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IMPARTING THE BLESSING

Sometime back I watched a set of DVD's by a pastor, William Ligon, to whom God had specifically given the ministry of teaching the scriptural concept of imparting a blessing. Pastor Ligon had a close friendship with a Jewish Rabbi, and he asked the Rabbi to teach him the wisdom of the Jews regarding the blessing. My notes seem a little disjointed, but I believe the following will give you the flavor of this excellent teaching and may inspire you to search out more insights:

- God gave Moses three things:
 1. Salvation by sprinkling the Blood so that the angel of death would Passover. (Exodus 12)
 2. The Law. (Exodus 19:4-5, and Exodus 20)
 3. The Blessing. (Numbers 6:22-27) *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, "This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." NOTE: BLESSING PEOPLE, PUTTING GOD'S NAME ON PEOPLE, UNLOCKS GOD'S FAVOR ON THEM!*
- In Genesis 1:27, "God created man in His own image..." In the next verse, "Then God blessed them...."
- Jesus starts the Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes, which are nine blessings: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the pure in heart, etc."
- Jesus' last act on earth, just before His ascension, was as follows: "And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them." (Lk. 24:50)
- Moses taught Aaron and his sons how to bless the people. God said in the Bible, "The blessing is commanded by the Lord!" (Ps. 133:3) Christians don't know, don't understand, that the blessing is an imperative, a commandment of God.
- A grandfather in Kentucky pondered this material. His daughter and son-in-law had been married for many years and were barren, much to their sorrow. He explained the material to them, then prayed over them and imparted his blessing. In a few weeks, they were expecting a child. (Imparting the blessing will not solve all problems, but it does break the power of the curse!)
- Average parents warn, counsel, correct, lecture, but seldom if ever bless their children.

BREAKING THE CURSE BY SPEAKING A BLESSING

- The Rabbi who was a friend of Bill Ligon told about a father and mother who came to him about their son. The boy was in trouble at school, and had received all F's in the 7th Grade. The teachers were now talking to one another about him and "cursing" him with their words, calling him a trouble-maker, and telling him he was going to end up in prison. The boy was now repentant, so the Rabbi instructed him to go to each teacher and say the following: "You are an excellent teacher. I am sorry for the way I have been acting. Please forgive me. I want to change." The teachers responded as the Rabbi had guessed they would. They told the boy they didn't believe him, and they cursed him again. The boy listened patiently and repeated his words blessing the teachers. Again the teachers rejected his apology and cursed him. The boy listened patiently once again, and said: "I am so sorry for the way I acted. You are a fine teacher, and I ask you to forgive me." Finally, the teachers believed the boy and stopped talking about him. His father laid hands on him every morning and blessed him. That year the boy made all A's and B's. He went on to graduate with honors and became a successful businessman.
- In the book of Job, Job was cursed by his three friends. God had Job speak a blessing over his friends in order to break the curse over them. (Job 42:7-10)
- Jesus commanded His followers to bless those who curse you. (Mt. 5:44)
- Paul teaches us to: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse...Repay no one evil for evil." (Ro. 12:14, 17)

- Peter tells us that forgiving and blessing others qualifies us to inherit a blessing! Wow! Think about that! *"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another, love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous, not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing."* (1 Peter 3:8)
- A Baptist pastor brought his wife for ministry. His wife was an angry, emotionally disturbed person, and she was born with a birthmark on her forehead in the shape of a V. Pastor Ligon learned that the woman's mother spoke curses over her from the time she was in the womb and all of her life. Her mother would say, "You have always been cursed, and you will always be under a curse!" The mother's name was Virginia. Pastor Ligon had the woman forgive her mother, pray for her, and start speaking blessings about her and to her. Gradually, she started to become peaceful, and gradually the V on her forehead started fading away! After about six months, she reverted to being angry toward her mother and talking about her. The V started returning! It dawned on her that the external sign was reflecting the internal condition of her heart. She repented and started blessing her mother, and the V again faded away.
- Pastor Ligon tells of initiating an annual blessing service in his church. Over the years, they have received testimonies of businesses that started prospering, homes and marriages being healed, and children changing into godly people.
- The Jewish community has a Bar-Mitzvah service for boys when they turn 13, and a Bat-Mitzvah service for girls when they turn 12 (girls mature earlier than boys). This marks the child's season of becoming a mature adult. This is simply an elaborate and beautiful blessing service. (You might Google this subject and review the components.)
- When the Patriarchs blessed their children:
 - (a) They understood that God was present and involved in the blessing. Numbers 6.
 - (b) They did it by faith. See Hebrews 11:21-23.
 - (c) They desired the best for their children.
 - (d) They verbalized it.
 - (e) They laid hands on each child. See Mark 10:13.
 - (f) They knew that the blessing was irrevocable!
Remember the story of Jacob and Esau. See Romans 11:29 - *"The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable."*
 - (g) While they were gathered, they listened and gave the Holy Spirit time to speak prophetically.

HOW WE MIGHT HAVE A BLESSING SERVICE FOR OUR CHILDREN

Pastor Ligon suggests we Christians have a blessing service for each of our children, or a service where we bless them all together, incorporating all of the components listed above. Some suggestions:

1. Do this in faith. Do it when the children are little, and/or when they are older. Do it when your son is seeking a wife, or when your son or daughter goes off to college.
2. This is an opportunity to affirm each child. Many children (including children of Christian homes) feel bad about themselves and curse themselves, and this adversely affects their whole life.
3. Prepare the child or children at least a year in advance, if feasible. Set a day, invite Grand Parents, relatives, close friends, older people, younger people. Tell them (you decide who should speak) what you are going to do and ask them to prepare what they are going to say.
4. Plan a meal. Give plenty of time, and focus on the blessing ceremony. (Don't clean up the dishes until after the ceremony.)
5. Welcome people warmly.
6. Pray and invite the Holy Spirit to be present.
7. Suggestions: Memorize scriptures. Prepare personal testimonies. Teach those who will have a part how to bless people. Give a special word of thanks to each person who comes. Suggested sequence:
 - 1st - Father speaks. He (each person who has a part) ends by hugging his child.
 - 2nd - Mother speaks (if she chooses)
 - 3rd - Brothers and sisters.
 - 4th - Grand Parents
 - 5th - Friends.
 A small gift might be given to the child, or some token of remembrance.
8. If you have a single family home, make adjustments. Pray about how God would have you do it.

BIBLE PUZZLER

Frequently when I read the Bible, it raises many questions in my mind that don't seem to have answers; for example, the story in John 5 of Jesus healing the paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda. (Please get your Bible and read this story.)

- Vs. 3 says that a great multitude of sick people lay there: blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for an angel to come and move the water, at which time healing power seems to have been present to heal whoever entered the water first. That, itself, is a puzzle to me.
- Unless the account leaves out some details, Jesus apparently walked past a multitude of sick people to get to the paralyzed man. I don't understand that, but God is sovereign: He sees what we can't see, He has purposes we can't fathom, and it is true to our experience that some are healed through faith and some are not, at least not healed in the moment we pray.
- Jesus asked him, "Do you want to be made well?" I think I understand that: some years ago a number of us fasted and prayed for a member of our fellowship who had been in a wheelchair for many years. On the day we met and started praying for him, he admitted he was frightened at the idea of being healed and did not want to be healed. He was getting a sizable disability check each month, his life was well-ordered and secure, etc. There can be other reasons that people are content to be sick also.
- In Verse 8, Jesus healed the man. He told him to rise up, take up his mat, and walk. Immediately, that happened. There is no evidence in this account that the man had faith in Jesus. In fact, in Verse 13, when the Pharisees asked the man who healed him, he said he didn't even know who it was! A stranger walked up to him, asked him if he wanted to be healed (the man didn't give a straight answer to Jesus' question); the stranger told him to get up, and he did. I'm sure he thought, "What happened? Who was that man? What is going on? Glory to God!"
- This is really a puzzler: Jesus finds the man later and says, "*See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.*" What? Sin no more? What in the world had he been doing? Certainly not visiting bars or stealing sheep. He had been lying there paralyzed for 38 years! This is really worth reflection. In God's eyes, the man had obviously been sinning. We can only speculate what his sins might have been: perhaps he was filled with bitterness toward God because of his lot in life; perhaps filled with bitterness and hatred toward some person whom he blamed for his condition; perhaps filled with bitterness and self-condemnation against himself. Perhaps he was hating the people who went ahead of him into the pool when the angel stirred the waters. Perhaps he was filled with envy and greed toward the wealthy people who visited this beautiful pool every day. Perhaps he was eaten up with sexual lust and perversion. Perhaps he had a twisted form of pride and regarded himself as a victim and a martyr. God only knows what his sins were, but they were sins of the heart, not of the body, and those may be worse in God's evaluation. His sins were so serious that the man's soul was in mortal danger, and God saw that he had a far worse problem than being paralyzed for 38 years.
- Note: The heart condition of a "nonentity" - a disabled person, a child, a person of a despised minority, a prostitute, a person with leprosy or aids, you and me, is of tremendous importance to God!
- Jesus "Only did what He saw the Father doing." Jesus must have had a vision of the Father walking to the man and healing him. And after Jesus did what He saw the Father doing and healed the man, He warned him that his soul was in desperate danger unless he repented.
- Jesus said in Verse 17, "*My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.*" Genesis says that after God created all things, He rested. Some people think that God retired at that point. Jesus corrects our impression and says that His Father has never stopped working. The creation, I believe, is an ongoing process. Stars are constantly dying and being born. Roots of grass and trees are reaching out even now that the days are warming. The fields and forests are turning green. Every day "someone" paints another beautiful sunset. Who do you think is behind all that, Mother Nature? Babies are being born. God is reaching deep into hearts and minds and preparing souls to open to the Savior. Jesus said, "*No one can come to me unless the Father draws him.*" Our God is an active God, He is a dynamo of energy and power and LOVE! Love is a verb.

I have given up trying to understand very much about God. "*His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts.*" But based on the little I know about Him, He is magnificent! He is worthy of our thoughts, our study, our adulation, our service, and our very lives. "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding.*" Yes!

TESTIMONY OF PASTOR JESUS ANTONIO

On my trip to Tepic, Mexico, last year, a humble pastor shared his testimony with me:

"I was born into a Roman Catholic family. In my mind I knew that God was important, but I lived in sin. I studied and became a construction engineer. By age 30 I had destroyed my life with alcohol. My wife lost four children by miscarriage, and one son died at 2 years old. My wife was about to leave me.

One day I cried out to God: 'What kind of God are you? You are a terrible father. Look at the things that have happened to me. Talk to me! I have never seen or heard you. Where were you when I was abused as a child, when my kids died? I'm going to shoot myself!' For nearly 2 hours I yelled at God. Then a strong wind came into my room. I started trembling. I vomited and screamed and fell on the floor.

A voice spoke to me very clearly: 'The things that happened to you were not my fault. Your parents rejected Me.' I saw a vision of my ancestors passing in front of me.

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I could not see their faces, but I could see their sins. I saw men who were thieves, idolaters, committing adultery, involved in witchcraft, fighting and hurting people. I said, 'Oh, God, please forgive!' I saw myself being born and saw my whole life. I was not a good person. I saw the things I had done when I was a teenager, shootings, knives, drugs, stealing cars, getting drunk and high. Again I asked God to forgive me.

I heard the voice say, 'I have loved you with an eternal love. I gave my Son Jesus Christ for you.' I made a pact with God that day. I said, God, I don't understand hardly anything about the Bible, but from this day, as I read the Bible, everything that is written in your Bible, I will do! So I quit my engineering job, abandoned all things to God, and said I would start a church. God brought my wife back to me and healed our marriage and our sicknesses.

The doctors said we couldn't have any more kids, but we prayed, and God said, 'If you believe, you will have a child.' Sure enough, we had a son. When the boy was six months old, he got sick and died at the hospital. The doctors wanted to take his body away. God said to me, "He is not dead, but sleeping! Tell him to wake up!" I did, and when I picked him up, he cried out! The doctors were startled and amazed. The voice spoke to me: 'I am the resurrection and the life! The curse over your kids to die young has been broken. There is no more curse. You are my friend.'

There are many sick people, tormented people in my country. They are living under many curses. I don't believe Jesus would die to save our souls but not give us power to heal and break curses. God told me to name the church I started, 'Living Waters.' He has used us to save many souls, to heal many sick people, to break curses and cast out demons. He has shown me we must live a holy life, but he also showed me we must help people get to the root of their sins so they can be set free."

WEB SITE - - - www.glennbrownministries.com

I am so happy to tell you that my friend, Jon James, and my son, Terry, have completed the first phase of my web site. It now has 25 chapters or separate teachings in script, and 20 in audio, along with all the newsletters back through 2007. I am disappointed with the audio. I recorded them in a sanctuary, without a congregation, and they are as flat as a pancake. Oh, well. Maybe I can redo them in due course. Also, in days to come there may be video teachings. This is so convenient and helpful to me in my ministry. Thank you, Lord! And thank you, Jon and Terry!

God Bless,

Glenn