

## **BLESSINGS AND MIRACLES**

**It's true that we serve a God of miracles. But brace yourself, because what I am going to say about that will come as a total shock to some of you. The Lord's preference is not to meet your needs through a miracle.**

**Now before you think I've lost all my faith, hear me out. I define a miracle as the suspension or superseding of natural laws, and personally, I've received many. There is no doubt in my mind that the Lord performs miracles and uses them like a bell to draw people unto Himself.**

**But let me ask you, would you rather receive a miracle of healing or live with the blessing of good health? Would you rather have the Lord perform a miracle to pull you out of bankruptcy or be so blessed financially that He wouldn't have to? I think the logical answer to both of those questions is obvious.**

**It's always better to avoid problems, which is the result of living in blessing, than it is to be delivered out of them, which requires a miracle.**

**There are three important reasons for receiving from God through blessings rather than miracles. First, blessings prevent crises, while miracles deliver from crises. Second, a blessing is always a more abundant supply than a miracle. And third, miracles are a temporary fix, while blessings are permanent solutions. Therefore, if you're living from miracle to miracle, it probably means you're living from crisis to crisis.**

**God's original intent for His creation was to function under His blessing instead of a miracle. If sin hadn't corrupted God's creation, there would be no need for miracles. Everyone would be healthy, everyone would be prosperous, and strife, the cause of broken relationships and wars, wouldn't even exist.**

**Unfortunately, there is corruption in the earth, and there will always be a place for miracles. However, Jesus not only forgave us of our sins, He redeemed us from the curse and placed blessings on His followers.**

**Galatians 3:13 says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hanged on a tree."**

**If we will believe we are blessed and act accordingly, we can avoid many of the problems that make us candidates for miracles.**

**Let me illustrate. Some believers pray for financial miracles but aren't practicing the principle of giving and will not work. They know God loves them, so they're counting on and believing for a miracle. And that's just what it will take. They aren't obeying God's Word in faith, so they can't receive the blessing God has spoken over them.**

**The Lord told us to work so that He would bless the work of our hands and that if we would give, it would be given unto us.**

**We read in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."**

**Deuteronomy 28:12 reads, "The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow."**

**Luke 6:38 says, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.**

**If we don't obey Him in these commands, it's either because of ignorance or we don't fully trust His promises. That doesn't mean**

**the Lord hates us, but it means our unbelief is stopping the blessing He has spoken from coming to pass in our lives.**

**So, lack of faith in God's blessing causes us to enter into crisis, and right before disaster, if we continue steadfast in our belief for a miracle, we receive just enough to get us over the hump. Then next month we need another miracle. I know this drill from experience.**

**One of the greatest mistakes of my life was believing that to be a full-time minister, I had to quit working a secular job. It wasn't that I minded working; I've been a hard worker all my life and I enjoy it. I honestly thought I had to make a choice, that I couldn't do both.**

**It took years for the Lord to get through my stubbornness and teach me I could work to supplement my income until the ministry grew. In the meantime, Jamie and I suffered a lot of financial crises, unnecessarily.**

**Because the Lord loved us, He kept us alive with a lot of miracles. I remember the week before our first son was born. We didn't have the money to pay the expenses. Miraculously, a Bible study group from nearly 100 miles away sent us all we needed to pay for the birth, just in time.**

**The day of Joshua's birth, I ran out of gas and pulled into a service station. Without any money and not knowing what to do, I started filling my tank believing God would perform a miracle. (Please don't do this - I'm not recommending it; it's just what I did.)**

**I didn't know it when I pulled in, but while I was filling my tank, the owner came out, and as it turns out, he was a Christian friend. He asked how I was doing. I told him about Joshua just being born, and he said, "Well, let this tank of gas be on me in celebration of his birth." Thank You, Jesus!**

**On another occasion, we went to the grocery store with \$7 and came home with three large grocery sacks of meat and other food.**

**Another miracle. Once, our car ran for a week without gas. The block even cracked because we didn't have enough antifreeze, and yet it didn't leak water. On and on, I could go. We experienced miracles all the time.**

**Many years later I was thinking about all those miracles, and I began to be a little concerned. It had been years since I'd seen miracles like that in our finances. As I pondered this, the Lord spoke to me and said, "Would you like to go back to living by miracles, or would you rather live in the blessings you now enjoy?" That was a no-brainer. I'd rather be blessed than in need of a miracle. When I need gas now, I just pull in, fill up, and buy it. Thank You, Jesus!**

**Because miracles are "unnatural," they are never permanent. The Lord created laws that govern the operation of His creation. He sometimes, temporarily, supersedes them, but always returns the situation back to the natural operation of those laws.**

**For instance, if we abuse our bodies, we can receive a miracle of healing. But if the root of the problem isn't dealt with, the sickness or infirmity will return, and we'll need another miracle.**

**But when we believe God's Word and follow its instructions, it will teach us how to eat, exercise, and enjoy emotional health that works like a medicine (Prov. 17:22). The Lord would rather keep you healthy through His blessing than to heal you by a miracle.**

**And, unlike miracles, once a blessing is received, no outside force can stop it:**

**"Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it" (Num. 23:20).**

**The only thing that can stop the blessing of God in our lives is our unbelief. What a powerful truth. Balaam's curse couldn't stop the blessing that was on the nation of Israel. The blessing received in faith will always trump the curse.**

**So, what is the blessing of God, and how do we receive it? To begin with, the blessing of God isn't things. The blessing of God will produce things, but the blessing isn't things.**

**Galatians 3:14 says, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."**

**Abraham's blessing has come upon us through faith in Christ, and the blessing isn't the things that Abraham possessed. Would you want Abraham's animals that have been dead for four thousand years? Do you want his tents and clothes? I don't think so. What you want is the favor of God that was spoken over him, which produced his physical and spiritual abundance.**

**That's what the blessing of God is; it's His divine spoken favor. And that blessing, if mixed with faith, will produce abundance in spirit, soul, and body.**

**There is much more to the contrast of blessings and miracles than what I have been able to present here. I consider this to be one of the most foundational and beneficial truths the Lord has ever taught me. If you can make the adjustment from a miracle mentality to a blessed mentality, you will begin to prosper as never before.**

**The good news is, you are already blessed. The bad news is, most don't know the power of that blessing. They would rather have a miracle.**

**If you receive this teaching in your heart, you will come to a place where you will pray, "Lord, help me to never need a miracle from You again. I want to live in the blessing." When it comes to personal needs, miracles should be for people who don't have the revelation of God's blessing. Don't let that be you.**