derail the very blessings that God has for you. In order for God to bless you, you have to come out and be separate. Most of us don't want to take that first step. Now the question is, as we come to this passage, how exactly does God go about blessing me? And what exactly is that blessing? Well, that's we're going to touch upon

today, and what we're going to look at specifically is more dealing with the personal application as we're going to talk specifically about Abram and God making him a blessing and then ultimately we're going to talk about, which will probably be next week, the ramifications of this, and I would say the extremity of this blessing, which ultimately, if you look at the end of verse 3, “all the families of the earth will be blessed.” That's pretty powerful. But it starts with, “I'm going to bless you.”

Now, I also want you to note something else, in verse 2, that it always starts with God. Once again, the emphasis is that God is the source of the blessings, and so it starts off,

(Genesis 12:2) “And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,

And make your name great;

And so you shall be a blessing;

(Genesis 12:3) And I will bless...”

So, it's very clear that God is the one and the source of the blessing. If in fact you think there's any other source, once again, you're going to be sorely disappointed. God begins to bless.

At the very beginning of this, in verse 2, we read that God is doing a work in our lives. Probably at first glance, you say, “What do you mean work?” Well, the very word “make” has with it the connotation of God working. There's a work that He's involved in and what is that? Well, the work is, if you look at verse 2, “I will make you a great nation.” God is actually forming something here. When I look at this word “make,” “‘āśâ,” that is actually in the Hebrew, it is often translated, just to give you some examples:

Exodus 5:9, It's translated “work”.

In Exodus 31:4, it is actually in reference to designing something. It's pretty interesting. It's actually in reference to designing something, a kind of artistic work. The way it oftentimes is described is that God is actually molding something.

(Isaiah 64:8) “But now, O LORD, You are our Father,
We are the clay, and You our potter;
And all of us are the work of Your hand.”

God has actually molded something. Now, where there's work involved, that means sometimes there's kind of

painful labor. This is not going to be easy. So, when God begins, He's saying, "We're going to make you a nation, but it's going to take some work, and We're going to accomplish this." Now, what God is stating by this is it's going to be done. I mean, once God says it, it's done; it's as good as done. So, the promise is of God and these are the promises that we claim. It's going to happen, but there's going to be work involved, and there's going to be a molding, there's going to be a shaping. God is creating a design in us. So, the question is, how is this going to happen? Now, He uses two words to describe, and ultimately, what He's doing in this first phrase is giving us where we're heading. Where are we heading? Great nation. So, the last word, "nation," is once again, the word "*gôy*," which seems to be just a confluence of people that are gathered together for some particular reason; they don't know exactly how they all got here. But when He uses the word "great," it actually has the root word "to bind together". It gives a picture of a twisting something together like rope, and the more you twist the rope together, the stronger the rope becomes. So, the interesting picture of, "I'm going to draw a people

together, We're going to bind you together, and you're going to be powerful. You're going to be great. You're going to be strong." So, the word "great" is in reference to magnitude, it's in reference to power, and it's in reference to nobility. In other words, "I'm going to make you great in all these areas. I have great things in store for you." So, He's actually given us kind of a down the road, this is where we're heading. God has great things for us, especially to a guy that is married to a woman that can't have children, and He's going to make him a great nation? That's going to be some trick. But God is revealing that this is all going to be Him, and I've oftentimes said, "It really isn't faith until it's impossible, and then it begins to stir in your mind, 'God has to do this.'" I mean, this is where you take your hands off and you go, "Ok. This is all God."

My wife and I oftentimes talk, and she goes, "We're just going to give it to God and let Him..." I said, "Honey, you don't give Him anything and you don't let Him do anything. He's God and He does whatever He does." We oftentimes use those phrases and it's really inappropriate

because, what, is God going, “Don't hold Me back. Don't hold Me back.”? I don't think so. So, God is going to do a great thing, and He begins to display.

Now in this one verse, verse 2, He begins to show us how He's going to do that.

So, if you look with me, He goes on and says,

“... And I will bless you...”

Interesting. It actually starts with Him blessing Abram. In other words, “You're going to experience My blessing upon you.”

Ultimately the goal is, if you look in verse 3,

(Genesis 12:3) “And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.”

And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

That's the end of verse 3. So, we know where we're heading, but how do we get there? Well, it starts with God blessing you. How in the world can you talk to anybody else about the power of God and the blessings of God if you've not experienced it? So, the wonderful thing about this is that God's going to be working.

I like the way it's put in 2 Corinthians 8:5, where Paul begins to talk about those that were in Macedonia and he talks about their generosity and their giving, and he uses this particular phrase, he says, "But they first gave themselves to the Lord." Now, what it's stating is that they've been very generous with giving and helping all these other people, but it started with them giving themselves first to the Lord.

You see that same kind of pattern that is given like in 2 Corinthians 1:1-11, where Paul begins to share his own testimony, and the way he describes himself is that he was burdened excessively beyond his strength. He goes on and says, "The reason for this is so that I wouldn't trust in myself, but in God, who raises from the dead." But what he's fundamentally saying is, "I had to go through this in order to be a comfort to you and let you know it works. This actually works. God will be your strength when all your strength fails." That's why He'll ultimately say at the end of 2 Corinthians, "My strength is made perfect in your weakness." In other words, God's going to take that moment in which you realize that you have no

strength, and He's going to show Himself strong, and you're going to go, "I realize that everything is all of God." But you have to come to that point in order to experience that. If you can imagine Paul really conveying this comfort to the Corinthians, they're going, "He really knows it works." So, therefore, he can begin to tell them all the wonderful things that the God of all comfort can do for them. The same thing when he's writing to the Church of Philippi; he's saying, "There are some things happening that I'm not real fond of." And I can just see the Philippians going, "Yeah. So, you're really upset about this, aren't you? I mean, you can't stop thinking about it, can you?" He goes, "No, no, no. I've learned to give thanks in this, because I know that God's in control, and in my giving thanks, God has brought a greater ministry in my imprisonment." In other words, "I found victory in this and let me share it with you." So, it always has to do with working through these things and experiencing them yourself and God blessing in spite of what you do and really coming to terms with God's goodness in your own life.

It is interesting when you follow the life of Abram, we're going to do that as we go through the Book of Genesis, but as you follow the life of Abram, when He brings him into the promised land, the first thing that God sends is a famine in the land. "You're in the promised land. Oh, good," famine. That's some welcome, isn't it? And you could just hear God saying, "So, what are you going to do with that?" Well, Abram takes some wrong turns; tries to work out the scenario himself, goes down to Egypt, tries to figure it out himself, and in the process of him trying to work it out himself, God is still gracious to him. So, God not only rescues him from the stupid mistakes that he makes, but he leaves Egypt with greater blessings than he ever had, and he's going, "Where did that come from?" And he realizes, "God's blessing me. God blesses me." So, when he goes into the next chapter, he has problems with his nephew, Lot, and his nephew, Lot, is very much thinking of himself. So, Abraham goes, "You know what? God was gracious to me. I can be gracious to Lot." So, what God is doing is He's training this man to be a blessing. Our thoughts, once again, are "If God would just give me what I want, then I'm going to be blessed." God

goes, “No. You're going to be blessed if you are a blessing.” So, that's fundamentally going to be the way that He takes Abram in in the passage, “First, I'm going to bless you. You're going to see My love and My grace upon you.”

I remember coming to the Lord and just sensing His forgiveness. It was all Him. I wasn't any better that day than any other day. I just trusted Him to forgive me, and I felt the showers of blessing of His grace upon me. It was that which I experienced, and thus, could be able to share it with somebody else, that would take that load of burden off of them. I've never really ever been able to comfort somebody by telling them how wonderful I am or how many things I possess. Have you ever walked up to somebody, and said, “You have no idea how rich I am and the money I have in the bank and all the things that I have at home. I'm just so much better than you. Are you comforted by this?” And there's actually no comfort and there's no blessing that they feel. People aren't just sitting there going, “I feel the blessing. I'm feeling close to God.” It's just not working. So, what God is doing is He's doing

that great work of making us a blessing, and surprise, this is where blessings come from.

The phrase reads this way,

(Genesis 12:2) “... And I will bless you...”

Once again, all God.

“... And make your name great...”

Ah, that's a key phrase there, because what we're talking about is reputation. What we're talking about his character. The name “Shem” within the genealogy, means “reputation”. It's talking about who you are, and what He's saying is that by virtue of your reputation, you'll be a blessing. Now, once again, I think one of the problems is that our perception is that “If in fact God will make me the subject of blessing, that is to say, just shower blessings upon me, that that's where blessings are.” But this actually goes beyond the isolated event of God giving you a blessing and into the realm of actually making you the blessing. He is actually taking you into that realm. So, the way this starts, and you can you can kind of feel the beginning of this work happen, right? Because a good

name doesn't happen overnight. There's a lot of molding, a lot of squeezing that begins to happen through that process. As we're going to watch the journey of Abraham, we're going to see once again him make blunders, and we're going to see him make mistakes. We're going to see him struggle with things; trying to take matters in his own hands; trying to maybe appease his wife by virtue of giving her what she thinks she wants or what she thinks would be best or what she thinks would work out, and so he compromises. But in the process of all these things, God begins to mold him, ultimately to the point in which he'll literally take his son, place him on the altar, and say, "He's Yours." But that's going to be a journey, and his name is going to become so great that as you read in Romans 4, he's going to be the paragon of faith, and you're not going to remember Abraham because he messed up with Pharaoh, or he messed up with Abimelech. You're not going to remember him for that. You're going to remember him for faith, and that faith is going to inspire you to believe.

The way that it's put, if you look with me in Romans 4, really much of the chapter here of Romans is about Abraham.

As he starts off,

(Romans 4:1) “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?”

That Abraham was justified by works? Obviously not. Well, if that was true, he'd have something to boast about, but it wasn't works.

But it goes on and says,

(Romans 4:3) “or what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.””

It goes on and talks about this faith in God, and one of the most endearing phrases that we read in Chapter 4 is found in verse 18,

(Romans 4:18) “In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, “SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE.”

(Romans 4:19) Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;

(Romans 4:20) yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith..."

If that doesn't encourage you, if that doesn't bless your soul... See, the great evidence of true faith of God's presence within me is I don't give up. In fact, I grow stronger in faith the more the trials and tribulation, and that's evidence of God's presence with me, because that's not my power. I've reached the end of my rope a while back, but this is God's presence, and I can't think of anything more comforting. That's a blessing of security. That's a blessing of presence of God.

As we go back, it's very clear that it's going to have to come through this name and there's going to have to be some work. In fact, God will ultimately change his name from Abram to Abraham around Genesis 17. Now, once again, Abram making reference to a father of exaltation. But God says, "No, no, a father of many people. That's

what we're going to." I don't know if his father named him that just because of hope or once again, expectations that he was going to be a great man in some way, but God had greater plans for him, and it wasn't selfishness and it wasn't self-exultation. It was going to be, God was going to use him to influence so many people for His kingdom. So, you have this wonderful picture, and once again, what God's going to do is He's going to teach this man patience, endurance, courage. I mean, we're going to see all kinds of things coming out of him, not only confidence, but kindness and a fortitude of giving and selflessness that really marks this individual. Why is it that so many people want to have and declare Abraham as their father?

"Abraham's our father!" You read in John 8, "We're the kids of Abraham." Jesus goes, "No, no, no. You're nothing like him. You're nothing like him."

(Genesis 12:2) "... And make your name great..."

Watch the phrase here,

"And so you shall be a blessing (*b^ərāḱâ*)."

"*b^ərāḱâ*" is talking about who you are. You're the existence of blessing. Well, we've gone a long way from

me getting a blessing to me becoming a blessing. This is what God has in store for us. What a magnificent picture when you think about that.

If you look with me in 1 Peter 3, I think it's one of the great themes of this book as he talks about the difficulties and the problems and the trials. Of course, our thoughts are that all these trials and tribulations and difficulties, especially when you have people that don't like us, treat us poorly, unfairly, "This is just bad karma." That's what we're thinking. "Nothing about this is good." And God goes, "I'm just fixing your name. I'm calling out a people of excellence, and in order for you to be excellent, your name has to be repaired." You say, "Well, what do you mean? What kind of name?" "Well, you need the name of patience; you need a name that will be declared kind; you need a name that will be enduring. We're fixing the name." Well, how do you do that? Well, you go through the trials, and you display excellence.

(1 Peter 2:9) "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of

Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

(1 Peter 2:10) for you once were NOT A PEOPLE...

You were a bunch of wandering blobs.

“... but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.”

You know what a blessing is about.

(1 Peter 2:11) “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”

(1 Peter 2:12) Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles...”

I mean, this is what's going to make you distinct, and this is how they're going to see what a blessing is all about. People are going to go, “My life is miserable. Why is that guy smiling?” And God's going to say, “You're going to be the resource of blessing in his life. They're going to watch you and they're going to see there is a path to blessing.”

If you go into Chapter 3, it reads this way,

(1 Peter 3:8) “To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit.”

Those are not traits that come naturally.

(1 Peter 3:9) “not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”

Where does the inheritance of blessing come from? You being a blessing. I know, I know. The way we normally think is just “Showers of blessing. Where are they?” We're looking for God and God goes, “No, no, no. We're going to make you a blessing, and through that, you'll receive the blessings.” Definitely not the way we think. God is working.

If you look with me in Ephesians, it reads this way in Ephesians 4, as he begins to talk about even in our speech and the things that we do. We're no longer angry. We're no longer speaking lies. Instead, (Ephesians 4:29) the words that are coming out of our mouths are edifying. They're building up; they're not tearing down.

“... according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”

(Ephesians 4:31) “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor...”

Well, those are things that the world does.

Once again, you drop on down to Chapter 5,

(Ephesians 5:1) “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;

(Ephesians 5:2) and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you...”

(Ephesians 5:3) “But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.”

God is calling us out. He's calling us to be different. God is molding us. It's not going to be an easy trip. But the first thing that He has to do is make your name great, and He's going to do that because the person of Christ is going to be living within us, and He's going to mold you into the person of Christ. We're actually being transformed into His image. Where is the blessing? Being transformed into

His image because the more you're like Him, the more you can be a blessing to people. Now listen, this is very important that you understand this. You blessing other people has little to do with an individual act that you perform. That is to say that you go up to somebody, "Let me help you." Maybe you change a tire. Maybe you give them a little money. Maybe you encourage them in some way, "Be warm, be filled, be clothed," whatever. So, you're doing something nice to them. This is not necessarily being a blessing, although they might reap some benefit of it, there's no doubt about that. What Scripture is talking about is that you yourself leave a legacy of being a blessing in people's lives that they see Christ, so that the blessing is you. I know it's hard for us to fathom. You will be a blessing. Therefore, all the world will be blessed. But you have to become the blessing in order for this to take place. You can look for it to happen a lot of other different ways, but this is the only way it's going to happen. This is the way God works. God's not going to do great work when you're resisting His character and His nature. But as you begin to live that life, and I can think down through the ages of different people

that have been in my life, and I can say truly, “That person was a blessing to me.” God is doing that work. He's calling us out to be separate.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and it's our desire to be different. Not like the world. You were calling us to be like Yourself, as you sent Your Son to bless us in spite of ourselves. You sent Your Son to forgive us when we were unforgivable. Nevertheless, we saw blessing and we tasted a blessing firsthand, and it was the person of Christ that drew us into the realm of blessing, and You now have called us to be that source of blessing, as Christ lives within us.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed. You want the blessing? You must be the blessing. God's doing a work. This is not going to happen overnight. I mean, the transformation and the salvation does, but in the image of Christ, we've got some work ahead of us. But God's going to build a name, and in that name, He's going to bless. You just have to say to God, “I'm ready.”

