

## **A Special Message of Encouragement** **“There is a Blessing In It”**

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Little Samuel...

☞ **How many times** have we started down a road that we thought was going to be filled with grief and sorrow, only to find out later that the Lord had a Blessing in it for us?

The very first place we see the word “Blessing” in the Bible is in the Book of Genesis where the Lord promises to bless Abraham...

### **Genesis 12:2**

I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

Now I challenge you to read the story of Abraham and then tell me exactly where it is that he deserved to have the kind of blessings that the Lord was going to pour out on his life.

☞ **Abraham disobeyed the Lord** on occasion, he lied and misrepresented the Lord on occasion, he was far less than perfect on many an occasion.

**But even so, the blessing of the Lord was poured out on his life because he believed what the Lord said.**

### **Genesis 15:6**

And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

And all those today who also fail in areas of your life, but believe what the Lord said, when He said that if you believe in Jesus sacrifice for your sins, you are destined to also experience the blessing of God.

**Now sometimes it is not obvious at first glance, just what that blessing will be, but if you wait on the Lord for awhile, you will see just exactly what it is.**

I told Tim and Colleen there in the Burn Center that in the future they were going to look back on this event as one that brought some of the greatest blessings of their life...

**Tim said he believed that, even though right now a blessing in this is not visible yet.**

### **Hebrews 11:1**

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

### **Job 42:1-6**

1 Then Job answered the LORD and said:  
2 "I know that You can do everything,  
And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.  
3 You asked, "Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?"  
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,  
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.  
4 Listen, please, and let me speak;  
You said, "I will question you, and you shall answer Me."  
5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,  
But now my eye sees You.  
6 Therefore I abhor myself,  
And repent in dust and ashes."

In the trial that Job was going through, he could not yet see the Blessing of God in it, but after it was concluded, Job no longer had to ask people what the Lord was like, now he could say that he understood what the Lord was truly like **because he has seen with his own eyes** exactly how good and Loving and Kind that He is.

- ☞ **In the 23rd Psalm**, David wrote that we who believe in the Lord are called "**His sheep**" and that sheep do not always like to be led, they actually prefer go their own way.
- ☞ **Some of you** are shaking your heads...you know what I mean!

Jesus as our Shepherd wants to lead us...

- ☞ **This morning**, it is "*Along the paths of Righteousness*"-**that is, the right paths...**
- ☞ **But leading us, is going** to be a very difficult job for our Shepherd.
- ☞ **Because, the sheep** don't always want to be led...

**In case you don't know it yet, sheep are very stubborn and self willed animals...**

In fact, it was to this truth that Isaiah the prophet wrote and described the condition that all human beings are in:

### **Isaiah 53:6**

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way

As we continue to see demonstrated by the Lord, there is an amazing similarity between these "**Dumb Sheep**" and every one of us...

- ☞ **It is not an accident** that our behavior and the behavior of these sheep that the Shepherd is writing about in Psalm 23, are so similar.

### **Psalms 100:3**

...We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

**Poor Shepherd, trying to lead His sheep along the paths of Righteousness...To bring us into the Blessings He has planned for us, but the dumb sheep don't always want to be led!**

- ☞ **Sheep are know** to be notorious creatures of habit.
- ☞ **If left to themselves** they will follow the same trails over and over until those paths become ruts.

Any one here this morning "Stuck in a rut?"

- ☞ **Are you following the same paths** over and over again and not really making any progress?

Did you know that the true definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over but expecting a different result!

**Most people do not realize that sheep cannot take care of themselves.**

- ☞ **Actually, of all of the animals on a farm**, the sheep require more careful handling, more detailed direction, and more care, than any other.

David, the writer of Psalm 23, no doubt knew and understood this because he speaks of sheep who:

- ☞ Need to be led to **Green pastures**.
- ☞ Need to be led to **quiet waters**.
- ☞ Need to be **restored**.
- ☞ Need to be led **down the right paths**...

**David understood that In order for the sheep to be able to flourish, they had to be under the constant watchful eye and care of the Shepherd.**

- ☞ **Sheep "Have to be led"** because they tend to favor the same grazing spots over and over...
- ☞ **As a result** of this a sheep will **over graze** an area so badly that they end up tearing out the roots also.
- ☞ **The results are** utter bareness and complete lack of any nutrients.

**The Shepherd knows that the sheep don't know how to manage their own lives, so he will constantly keep His sheep on the move, shifting them from pasture to pasture.**

- ☞ **This prevents overgrazing** and those deep "Ruts" along the path.
- ☞ **The Shepherd knows** how to keep the sheep from "**Revisiting** the same spots over

and over and placing themselves into ruts.

The Shepherd knows that the sheep need a “**Predetermined Plan of Action**”.

- ☞ **The Shepherd will intentionally** lead His sheep along the right paths from one grazing area to another.
- ☞ **This is exactly** what David had in mind when he said:

*“He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name sake...”*

**That verse means to “Following a precise, predetermined plan of action”**

Do you understand today that the course that your life is on right now, that the Lord has prepared it for you, and if you will stop fighting against Him, He will lead you into a place of Blessing?

- ☞ **Right now**, none of us who have heard of Tim and Colleen’s terrible trial with their son Samuel, can think of any blessing in all of this.
- ☞ **But is a few more days or months**, we will all begin to see what the Lord’s purpose was in allowing all of this to happen.

In 2001, when the Lord allowed my home in Heber Arizona to be caught in the Chedesky Wildfire and completely destroyed, I wondered how that would ever turn out to be a blessing...

**Within one year, He gave me even a better house here in Winslow.**

In 2006 my wife Elsie passed away suddenly and I thought that would be the end of my life, but then he gave me Melinda and blessed my life in ways I could have never imagined...

**Perhaps today you are suffering through some difficult days, if you just hold on, the Lord has a blessing in it for you, just wait and see...**

By following the Shepherds course, by being led by Him, this keeps the us healthy, happy and nourished.

**You know, left to our own, we will not follow the right path, we will run over and over the same old paths just like the sheep David was writing about, and wear a rut into our life.**

We will revisit

- ☞ Past **failures**,
- ☞ Past **hurts**,
- ☞ Past **regrets**,

- ☞ Past **losses**,
- ☞ Past **Sins**
- ☞ **Until there is a great big Rut** right down the middle of our heart.

### **The Shepherd is the only one that knows that right path for His sheep...**

- ☞ **The problem for us as His sheep** is that when the Shepherd is leading us, we sometime either:
  1. **Don't recognize** that it is the Shepherd who is leading us.
  2. **We don't like** the path that the Shepherd has chosen for us.

We have this major problem as the Lord's sheep, with not being able to see what is right there in front of us...

On June 6, 1981, Doug White and his new bride, Sylvia checked into the hotel where they were booked to spend their Honeymoon together.

They were filled with excitement as Doug turned the key to the door of their honeymoon suit.

There was a beautiful sofa, wonderful carved wood tables, a complete kitchen, gorgeous paintings on the walls, lush carpets, a 50 inch plasma TV set, but...**NO BED!**

They lifted up the cushions of the sofa to discover that it was one of those **sofa beds**.

They unfolded the mattress and spent a sleepless night on a lumpy sagging mattress.

The next morning Doug went down to the hotel lobby to talk to the manager of the hotel.

***"We are here on honeymoon and booked this room months ago, but when we arrived last night in our room, there was no bed!"***

The manager asked Doug, *"Did you open the door inside the living room?"*

Doug went back to the room and together he and Sylvia opened the door in the living room that **they assumed was a closet**, to find a magnificent king size bed in the most beautiful bedroom they had ever seen!

Sometimes the Shepherds plan for our lives is **right there in front of us**, but we can't see it.

In fact we may already be on the right path that He wants for us right now, but not even know it...

- ☞ **Why?**
- ☞ **Because we don't tend to see** a difficult path as one being the Lord's will.
- ☞ **When we suffer loss**, we might blame the Lord.
- ☞ **When our life is hard**, *"Surely the Lord cannot be in this!"*

- ⊞ **If people** are making our life difficult.
- ⊞ **If we have struggles** in our marriage or at work, we should recognize that those struggles very well may be the exact path the Shepherd has chosen for us.

## Why?

### Acts 14:22

... “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”

Probably one of the greatest led men on the earth was Paul, and yet there were times when even he didn't understand the path that he was on...

### Acts 16:1-7

1 Then Paul came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek.

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

5 So **the churches were strengthened** in the faith, and **increased in number daily**.

7 After Paul and Barnabas had come to Mysia, **they tried to go** into Bithynia, **but the Spirit did not permit them**.

## Why did the Spirit not permit them to go to Bithynia?

- ⊞ **Paul and Barnabas** were going there for good and honorable reasons.
- ⊞ **They were going there** to strengthen the churches.
- ⊞ **There were going to teach** the people the word of God.
- ⊞ **But** the Holy Spirit said: “NO”.

When Paul was at Galatia, he wrote to them late and described this time here in Acts 16 where the Holy Spirit stopped him from going to see them.

### Galatians 4:13

You know that **because of physical infirmity** I preached the gospel to you at the first.

- ⊞ **How did** the Holy Spirit stop Paul?
- ⊞ **He was sick**, so very sick that he couldn't get out of bed.
- ⊞ **Paul was** a very strong willed man.
- ⊞ **Sometimes the Lord** has to stop strong willed people and put them into a sickbed so that He can get there attention.

**Some pastors have been teaching the people that if you get sick then it is because you just don't have enough faith.**

- ⊞ **They say** that if you just had enough faith you would never get sick, you would be rich and have everything that you want.

But that doctrine is not taught in the Bible!

- ☞ **In the Bible**, Jesus let one of His closest friends, Lazarus, die.
- ☞ **When Jesus heard** that Lazarus was sick, Jesus waited 2 more days before He went to see him.

### **John 11:1-6**

1 Now **a certain man was sick, Lazarus** of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.  
3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “**Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.**”  
6 So, when Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, **He stayed two more days** in the place where He was.

**Why would Jesus wait 2 more days when He heard that his friend was sick?**

Why would the Lord allow Paul to get sick, instead of allow him to go to Bithynia to teach the word of God?

**The Lord our Shepherd, leads us along the path of Righteousness (The right path), FOR HIS NAME SAKE”.**

### **Job 9:10**

He does great things past finding out, Yes, wonders without number.

### **Romans 11:33**

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

### **1 Chronicles 16:34**

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

10 times in the Old Testament that phrase is repeated: “**Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever”**”

**Why so many times?**

- ☞ **Because the Lord**, our Shepherd is “***A Good Shepherd***”, and EVERYTHING that He does is ALWAYS good.
- ☞ **Just because** we don't understand or necessarily agree with what or how He sometimes does things, IT DOESN'T MATTER

*“..for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”*

**Paul didn't know why the Lord wouldn't let him go to Bithynia.**

- ☞ **Sometimes the Lord** just enforces His will over the will of men.
- ☞ **And He Always does** it for their own good.

- ☞ **Later on**, as Paul can now look back on the whole experience, he realizes that the Lord was directing Him.

Did you get that? The Lord was directing him by a Trial.

- ☞ **The Lord** was directing Him by **saying NO**.
- ☞ **The Lord** was directing him by **making him sick**.
- ☞ **The Lord** was directing him by **not allowing him** to do something that made perfect sense to Paul.

**This is Really what this part of the 23rd Psalm means:**

### **Psalms 23:3**

...He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

Don't miss the last 4 words of that verse; "**For His Name Sake**"

**What does that mean?**

### **Psalms 51:4**

Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.

When David committed Adultery with Bathsheba and then had her husband Uriah murdered to cover up his sins, after Nathan the prophet came to David and told him that He was the guilty man, David went and wrote this Psalm of Repentance to the Lord...

*"...that you Lord may be found just when you speak and blameless when you judge..."*

**David understood that everything that the Lord does is always Holy, Righteous, Loving, and Just.**

- ☞ **These are facts** that cannot be disputed.
- ☞ **Except** in the mind of man.
- ☞ **Man doesn't always believe** that the Lord is Holy, Righteous, Loving and Just.
- ☞ **But David confessed his sin** to the Lord, "*Against you I have sinned...*"
- ☞ **David said this** so that the Lord would receive the just glory that He deserves.
- ☞ **So that when the Lord does anything**, He will always be seen as Holy, Righteous, Loving and Just.

Even if we don't always understand why the Lord does what He does, we should never doubt that He is Holy, Righteous, Loving and Just.

**The Lord wants to bring us to that place in our relationship with Him as "Our Shepherd", that we really believe this is true.**

So that when you and I are being led along the paths that the Lord chooses for us, we will have confidence in Him.

**So that we will have peace, even when everything doesn't make sense to us.**

So that we will not fight against every inconvenience, change, trouble, hurt, loss or suffering.

**All of this leading by our Shepherd along the "Right Paths" is to bring us to the place where we so totally rely and depend upon the Lord that He becomes our entire life.**

### **2 Chronicles 13:1-12**

1 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, **Abijah became king over Judah**. (Southern Tribes)

2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and **Jeroboam**. (King of Israel, Northern Tribes)

3 **Abijah** set the battle in order with an army of valiant warriors, **four hundred thousand** choice men. **Jeroboam** also drew up in battle formation against him with **eight hundred thousand** choice men, mighty men of valor.

4 **Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim**, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, and said, "**Hear me, Jeroboam and all Israel:**

5 Should you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, **by a covenant of salt?**

**Jeroboam is trying to destroy the Kingdom that God Established with David.**

*"Don't you realize that God is the one that established the dynasty of David, the house of David over Israel for ever?"*

God's promise to establish David's kingdom forever, was a conditional promise.

- ☞ **He would establish David's Kingdom** forever if they continued to walk in the ways of the Lord.
- ☞ **Abijah, King of Judah**, doesn't really recognize God's promise as a conditional promise by a covenant of salt.

**In Israel, when they would offer their sacrifices, they would always salt the sacrifices as a preservative.**

So the idea of a "covenants of salt" was that this promise that the Lord had made was a preserving, or a covenant that would not cease.

### **12 Chronicles 13**

6 Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, **rose up and rebelled against his lord.**

7 Then worthless rogues gathered to him, and strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and inexperienced and could not withstand them.

8 **And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD,** which is in the hand of the sons of David; and you *are* a great multitude, and with you are the gold calves which Jeroboam made for you as gods.

12 Now look, **God Himself is with us as our head,** and His priests with sounding trumpets to sound the alarm against you. **O children of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper!**”

Abijah warned the people of the northern Tribes of Israel that if they attacked the Southern tribes of Judah, they would be fighting against God Himself.

**The people in the North, in Israel, and the people in the South in Judah, were really all the same people, they were God’s people, and yet they wanted to fight against each other.**

Abijah said that if they go ahead and carryout this plan to attack each other, they will in essence, “Be fighting against God”.

**I wonder how many of us this morning, are doing the same thing:**

- ☞ **Fighting against** the present circumstances of our life, when the Lord is already in control of what is happening, **and so we are really fighting against Him.**
- ☞ **Fighting against another believer** in Jesus Christ. Perhaps we have said some negative things about another believer, or thought some negative thoughts against another believer.
- ☞ **Maybe we have even apposed** the work that another believer was attempting to do for the Lord, if we did appose them, we have been fighting against the Lord!

I don’t think that any of us want to be in a position in our lives where we find ourselves opposing the God of the Universe.

**Here is the Bottom Line: The Lord is working in all of your lives right now to bring Blessing to you.**

In every situation of your present life, there is a blessing in it for you, if you will wait and look for it.

**Let us together determine to stop fighting against the Lord as He is acting as our Great Shepherd, leading us along the right paths that He has chosen for us even before the foundation of the world.**