

Blessed Is the Man

By Mike Lorence

The Way to Happiness

How would you like to know the secret to be blessed every day of your life? Some might say, 'That's not possible,' and for them that's the case. But we are believers who have a God that makes the impossible possible. When I was a teenager in the '60's I was earnestly looking to find a way to be blessed. I wouldn't have used those words, but instead I would have told you I was looking for meaning to my life and to be happy. I tried my family church and reading the Bible, but it didn't seem to fit for me, so I turned to drugs, alcohol, and a destructive lifestyle. I figured I would do whatever I wanted to do and that would make me happy. I even tried taking LSD, a strong hallucinogenic drug, almost every day for two years to help me escape to a world of colors, filled with light and music. It was wonderful while I was under the drug's influence but eventually, I'd come back to reality and it sucked.

Then when I was seventeen, I was born-again and my life changed. I finally understood that being blessed or happy was spiritually-based and that I'd only find what I was looking for if I followed the Creator of Life's formula and not my own.

Psalm 1:1 (KJV)

¹ Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

There it is! The formula for being blessed and happy. It's so simple. The word "blessed" can be translated as happy. If you want to be blessed then DON'T do the next three things mentioned. Don't WALK, STAND, or SIT with those who are not doing verse two which tells us to meditate in the law day and night. It's our delight or what we take pleasure in. We are to meditate to the point of acting. It's not some Transcendental-type of meditation, but an earnest deep consideration of God's Word and we do it day and night. That just means it is an ongoing action in our life, not something we do occasionally.

Psalm 1:1-2 (KJV)

¹ Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

² But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

If only I'd known these verses when I was looking for the meaning to my life, if only I'd know these verses.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 (KJV)

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Duty isn't in the original texts so it should read, "for this is the whole of man." The totality of our lives is to love God and keep His commandments. That's the true meaning of life. Some may think that's an onerous task, but it's not at all. It's what we're all about.

1 John 5:3 (KJV)

³ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

The word “grievous” means burdensome, heavy, oppressive, hard to bear. Many other translations use the word burdensome. Only religion is burdensome and burns you out.

Matthew 11:28 (KJV)

²⁸ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

The word “labour” means beat down and weary, and the phrase “heavy laden” means burden upon burden. Some of you may be familiar with the phrase, “It was the last straw,” or “It was the straw that broke the camel’s back.” Camels would carry straw. How much does a piece of straw weigh? So little that you wouldn’t even notice it should someone drop a piece on your back. When putting straw on the camel there comes a point where just one more piece of straw is too much for it to bear. Life can be like that with one burden stacking upon another until we finally break. Jesus is telling the people, if you feel like that come to me and I will provide you with rest.

Matthew 11:29-30 (KJV)

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The yoke is a burden, but compared to what the world puts on us, it’s easy or useful, and light and easy to bear.

Two Contrasting Examples

Now let’s be clear. This does not mean that because we are blessed that negative things won’t happen to us and all our problems will disappear. We need to understand that circumstances don’t determine if you’re blessed. You do. Let’s look at examples of two men in the Word and see how differently they look at situations in their lives.

Peter and the Fish

The first example we’ll look at is Peter.

Luke 5:1-5a (KJV)

¹ And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

² And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

³ And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

⁴ Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

⁵ And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing:

Put yourself in Peter’s place. He hadn’t known Jesus for long and he comes along and wants you to take your boat out so he can teach. You’ve worked all night and had nothing to show for all

your labors. You're thinking of going home, grabbing a bit to eat, then going to bed. Now you've got to listen to a teaching. But you respect this man, and so you row him out into the lake. Finally, Jesus finishes teaching, and you're thinking, great teaching, but now I can go home. But instead he wants you to start fishing again. You know there's no fish out there and now you're going to have to clean these nets again, and for what?

You try to explain to him, "Look Jesus, you're a great teacher but I'm a fisherman. I know my business and I'm telling you there's nothing out.

Luke 5:5b (KJV)

⁵ ...nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

Jesus told Peter to let down his NETS plural. But Peter to appease Jesus said he'd let down a single net. Peter thought he would outsmart Jesus just to show him there weren't any fish down there, thereby saving himself work cleaning all the nets. Did anyone in the boat correct him? No, not even Jesus. Is Peter doing the will of Jesus? No. Doing some of it isn't the same as doing it. Believers sometimes play this same game. I know I have. Let's see what happens.

Luke 5:6-7 (KJV)

⁶ And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

⁷ And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

Peter must have been shocked at what happened. As soon as the net went into the water it caught a tremendous number of fish, so many that the net broke. There were so many fish that



they called out another boat and took in so many fish that both boats started sinking. The Greek word for filled is *pimplēmi* and implies that it was filled to the point of overflowing. Fish were jumping out of the ships. Can you imagine?

Over the years, I've collected small sculptures done by Brian Jekel depicting certain events in Jesus' life. One he titled, *Miracle of the Fisherman*, and is based on this record in the Word. I love it because it reminds me to make sure that I'm doing ALL that God wants me to do and not just some of it.

Peter had been fishing his whole life and thought he knew better than Jesus. He had the solution to being blessed and that was to get this chore over and get home. He allowed his background of being an expert fisherman, along with his frustration of working all night and not

catching anything, cloud his judgement. Now not only did he have dirty nets, but a broken net and two sinking ships. How much easier would it have been to just do what Jesus had asked him to do?

Luke 5:8-11 (KJV)

⁸When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

⁹For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

¹⁰And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

¹¹And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

In verse 8, it tells us that when Peter saw it. What did he see? The abundance of fish? Yes, but what he really saw was his disobedience and he realized he was wrong. But Jesus set a new vision for all the men, and they forsook everything and followed him. They forsook all. That included their arrogance. They followed him, which means they did what they were asked to do. Peter had the wrong idea of what it would take to be blessed. Jesus tried to bless him and the others with a super abundance of fish, which easily could have set them up financially while they followed him. Now they are truly blessed.

The Man Born Blind

Let's look at another record of a man born blind.

John 9:1-2 (KJV)

¹And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

²And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Imagine you're the blind man and this crowd stops in front of you and a conversation starts up. He can hear everything they are saying. And the disciples are asking Jesus the cause of his blindness. Was it a punishment for his sin or the sin of the parents? Can you imagine the condemnation that he might feel that he or his parents were responsible for him being blind? That's what religion teaches. He's now waiting to hear the answer from the Master or Rabbi.

John 9:3-4a (KJV)

³Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

⁴I must work the works of him that sent me,

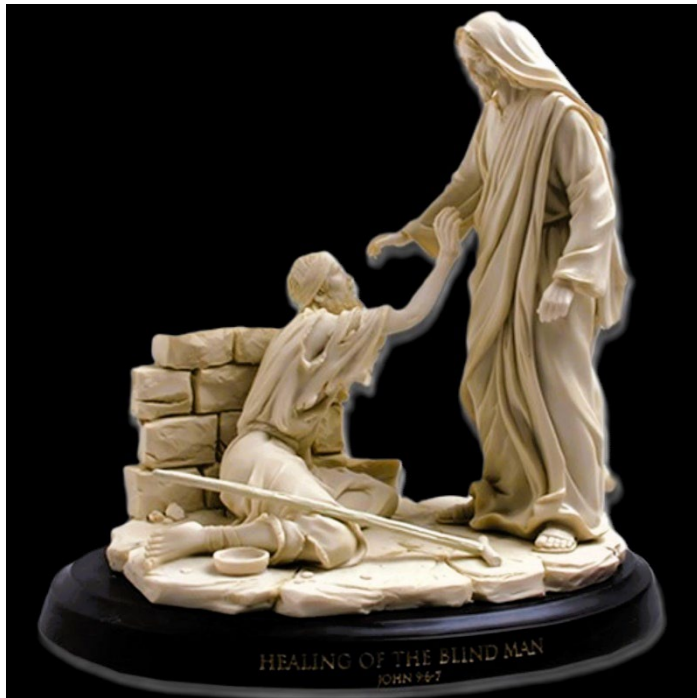
This man had heard all his life that God was punishing him and his parents for his blindness, but now this man is saying it wasn't their fault. The punctuation in the King James Version makes it sound like God did this so that Jesus could now do the works of God. Place a period after parents and then read the verses. Jesus said that God wants Jesus to do God's work and he's going to do that now. The blind man must have been shocked and surprised hearing these words. His anticipation of what was coming must have skyrocketed.

John 9:6-7 (KJV)

⁶When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

⁷ And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

This man's life was changed in a matter of minutes. Jesus makes an amazing proclamation and the next thing he hears is him spitting on the ground and putting mud in his eyes. He could have thought, "What the heck is he doing to me? Is he crazy?" But he did what Jesus told him and he received his sight. Imagine for the first time seeing the place you've lived your whole life and hearing the voices of those you know and now being able to see their faces. What a blessing!



I have another sculpture by Brian Jekel titled, *Healing of the Blind Man*. It shows Jesus just as he's getting ready to put the clay on the blind man's eyes. It reminds me that I'm also supposed to do the works that God has sent me to do, even those considered impossible.

But this isn't the end of the record.

John 9:8-12 (KJV)

⁸The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

⁹Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

¹⁰Therefore said they unto him, How

were thine eyes opened?

¹¹He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

¹²Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

Now the whole area is involved, trying to understand what has just happened and they have started talking among themselves. Some said he was the blind man that had begged and others said he wasn't. He kept telling them, "It's me! It's me!" He explained how it happened and when they asked him where the man was that healed him, he told them he didn't know. Instead of rejoicing with this man over his great deliverance they want to stand around and debate it.

John 9:13-18 (KJV)

¹³They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

¹⁴And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

¹⁵Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

¹⁶Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

¹⁷ They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

¹⁸ But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

After a while, these neighbors took him to the Pharisees and they asked him again what had happened. Now they begin to debate among themselves while this man is standing before them. They kept questioning him and putting pressure on him. And they called him a liar and didn't believe his story. Now they send someone to get his parents. Maybe they can help straighten this out. How could such a wonderful thing go so awry?

John 9:19-23 (KJV)

¹⁹ And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

²⁰ His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

²¹ But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

²² These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

²³ Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

Even his own parents wouldn't stand up for their son. Fear is a powerful motivation and can cause people to do things they would never have thought they'd do. Can you imagine how the man born blind must have felt when his own parents turned their backs on him. This blessing now seems to be a curse.

John 9:24-34 (KJV)

²⁴ Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

²⁵ He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

²⁶ Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

²⁷ He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

²⁸ Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

²⁹ We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

³⁰ The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

³¹ Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

³² Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

³³ If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

³⁴ They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

The Pharisees put intense pressure on him and reviled him. That means that they heaped abuse on him. Remember our verse in Matthew 5:28 said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden?" They were piling one burden upon another on this man. That's religion once you pull back the curtain.

Finally, they repeat what they've always said. that you're a sinner and your blindness is the punishment you received because of it. Then they cast him out. This is more than kicking him out of their presence. It means he was excommunicated. It's the worst punishment that could be inflicted. He couldn't associate with others. Everyone shunned him.

In just a few hours, what had started out as a normal day went from the most amazing thing in his life to the worst. What thoughts would be running through your mind? Instead of celebrating, it now seems to have turned to mourning. Now what? What am I supposed to do?

John 9:35-38a (KJV)

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

³⁶ He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

³⁷ And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

³⁸ And he said,

Jesus heard. It must have been the talk of the town. But Jesus went to find him. What a wonderful phrase. Sometimes when life seems to go all to hell, we need someone to come and find us. Did Jesus try to console him? No. He asked him one question? Remember the Pharisees had said that Jesus couldn't be from God because he hadn't keep the sabbath. They hammered the man with it. Now Jesus is asking him if he believes on the Son of God.

And the man asks a very logical question. Who is he that I might believe? Remember he'd never seen Jesus' face. He'd only heard his voice. Jesus then tells him that he is the son of God and the man responds. How would many have responded at that point? "You are a rotten so and so. You ruined my life. I was blind but I was doing okay. Now look at what you've done to me. My parents turned against me. I just endured a horrendous berating by the leaders and now I've been excommunicated. How could my life be any worse?"

But he didn't say those things.

John 9:38 (KJV)

³⁸ And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

What a man! He knew he was blessed regardless of the circumstances surrounding him. He'd just met the son of God. In the following verses it tells us that the Pharisees were there and overheard this conversation. This is the setting for the conversation in John chapter 10 and the man born blind was there. He heard Jesus say that he was come that we might have life and have it more abundantly.¹ How all that must have comforted his heart. We don't know but he may have been one of the followers on the Day of Pentecost.

Both Peter and the man born blind had an opportunity to be happy and blessed. Peter originally wanted it to come from the circumstances of getting home. The man born blind had a tremendous blessing but circumstances tried to turn it into a curse. Yet he saw past the

¹ John 10:10b - ...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

circumstances and received an even great blessing by meeting the son of God. His healing went far beyond receiving his sight. His soul was comforted.

Claim Your Blessings

There are numerous examples in the Word who lost out on the blessings. Remember Israel after being freed by Moses wanted to go back to Egypt and the burdens and bondage of making bricks without straw. God wanted them to go to the land flowing with milk and honey. We must be thankful and blessed regardless of the circumstances around us.

Proverbs 3:1-8 (KJV)

- ¹ My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:
- ² For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.
- ³ Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:
- ⁴ So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.
- ⁵ Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
- ⁶ In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
- ⁷ Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.
- ⁸ It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

God's Word is full of promises of the blessings that abound when we keep God's commandments. We need to go back to the verses where we started and read "the rest of the story."

Psalm 1:1-3 (KJV)

- ¹ Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
- ² But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
- ³ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The blessing of doing the first two verses is being like that tree planted with an abundance of water. We can have that in our lives.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (KJV)

- ¹⁸ In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Finally, we commanded to be thankful in all things. Not FOR everything but IN everything. The best way to do that is by speaking in tongues, giving thanks well.²

² 1 Corinthians 14:14, 18a - **For** if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: