

## The Place of Blessing • Deuteronomy 28:1-10

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. A “Designer” Life

1. Think for just a moment what the absolute perfect life *for you* would be like.
2. Where would you live?
3. What would you do?

#### B. Pretending

1. Little girls will often get their dolls out, dress them up & arrange them in such a way as to *emulate* a family.
2. Growing up, ever so often my friend & I would get roped into playing “pretend” with his sister.
  - a. I guess her dolls weren’t enough fun so she’d persuade us to play make believe with her.
  - b. While us guys wanted to go blow stuff up & make “pretend war”, she wanted to make “pretend house.”
  - c. It was so boring! Her idea of fun was to have us just sit there while she would make pretend-dinner with her pretend-dishes on her pretend-stove.
  - f. Then we’d pretend-eat it while she pretend-nagged us.
3. In all the pretend-house kids make up, there’s little that connects with the *reality* of adult life.
4. They just *imitate* the outward forms they see day after day.
5. But they have no real awareness of the *deeper aspirations* & longings of their parents.
6. Imagine what it would be like *if they did*.
  - a. 7 year old Suzie says to her pal Johnny, “Let’s play house.” He says, “Okay.”
  - b. He says, “I’m a world renowned experimental nuclear physicist & winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics 4 years in a row.”
  - c. She says, “I’m a successful entrepreneur who invented a scope that measures flux capacitance & am the CEO of the company that makes and sells it.”
  - d. She says, “We live in a mansion on a hundred acres in Montecito.”
  - e. Johnny says, “An estate that size will need the help of a domestic staff of at least 8 full-time cooks, maids, & gardeners.”
  - f. Suzie replies, “Only 8, I was thinking it would be more like a dozen.”
  - g. “A dozen it is,” he answers back, then asks, “What do you drive?”
  - h. She thinks for a moment then says, “I drive a Humvee. Not a Hummer mind you but a real Army Humvee that’s been converted into a luxury SUV with rich wood-grain paneling, leather upholstery, a premium sound system, navigation & DVD.
  - i. “Nice” he says, wishing he’d thought of it. Then he says, “Okay, if you’re driving the SUV, then I’ll go with something a little sportier; a silver Porsche Carrera GT.”

#### C. Happy?

1. You realize, don't you, that there are people who are living lives very close to that right now; just a few miles up the 101 *in* Montecito!
2. They have the mansion, the acres, the staff, the cars, & the careers.
3. And as far as the world is concerned, they've *arrived*; they're **SUCCESSFUL**.
4. But do they see *themselves* that way?
  - a. If they measure success by *happiness*, would they count themselves as successful?
  - b. You see, the world looks at all these things & says, "If *I* had that, I'd be happy."
  - c. But those who *do* attain it more often than not say that happiness is not found in such things.
5. The world looks at the rich & famous & calls them *blessed*.
6. But they rarely see *themselves* that way – they're still looking for that elusive thing called 'success,' 'happiness', the truly 'blessed life.'
7. Our study today will show us where blessing is found.

## II. TEXT

### A. Set The Scene

1. Moses is speaking his last words to the nation of Israel.
2. In just a short time they'll be crossing the Jordan River from the East and entering the Promised Land.
3. But he will not be leading them. That task will be Joshua's.
4. Moses has been a faithful leader of the nation now for over 40 years & he's deeply concerned for their success in conquering Canaan.
5. He's like a coach who's got the football team in the locker room before the biggest & most important game they will ever play.
6. In these chapters he's reminding them of their plays & the game plan they've been practicing for years!
7. He warns them to be careful to avoid *penalties*; to play by the rules lest they be disqualified.
8. Then, he ends as every good coach does - with an inspiring speech about what it will mean *if they win*.
  - a. He sets a vision of victory before them and paints a vivid picture of success.
  - b. As that vision takes shape in each person's imagination, they become motivated to go out and make it happen.
9. Listen to the vision of success & victory Moses hands Israel.

### B. V. 1

**1 "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.**

1. Moses tells them if they're faithful to the Lord, they will be #1 among *all* the nations of the Earth.
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2. There's been a raging debate among sports enthusiasts over who should be ranked #1 in college football.
    - a. Some say USC, others claim Oklahoma.

- b. The real test will be on New Year's Day when they square off in the Orange Bowl.
  - c. Only 1 team can win when they go head to head, & winning that game will determine **WHO** is #1.
3. Can you imagine the speech the coach of **each team** will give in the locker room prior to the game?
    - a. This is it – what they've been working for, some of them, for 4 years!
    - b. It all comes down to 1 game – 4 quarters – they can be #1 **if** they will just win this one last game.
  4. Moses says the same thing to Israel but the contest is far more important than a football game. It's about the game of life and the success of an entire nation.
  5. The only condition to Israel's ascendancy to the premier nation on Earth is their obedience to the Lord.
  6. That was the **essence** of the covenant, the **special agreement** God had made with Israel.
    - a. Israel's side of the covenant was obedience to the Law.
    - b. God's side was blessing; specifically, **material** blessing.
    - c. If Israel obeyed God, faithfully following His commands, then God would protect & prosper them.
  7. Moses goes on to list the **ways** God's blessing would come . . .

**B. Vs. 2-10**

**2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:**

1. Not only would the favor of God **rain down on** them, it would **pursue** them.
2. As they were careful to walk in obedience, **God** would be careful to make sure His protection & provision permeated every area of their lives.

**3 "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country.**

1. This is the **location** of blessing.
2. It didn't matter if they lived in the city or the country, God's favor would find & bless them.
3. Many who live in the city wish they lived in the country where it isn't so busy & crowded.

*Green Acres is the place to be.*

*Farm livin' is the life for me.*

*Land spreadin' out so far and wide;*

*Keep Manhattan just give me that countryside.*

4. Many who live in the country wish they lived in the City where life was more **exciting**.

*New York is where I'd rather stay.*

*I get allergic smelling hay.*

*I just adore a penthouse view.*

*Darling I love you but give me Park Avenue.*

*The chores. The stores.*

5. One of the chief sources of unrest among many is the “myth of greener grass.”
  - a. you know – “I’ll be happy when . . .”
  - b. God promises that no matter where His people live, they will be content.

**4 “Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, . . .**

6. Their *family & home life* will be blessed.

**the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.**

7. Their *profession* will be blessed.
8. Since virtually everyone in that day drew their living thru agriculture, the promise here is of increased flocks & abundant harvests.

**5 “Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.**

9. The basket & kneading bowl referred to their *pantry*.
10. Translating this into modern terms we’d say that their cupboards & refrigerator would be filled with goodies.

**6 “Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.**

11. Coming in & going out was an idiom referring to *daily life*.
12. Moses tells them even their *routine* will be blessed!
13. Instead of life being a bore, it will be a delight because each day will see some new measure of favor from God.

**7 “The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.**

14. Even their *troubles* will become the canvas upon which God paints more blessing!
15. You know, God never promises His people a trouble free life.
  - a. We live in a fallen world that hates God and stands in opposition to those who side with Him. It’s inevitable that trouble will come.
  - b. But God says that even trouble will become an occasion for His favor.
  - c. When the enemy comes with a well organized plan to destroy, he’ll end up fleeing in chaos because God will protect His people.

**8 “The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, . . .**

16. The *storehouse* speaks of one’s plans & provision for the future.
17. Their investments & savings will be blessed; their business deals will prosper & accumulate.

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**and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.**

18. The entire context of the blessing Moses announces here was the **LAND** of Israel.
  - a. The *place* of this blessing was contained within the *borders* of the Promised Land. The blessing only covered a specific geographic locale.
  - b. Keep that in mind as we read on.

**9 “The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.”**

19. The last great promise is the blessing of *fellowship & intimacy* with God.
20. If they are faithful to the Lord & walk in His way, keeping His commandments, then not only will they enjoy material prosperity in the Land, but they will enjoy an intimate relationship with Him.
21. Moses says, “The LORD will **establish** you as a holy people to Himself.”
  - a. That word “establish” means to make something *strong, stable & secure*,
  - b. Not subject to being knocked about or blown around.
  - c. Their *Homeland Security* would be overseen by God Himself.
  - d. And just as they would experience peace at the borders of their nation, they would know an *inner peace* that comes from knowing God.

**10 Then . . .**

22. When? When God’s blessing has been poured out on them in such an obvious way & they’ve become Earth’s pre-eminent nation -

**10 Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you.**

23. The nations of the World will realize God is real & has chosen Israel as His special people.

### **C. For A Short Time**

1. There was only one period in Israel’s history when she managed to come close to enjoying these promises of God.
2. It was during the reigns of David & Solomon when the nation walked in something close to genuine obedience to the Lord.
3. King David’s heart was loyal & during the early & middle years of his reign he led the nation in whole-hearted devotion.
4. God blessed Israel wildly!
  - a. She became the ancient world’s pre-eminent nation. The people and land prospered.
  - b. Attacks against her ended & she was able to press her borders to their furthest extent.
  - c. But David’s later years saw the corruption of power creep into his house & things began to come apart.
  - d. Though Solomon, David’s son, began his reign with a good heart, it wasn’t long till he strayed from the Lord.
  - e. And the blessing of God slowly faded from the scene like a cloudy sunset.

### **D. So What?**

1. So what? What does this passage have to do with us?
2. This is the covenant God made *with Israel*. It’s *not* the covenant He’s made with us.
3. So why spend time here. Why waste a whole Sunday morning looking at this?
4. This is December & just a couple weeks before Christmas. Wouldn’t a Christmas message be more appropriate?
5. Well, this *is* a Christmas message; one that goes right to the heart of what

Christmas is all about.

6. While this passage tells us about the covenant God made with Israel, notice *what* it tells *about* God – that *He desires to bless His people*.
7. He wants to favor them in every way imaginable. And **THAT’S** why He sent His Son.
8. You see, under the Old Covenant blessing was *conditioned* on obedience to the law.
9. And the only *place* the blessing could be enjoyed was within the borders of the Promised Land.
10. Under the *New* Covenant, the *new arrangement* God has made, the condition and location of blessing have changed.
11. Now, the location of blessing is IN Christ, and the only condition is trust in Him.
12. Listen to what Paul says in Ephesians 1:3  
**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.**
  - a. The moment we’re born again, we are *identified* with Jesus Christ.
  - b. Our faith in Him places us **IN** Him before God.
  - c. And God has located all of His blessing *in* His Son.
13. In 2 Cor. 1 he puts it this way . . .

**19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, . . . was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. 20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, . . .**

- a. In other words, nothing is *iffy* with Jesus. He is no “Maybe” man.
- b. When we come to God through Him God doesn’t say, “Yes. No. I don’t know!”
- c. When we come to God through faith in Christ God says a resolute & clear “YES. Absolutely!”
- d. All of God’s blessing, all of His favor is *located in Christ*.

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. God Still Wants To Bless

1. Understand that God loves you & *longs* to bless you.
2. Just like Israel, He wants to bless you with a *contentment & satisfaction* not based on *where you live*, in the city or country,
  - a. In Ventura, Camarillo, Oxnard, Ojai, Thousand Oaks, or Port Hueneme
  - b. In Spanish Hills or La Colonia, The Ventura Keys or Ventura Avenue.
3. Just as in the Old Covenant, He wants to bless *your home & family life*- So your marriage is a joy, and your children a delight
4. He wants to pour His favor all over *your profession* so that everything you set your hand to succeeds.
5. He wants to *fill your house* with good things that bring delight.
6. He longs to *fill your day* with His favor so that you come in & go out with a smile on your face because all around you are the evidences of His love.
  - a. every once in a while, I’ll put a bunch of little notes or gifts around our house in both obvious & hidden places as a sign of my affection for Lynn;

- b. on the counter, in a drawer, in the fridge, between the sofa cushions.
  - c. when she finds one it brings a smile to her face & lifts her heart at the evidence of my love.
  - d. as the Bride of Christ God has sent countless signs of His love & affection for us.
  - e. He longs that we might see them throughout our day, & that all life was spent in the joy of discovering His favor.
7. Just as with ancient Israel, God wants to use even *the trials* you experience as a way to heap blessing on you, turning what the enemy has meant for harm to good.
  8. He desires to bless you with *success* in everything you set your hand to.
  9. And most importantly, He wants you to know peace, to have the confidence of knowing that when this life is over, the glory of heaven awaits.

### **B. The Place of Blessing**

1. Today, because Jesus came, the *place of blessing* isn't located in Israel.
2. And the *condition of blessing* isn't adherence to the Law of Moses.
3. The **PLACE** of blessing is **IN** Jesus.
4. And the **CONDITION** of blessing is nothing more nor less that *trust* in Him.
5. Our being blessed by God is conditioned on *Christ's obedience*, not ours, and His obedience is perfect & complete.
6. If we would know the fullness of God's favor, we need **DO** only *one thing* – **ABIDE IN CHRIST**.
7. In Him are all the promises & blessing of God.

### **C. Abide**

1. Okay, so how do we do that? How do we abide in Christ?
2. Simple – trust in Him. Look to Him.
3. When? First thing in the morning.
  - a. Then, second thing in the morning.
  - b. After that, third thing, and in all the rest of the things of your day.
  - c. Look to Him as the last thing you do at night before you fall asleep.
4. Abiding in Christ means to look in Him, to continue in the place of trusting Him.
5. It's a bit difficult to explain what that means just as it is a bit difficult to explain to a young child how they ought to trust their Mommy & Daddy.
6. They don't need it explained – they know intuitively how to trust.
7. And so ought the Christian because we have been born again and are the children of God.
8. If abiding in Jesus is something you don't understand how to do, ask the Father to teach you. He will.