

Exceeding the Limit Part 3

We have been talking about self-imposed limits that prevent us from experiencing the blessings of God in our life. The bible says God has given us everything we need to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord - a blessed life. Here again is the Scripture we've been referencing. **V3 - "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. V4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. V5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; V6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; V7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. V8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."**
2 Peter 1:3-8.

Remember the key points in this passage:

- 1. Everything we need to live a life pleasing to God is available to us (v3).**
- 2. We have been invited to participate in the very life and nature of God (v4).**
- 3. We have a responsibility - "make every effort" - to participate and grow in our walk with God (v5).** That means removing the things that limit the flow of God's blessing and favor.
- 4. Our walk with God and our spiritual growth are to be "in increasing measure" (v8).**
- 5. If we continue to grow in Christ our life and service will be effective and productive (v8).**

We made the point that the God we serve is an unlimited God and he is "able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us." Ephesians 3:20. He is not looking to withhold blessing from his children. Everything we need to live a godly life is available to us if we choose to obey the Lord. "No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly." Psalm 84:11 The problem is with us. We limit the blessings of God in our life.

What do we need to do to exceed the limit? Two weeks ago I told you to **Make every effort to get the sin out of your life. Make your obedience immediate.** Stop hesitating, looking for a better offer or a better life. There isn't one! Last Sunday I told you **We limit the**

flow of God's blessing in our lives when we refuse to forgive. Flow follows forgiveness, remember? **Inconsistency limits the blessing of God in our lives.** Remember the passage from Hebrews 6:7-8 about the land prepared to receive the rain? Consistently keep your heart and life prepared to receive and benefit from God's blessing. Live a faithful, consistent life and don't let sin or compromise rob you of the blessings of God.

Let me show you another way we limit the blessings of God in our life. I referred to part of this passage last week, but look again at 1 Peter 3:8. **"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, 'Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.'"**

1 Peter 3:8-12

Look at what Peter is telling us about the connection between our relationships and the blessing of God. **How we treat one another effects the blessing of God in our lives.** This passage addresses our attitude toward others. It speaks of our actions and our reactions to others. I told you last week the importance of forgiving others for their sins against us. If we don't forgive, we won't be forgiven. But it's more than just forgiving someone over some offense. It is about how we treat others, how we speak to and deal with others. If we aren't treating one another as Scripture tells us, we limit the blessing of God in our lives.

In the passage just above this Peter speaks to husbands and wives about how they are to treat one another. He tells husbands to be considerate of their wives, to treat them with respect so "that nothing will hinder your prayers." 1 Peter 3:7. How you treat others - how you treat your spouse - it can limit the blessing of God in your life if you mistreat them.

Peter tells us to live in harmony with one another. Notice he didn't say in unison, but in harmony. We are to make adjustments so we blend together, so we can work together, serve together, complement one another and function as the body of Christ. Harmonizing all of our differences. We are to be sympathetic, understanding, putting ourselves in the other person's place. We are to love one another like we are brothers and sisters, committed to each other regardless of what happens because we are family. You can't just stop being family to your

brother or sister! We are to be compassionate and humble, not thinking ourselves better than others. This is how we act toward each other and the result is we inherit the blessing of God.

The passage speaks not only of our actions, but of our reactions. Peter tells us not to repay evil with evil or insult with insult. I always thought of this passage as referring to the actions of people outside the church insulting or mistreating us. The truth is, even within the church, within the family there will be times when we are insulted or mistreated, when someone wounds or hurts us, but our response is not to wound in return, but to bless instead. We are to bless others because we have been blessed. We are to be merciful because we have received mercy. We are to bless others, even when they've wronged us, because we were called to be a blessing. When we act in love toward each other, when we bless others, when we repay evil or insult with a blessing, we are placing ourselves in a position to be blessed. How we treat others determines the flow of God's blessing in our lives.

Peter quotes from Psalm 34 as he tells us to turn from evil and do good if we want to enjoy life and see good days. "Turn from evil." I've already said get the sin out of your life and stop living like you did before you met Jesus. Instead of sinning Peter said "do good." Get along with others. Be compassionate and kind. Pursue peace in your relationships. Then look at verse 10. **"Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech." 1 Peter 3:10. To enjoy the blessings of God we have to guard our mouth and our words.**

You know I'm not a "name it and claim it preacher." I've never tried to tell you that you can have whatever you say or claim. I don't believe the bible teaches that. In fact, these past two Sundays I've been trying to make the opposite point, that it is not just about what you say, it's how you live and how you obey that determines the blessings of God in your life. The bible isn't a book of formulas or magical incantations. "Say this and you will be blessed." You can claim every blessing in the bible and confess His word all day long, but if you harbor sin in your heart, if you are doing evil, if you refuse to forgive others, if you are mistreating others, if you aren't living in obedience to God, those blessings aren't coming. Peter said the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, his ears are attentive to the prayers of those who are living in obedience, but if you are disobeying God and do evil, "the face of the Lord is against you!"

With that being said, there is something I want you to see in this passage. Peter said we must keep our tongue from evil and our lips from deceitful speech. He is saying we are to speak

the truth, not lies. We are not to deceive others or defraud others with our words. But I think there is another lesson we can learn here about our words and limiting the blessing of God. Our words reflect what is in our heart. **It's time to get your words, your heart, your thoughts, and your actions in agreement with God's word and His will!**

The psalmist said, **"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."** Psalm 19:14. Jesus said **"Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks."** Matthew 12:34. We need to get our heart, our mind and our mouth on the same page as God's word.

It's time to get it together, not just talking the talk, but walking the walk. Do your heart, mind and mouth line up with God's word? If you walk around saying, "God won't help someone like me. I'm no use to God or anyone else." If you walk around complaining about how God blesses others and not you, talking bad and gossiping about others, jealous of others and how God has blessed them, trust me, you are limiting your access to God's blessings. You are choosing to stand in the corner, like the older brother in the story of the prodigal son, refusing to go in to the celebration. Get the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart in agreement with God's word. Guard your heart, guard your mind and guard the words of your mouth.

Remember what the Lord said to Joshua? Joshua was second in command to Moses leading Israel through the wilderness into the promised land. Moses died and Joshua is now in command. Before he takes them across the Jordan river God says, **"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."** Joshua 1:7-9

"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it ...so that you may be careful to do everything written in it." Read and study God's word. Meditate on what you read. Let it take up residence in your mind, in your spirit, in your words. Then bring how you think and how you talk into agreement with what God says. Learn what he requires of you. ("Whoever would love life and see good days must...") Take that knowledge and obey God.

Surrender to him and obey him. Do you hear what I'm saying? It's time for a revolutionary change in your life. It's time to bring how you think, how you talk and how you act, how you walk, how you live, all into agreement with the word of God. What a difference it will make if you approach all of life with God's word in your heart, you mind and in your mouth. Obey God and start saying what God says about your circumstances. Instead of giving into fear, do what God has said and declare what God has said.

God tells Joshua to be strong and courageous. Apparently Joshua would face things that would make him feel weak and frightened, but God told Joshua to get God's word into his heart and into his thoughts as he meditated upon them. Then he told him not to let God's word depart from his mouth. Keep obeying God and keep saying and believing what God had said.

Joshua crosses the Jordan river into the land of Israel and the first obstacle he has to face is the walled city of Jericho. God gives Joshua a bizarre battle plan to march once around the walls each day for seven days and on the seventh day, march seven times and then shout and the Lord would cause the walls to fall down. Think about Joshua as he stares at that walled city. What if the walls don't fall? What if they experience defeat in their first battle? His men are untested. I can picture Joshua walking around, thinking to himself, "what in the world have I gotten myself into? Moses is dead and now I'm the leader of all these people. The old folks are all dead and now these young families are looking to me to lead them into this land they've heard about their whole lives. Here we are and the first thing we face is this ancient walled city. And God gives me this hair-brained scheme for conquering the city." The more he walked and talked the more the doubts begin to cloud his mind and his heart and his perspective. "There is no way this can work. I need to just head back across the Jordan and run for the hills."

"But what was it God said Don't let these words depart from my mouth. Sounds like they have. 'Be strong and very courageous' he said. 'Be careful to obey everything God had told Moses to do and he would bless me make me successful.'" Instead of running back across the Jordan, Joshua starts remembering. He starts declaring what God had said. "This may look impossible, but I'm going to obey God. I am not to let the words of God's law depart from my mouth. He says to be strong and courageous and not be terrified because He is going to be with me wherever I go. I'm obeying God and he will give me success and give us this city."

I'm speaking as plain and clear as I know how. It's time for you to stop playing church and start obeying God. We are running out of time and the stakes are higher than you can

imagine. It's time for you to obey God, submit your life to Him, get God's word in your heart and in your mind and in your mouth and start living the life he is calling you to live. It's time to do everything he has told you to do. Stop limiting the blessing of God in your life. Obey God and declare his word for your life.

It's time for you, with your heart and life surrendered to God and obeying his word, to start walking around the walls of that obstacle in your life. Start declaring what God has said about the righteous. **“The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” 1 Peter 3:12 .**

“Lord, I've repented of my sins and by your grace and with your help I am doing my best to obey your word. You said your eyes are upon me because you have declared me to be righteous by my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. I turn away from sin and evil and I believe you are listening to my cry. I am walking around the walls of this obstacle in my life, my own Jericho I am facing, but I am not afraid because you told me along with Joshua to be strong and very courageous because you were going to be with me. I am declaring your word – what you have said. You said you had not given us a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind and I claim that sound mind, without fear. You said you would keep me in perfect peace when my mind was stayed upon you and I am fixing my eyes and my mind on you today. You said if I would believe upon you that me and my household would be saved and I declare it today that my children will know you and serve the Lord and my grandchildren as well. Your word declares that you would supply all of my needs according to your riches in glory. That if I brought my tithes into the storehouse you would open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing upon me, so much that I wouldn't even have room for all of it. I am obeying your word and I'm not going to let it depart from my mouth until I see it happen. Your word declares that you delight in giving good gifts to your children and I'm not going to feel guilty about asking my heavenly Father for good gifts when you've already promised them to me. Your word tells us you are the Lord that heals us and I need healing and I believe and declare that by your stripes I am healed of this disease today.”

God is going to perform and complete and carry out his word. Don't let it depart from your mouth. Let your faith increase as you proclaim his word. Stop limiting the blessing of God by ignoring his word, by neglecting his word, by disobeying his word. Don't let it depart from your mouth or your heart or your mind. Let God's word govern and direct your actions and your

life!

Do you get what I'm telling you? If we will obey God and his word, if we will apply God's word to our life, if we will get the sin and compromise out of our life, if we will live in harmony with one another and love one another and treat others as Christ taught us, if we will act toward and react toward others in order to bless and be a blessing, we can expect to love life and see good days the bible says. We can exceed all these self-imposed limits and we can enjoy the blessings of God. He has good things for us now and forever. He has called us so we may inherit a blessing. Believe it. Live it. Obey God. Begin to get your life, your thoughts, your mind, your heart and your words in agreement with God's word and watch what happens.