

Blessed to Be a Blessing

I was watching the news when the station ran a segment on a young couple whose home had been struck by lightning. Everything they owned had been destroyed during this unfortunate event, but what caught my attention was what the young man said about his ordeal.

He told the reporter that their lives were over. I couldn't help but think how God had spared their lives, their health and had given them a future to look forward to. But all they could see was the "stuff" they had lost.

This couple could not see their blessings. They had built their world based on their stuff—and now it was gone.

The mind-set of many believers today is not too different from this couple. We think that if we are blessed with a lot of material possessions, then God is favoring us. We stand before our brothers and sisters and testify to the goodness of God when He blesses us with even more than we already have.

"Sister, you should see the car God blessed me with," we tell our friends. And if we're not being blessed with things, we think God has a problem with us.

As a people we store a lot of stuff, much of which we don't use. We lock our belongings behind heavy-duty doors with multiple locks. And as if that isn't enough, we add high-tech security systems and guard dogs for protection. The reason we are paranoid about losing these things is because our stuff has become our focal point.

Christians listen to stirring preaching on prosperity and then walk through life reasoning that the kingdom of God is about gaining things. We whoop and holler because we think that the best sermons are the ones that encourage us to acquire more. Our motivation often has little to do with kingdom business

and much to do with naming and claiming more things.

Fortunately, the Holy Ghost inspired Matthew to tell us that we should not lay up our treasures on earth, but in heaven. When the disciple addressed this issue, he was talking to people who believed God favored those who had a lot, but left out in the cold those who had little. The motivation for these believers was to obtain an abundance of material goods because that meant they had God's richest blessings.

So the problem Matthew addressed is the same problem we as Christians must address today. The belief that our material possessions are so important actually messes up our hearts. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21, NKJV).

If we concentrate on things, and those things are taken away or destroyed, our entire world is disrupted. But if we have a clear understanding of Scripture, then when something is taken away we will survive.

You see, God is not interested in just you alone. He has a bigger picture in mind. When God made his covenant with Abraham, He blessed him so that he could be a blessing to millions of other people. God has blessed us for the same reason.

"Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (see Matt. 6:10) should reign in all our communities. Our neighborhoods should be crime-free because God's presence is reflected through His people. And our cities shouldn't be plagued with hopelessness and poverty because believers reside in them. Matthew 6:33 tells us to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

As Christians, let's concentrate on goodness and kindness and winning our neighborhoods through our witness for Jesus Christ.

If you want the favor of God on your life, then plant into someone else's life. Help widows and provide clothing for the less fortunate. We should feed the hungry and help people like the couple who lost everything during a tragic event.

The only way we can effectively impact the world with the love of Jesus is to focus more on spiritual things and less on material "stuff."

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