

Fire in my Bones

The Life and Times of Jeremiah the Prophet

If you had a choice between living a blessed life and a cursed life, what would you choose? You may think that a ridiculous question or at least a rhetorical question that needs no answer. Surely, it is obvious that all of us would choose a blessed life. As we come to the seventeenth chapter of the book of Jeremiah, we learn sadly that the people of God of Jeremiah's day were cursed rather than blessed. I think the confusion lies in that we misunderstand the ways of God. Paul put it this way in Galatians 6:7 "Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." That's the rub isn't it? We want the benefits without the responsibilities. We want to live life on our terms, without regard for God's will, while still enjoying God's blessing. God reminds Jeremiah it doesn't work that way.

The Blessed Life Jeremiah 17:3-19, 16a

My mountain in the land and your wealth and all your treasures I will give away as plunder, together with your high places, because of sin throughout your country. ⁴ Through your own fault you will lose the inheritance I gave you. I will enslave you to your enemies in a land you do not know, for you have kindled my anger, and it will burn forever." ⁵ This is what the LORD says: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD. ⁶ He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. ⁷ "But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. ⁸ He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." ⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? ¹⁰ "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve." ¹⁶ I have not run away from being your shepherd;"

Far more than you want to be blessed, God desires to bless you. God has graciously revealed the way of blessing to us, but the choice of whether we walk the path that is blessed or cursed is up to us. I want to explore two things from this remarkable revelation God entrusted to Jeremiah twenty-six hundred years ago.

Frist, what is the blessing that God promises to give and secondly, what is the life that God promises to bless.

What is the blessing God promises to give?

1. The blessing of identity (who you can become): a tree not a bush
2. The blessing of accessibility (what you can receive): a stream not a wasteland
3. The blessing of sustainability (how you can survive): protected not neglected

What is the life that God promises to bless?

1. The blessed life is a surrendered life.
 - Jeremiah 17:5,7
 - Psalm 1
2. The blessed life is a cultivated life.
 - Jeremiah 17:8
 - John 15:1-2
3. The blessed life is an examined life.
 - Jeremiah 17:9-10

- 2 Corinthians 13:5

4. The blessed life is a steadfast life.

- Jeremiah 17:16
- Psalm 112:7

God loves to bless. He wants to bless you. The choice is yours. Look it's really quite simple.

You know $1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 4$. You may want it to be 8 or 74 or 1,002 but no matter how you count it, it amounts to 4. In the same way: a surrendered life + a cultivated life + an examined life + a steadfast life = a blessed life.