11.08.26

Genesis

Chapter 27 - Good Blessings Bad Delivery

Reaping Grievous Repercussions (vs.30-37)

Genesis 27:30-37: Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had hardly gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. Then he also made savory food, and brought it to his father; and he said to his father, “Let my father arise and eat of his son’s game, that you may bless me.” Isaac his father said to him, “Who are you?” And he said, “I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.” Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, “Who was he then that hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate of all of it before you came, and blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed.” When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father!” And he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing.” Then he

said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.” And he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” But Isaac replied to Esau, “Behold, I have made him your master, and all his relatives I have given to him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?”

Well, we come to a passage in which this is a moment in that the father is passing on the blessing of God to his son. By the time you finish the passage, you realize, where's the blessing? Because there's a lot of acrimony, there's a lot of upset, clearly there is a sense of hopelessness and anger within this scene. As the narrative unfolds, we feel like anything but blessed. Everybody seems to want the blessing of God, but nobody really understands what it is. And in many respects, that's what this passage is talking about. It's talking about our inability to really perceive what the blessing of God is. The blessing

that was given to Abraham in Genesis 12 is really clear, "I'm going to bless you and I'm going to make you a blessing to all nations." That in a synopsis is really conveying, first of all, that the blessing is going to come from God alone. And secondly, a large part of the blessing is you blessing others. Nevertheless, it's very easy for us to get focused on the physical things, and as Esau was so honed in on, as he begins to see the blessing of God as something that is perhaps more focused on materialism than it is on spiritual. And when you look at Jacob, the desire to be blessed by his father seems more about an affirmation and an acceptance by his father rather than, once again, the blessings of God.

As they both long for the blessing, one, of course, feels entitled, and that would be Esau, just simply because he came out first. He was born one of the twins, he came out first, and he felt like he was entitled to that blessing. However, because of the way that the father responds and because of the way the father, Isaac, has been living, they misconstrue what the blessing is all about. The reason why I say that is that Isaac seems to be focused on

the physical. It's all about the meal with him. It's all about the son that gets the game for him. It's the physical things; it's the material things that he seems to be focused on. And he seems to, interestingly enough, want to blend that good feeling of a good meal with the spiritual blessing of God. Now, that in and of itself is not a bad thing, that you have a good meal, that's not a bad thing. I hope you all have a great meal at Thanksgiving. And I hope you enjoy it. Nevertheless, the purpose of the meal isn't necessarily that we feel full. The purpose of the meal is that we give thanks. And oftentimes, the blessing of that moment gets lost because we're so focused on the physical. This is one of the reasons why you can't literally amalgamate the things of pleasure, the things of the world, or the things of flesh with the spiritual because once you begin to do that, what happens is the physical takes precedence and actually takes on the driver's seat. That is to say that what begins to happen is your focus easily goes on the things that are physical and the materialism of the moment rather than the true blessing of the moment. I'll give you an example of this that's stated in the Book of Galatians.

If you turn with me to the Book of Galatians, Paul will make mention of this specifically as he begins to talk about the wonderful things that God gives us.

But his statement is, if you turn with me to Galatians 5,

(Galatians 5:16) "<u>But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.</u>"

So, obviously at this juncture he's making a division, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit. Now, the thought is, we can kind of mingle these things together. And so, if I can do something that makes me feel good in order to receive Jesus, then hey, that's a good thing. Well, the problem with that is that before long, you're just looking for the thing that makes you feel good rather than the receptivity of Jesus.

So, his statement goes on and says,

(Galatians 5:17) "<u>For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit</u>..."

In other words, if you're thinking about what gratifies you, that's going to set a desire against the Spirit of God. An example of that, of course, is when God tells us to love

one another. Now, I can tell you that phrase is going to put you at odds with your flesh because as Paul will ultimately say in Philippians 2, "You need to hold someone else in higher esteem than yourself." Well, that immediately goes against your flesh because there are going to be times where God's going to say, "You need to minister to this person." You're going to go, "I'm hungry," or "I want this." "I have a desire." "I need sleep," or something like this. It's going to set the desire against the Spirit. You can't combine the two. You can't perceive that "I've got to make ministry pleasurable to me in order for me to minister." If you begin to think in those terms, it won't be long before the pleasure starts ruling whatever you do. And so, you get these mixed messages, so to speak.

But the passage says,

"For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition..."

So, that's telling you what? You can't harmonize the two. You can't bring them together. You can't use them together.

"... these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

(Galatians 5:18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."

He ultimately goes on,

(Galatians 5:19) "Now the deeds of the flesh..."

And he describes them, which is very clear that all these deeds of the flesh are you just feeding whatever you want.

We come to an interesting passage in which we see the beginnings of this, and the beginnings of this is, we see Isaac bringing a blessing to his son. His eyes at this juncture, being an older man, he's unable to see, but really, it's kind of a metaphor for his inability to actually observe what is really important. So, here he comes to his sons, and he comes to this meal and his whole focus is on the meal, and we wonder as we come to this, why Esau is not focused on the blessing of God. Well, I can tell you why he's not focused on the blessing of God. It's because he's been raised in a household where the father was

always concerned about just getting what pleased him. And so, Esau's thinking, "Well, as long as I just give my dad whatever just pleases him, you know, as far as his physical goes, then everything's going to be okay." It's already got him thinking in a confusing way, "What really is important? Is it the blessing of God that make rich and He adds no sorrow to it? Is it really the blessing of God, or is it the abundance that my father has?"

The thing that all of us need to understand in the context of this is that Abraham was extremely wealthy. Scripture tells us that he had a lot of stuff, and then that was kind of at the beginning. And then all the way through, Abraham gets more stuff, and he gets more stuff. And he becomes such a source that nations begin to fear him. As he came to rescue Lot, he pushed back the Babylonians. He pushed back other kings because of the people that he had and his army. And so, he was a powerful source. And people were, in some way, afraid of him. The Philistines were in some way afraid of Isaac, his son, as he received all of the blessings in the materialism of Abraham. And so, he comes in and he's king-like. Patriarchs at that

particular day were like kings. And so, as Isaac is coming to the foreground of blessing his son, he is coming as a king. Now, as a king then decrees something, it can't be broken. You actually see that as you go a little bit further in the Book of Esther. A king decrees something, he can't go back on his decree. And the same thing is true with the blessing. So, he's going to decree a blessing. Esau's thinking, "I'm going to get a lot of stuff." Jacob's thinking, "I want the stuff, but I want my dad's affirmation. I want the acceptance of my father." That's a powerful desire with a lot of young men, and it should be in that sense. Nevertheless, it shouldn't be that which is most important. It should be the blessings of God.

And so, as we come to this, we have these two forces vying for things for all the wrong reason. And because of that, you're going to have dissonance, and you're going to have people fighting and warring over this stuff. And if it becomes about the things of the flesh, then it's no longer about what's right and wrong. And so, if you recall the whole text, Jacob's mother goes, "We're going to get you the blessing instead of your brother." And so, by hook or

by crook, they begin to go into the whole deception thing, and you begin to say, "You know, if it works, it has to be right because it's all about getting the material or the affirmation that they want." And Scripture's saying it's not right. This passage begins to display the result of going that way. In other words, if I go after good things, but I go after it the wrong way, it's all about getting what I want. So, what happens? Well, what happens is what the passage begins to reveal.

And if you look with me in Genesis 27,

(Genesis 27:30) "Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob..."

Which of course was all under subterfuge and all in trickery and deceit.

"... Jacob had hardly gone out..."

You can almost see the hand of God just orchestrating this thing.

"... from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting."

In other words, the brother was coming in to get the blessing because he was the one that was expected to get the blessing from Isaac, and Isaac has been tricked. So, now things are going to start to unravel. Up to this point, it seemed to be working. Nevertheless, what's happened to peace and harmony and contentment and benefit? What's happened to all those kinds of things? I mean, the bottom line is that "We got what I want, but where are the blessings of God?" And really fundamentally what this passage is saying is that you want the blessings of God above everything else. There is a reason why there's ambiguity here about the blessing. It's almost like Scripture's going, "There's a blessing." And it doesn't tell you what it is. It's pretty interesting. But as you go through, you begin to realize, oh, the blessing is God's on your side. That's the blessing. As we've oftentimes mentioned with Ecclesiastes, you know, who can have joy without Him? So, you get all this stuff. It doesn't matter how many kids you have, as Ecclesiastes says, we talked about this last week. It doesn't matter how much money you have. You can't enjoy it because joy and harmony are gone. What happened to that? Where does that come

from? Well, Scripture says it comes from God. That's the blessings of God.

What happens when a parent begins to marginalize the blessings of God in the household? I can tell you exactly what's going to happen. It doesn't matter if you go to church or not. If you marginalize, if you say, "Ah, well, it's kind of equal to me having a good meal, it's kind of equal to me doing what I want to do," and you kind of blend them together, then the kid gets a mixed message. And you know what he thinks? Before long, he goes towards the physical. He won't go towards the spiritual. He's drawn towards the physical. And he goes, "Well, this is just as much a part of the blessing as the spiritual." So, he'll always gravitate towards that. And before long, you find him going for those things and going after those things however they can get them because it's no longer about what's right and wrong. It's no longer about righteousness. Those are spiritual things. It's no longer about truth. You can be deceitful as long as you get the physical. And before long, you have a lot of upset in the household; you have a lot of disharmony in the

household. You wonder, "Where did that come from?" Where's the discontentment coming from? Why is it that people are at each other's throats?

You go through Scripture and it's not unusual for God to ask these simple questions. If you remember going all the way back to Cain in Genesis 4:6, He turns to Cain and look, Cain has brought an offering before God that was less than honorable. And God says, "I'm not going to accept that." Cain gets really upset about it. And the question that's posed to him by God is, "Why are you angry? Why has your countenance fallen?" Another way of putting that is, "Why are you angry and why are you so depressed?" I'm sure that at that particular juncture Cain had no idea. But God turned to him, and He says, "If you do the right thing, don't you think you'll be okay?" That never entered his mind. Just doing the right thing. You know a lot of our misery is just the fact that we don't do the right thing. "Why am I so depressed? I don't even know why I'm so angry all the time." What should you be doing? "Well, I should be serving and helping, and I should be building others up and I should be praising God,

and I should be doing the right thing." Are you doing that? "No, I'm so depressed." We keep going back to that same place.

Jesus will talk to the multitudes in Matthew 6, and He'll say, "Why are you so worried about stuff? Why are you worried about the shelter over your head? Why are you worried about your clothes? Why are you worried about food? Why are you worried about these things? You're not believing Me, are you?" It's hard to believe that just that little thing called faith can actually relieve you of a whole lot of anxiety. And it's not just about a formula of "as long as I believe and cross my fingers, it's going to happen." It's about actually believing and God rewarding that. See the living by faith is actually believing that God rewards those who diligently seek Him. We believe that. You start living that way and watch it happen. God begins to reveal Himself, and you go, "Well, I don't even know why I was so worried about all these things all my life." Most of us spend time worrying about getting stuff and then we worry about how we're going to keep it. And our whole life is spent on anxiety and worry.

Jesus will say in Matthew 8:26 to His disciples, "Why are you afraid?" Well, I'm sure they had good reason in their own minds with the boat kind of almost to the point of capsizing and the winds and the waves, but Jesus goes, "Why? I'm here. No need to be afraid."

All these things begin to reveal the fact that we want the blessings of God, but we're just not real sure how to get them. And quite frankly, on the whole, we don't even know what the blessings are.

There's an interesting passage in Psalm, if you turn with me to Psalm 42, 43, actually some of the Psalms of Korah.

It starts off in that wonderful phrase,

(Psalm 42:1) "<u>As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God.</u>"

He begins to talk about how thirsty he is for God. That doesn't always come naturally to us. We have a lot of other desires that oftentimes bring our focus. His declaration at the very beginning is, "I really thirst for You." The passage, in a way, is going to display, yes, you might say that you really thirst for Him, but there's

something that's getting in the way. So, here's the interesting thing about the passage, because he realizes that he's not all there yet. And the reason that he realizes that, and the way that we know this, is that it's actually stated in verse 5. Look with me in verse 5.

The cry is,

(Psalm 42:5) "Why are you in despair, O my soul? ..."

He doesn't understand why he's cast down, why he's depressed. Why is he in mourning? He doesn't understand. "Why am I so sad?" I know a lot of Christians, they walk around and go, "Yeah, I love the Lord. I just don't know why I'm not happy." They actually don't know why. I mean, the blessings of God, the joy of the Lord is going to be your strength, right? I mean, Jesus even says, "I came that you might have joy and that you might have it abundantly." So, we ask ourselves, "So, why am I not happy?"

"... And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God..."

Hear him talking to himself? "You're not hoping in God."

Verse 9 actually reveals what the problem is, and the problem is that he's concerned because people are oppressing him. A little insight here- People are not always nice. I mean, here's another epiphany- You're not always going to be liked by people. I know that's a shocker, but you know, everybody's not going to like you. And so, I've actually seen some people; they're so worried about "So-and-so's angry at me." What are you so upset about? Why do you feel like everybody has to like you? Shouldn't you just feel like, "I just need to please God?" That goes back to Galatians 1, right? Seek to please men or seek to please God? If I sought to please men, I wouldn't be a bond servant of Christ. A lot of the upset and despair that we have is a result of how we feel others are looking upon us as. They don't like us; they're vindictive towards us. And of course, the next Psalm is, he wants God to vindicate him.

The point of the text is that he's wrestling with the fact that he knows he's in despair, "Why am I in despair?" And I would say, the bottom line is, I mean, fundamentally he's asking, "Why do I let this thing bother me so much?

Why do I let what people feel about me... And why do I care so much about that?" And I would say, because you're not hoping in God. Because your trust isn't in God. Because you're not looking to Him for the affirmation. You're looking to others for the affirmation.

He'll ultimately end in verse 11,

(Psalm 42:11) "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me?
Hope in God..."

"He will pick up my countenance." Isn't that how it ends?

If you look in Chapter 43, it's the same thing,

(Psalm 43:1) "Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation..."

"They're accusing me of all kinds of stuff." Okay. If your happiness is directly correlated to how people see you, you're going to be miserable the rest of your life. He goes on and he says, "I need You to send out Your light of truth. I need You to reveal."

He ends in verse 5 the same way he ended in Chapter 42,

(Psalm 43:5) "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God."

But what is he saying? He's saying, "Wait for God. Trust in Him. Let Him be the source of your joy and your pleasure. God will do right." Can you do that?

We come to a passage in which Jacob is concerned about how his father sees him. He's vying for his affirmation. He's vying for, in some way, his acceptance. Esau is wanting the stuff that his father has and feeling like that's going to give him some sort of happiness. But all of this unfolds with the father going, "What's happened? What's happened to my family?" Isaac's going, "Why is everybody upset? And I've been tricked. How could that happen?" Because, Isaac, you've been living a lie yourself. You've tried to talk to your kids about the goodness of God but you mixed it with the pleasures of your flesh and they got a mixed message. And quite frankly, you're not living the truth because you're saying, "My happiness is all about having a good meal."

The passage unfolds in which Isaac actually, as the passage says, begins to shake violently because of what has happened.

Read with me in verse 33,

(Genesis 27:33) "Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, “Who was he then that hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate of all of it before you came..."

"I blessed the wrong guy. But I'm a patriarch. I'm a king. I decreed it. And so, it is. I blessed the wrong guy."

It says this in verse 34,

(Genesis 27:34) "When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father!”

(Genesis 27:35) And he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing.”

(Genesis 27:36) Then he said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob ("supplanter"), for he has supplanted me these two times? He took away my birthright..."

Which is not really true. He sold it. He gave it away for a bowl of really not really good soup as we were reading when we went to the passage. The passage fundamentally was saying this wasn't even good stuff. But just because he was hungry and because he wanted to feed his desires. Where did he get that idea from? That what's most important is to feed his fleshly desires? Where in the world did that come from? Parents see their kids going a certain way and they go, "I don't even know how they got there." I know. Yeah, it's a bitter cry. It was a hard time. There's deceit, there's lies, that's because of the fact that you have these mixed messages. I mean, truth takes a backseat to pleasure and it takes a backseat to what is practical and the practical solutions that you go after. I mean, if it's not about the righteousness, if it's not about truth, if it's not about good, if it's about evil, then what do you have? You have practical solutions and pleasure, that's what you go after. And so, what do you reap? Well, Scripture says the wages of sin is death. And the deception that came because of this and brings a heartache. Esau says, "My brother cheated me. He took these things from me." But you've been living a lie up to

this place up to this point; you might as well finish the lie out and say, it's somebody else's fault. Cain does the same thing. He's not honoring to God. Then problems start coming and he starts blaming it on everybody else. He wants to kill his brother because it was his brother that brought the good offering. Had he not brought a good offering, then God would have accepted his bad offering. And you begin to blame everybody for your sins. That's one of the clear signs that somebody is not coming to God honestly, because they're always looking to blame somebody. Somebody else's fault, somebody else's fault. It's you. If you'd just admit it, everything will be okay. Remember what God says to Cain? "Just do the right thing. Admit that it was you." But "No, no, it's my brother." "He stole my birthright, though I gave it to him." And then, now he has taken the blessing, because why? Well, Scripture has already told us that he despised the blessing even in the way that he, that is to say Esau, married other women, foreign women. And so, there's a despising of the blessing. In fact, he makes his mother miserable.

If you look at the end of Chapter 26,

Gen 26:34) "When Esau was forty years old he married Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite;

(Genesis 26:35) and they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah."

This is going to pan out at the end of Chapter 27 here in verse 46,

(Genesis 27:46) "Rebekah said to Isaac, “I am tired of living because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like these, from the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?”"

"Just kill me."

What is clear is that Esau could care less about the true blessings of his father and his mother and of God. The only thing he wanted was the material affirmation or the things that he longed for. So, he begins to blame Jacob because he didn't value God's blessings.

(Genesis 27:37) "But Isaac replied to Esau, “Behold, I have made him your master, and all his relatives I have given to

him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?”"

We end the passage with that particular phrase because what we have, once again, are people going after good things the wrong way. It's the blessings of God. I mean, this is all about the blessings of God. And yet, we're being deceitful, we're going through trickery, we're angry, we're trying to bribe by virtue of cooking a meal. All these things are being brought in, and our manipulation is actually causing the sorrow.

Why is there the manipulation? And the answer is because there's not the realization of what the blessing is. And that's fundamentally what Scripture's doing for us. It's not telling us; it's letting us see what the blessing is. What if you had everything? Here again, we go back to Ecclesiastes. You have a guy that says, "Everything my eye sees, I get. So, why am I not happy?" I mean, that's fundamentally the Book of Ecclesiastes, "Why am I not happy?" And the answer is repeated over and over again.

You can't be happy without God. And it's the blessings of God that bring the happiness.

There's a passage in the New Testament; I want you to turn there with me. It's found in Ephesians 1. If you've ever read the Book of Ephesians, what is clear about the Book of Ephesians is it starts off with the blessings of God. When we read the beginning of Ephesians, we almost kind of gloss over the beginning because it says, "He's blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places." And we go, "Okay, that's not going to benefit me today." And we kind of hang it up. But heavenly blessings can be enjoyed today, and that's one of the things that he states in the Book of Ephesians. It's one of the main purposes of Ephesians, that you might enjoy spiritual heavenly blessings today where you are. If in fact you're looking for the wrong blessing, you're not going to get it. You're not going to see it.

I'll give an example. Matthew 5 says that God blesses all. He causes the sun to shine. He causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. Now, He goes on and says, "Now in light of this, what I want you to do is I want you to

forgive people." Now, the point of the matter is that you might go out on a beautiful day. We had a beautiful day yesterday. You might go out on a beautiful day, the sun shining. That's a gift from God. That's a blessing from God. But if you hold a grudge against somebody, you can't enjoy it. It's there for you. I mean, kids may have godly parents that point them in the right direction. What a blessing it is to have godly parents. But if they're rebellious kids, they never can be thankful for that. You can have a spiritual ability to discern, but if you use it to be critical and condemning, it'll never be useful to build and help. All these things God gives us as blessings, but if you don't have His blessing upon you, you can't enjoy them. Ephesians 1 is really about the blessings of God that bring the joy among us.

And so, he states in verse 3,

(Ephesians 1:3) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

(Ephesians 1:4) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love"

Can you imagine... Think about the fact that you might have a lot of stuff, but you're not loved. Can you really enjoy that? But this passage is saying, do you have any idea how much you're loved? He'll go on and say that He's known you before the foundation of the world. So, it's like you weren't an afterthought. I mean, the understanding, the realization of how you are loved and you are loved to the point in which He wanted to adopt you.

(Ephesians 1:5) "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

(Ephesians 1:6) to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us..."

In other words, He didn't do it grudgingly, but He actually does like you. He loves you.

(Ephesians 1:7) "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness..."

Talk about value. You know, if you don't feel valued, you can't enjoy the things that you have. But He values you so much, as Peter will say, that you weren't bought with silver and gold, but with precious blood of Christ. That's a lot of value.

And he uses phrases like in verse 8,

(Ephesians 1:8) "which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight"

It's so great to understand. I mean, you see things that are happening in the world, and it can be very upsetting. But you know what? Just step back and go, "Okay, God, how am I supposed to see this?" And He gives you wisdom and insight, and you go, "Wow, that's really great. This is a great day." It's amazing how things can get turned around so quickly as He gives you the... But He lavished that upon us.

(Ephesians 1:10) "with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times..."

He's bringing all these things together.

As you go through the Book of Ephesians, He begins to talk about things like unity in the family. He says, "This is a blessing I've given you. You focus on Me, you come to Me, I'm going to bring you all together." Where there's disunity, the person isn't seeking the will of God, they're seeking their own will. But as you're seeking the will of God and you're giving thanks for all the things He's given you, it brings you together. It just tears down all the barriers, if that's what your focus is. And He begins to emphasize that in the Book of Ephesians. He begins to emphasize not only that, but the fact that you can be in a place that... To me, what's amazing is... It's the wonderful thing about church... That you can come together in a place that builds up instead of tears you down. If you'll come and do that. I mean, we won't allow people to tear down people because this is a place that is to build up. Knowledge makes arrogance; love edifies; it always builds up. God says, "I've given you these gifts for the whole purpose of building up the body." That's why we're here. But how wonderful that is. Think about that. Is that a blessing that you and I take for granted? If in fact you try to mix it with maybe a Sunday meal, before long it's all

about the Sunday meal. But you know what I enjoy the most is a fellowship of people coming together and building one another up.

Ephesians 5 will talk about the love of God and talk about it in such a way that it's like a relationship of a husband or wife. And that's the way the church should be. It talks about actually having victory over the enemy in Chapter 6. I mean, can you put a value on that?

I've got to close with a passage, in the Old Testament, and it's one that has oftentimes spoken to me because there are moments in our lives where we just get frustrated with the world and once again we get misfocused. And Habakkuk was one of those prophets that got a little mixed focus. It was actually written around 600, 605 BC, about the time that Babylon was getting ready to come in and take over the nation, his nation. He did not know that at the beginning of this book as he begins to write the prophecy. In fact, what Habakkuk was focused on was just how bad people are, and more specifically, how bad people are in his nation. Sound familiar? Okay, so it's really easy to get focused on that and how these people

are disturbing us and There's a lot of wickedness going on. There was. There was no doubt about it. A lot of wickedness going on. Jeremiah talks about it specifically; kind of a contemporary of Habakkuk. And Jeremiah talks about the fact that they were sacrificing their children to the god Molech. So, there were a lot of bad things happening in Judah at that particular time. They were boasting of their wisdom, their strength, their riches. Their women were flaunting their wealth and their power. Jeremiah talks about the disdain for the truth, in fact, and they're embracing a lie. He says, "The prophets prophesy falsely and you love that." It was a bad time. So, it's no wonder the Book of Habakkuk starts off and the prophet begins to cry out to God, "How long will this happen? How long will You let my nation do this? You've got to fix them."

So, he cries out to God as he calls out for help,

(Habakkuk 1:2) "How long, O LORD, will I call for help, And You will not hear? I cry out to You, “Violence!” ..."

"Look what they're doing to the children, to people around us. Look how they're acting. Look at the

deception. Look at the hate. But You haven't saved? Why do You make me see this stuff? You see this evil around me. Why did You even open my eyes? Why do I even know it? I mean, ignorance will be bliss at this particular point.

(Habakkuk 1:3) “Why do You make me see iniquity, And cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me...”

The wicked have moved into power. They've taken over.

"... Strife exists and contention arises.

(Habakkuk 1:4) Therefore the law is ignored And justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous..."

"We're outnumbered."

"... Therefore justice comes out perverted.

(Habakkuk 1:5) "Look among the nations! Observe! Be astonished! Wonder! ..."

God says,

"... Because I am doing something in your days— You would not believe if you were told."

He now begins to describe these people called the Chaldeans. He says, "They're on their way. Help is on the way." Not the help that he was necessarily thinking about, but He begins to describe the Chaldeans.

He says in verse 6,

(Habakkuk 1:6) “For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, That fierce and impetuous people Who march throughout the earth To seize dwelling places which are not theirs.

(Habakkuk 1:7) They are dreaded and feared; Their justice and authority originate with themselves.

(Habakkuk 1:8) Their horses are swifter than leopards And keener than wolves in the evening. Their horsemen come galloping, Their horsemen come from afar; They fly like an eagle swooping down to devour.

(Habakkuk 1:9) All of them come for violence. Their horde of faces moves forward. They collect captives like sand.

(Habakkuk 1:10) They mock at kings And rulers are a laughing matter to them. They laugh at every fortress And heap up rubble to capture it.

(Habakkuk 1:11) Then they will sweep through like the wind and pass on. But they will be held guilty,
They whose strength is their god.”

Habakkuk begins to cry out to God, and he goes, "Whoa, whoa, You're the everlasting One. You're the One that can do this."

He then realizes as he goes into Chapter 2, which is actually where we get that phrase in Romans, "the just will live by faith," but his ultimate declaration is, "I know that the proud one, he's not thinking right. And when somebody's arrogant, they're not thinking right." And in a way, Habakkuk is not only talking about his nation, in a way he's not only talking about the Chaldeans, in a way Habakkuk is talking about himself. Because Habakkuk realized that he's been misfocused. You can easily get surrounded by evil and allow evil to begin to control your thoughts.

His statement is, if you look in Chapter 3, as he begins to pray to God, and the reason we know this is it says,

(Habakkuk 3:1) "A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet..."

In verse 2, it reads this way,

(Habakkuk 3:2) "LORD, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years, In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy."

We know that God is a just God. He's going to do right. Our faith and our trust is in Him. It's one of the great blessings that we have. We don't know how to claim that blessing because quite frankly, a lot of times we try to make it happen. Not unlike Rebecca or Jacob, we try to get that blessing for ourselves in various ways. We think in terms, perhaps, of politics. We think in terms, perhaps, of the things that we can accomplish by virtue of our works. And Scripture continually says, "Go to God." You can have a blessing of peace in the midst of this. He'll protect you in the midst of this.

Habakkuk comes to this final point, if you look with me in Chapter 3,

(Habakkuk 3:16) "I heard and my inward parts trembled..."

At the fact that God is bringing judgment upon his people. The very thing that he had initially prayed for, by the way.

"... At the sound my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, And in my place I tremble. Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress, For the people to arise who will invade us."

Could you imagine hearing some news? "Oh no, America's going to straighten out." When's that going to happen? "When China comes in, they're going to invade you and they're going to completely destroy you." Can you imagine? Now, you have to wait. God said it. It's going to happen. Now, you have to wait.

But then, he states this in 17,

(Habakkuk 3:17) "Though the fig tree should not blossom..."

We know that when they came in, they literally burned everything in sight.

"... And there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail And the fields produce no food,

Though the flock should be cut off from the fold And there be no cattle in the stalls,

(Habakkuk 3:18) Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.

(Habakkuk 3:19) The Lord GOD is my strength, And He has made my feet like hinds' feet, And makes me walk on my high places..."

That's actually a song. You see how it ends there? That's a song. And what it's saying is that you can have the blessing of peace, but you have to know how to get it. Scripture tells us that the blessings begin with receiving Christ. It then begins by obeying Christ. There aren't any blessings outside of that. You can have the material. You can have the things that you might think, maybe a pat on the back from somebody that you long to have affirm you or accept you. It's not going to bring you joy. It's not going to bring you happiness. It's not going to bring you contentment. It's not going to bring you hope. You're not going to have real stuff. But if in fact you'll turn to the Lord and say, "It's Your blessing alone that I want." Jacob will ultimately come to this point. I don't know if you've

read ahead. Have you read ahead the Book of Genesis? If you read ahead, you'll find out that he'll wrestle with the angel of the Lord. And the wrestling will be, "I want Your blessing. I'm not letting You go till I get Your blessing. Forget about my dad's, forget about the things. Your blessing is what I want." If you'll wrestle with that, you'll find peace and joy. You'll be able to enjoy the things that you have, and you'll not worry and be anxious about what's happening. Because if God is for us, who can be against us? We have peace, right?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your lovingkindness and for Your peace that passes all understanding. Father, we know that You've given this to us. You've promised it to us. Nevertheless, we don't feel like we're recipients because of the fact that we've tried to make peace happen our own way. We've tried to get big bank accounts. We've tried to manipulate relationships. We've tried to organize in ways that the world does. And we found ourselves only miserable, angry, and hurt, disappointed.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. What I'm asking you to do is turn to Him. Trust in Him. Blessings will come upon you. If you put Him first, see if He doesn't open up the windows of heaven. Is it possible that simultaneously God can punish the wicked and bless the righteous? And Peter says, "Absolutely positive." This will happen. And so, the promise is ours. How you go about getting it, that's a different story.