

Promises and warnings

There is a story of a poor beggar who cried out to God to change his lot in life. Besides hating the begging, he felt embarrassed and oppressed by the constant scornful looks and remarks that he had to endure daily. Then one day God answered his prayers. As he was looking through the garbage he found a gold watch and a diamond ring. He promptly took them to a jeweller to be evaluated. To his astonishment he was told that they were worth \$35,000 together, which the jeweller paid him for them. He then bought some new clothes, rented a flat, and tried to find work after cleaning himself up. As work was hard to find he started investing his money in lucrative business deals and his wealth soon grew. It wasn't long before he bought a nice house and a new car. He hadn't even considered that maybe God had answered his prayers. He start boasting about his wealth and how hard he worked for all that he had. One day as he was walking down the street where he used to beg other beggars, who knew him, started asking him for money and food. Instead of showing them compassion and helping them he merely scorned at them and told them to find jobs. It wasn't long after that that the markets where he had invested his money crashed for unforeseen circumstances and he lost everything that he had. He ended up on the street where he started before he found the watch and diamond ring.

Let us watch our lives and attitudes lest the story of this beggar becomes our story.

Deuteronomy 8: 1 – 20

1) God has expectations on us

- Obey
 - Outcomes of obedience:
 - Live – God desires to give life in abundance
 - Increase – it was God's will from the beginning that we increase in number. Increase shows life. Stagnation shows that something is dying.
 - Enter and possess the land – possess that which God had promised
 - God promised on oath but the people of God still have to obey to receive them
- Remember
 - Whenever God wants us to progress – go forward – he wants us to remember what He has done for us – the good and the bad.
 - God led his people to test what was in their hearts
 - He humbled His people causing them to hunger then providing manna for them to teach them that man does not live by bread alone, but by the Word of God.
 - God kept their clothes from wearing out – He provides all that we need for the journey.
- Know
 - Know that the Lord disciplines those He loves. He's merely treating us as His children.
 - So knowing isn't about the discipline but knowing Him as our father.
 - Proverbs 15: 32 Those who disregard discipline despise themselves, but the one who heeds correction gains understanding.
 - Anyone who opposes discipline opposes the wellbeing of the one in need of being disciplined.
- Revere
 - The ultimate expectation that God has is for us to revere Him. To honour Him.
 - Obedience to His commands, remembering His dealings and faithfulness to us, knowing his fatherhood all come to nothing if we fail to honour Him as our Lord and our God. The one who is sovereign over our lives.

2) God wants to give us good things.

- God promised His people a land of abundance
- So many times we think that God just wants us to have bad things happen to us in life.
- We often evaluate God by our experiences instead of by what God says about Himself in His Word.
- If the Israelites had evaluated God by their experiences they would have considered Him to be a torturous God who wanted them to die in the wilderness.
 - They questioned Moses and Aaron for leading them to die in the wilderness. However, they were really complaining against God himself as Moses and Aaron were only doing what God had instructed them to do.
 - Exodus 16: 3 The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."
 - Exodus 16: 8 Moses also said, "You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD."
- Their perception of God would have been:
 - A God who leads them out of slavery just to abandon them in the wilderness.
 - A God who doesn't want them to have security and good things in life.
 - A God who doesn't care about them
 - A God who just wants to judge them.
- None of this is true of who God is. That was because they only short-sightedly looked at their present experiences rather than remembering everything God had done for them and the promises that had not yet been fulfilled.
- Yes, we do go hardships and sufferings. And maybe we won't ever own a house or have a lot of money. But that doesn't invalidate God's promises.
- Jesus came to usher in His kingdom, but the kingdom hasn't been fully realised yet. That will only happen when He returns.
 - We accept the good things that He has for us now and live in hope for the better that is still to come.

3) Warnings of temptations in prosperity

- It is seldom that we find warnings for when we go through trials and difficulties.
- God rather warns us for times of prosperity.
- When we have all that we need and want it is easy for our hearts to grow proud and forget the Lord. Forget where we have come from. Forget who gave us what we have.
- It is easy to be like Nebuchadnezzar and boast about the work of his hands.
 - Daniel 4: 28 – 33 All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" Even as the words were on his lips, a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. **32**You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes."
 - Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.
- Let us not yield to such temptations when they come up, but let us give honour where honour is due.
 - Deuteronomy 8: 18 But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.