

Aim to be blessed? (Deuteronomy 28:1-20 : Matthew 5:1-12)

Rabbi Levine is walking slowly out of a Shul in Golders Green when a gust of wind blows his hat down the street. He's an old man and can't walk fast enough to catch his hat. Across the street, Bernie sees what's happening, rushes over, grabs the hat and returns it to Rabbi Levine.

"I don't think I would have been able to catch my hat." Rabbi Levine says. He places his hand on Bernie's shoulder and says, "May God bless you."

Bernie thinks, "I've just been blessed by the Rabbi, this must be my lucky day." So he goes to the races and sees in the first race a horse named 'Top Hat' at 20 to 1. He bets £50 and the horse comes in first. In the second race, Bernie sees a horse named Fedora at 30 to 1 so he bets it all and this horse comes in first also.

When Bernie finally returns home to his wife, she asks him where he's been. He explains how he caught the Rabbi's hat and was blessed by him and then went to a betting office and started winning on horses that had a hat in their names.

"So where's the money?" she asks. "I lost it all in the ninth race. I bet on a horse named Chateau and it lost." "You fool, Chateau is a house, Chapeau is a hat." "It doesn't matter," Bernie said, "the winner was some Japanese horse named Yarmulka."

Have you been blessed lately? Or have you seen your blessings disappear like Bernie did? How do you perceive your blessings? In material ways? Or in spiritual ways? Or/

The Christian life is about a God who blesses His people. But when you hear that you hear it through an economic filter or wonder about the truth because life has been a big struggle for you.

The Beatitudes in Matthew 5 describe the blessings that are given to God's people. A close examination of them shows us a number of things.

Firstly "blessed" is a word that is defines as an inner feeling of exalted happiness or inner joy. It describes the feeling of being approved by God. It is a response of thankfulness for being cared for and provided for in the little and big things. It is a relational experience between Creator and creature. It is a feeling that is generated within by a personal experience or event and the

infilling of joy by the Holy Spirit.

Secondly these blessings come upon us when we least expect it as we see the hand of God working in our lives.

Thirdly they enable us to live and work through the challenges that we face though they may not change the challenges that we face.

Fourthly they give us hope that God is on our page and working behind the scenes to work His purposes and our best for us.

Fifthly they are experienced more and more when we become poor in spirit. Those who are “poor in spirit” are those who are humble before God. They realize that they have nothing in this life that they can contribute to receiving the kingdom of heaven. They have afflicted their souls, meaning that they have humbled themselves and repented with deep contrition; and they have come to the king as helpless and hopeless sinners. There is no arrogance in them, no self-righteousness, no self-sufficiency. They are free from their own pretensions, and therefore they are free for God.

Sixthly, they are experienced more and more when we become meek. Meekness is the active and deliberate acceptance of undesirable circumstances that are wisely seen by the individual as only part of a larger picture. Meekness is not a resignation to fate, a passive and reluctant submission to events, for there is little virtue in such a response. Meekness does not identify the weak but more precisely the strong who have been placed in a position of weakness where they persevere without giving up. In the Bible the meek are those who have a spirit of gentleness and self-control; they are free from malice and a condescending spirit.

Seventhly, they will be experienced more and more when we hunger and thirst after righteousness. — The two words used here "hunger" and "thirst" are being used figuratively to indicate a strong desire. A person who has gone without food or water for an extended period of time would truly understand the figurative meaning of these words (as many of Christ's followers probably would have). There is nothing more basic in one's material life than the desire to eat or drink when food and water are short. Christ is stating that He will transform the life of the person who desires to be righteous so much so that his desire for righteousness equals his most basic needs for food and water. Righteousness is a right relationship with God and right living for God.

In all the challenges of life that we face about our health, our finances, our relationships it will be our attitude of being "poor in spirit" and "meekness" that will determine whether we become overcomers or being overwhelmed.

God is the healer but our healing will be influenced by our attitude to what we are experiencing. The beatitudes remind us again that the blessings of God come upon people with a Kingdom attitude (Poor in spirit; meekness; hunger and thirst for God; merciful; pure in heart; peacemakers) but that is not an iron clad guarantee that nothing bad will happen to us.

But the blessings come to sustain us and remind us that God is in control when everything seems out of control. So be blessed!

**Walking Free:** This year has continued to be busy. We do 20-24 ministries per month on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays (fortnightly) via face to face, phone and skype. We now have a third person helping us when we pray that is very helpful. We are seeing some breakthroughs for people as they leave feeling lighter as they have handed their burdens to Jesus. But many of our clients go back to challenging situations which also need to be healed by Jesus. We conduct a fortnightly prayer meeting with four people helping Liz and I pray for the up and coming clients.

**Toowoomba Team:** Hal, Debbie, Stephanie and Charmaine have no clients at the moment. Stephanie has been sick with heart problems and the Hoppers have had personal business to attend to.

**Seminars:** I will be conducting a seminar in SA on March 18 *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough* at Hawthorn Uniting Church from 9.30am-4pm. The cost is \$25 including notes. If you live interstate, it will be possible to email the notes to you after the conference for a donation to support us.

**Bible Studies:** I have started doing a bible study on the Sermon on the Mount on Monday afternoons at 2pm and Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm. If you live in Adelaide and would like to come, let me know. I give out detailed notes that we work through with questions attached.

**Finances:** Finances remain a challenge as we have lost some sponsorship. The income has dropped by \$1000 approx per month.

We are looking for more sponsors to support the healing and teaching work of Jesus through Walking Free. No matter how small the donation, we welcome new donors. Remember that each donation to the gift fund is tax deductible. If you would like to become a sponsor, it is a matter of a one off or regular donation to the following:

Walking Free Renewing Ministries Gift Fund

BSB 084-961 ACC 82-215-5845.

Use your name if you would like a tax receipt at the end of the financial year.

**Praise God for His provision.**

- **Thank God for the healing and restoration He is bringing to our clients.**
- **Pray for more finances to support Walking Free Ministry**
  
- **Pray for team in Adelaide who pray for the ministry: Margaret, Lesley, Diane, Julie and Tim.**
- **Please pray for team at Toowoomba: Hal and Debbie, Stephanie, Charmaine.**

**Family Life.** Jonathan and Naomi are expecting another daughter in March/April. David and Maddy are expecting their second child in June. We now have a significant event on each month to add to our busy calendar.

**Pray for Naomi, Jonathan and Jennifer; Jess; David and Maddy and Elijah and the safe arrival of their babies.**

**India:** from Pastor Devadas: *Today we have cottage Prayer meeting at one of our Believers called Chittamma's house. she was suffering from back pain for long time and she believed in the Lord and she was healed so she is having thanks giving prayer meeting at her home by inviting all of our church members.*

Pastor CH's church has grown and he has sent me pictures of approx 50 men, women and children worshipping. Rev Sambabu continues to work from a larger city base supporting widows and orphans.

**Pray for their ministry that God will grow their churches and provide for all their needs.**

**Kenya:** Pastor Isaac is asking for help to build a brick church for \$8000. He writes :*After i bought a church plot last year December. I applied for rural electrification programme for our new church plot together with our local rural primary schools (i spend \$ 400 for application) . Good luck Kenya power and lightning company brought an electric pole at church yesterday and install it . Electrical fittings will be done before/after church will be on the process of foundation/building process. . Total cost will \$ 500 for purchasing meter box, electrical wiring ,fixing security lights, charges etc . I was highlighting you to know the progress i've made . New development came after i forwarded to you final quotation. Our services used to be cut short evening hours without power but now God has already brought , only building structure remains and fixing it to work. Some places we used hired generator/solar panel.*

**Pray for this project. If you would like to contribute to this building project, deposit your money with the name Kenya Church into our account**

**Walking Free ☐ Renewing Ministries**

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