

## The Good Life 2 - Blessing

**\*\*Bumper Video –**

**Good Life Title**

What does “Living the good life” mean...?

Many people when asked what living the good life is would dream of a different life...

If I could just add something or change something... then we would be living the good life. For this reason..

**The good life seems elusive..**

The good life is the Life that the Good Shepherd gives.

John 10:10-11 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.(NIV)

Last week we talked about Joy & Happiness - Living the Good Life includes Joy & Happiness.

This week we want you to know the **Good Life is a Blessed life.**

**Your life AFTER CHRIST is supposed to be better than BEFORE CHRIST.**

Is your life better? Do you remember what it was like Before Christ? Do you remember the change?

## **The world needs to meet some Christians who are living a full life, the Life Jesus talked about in John 10:10.**

There is a lot of misunderstanding around BLESSING.

Sneezing – We often say “God Bless you” or simply “bless you” after someone sneezes. Why? We aren’t completely sure how that got started.

Some people think that it was at the order of the Catholic Pope Gregory 1 as the bubonic plague was nearing Rome. The phrase was to encourage the people to pray constantly and a sneeze was a warning sign for sickness...

Other people claim that people used to believe that a person's soul could be thrown from their body when they sneezed. Sneezing would otherwise open the body to invasion by the Devil or evil spirits, or that sneezing was the body's effort to force out an invading evil presence. In these cases, "bless you" or "God bless you" is used as a sort of shield against evil.

So either of these reasons led everyone to believe that if you got sick and died – you must not have been blessed. You probably had some secret sin in your life...

We see this same kind of thought with Snake Handler Christians who take 1 scripture out of context and built a doctrine where if you were able to pick up poisonous snakes and not get bit and die – then

it meant you were Blessed by God and viewed as Holy and acceptable in His site... of course if you got bit and died it meant you weren't blessed but rather an impure sinner...

Blessing isn't supposed to be a superstition? It's not about good luck...or Holy Luck. It's not about ritualistic behavior or repetitive prayers to bring you favor with God.

Blessing isn't ever to be used as a sign of your worthiness – That would quickly become a mess because then we would compare our blessings against everyone and determine that we are indeed more holy, blessed, and loved by God than those people over there.

As a Christian growing up I ran into these 2 schools of thought on Blessing...

**a. Acquiring riches, material goods, and fame are proof that Good loves you and you are pleasing to God. WRONG No the proof that God loves you is Jesus!**

**b. Poverty, constant struggle is pleasing to God. His blessings are Spiritual only and not material or tangible.. It is more spiritual to suffer through life. WRONG**

Philippians 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.(NIV)

God wants to provide your needs according to HIS RICHES.

Does that sound like he wants to "BLESS YOU" with poverty?

**God's blessings aren't spiritual only – they are tangible. Ask the 5000 who were miraculously fed by Jesus if blessings are tangible.**

Ask the blind man who Jesus spit in the dirt and made an eye and gave him sight if blessings are tangible. **We aren't dealing with smoke and mirrors here... Blessing isn't an illusion. It is real and tangible – It is Spiritual & Physical.**

It is not more spiritual to suffer through life. Being poor doesn't make you closer to God, just like being rich doesn't mean God loves you more.

Class warfare?

**It's God's will to bless. It's not like you have to talk Him into doing something He doesn't want to do. God wants to Bless.**

**God will bless you in ways you didn't even ask. The children of Israel asked to be set free from slavery... not only did God do that, He sent them with all the riches of Egypt and made them a mighty Nation.**

We are talking about the Good Life that comes from the Good Shepherd. That Good Life is filled with Blessing. Blind get their sight. The Lost are found. The slave is set free and given more than they thought they could have. That sounds like the good life right!?

God's plan is to bless you.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.(NIV)      God was speaking to a disobedient Israel here... Exile

Do you understand God has plans for you? We are talking good plans here! Plans to prosper you and give you a future. Even when you are doing wrong He still has good plans for you.

## Blessed How

How are we blessed? **We are blessed through Relationship/Inheritance, Obedience**

If you want to understand Blessing you need to look to Abraham.

God approaches Abraham through relationship in Genesis...

Genesis 12:1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.(NIV)

Genesis 12:2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.(NIV)

Genesis 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."(NIV)

The blessing wasn't just about Abraham but his children... an inheritance. Those coming after Abraham would be blessed.

We are descendants of Abraham through Faith.

Romans 4:16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.(NIV)

Galatians 3:14 He (Christ) redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.(NIV)

**Through our RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD we enter into the same blessing of Abraham. It's passed on to us as an inheritance.**

But not just the children of Abraham would be blessed... it says those who bless Abraham would be blessed...

**When you are living the Good Life, the people that bless you get blessed by God. That is an amazing promise.**

**No one is excluded from God's blessing. Anyone can enter into relationship and receive the inheritance.**

Psalm 33:12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance.(NIV)

The gates to His nation aren't closed. Peter tells us...

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.(NIV)

**Blessed How**

And then **through obedience we walk in the Blessing of God...**

Abraham obeyed God and walked in blessing.

Deuteronomy 28:1 If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth.(NIV)

Deuteronomy 28:2 All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God:(NIV)

Deuteronomy 28:3 You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.(NIV)

Deuteronomy 28:4 The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock--the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.(NIV)

### Unrecognized blessings

You may be listening to me, thinking that you aren't blessed. You might look at your life and see problems and struggles. You might not see the Blessings that are already present.

We often don't recognize what is right in front of us. The Sun that provides warmth & light – do you realize that is a blessing for you and all mankind? The place you live – do you realize it is a blessing? Your friends and family – We so often take these blessings for granted.

We are blessed in ways we don't recognize.

### Do you recognize the Blessing of God?

**Blessings are more than what increases us, but also what enlarges our spirit & attitude.**

Matthew 5:3-10 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.(NIV)

**The Blessing Jesus describes is different from how we often perceive blessing.**

In God's kingdom you are blessed even when the world treats you poorly. You have a greater blessing than the world can contain – You have the promise of Heaven. God's Kingdom is not like the world where people who cheat, lie, and steal seem to get ahead. Kingdom people are blessed from the inside out and have the morals of the Kingdom flowing from the inside out.

Meekness, a hunger & thirst (an appetite for the right things), they have a heart of mercy and purity, being a peacemaker...

**Do you recognize the Blessing of God?**

One of the more important questions is...

**Why are we Blessed?**



**There is often a disconnect between why we want to be blessed and why God has blessed.**

We want to be blessed to see an increase, to have better, to be stronger, to have more...

There is nothing wrong with this. It's natural to want this. There is a drive for better in all of us. God commanded Adam & Eve to be fruitful & multiply... And what better way to be fruitful and multiply than through God's blessing?

**But remember the promise of blessing to Abraham went beyond simply blessing Abraham. Abraham was Blessed and would be a Blessing to others.**

**If Abraham would have received the blessing but never blessed others – He would have never fulfilled the promise. The same is true for us his descendants.**

God has a bigger plan than to just bring increase into your life. He wants you to increase the lives of others.

**You shouldn't think of your life as a Bank Account where blessings are deposited and hoarded, but you should see your life as a conduit or a river where you receive Blessing as it flows through your life and into others.**

If it seems like blessing isn't flowing into your life, instead of angrily shaking your fist at God or thinking you must have failed God in some secret sin way.. Instead look to see if you are letting blessing flow from your life.

**Blessing is meant to flow through you to others.** Blessings don't stop, they flow.

A hoarder's mentality will keep blessing from flowing into & through your life. It's like damming up a river... You need to allow it to flow through...

**Blessings don't always belong to us, but are entrusted to us to pass on.**

## PITCHERS AND GLASSES

The Pitcher represents the blessing of God that are poured into us.

This Glass represents your life.

The blessings pour into our life and sooner or later... we can hold no more. And it starts to overflow.

So we decide we need a bigger glass... We have all this extra blessing... Let's get a bigger glass to contain it...

Let's buy a bigger house, let's buy a newer car, let's buy a new wardrobe, and a new cell phone... Because why do we have these blessings except to have bigger better stuff...?

But do we ever stop to think that God wants the overflow to be passed on to others instead of being stored in a bigger cup?

Blessings don't always belong to us, but are entrusted to us to pass on.

This is like the parable Jesus told in Luke 12

Luke 12:15-21 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."(NIV)

This man was blessed but didn't understand... Luke 12:15

"life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

In the end he was dead and all that was left was a bigger empty barn.

## MUSICIAN

Are you blessed?

Have you not been recognizing your blessings?

Are you a source of blessing?

It's ok to have nice things... But are you trying to live a good life based on the abundance of your possessions?

Do you understand that blessings should flow through you?

It's God's will to bless. It's not like you have to talk Him into doing something He doesn't want to do. God wants to Bless.

Jesus is the greatest Blessing we could ever receive.