

3. Ready to receive blessings?

May 10, 2009

Let's be honest. When it comes to praying, Christians, in general, don't want to get into it heavily. For serving the Lord Jesus Christ and the church, only a handful of dedicated believers get involved to serve the rest of the congregation. For tithing, less than 10% of the congregation carries all the expenses of the church. Of course, that is generally speaking. In our church's case, it is somewhat different.

But when it comes to receiving blessings from the Lord, wow, get out of the way, people will rush to the place to receive His blessings.

Is it wrong to be anxious to receive God's blessings? Are you kidding me? Absolutely not. God wants you to have His blessings. Then what would be the problem? One thing we often forget is that God is not obligated to give you and me His blessings. They are His from the beginning and He owes nothing to anyone, period. We owe Him everything including our own lives.

According to chapter 3 of 2 Kings, I believe that there are a few requirements we must have to receive the full potential of God's blessings that are designated for us.

A. A BAD IDEA

2 Kings 3:1-9 Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. 2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not like his father and mother; for he put away the sacred pillar of Baal that his father had made. 3 Nevertheless he persisted in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; he did not depart from them. 4 Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheepbreeder, and he regularly paid the king of Israel one hundred thousand lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams. 5 But it happened, when Ahab died, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. 6 So King Jehoram went out of Samaria at that time and mustered all Israel. 7 Then he went and sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, saying, "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?" And he said, "I will go up; I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 8 Then he said, "Which way shall we go up?" And he answered, "By way of the Wilderness of Edom." 9 So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, and they marched on that roundabout route seven days; and there was no water for the army, nor for the animals that followed them.

When Ahaziah dies, his brother Jehoram took over the throne of Israel since Ahaziah didn't have any heirs. Jehoram came from a total dysfunctional family. His father Ahab and his mama Jezebel were the worst king and queen the northern kingdom Israel ever had. I am sure y'all noticed no parents name their daughter Jezebel.

King Jehoshaphat of Judah was a godly king, but he was kind of a slow learner and gullable. According to 1 Kings 22, Ahab asked Jehoshaphat to join him in the war against the Syrian army. Ahab even asked Jehoshaphat to wear his king's robe while he disguised himself as a common soldier. That should have told him something was strange about this deal with Ahab, but Jehoshaphat went along. He almost got killed there because the Syrians thought he was king Ahab.

Now a son of Ahab, Jehoram asked him to join in a war against Moabites. If I were him, I'd say, "Not in your life, bubba," but he went along again without seeking the guidance of the Lord. So how do you spell Jehoshaphat? "Duh!"

These two kings decided not to attack from the north because the northern border of Moab was heavily fortified and the Ammonites might interfere, but to make an attack from around the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. A couple of very important things they did not consider was that there was no drinkable water anywhere around the Dead Sea, and it is extremely hot. The average temperature around the Dead Sea area is 120-140 degrees during the summer time because it is located about 1500 feet below sea level.

If we made a mistake in the past for a particular thing, we should learn from it. You may have heard me saying this before: "Hindsight is always 20/20. A person with a good hindsight learns from his own mistakes. But a person with a better hindsight learns from other people's mistakes." After the first mistake, if we repeat the same mistake again, it becomes the stupidity of our part.

B. SEEK THE LORD FIRST

2 Kings 3:10-11 And the king of Israel said, "Alas! For the LORD has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab." 11 But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there no prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD by him?" So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, "Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah."

The same war campaign, two different spiritual attitudes – Jehoram blamed the Lord while he was conveniently forgetting that his father's god Baal was supposedly the rain god. However, Jehoshaphat who was godly realized that he didn't seek the guidance and counsel of the Lord.

Isn't that a typical mindset of humans? When things go well with us, we think that it is to our credit. But when things go wrong, we think it is God's fault and we often demand Him to explain to us and even expect God to apologize to us and make it right according to our ways. That is not going to ever happen. Because God never does anything wrong.

Where did it go wrong? Jehoshaphat should have known better. He should have sought the Lord and His will for this war. We should not expect the Lord to bless whatever we do, but we should seek first His will as we bring a matter to Him in prayer. If He doesn't answer, do not do anything until He speaks to you.

What if the Lord's answer is against what you want? Then you have a choice here: You can go against the Lord's will and face a consequence or be obedient to Him and be blessed by Him later.

C. COME TO HIM IN HUMILITY

2 Kings 3:12-14 And Jehoshaphat said, "The word of the LORD is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. 13 Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother." But the king of Israel said to him, "No, for the LORD has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab." 14 And Elisha said, "As the

LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you, nor see you. Elisha had been hanging around Elijah long enough to learn Elijah's direct no non-sense approach.

I wouldn't be surprised that Jehoshaphat told the other two kings that they should go to Elisha rather than fetching him. When they arrived at the prophet's home, Elisha pretty much told the king of Israel that he wouldn't have seen him if it was not for Jehoshaphat. Jehoram was probably thinking, "Whatever!"

When we seek the Lord and His blessings in our lives, we must come to Him in humility. We cannot and should not come to Him with haughty and prideful attitude in our hearts. We should not think that we are VIPs – Very Important Persons, rather VNPs – Very Needy People.

Whether you'd like to admit it or not, we are all needy people. We cannot do anything apart from God other than sinning which is our nature.

John 15:5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Whenever we have a vision of who Jesus really is, it will always give us a realistic perspective of who we really are, as well. We fail to see the truth about ourselves until we see ourselves in His light. Seeing ourselves in His light always brings convictions.

D. PREPARING OUR HEARTS IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP

2 Kings 3:15 But now bring me a musician." Then it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.

It is a common practice to have praise and worship portion before the beginning of the teaching in evangelical church services. Why do we do it this way? Is it to give enough time for those who come to church late? Or is it something others do so we, too, are doing it?

I believe that there is a definite connection between praise and worship music to our God and the anointing of God to those who follow Him. We in Calvary Chapel of Sahuarita put a prominent emphasis in praise and worship of our God before the Word of God is spoken so that the Holy Spirit can prepare our hearts to receive His instructions from the Bible.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

While we praise and worship the Lord in music, we get to know Him through the Holy Spirit. Guess what? Getting to know our God itself is a blessing, don't you agree?

E. DO YOUR PARTS WITH OBEDIENT HEART

2 Kings 3:16-25 And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Make this valley full of ditches.' 17 For thus says the LORD: 'You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you, your cattle, and your animals may drink.' 18 And this is a simple matter in the sight of the LORD; He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand. 19 Also you shall attack

every fortified city and every choice city, and shall cut down every good tree, and stop up every spring of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones." 20 Now it happened in the morning, when the grain offering was offered, that suddenly water came by way of Edom, and the land was filled with water. 21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were able to bear arms and older were gathered; and they stood at the border. 22 Then they rose up early in the morning, and the sun was shining on the water; and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood. 23 And they said, "This is blood; the kings have surely struck swords and have killed one another; now therefore, Moab, to the spoil!" 24 So when they came to the camp of Israel, Israel rose up and attacked the Moabites, so that they fled before them; and they entered their land, killing the Moabites. 25 Then they destroyed the cities, and each man threw a stone on every good piece of land and filled it; and they stopped up all the springs of water and cut down all the good trees. But they left the stones of Kir Haraseth intact. However the slingers surrounded and attacked it.

The three kings' armies are already parched with thirst from marching in desert land. Now God was expecting them to dig ditches in the valley. While they were digging ditches all over, they didn't see one drop of water anywhere. But after their grain offering in the morning, the Lord brought so much water to fill the all the ditches and more.

What kind of principles do we get out of this? God wants us to prepare for the blessings He wants to bring. How God fulfills His promises to us is not our concern. God is God, and He is not bound to do His works in any particular way.

The importance of doing our part is our trust in Him and His attribute – faithfulness. Doing our part doesn't mean that we are not trusting God's capability or faithfulness, because He can do all things and He is faithful all the time. For the sake of obedience and trust from our hearts, He wants us to participate in the process of the fulfillment of His blessings to us.

God never asks us to do more than what we can do. He even gives us the very capability to do so. The only things we should bring to Him are obedience, trust and willingness.

When the Lord brings His blessings to us, there are two important things we must do:

1) Discard

It is not unusual for us holding onto something worthless when the Lord brings His blessings to us. These worthless things can be past memories, habits, traditionalism or pride. The only way to receive His blessings is to discard the worthless things from our lives.

2) Prepare

We need to prepare our hearts and lives to receive His blessings. You are saying, "Ya think?" Whether you believe or not, many Christians pray to the Lord for His blessings in their lives, yet they are not ready to receive His blessings because they didn't prepare their hearts and lives.

What if these three kings' armies didn't dig ditches? When the Lord brought all that water by way of Edom to the valley, if they didn't dig all those ditches, the water would have passed them by.

God told them to get ready and prepare to receive His blessing. God often moves us to do things that may or may not make much sense for the moment, but they are things that will prepare us for what He will do in the future.

The measure of water available to these thirsty men was directly connected to how faithful they were to dig the ditches. The more ditches and the bigger the ditches, the more water was provided. Though it was hard and unpleasant work, the more they did the more blessing they received.

The ditches were not the blessing, and they were not the victory, though they were essential parts of what both the blessing and the victory. When God wants us to do something to prepare for blessing, we should not confuse the preparation with the blessing itself. Without the miraculous blessing of God, all the ditches meant nothing. Without God, we can do nothing, we have nothing.

F. DON'T QUIT IN THE MIDDLE OF GOD'S BLESSING

2 Kings 3:26-27 And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not. 27 Then he took his eldest son who would have reigned in his place, and offered him as a burnt offering upon the wall; and there was great indignation against Israel. So they departed from him and returned to their own land.

This shows how desperate the King of Moab was following his defeat on the field of battle. He did this to honor his pagan gods and to show his own people his determination to prevent defeat.

King Jehoshaphat of Judah and king Jehoram of Israel should have finished the king of Moab. Because they quit in the middle of God's blessing, the king of Moab could boast that their pagan gods supposedly received the burnt offering of his own son and won over the God of Israel.

When we stop our work in the middle that is ordained by the Lord, it gives opportunities to our enemies to blaspheme our God's name. We must finish what we start in our God.

G. APPLICATIONS

To receive God's blessings, we need to have these in mind to do:

- 1) **Seek the Lord first**
- 2) **Go to the Lord in humility**
- 3) **Prepare our hearts in praise and worship of Him**
- 4) **Do our parts with obedient hearts**
- 5) **Don't quit in the middle of God's blessing**