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MAY 2017
A BLESSED MENTALITY

Greetings blessed saints of God! Grace and peace be yours in our Lord Jesus Christ!

I wanted to take a moment to thank all of our partners out there who support us both with your prayers and finances. We are so grateful for your faithful and generous support! We could not do it without you. So thank you again from the bottom of our hearts.

Things have been well with the Dickerson's. We have been seeing the Lord do wonderful things through our ministry, and for that, we are so thankful as well!

Most recently at High Point Church, I began a Bible study on Wednesday evenings on the subject of Financial Stewardship, and it has been a really good study thus far. (You can find these audio teachings on our church website @ www.highpointmacon.com under the "recent messages" > "special messages" tabs. They will bless you!)

And speaking of blessing you, I began talking in the introductory session about how important it is that we change our view of how God views our financial condition. You see, most of us were brought up in churches and denominations that taught us that in order for us to be "spiritual," we need to be poor. But this is not at all what the Bible teaches us. While God's Word certainly speaks a blessing over those who are poor, that does not mean that God wants His children to stay that way. It just means that He has a heart to see the poor blessed and that they are generally the hearts that tend to receive this gospel of the kingdom.

THE FATHER'S GOOD PLEASURE

For example, if you look at 1 Timothy 6:17, you find a different picture than religion has painted for us... In this verse, the Apostle Paul says, "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy."

Notice that the Apostle Paul did not tell Timothy here to command those who are rich in this present age to sell all they have and give it to the poor. I bring this to our attention because of those who believe we are to take a vow of poverty once we become Christians and give everything we possess away. This verse does not give us this standard- showing us that it is not God's will for everyone to sell all they have and wholly follow the Lord like that rich young ruler. No, some people are actually called to make a lot of money and to be the Lord's vessels to overflow into others- generously contributing to various works of the Lord.

And these are who the Apostle Paul was targeting in this verse- the "rich" church members. This is why he was telling Pastor Timothy to exhort them not to let their financial condition puff them up and to not put their trust in their resources (both of which are the temptations that can creep in on people who are wealthy).

But I just love the last phrase in this verse because, even in the midst of a verse that strictly warns people who possess wealth and possessions to not let their prosperity affect their humility towards God and towards man, Paul gives us a wonderful nugget of truth about God's attitude towards our financial condition. He says that the Living God "gives us richly all things to enjoy."

Now this tells me that our Heavenly Father desires to give us, not just some things. No, He wants to give us all things. And not only that, but He desires to give us *richly* all things.

You see, God is not cheap, nor does He just care about our basic necessities. This phrase tells us He has pleasure in watching you and I enjoy things! Amen! Don't we buy our children all kinds of toys and things that really

don't have a lot of educational or spiritual benefit when they are young? And don't we buy them these things just because they enjoy them and because we like to see them blessed and happy? Well, where do you reckon that comes from? You "dang skippy"- that giving nature comes from our Heavenly Father!

So, yes, some things God desires to give you and I simply because we enjoy them. No, you might not need it. No, it might not be something that will draw you closer to Him. But like any good and gracious father here on the earth, our Heavenly Father likes to see us happy and enjoying life. This is certainly a far cry from the picture religion has painted for us, isn't it? But we should never let our traditions and old belief systems determine our current beliefs if they contradict what the Word of God actually says. Am I right?

And the Word of God also teaches us in Psalm 35:27- "Let them shout for joy and be glad, who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, 'Let the Lord be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.'"

This verse says that God actually gets pleasure out of seeing His servants prosper, not seeing His children begging bread and scraping together loose change to pay their bills. No! God is pleased when we are "successful, flourishing and thriving" (literal definition of prosperity) in every area of life, including our finances! Thank you Jesus!

And what I consider to be the passage of Scripture that perfectly encapsulates God's heart on this matter is found in 3 John 2 which says, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."

Saints, this verse, although originally written by the Apostle John to the elder Gaius, was also inspired by the Holy Spirit to communicate God's desire for all of His children. Therefore, we ought to read verses like this as God's own personal message to us. Therefore, this verse shows us God's desire and wish concerning all of us- that we would prosper in all things and be in health, just as our souls prosper.

THE PROSPERITY OF THE SOUL

So God evidently has a greater vision for our lives than we have been taught, my friends! He wants us to be successful, thrive, and flourish in every area of life! It actually pleases Him to see us enjoying a prosperous life! But someone then might say, "Trey, if this is truly God's will for everyone's life, then why are there some who do not experience this blessed life?" That is a good question; I'm glad you asked...

The reason God's will is not automatically experienced in everyone's life is because we have a part to play in God's perfect will coming to pass in our lives. Tis true! Contrary to popular belief, just because something is God's will doesn't mean that it automatically will come to pass.

For example, it is God's will to save everyone, is it not? Sure, God wills that none would perish but that all would be saved and come into the knowledge of His Beloved Son (see 2 Peter 3:9). But not everyone gets saved, do they? And why is that? It is because each and every person born on this earth must respond in faith to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sure, the grace needful to obtain God's will has already been provided, but in order for us to obtain this grace, we must receive God's will *by faith!* This is the only way to salvation, saints!

Likewise, the only way to receive everything else that God wills for us (which is clearly and concisely listed here in 3 John 2) is also by faith. And this is exactly what the Apostle John said at the very end of this powerful verse because 3 John 2 ends by saying that God wants us to prosper in all things and be in health *just as our souls prosper.*

Now the two words "just as" are extremely important because they show us how God's will of prosperity and health are going to come to pass in our lives... These two words literally mean "according to," or better yet "in proportion to" in the original language. So, what the Holy Spirit was saying was that our prosperity are

“in proportion” to our soul prospering. In other words, **our prosperity outwardly is in proportion to our prosperity inwardly.**

So in the second session of our Financial Stewardship Bible study, this is what I focused on- getting the people to begin to prosper on the inside. I did this by teaching on the importance that our mentality and mindset play in experiencing God’s will in our lives.

Now if you recall, last month we talked about how trusting the Lord (particularly in the area of finances) is such an important part of the Christian life. And I also, in last month’s Living Logos, gave our financial testimony of how once Shannon and I changed our mentality concerning what God was willing to do for us, we experienced our “cup runneth over” blessing from the Lord! Amen! (If you missed last’s month message, you can download it free of charge @ www.treydickerson.com)

So, we can conclude that our belief system concerning God and His Word is a super important part of receiving from Him. And that is what I want us to emphasize in the remainder of this 121st edition of the Living Logos- how we see ourselves on the inside.

Church, our mentality is so much more important than many of us realize. Proverbs 23:7 says, “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” And do you reckon that it could work this way in the financial arena as well? Do you believe that if we think contrary to the way God thinks of us in our finances, that it could impede us experiencing what He wills for us? Absolutely! Someone will say, “Prove it!” Well, just look around you! Most Christians are not experiencing everything God desires for them, right? Therefore, I think it is safe to assume that this would include our finances as well.

THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM

So let’s talk now about the mentality that we need to have regarding ourselves and financial increase by looking over at Galatians 3:13-14...

In verse 13, the Apostle Paul made an incredible statement when he said, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law having become a curse for us...” Now people hear this and they don’t even stop and give any thought to what this actually means.

You see, if we are redeemed from the curse of the law (or, the price was paid for us to be free from said curse), then don’t you figure we need to go find out what this “curse of the law” was in order to find out what we are freed from? You bet we should! And while I could spend a lot of time talking to you about this, for time’s sake, let me just say that this curse of the law is listed in Deuteronomy chapter 28 and one of the things it included was poverty and lack. Therefore, among other things, we have been redeemed from the curse of struggling in our finances. Amen to that!

But in Galatians 3:14, we see how not only have we been redeemed *from* the curse of the law; we have been redeemed *for* the blessing of Abraham.

So what is this blessing of Abraham? Many read this to say, “the blessings (plural) of Abraham”- thinking that being blessed is just having a lot of stuff. But this is something that we need to renew our minds to as well because there is a difference between being “blessed” and having “blessings.” While being blessed is the empowerment to prosper and obtain blessings, the blessings themselves are not the root of the blessing; they are simply the fruit of the blessing.

For example, we are told in Proverbs 10:22- “The Blessing of the Lord makes one rich and adds no sorrow to it.”

Notice that in this Scripture, the blessing of the Lord is separated from the riches. In other words, Solomon made a distinction between the blessing of the Lord and the fruit of that blessing, which is the riches. We,

likewise, need to separate the two because the blessing is not wealth; it is, as Deuteronomy 8:18 says, the power to get wealth.

You see, the blessing of the Lord is an intangible thing, not a tangible thing. If our house were to burn down today, we are still blessed. If we were to lose our job, it doesn't change the fact that we are blessed. No, Abraham's blessing was not a donkey, a camel, a tent etc. The blessing of Abraham is the source of the tangible blessings that both he and we possess. Therefore, the blessing of the Lord is an intangible thing that affects tangible things. Amen!

FAVORED FOREVER

A great example of this blessing of Abraham is found in the life of his great grandson, Joseph...

In Genesis chapter 39, after Joseph was sold by his brothers, it starts off by saying, "Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him *down there*."

Have you ever felt like you were "down there?" Perhaps you feel that way right now. Well, it is hard to sink any lower than Joseph did. Just picture what was happening here to him- He had just been betrayed by his brothers and sold out for 20 shekels of silver (Sounds familiar, huh? Jesus was sold out for 30 pieces of silver by Judas). Now he, being stripped of his coat of many colors, was standing in his undergarments ready to be sold into slavery. So for all intents and purposes, Joseph looked as though he had hit rock bottom, being stripped of all of the favor that one could have in their life (Mind you, his coat of many colors was a representation of the favor he had from his father, Jacob).

But then, in Genesis 39:2, we are told something very powerful! We are told that the Lord was with Joseph and he was a successful man! Again, this statement was on the heels of him being in the lowest place of his life. Amen! This teaches me that your circumstances do not always reflect the truth- for you can be blessed, highly favored and have God with you, and in the natural, not have a lot of facts currently to back it up.

This, to me, seems to echo what the angel Gabriel said to Mary in Luke 1:28 before she would give birth to the Christ, experiencing the manifestation of the favor that was proclaimed over her life. He said, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women."

Again, this was told to her before she even had a clue what God was going to accomplish through her! So her reaction is understandable... Verse 29 says, "But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was."

You see, that is a similar reaction to what you get from most believers when you start telling them they are blessed, highly favored etc. They can't handle the gospel- mainly because it's too good to be true, and especially as it pertains to their circumstances. But what we need to renew our mind to is that it is still the truth even if none of our current circumstances line up with it yet. Amen?

So here is the lesson we need to learn from this: Even if everything in our life seems to be falling apart and we are in our lowest state, God is still with us and, therefore, He still sees us as prosperous! Amen! Therefore, we need to see ourselves the same- as blessed and prosperous! **Our circumstances do not determine if we are blessed; God's Word determines that we are blessed!** Amen!

In fact, the Greek word for "blessing" is the word *eulogia*- which is derived from the word *logos* meaning "word." So if the Word is contained in the word blessing then **you cannot separate God's Word from His blessing**. And, saints, until we learn to receive God's Word, we won't be blessed. His Words are what blesses us- that is, us putting faith in His Words! Therefore, the blessing of the Lord works in our lives as we mix faith with it.

WHAT GOD HAD SAID

And we see this same truth contained in the blessing of Abraham because this is how God blessed him too...

We see in Genesis 12:1-3 that when the Lord called Abram- "Now the Lord had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"

Now a lot of these promises certainly included Abram being blessed financially too. Let's not over-spiritualize this. Yes, it was God's blessing on Abraham which is what caused him to increase financially. And we would do good to know that this did not hurt his relationship with God either. Even though he was "very rich" (see Genesis 13:2), His commitment to following the Lord did not wane- showing us that simply having a plentitude of natural things does not have to hinder one's spiritual life.

Notice now in Genesis 12:1 that it says- "Now the Lord had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, from your family, and from your father's house, to a land I will show you..."

This is a very significant verse because if you look back to the end of chapter eleven you will see how Abram and Sarai left Ur of the Chaldeans with Terah (Abram's father) and with Lot (Abram's nephew) even though God specifically told Abram to leave his family and father's house behind (see verse 31).

But someone might be thinking- "But didn't God speak to Abram after he and his father moved to Haran? After all, Genesis chapter twelve does follow chapter eleven!" That is a good point; I'm glad you brought it up...

One thing we need to understand is that, in the Book of Genesis, every chapter is not necessarily in chronological order (compare chapters 2&3). It is for this reason (as well as many others) that it is important to interpret Scriptures in light of other Scriptures. In this case, Acts chapter seven gives us a more accurate description of what actually took place in this situation. Let's look at it...

In Acts 7:2-4, when Stephen was addressing the high priest concerning the charges being made against him, he gives a very specific commentary on what actually occurred during this time-period of Genesis... Stephen stated that God appeared to and spoke to Abram while they were still in Ur before they moved to Haran. Now this does not at all contradict what we see in Genesis chapters 11-12 because notice again what Genesis 12:1 said- "Now the Lord had said to Abram..." The word "had" denotes that what God said to Abram was something that took place in the past, and from Stephen's statement, it took place before Abram and his father's house moved to Haran.

So why do I make this point? It is to show that Abram only partially obeyed God's command.

You see, God told Abram to not only leave his country, but also to leave his family and his father's house. (Now that would be one of the easiest commandments some of us could ever obey! LOL!) But instead of he and Sarai leaving Ur alone, Abram went with his father Terah, who also took his nephew Lot with them.

You see, by not fully obeying what the Lord had told him to do (i.e. leaving his family behind in Ur), Abram got off the path that God intended for him to be on and became stuck- living in Haran. And I believe it is no coincidence either that when they left Mesopotamia that they wound up dwelling in this place called "Haran." Isn't it interesting that the place that they wound up living in had the same name as Abram's deceased brother- Haran?

You see, Abram was obviously very much attached to his family by his evident unwillingness to fully obey God's call to leave his relatives behind in Ur. And then- whether it was motivated by Terah or Abram himself-

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they ended up dwelling in a place named after the one very near and dear to them that had passed away. This illustrates to me what so many people do today...

You see, there are multitudes of Christians who have lost a loved one and have never been able to get back on track with God's purpose for their lives. They live their lives in the memory of the past, and because of this, they fail to move on with God. Saints, **your past doesn't determine your future, but your inability to leave your past can.** We have to be willing to follow the Lord and press on in life despite our past and circumstances. But let's look at this now from the following perspective: did God still bless Abram and perform his good word in his life even though he didn't instantly obey? Absolutely! This should settle in us that even if we have made mistakes in our finances or haven't fully obeyed God in the past, that He can and still will bless us! Amen!

OUR NEW I.D.

But those words "had said" are very significant in this respect: they were words given well before there was ever even a blade coming up out of the ground! And do we not see this throughout Abraham's life? God would give him grand and glorious promises of what He was going to do for him and then, sometimes a quarter of century later, he would see the manifestation of them.

The Bible teaches us that the Lord gave Abram this promise when he was close to 75 years old, and then the Lord would periodically appear and speak to Abram, giving him more "gospel." But while he certainly saw some fruit for the next quarter of a century, he never saw the full manifestation of the promise of having bearing children and inheriting the promised land. But it was when the Lord appeared to Abram when he was 99 years old and changed his name from Abram to "Abraham" that the fruit of the blessing He had promised him 25 years before that began to come into fruition in his life. In other words, God had to change this man's identity before he could receive the promise!

Likewise, my friends, we need to change our identity as well! We need to start seeing ourselves as a blessed, highly favored, and prosperous man or woman of God- even if we feel we are in Joseph's shoes. Then when that new identity is formed within us, we change our confession: no longer am I just "Lonnie Willis Dickerson III" identifying myself by my old name; now I am "Trey Blessed Dickerson!" This is what will take us from "down there" (see Genesis 39:1) and what will elevate us into that blessed experience God wills for all of His children to have.

You see saints, God "has said" many things to us! He has promised us that the blessing of Abraham is on our lives, that He wills for us to prosper in all things and be in health, that He has pleasure in the prosperity of His servants etc. etc. etc. But like it was with Abram, we will not see the manifestation of these promises until we start seeing ourselves in a different light and according to a different mindset! We need to see ourselves as "blessed" just as much as we see ourselves as "Bob, Bill or Barbara."

Victoriously,

