



Foundations of

FAITH

The Blessings of God

Lesson 22

Ten lepers once cried out to Jesus, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." The Lord did have mercy and healed them. He then told them to show themselves to the priests as required by the law. Later, one of the ten, a Samaritan, returned to thank him. When Jesus saw him he said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." (Luke 17:17, 18)

Most of us are as ungrateful as the nine. When we are blessed, we do not realise the measure of our blessings. If we do, too often we fail to thank God for his mercies. This lesson is designed to give us a greater appreciation of the divine blessings, both material and spiritual.

MATERIAL BLESSINGS. All men, whether Christians or not, have received bountiful material blessings from God. Jesus teaches that God "makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. 5:45) Food, clothing, shelter and many, many more things which we take for granted have come from God, for "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17) Yet, in a special way, God provides for the material necessities of Christians so that they have a promise of divine care which does not belong to the sinner. Jesus teaches, "**But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.**" (Matt. 6:33) Here he has specific reference to God's provision for the material needs of those who would put him before the things of the world.

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS. The greatest divine blessings are not material, but spiritual. Paul declares, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. 1:3) Since these blessings are to be found in Christ, they are the heritage of the Christian, and are not promised to the one out of Christ. We gain entrance to Christ where these blessings are to be found by being baptised into him. "For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:26, 27) We will now examine some of the specific spiritual blessings which belong to the child of God.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23) Spiritual death, the separation of man from God which has resulted from sin, can be overcome only by forgiveness. God forgives us by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ made possible by divine grace. "In whom (Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1:7) The Christian knows that having been baptised into Christ his sins committed prior to his acceptance of the Lord have been taken away. And he is assured that when through weakness he slips after becoming a Christian he may through prayer petition the heavenly Father to forgive. No past sin need weigh upon his conscience because he is certain that in Christ he has forgiveness.

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT. One of the greatest, yet most overlooked of the blessings found in Christ is that of the indwelling Spirit. Many scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit dwells within the Christian. "What?

Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19) "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16) "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Romans 8:11) As is true of other spiritual blessings, the indwelling of the Spirit is received at the time that one is baptised into Christ. Peter teaches, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and **ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:38, 39) Just as truly as the remission of sins results when one obeys the gospel, this scripture teaches that at the same time one also receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. Of course, nothing in these verses implies that one can perform miracles simply because the Spirit of God dwells within him.

STRENGTH TO MEET PROBLEMS. It is through the indwelling Spirit that God often works to bestow his blessings. For example, we are informed "that he would grant you ... to be strengthened with might **by his Spirit** in the inner man." (Eph. 3:16) But Paul also informs us, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13) The strength which Paul had to meet his problems was through Christ, yet apparently it was received by means of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. If we truly dwell in Christ, we will find it possible to surmount our obstacles. When we have temptation, we are promised that we will be able to successfully face it. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10:13)

DIVINE PROVIDENCE. It has already been suggested that God cares for the material needs of his children in a special way. This divine providence extends to every aspect of the welfare of Christians. Paul teaches, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28) The recipients of this promise are those who have been called out of sin, or Christians. Note that

this passage teaches that all things work together for the child of God. This does not, however, imply that we will always receive everything that we may desire. Sometimes we pray for those things which are not best for us. But the scripture does indicate that God will always do what is best for our welfare. Even when our lives are filled with grief, sorrow and suffering, we may know that if we truly love God all of those things are working together for our ultimate good, and that sometimes, if not now, we will understand the actions of our Father. Truly, we are assured that "he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Heb. 13:5, 6). **CHASTISEMENT.** At first we might not count the Lord's chastisement as a blessing. But the inspired writer informs us, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ... Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us, after their own pleasure; **but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.** Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Heb. 12:6-7, 9-11) Suffering often develops the best that is in us, and divine correction through chastisement should enable us to overcome our weaknesses. Just as a human father will punish his child because he loves him, so God must sometimes chastise us for our own good.

COMMUNION WITH GOD. A great source of consolation for the Christian is found in communion with God. James teaches, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." (James 4:8) When we are burdened we may find comfort in our Father. But we must go to him if we expect him to commune with us.

Communion is actually "joint participation" and implies action upon the part of both parties. This we have when we worship God. The various elements of worship each constitute communion with God. The Lord's supper is specifically referred to as a communion: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it

not a communion of the body of Christ?” (I Cor. 10:16 – A.S.V.) In partaking of these emblems in memory of our Saviour, we commune with God. This is also true when we pray. Actually, in prayer we are talking with God, pouring out our hearts to him with the assurance that he hears us. We are taught that “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James 5:16) On the other hand, when we read the scriptures God is talking to us, and as we open our minds to learn his will we are communing with him. Even when we sing praise to God we commune with him as he received the adoration which we offer to his name.

THE ETERNAL HOME. The consummating blessing of the Christian is that of an eternal home. The scriptures abound in promises of a home for the soul in life after death. Before he departed from this

earth, Jesus promised, “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2, 3) Paul declared, “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (II Cor. 5:1) The hope of eternal life is one of the great impelling forces which drives the child of God forward through the turmoils of life. Of this we read, “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.” (Heb. 6:19). Because the Christian has been a partaker of God’s spiritual blessings in this life, he can be confident that a dwelling place with God awaits him in the next.

TEST ON LESSON 22

Write true or false after the following statements:

1. All spiritual blessings are found in Christ.
2. Sinners never receive material blessings from God.
3. The Christian who sins has no promise of forgiveness.
4. The gift of the Holy Spirit is received by those believers who repent and are baptised.
5. God has promised the Christian a way of escape with every temptation.
6. All things work together for good to those who love God.
7. God gives us everything for which we ask Him.
8. Chastening is never a blessing.
9. Communion with God is joint participation between God and man.
10. Jesus promised his disciples an eternal home.

Match the spiritual blessings at the right with the scripture reference on the left by writing each blessing in the blank after the matching scripture:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|
| 1. 1 Corinthians 10:16 | | (a) Chastisement |
| 2. Colossians 1:14 | | (b) Eternal home |
| 3. Romans 8:28 | | (c) Communion with God |
| 4. Philippians 4:13 | | (d) Forgiveness of sins |
| 5. Revelation 3:19 | | (e) The indwelling Spirit |
| 6. 1 Peter 1:4 | | (f) Strength to meet problems |
| 7. II Timothy 1:14 | | (g) Divine providence |

Read Romans 8:1-28 and fill in the blanks:

1. Those who are after the Spirit mind the things of the
2. If Christ dwells in us the Spirit is because of righteousness.
3. Our mortal are quickened (made alive) by the indwelling Spirit.
4. If through the Spirit we mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body, we shall
5. Those led by the Spirit of God are sons of
6. The Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are of God.
7. The Spirit helps our
8. The Spirit makes for us with unutterable groanings.

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Answers

These lessons are based on the King James Version, so if you are using another translation the words employed may vary slightly. Sometimes an alternative answer is possible. The following is a useful guide.

Section 1 – T, F, F, T, T, T, F, F, T, T.

Section 2 –

1. (c)
2. (d)
3. (g)
4. (f)
5. (a)
6. (b)
7. (e)

Section 3 –

1. Spirit
2. life
3. bodies
4. live
5. God
6. children
7. infirmities
8. intercession

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