

BLESSING OR CURSE

TEXT: MALACHI 3:7-10

Introduction:

1. In Deuteronomy 11:26 we find these words, “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse.”
2. As we study the book of Deuteronomy we see a choice was presented to the children of Israel (cf. Deut. 11:26-32).
3. We see this choice throughout the entire Bible. God wants to bless us, but He cannot bless us if we choose to disobey Him.
4. The first time we see the word “blessing” in the Bible is in Genesis 12:2, where the LORD said to Abraham, “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.”
5. Then the LORD goes on to say in the next verse, “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (12:3).
6. Those who have been a blessing to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have received a great blessing.
7. But those who have cursed them have been cursed.
8. We see this choice in Malachi chapter 3. Verse 9 says, “Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.”
9. Then verse 10 says, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”
10. So we are presented again with a choice – blessing or curse.

I. AN APPEAL FROM GOD (3:7).

1. “Return unto me” (3:7). In the Bible, God says, “Return unto me, and I will return unto you” (Malachi 3:7).
2. Zechariah 1:3 says, “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.”
3. Zechariah goes on to say, “Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil

doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD” (1:4).

4. And we see in Malachi 3:7, the Israelites questioned God – “Wherein shall we return?” (3:7).
5. In other words, they were asking, “How should we turn?”
6. The Lord answered them with a serious accusation.

II. AN ACCUSATION FROM GOD (3:8).

1. It is a serious accusation – “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me” (3:8).
2. Proverbs 6:30 says, “Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry.” But men do not rob God because they are hungry. Men rob God because they are greedy.
3. And materialistic. And covetousness.
4. If men despise thieves, what can be said about a man who is guilty of robbing God? (3:8).
5. Just as they challenged the LORD in verse 7, they did it again in verse 8 – “But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?”
6. God answered them – “In tithes and offerings” (3:8).
7. I met a man in the Philippines who visited a Baptist church and heard the preacher preach a message from this text.
8. He got under strong conviction because he was a lost sinner and he was a thief. He got convicted, came forward at the invitation and was gloriously saved.
9. Robbing God is a serious offense, and the result of their sin is seen in verse 9, “Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.”

III. A PROMISE OF BLESSING (3:10).

1. As we saw earlier, God always offers man a choice. It is either a blessing or a curse.
2. Joshua said, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Josh. 24:15).
3. Elijah said, “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him” (I Kings 18:21a).
4. Some of God’s promises are unconditional and there is nothing man can or cannot do to prevent the fulfillment of these promises.

5. For example, Jesus said in John 14:3, “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.”
6. This is an unconditional promise. We can be certain our Lord is coming back, no matter what man does or does not do.
7. However, most of the promises in the Bible are conditional. Let me mention a few. In John 15:7, our Lord said, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”
8. The key words here are: “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you...”
9. In John 15:14, our Lord says, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”
10. “If ye do whatsoever I command you.” In other words, do not expect God’s blessings if you are not willing to do what He has commanded you to do.
11. Some people want the blessings of God, but they do not obey God.
12. Our Lord said in Luke 6:46, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”
13. Many people say they love Jesus, but Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”
14. So most of God’s promises are conditional. God says, “I will bless you if...”
15. When God conditions a promise, it is foolish to expect Him to fulfill His promise if His conditions are disregarded.
16. Most divine promises are conditional. Matthew 6:33 says, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
17. “All these things shall be added unto you,” if you first seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.
18. Going back to our text, we see that getting a blessing is conditioned upon giving (Mal. 3:10).
19. This is an immutable, unalterable, unchangeable spiritual law.
20. Jesus said in Luke 6:38, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”
21. Our Lord said in Matthew 10:8, “Freely ye have received, freely give.”

22. The law of sowing and reaping is taught throughout the Bible. The Bible teaches that you not only reap what you sow, but you reap more than you sow (cf. II Cor. 9:6, 7; Proverbs 3:9, 10; Luke 12:16-21).
23. This is true in the spiritual realm as well as the physical realm. Malachi 3:10 refers primarily to material blessings, but it applies to spiritual blessings as well.
24. Ephesians 1:3 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”
25. But to receive these blessings, certain conditions must be met, because most divine promises are conditional. God promises to open up the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, but first He says, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith” (Mal. 3:10).
26. Proverbs 11:24 says, “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”
27. Many years ago, Pastor W Graham Scroggie said, “It is not prosperity that is productive of liberality, but the latter which is productive of the former.”
28. Dr. Scroggie gave some Biblical examples (II Chron. 31:4-10; I Kings 17:9-16).
29. Dr. Scroggie said, “If we get and fail to give, we shall lose, and our getting will be stopped...Thousands are losing inestimably in material things because they are not giving of their substance to God. The doctrine of Christian giving has almost passed out of our thinking (and concerts, bazaars, and entertainment have taken its place)...And how incalculable is the loss of those who fail to give of the grace which they receive! Your present depression may be due to past unfaithfulness.”

CONCLUSION:

1. “Your present depression may be due to past unfaithfulness.” What a statement, and, though he said it many years ago it is very appropriate for today!
2. Some economists say our country is heading towards a depression. Others say we are presently in a recession.
3. Many of us do not know the difference between a depression and a recession.

4. Some one has said, “A recession is when your neighbor loses his job. A depression is when you lose your job.”
5. Whether you want to call it a depression or a recession, things look pretty bad. There has been plenty of finger pointing – the government, Congress, the banking industry, etc.
6. Certainly, they all have had a part in this. However, it could very well be that this terrible situation was brought on by God Himself because our country has become selfish and materialistic (Malachi 3:9)!
7. And I am not just talking about the unsaved. Many surveys indicate that the majority of Christians are not giving much of their income to the Lord’s work.
8. The same Lord who stood in the temple and watched as the people cast their money into the treasury, is watching today.
9. Haggai 1:6 says, “Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.”
10. Blessing or curse: the choice is ours (Malachi 3:9, 10).