

## The Power of Blessing Part 2

We began this brief series last Sunday talking about the power of blessing others. We said that in bestowing a blessing we communicate a sense of love and acceptance, we are ascribing value and worth to that person. In addition, we are setting and keeping before them the knowledge that God has a plan and purpose for their life. We are imparting to them a sense of destiny, a sense of purpose in God's kingdom and in God's economy. We are declaring to children, to a spouse, to a friend, to those people in our life and within our sphere of influence, that they are God's children, that they belong to him and not to the devil or to the world. Our words have power. The bible says **“Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” Proverbs 18:21.** We need to recognize that and use our words, use that power to bestow blessing and life. I said last week, recognize that your words are having an effect. Make it a blessed effect. Make it a positive effect, a godly effect, a grace filled effect.

Last Sunday we looked at the story of Isaac and Rebekah and their sons, Esau and Jacob. It is a convoluted story for sure, but it shows us the power of blessing as Isaac the father blessed Jacob but had no blessing to give to his brother Esau. The biblical account recorded in Genesis 27 also gives us an example of the family blessing that Gary Smalley and John Trent refer to in their book, *The Blessing*. If you recall, they refer to five elements of the blessing that can make a difference: meaningful touch, a spoken message, attaching high value to the one being blessed, picturing a special future for the one being blessed, and an active commitment to fulfill the blessing. We talked last Sunday about the first two elements of the blessing: the importance of appropriate and meaningful touch and the power of the spoken word. Consider with me now the last three elements of the blessing.

**Bestowing blessing by expressing high value.** To value is to attach great importance and worth to something. This is at the very heart of this biblical idea of bestowing blessing. In Hebrew the root meaning of the word blessing is “to bow the knee.” We bow the knee before someone we value and to whom we show honor. You bow the knee before royalty, before an earthly king or queen. You symbolically bow before great talent, great value. “We’re not worthy.” When we bestow blessing we are recognizing this person has worth and value.

What or whom do you value? To what do you show highest value? You know we are supposed to use things and value people, but too often we get those things reversed and end up valuing things and using people. Think for a moment about some thing, an object you value

highly, something you possess. A car, a musical instrument, shoes, a collection of some kind. Think about how you treat that object, the respect you show it, how you speak about that thing. Then think about the people in your life. Do you show greater honor to and bestow greater value on objects than to the people in your life? You talk about how beautiful that car is, how you just love your new \_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank), you bestow honor on those things, but how do you speak about your child, your spouse, your friend, your coworker? You talk sweeter to your dog than you do to your child or spouse or the waitress that brought your food. That's not how this is supposed to work. Are you blessing others?

Psalm 103 says **“Bless the Lord O my soul and all that is within me bless His holy name.” Psalm 103:1** When we bless the Lord we are acknowledging and honoring God's intrinsic worth. We are attaching high value to Him. We are bowing the knee to Him. While Scripture emphasizes blessing the Lord, it also refers to people blessing other people. **“This is the blessing that Moses the man of God pronounced on the Israelites before his death.” Deuteronomy 33:1. “Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance.” Joshua 14:13.** We read the blessing Aaron and the priests spoke over Israel at the close of the service last Sunday. In all these examples they were attaching high value to people, recognizing them as special individuals. This is what the Patriarchs did in blessing their children and grandchildren, ascribing worth to them, attaching high value to them, declaring God's plan and purpose over them.

We do the same thing when we bless our children, our spouse, our friends, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, the people of significance in our lives. And believe me, everyone longs to feel accepted, valued and honored. Everyone needs to hear words of high value expressed about them, not just for what they do, for performance, but for who they are.

As parents, if you only praise a child and attach value to what the child does, to performance, you will either cause her to be driven, an overachiever, or cause her to withdraw, failing to try because she is afraid to risk losing your approval or never receiving it. Look for ways to express high value and acceptance apart from performance, not only for performance. **“I love you simply because you are my daughters and nothing will ever change that.”**

In Genesis 49 Jacob (also known as Israel) blessed his sons before his death. The bible says, **“All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each the blessing appropriate to him.” Genesis 49:28** When

you look at his blessing, Jacob used a word picture with each. They were establishing a nation so some were described with images we might not think too complimentary. Judah was a lion's cub, strong and quick, Dan will be like a serpent beside the road, Issachar like rawboned donkey, Naphtali like a doe set free, Joseph a fruitful vine. The point is, Jacob spoke uniquely to each of his children. He recognized potential and assigned high value to his children.

Think of ways that you can bestow blessing and assign high value to those God has placed in your life. Identify character qualities and traits that you can commend and to which you can attach value. How can you point to their great potential? Think of Jesus speaking to Simon and calling him "Peter, meaning the Rock." He was anything but steady and solid as a rock early on, but Jesus saw something in Peter that Peter didn't see in himself. "Satan has asked to sift you as wheat...but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Luke 22:31-32 You can't sift a rock like wheat. But Jesus knew Peter would be a rock for the other disciples. He recognized potential and bestowed value and blessing on him. Praise the potential you see, even if they don't recognize it yet. Express high value. The people God has placed in your life are valuable, more valuable than any possession you might have. Recognize it, value them and bless them!

I heard Gary Smalley speak at a conference. Holding a violin he announced it was a Stradivarius. Everyone gasped and Smalley said, "That is the sound of high value and worth. I make that sound when my children walk in the room. It annoys them, but I want them to know they are of inestimable value and worth!"

**Bestowing blessing by picturing a special future.** Hopefully, if you are expressing high value to your children, spouse, friend, etc. you will be picturing a special future for them. Gary Smalley writes, "When it comes to predictions about their future, children are literalists – particularly when they hear predictions from their parents, the most important people from an earthly perspective, in their lives. For this reason, communicating a special future to a child is such an important part of giving the blessing."

When a child believes that his or her future is hopeful, that there is something to look forward to, her entire attitude toward life is different, positive. Speak words that encourage and predict a special future, one that includes God's best, God's purpose, God's destiny. For instance, "God has given you such a sensitive spirit. I wouldn't be surprised if you end up

helping a great many people as you get older.” Contrast that with “You’re so lazy and selfish. You’re never going to amount to anything.”

As a parent, seek to find ways to help your child discover God’s plan for their life and then picture that future. Give a general sense of blessing. The prophet Isaiah declared, **“Here am I, and the children the Lord has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion.” Isaiah 8:18.** Bestow that kind of blessing on your children, on those in your circle of influence. “God brought you into my life. God gave you to your father or mother and I. You are the seed of the righteous. The promise of the Father is for you. You are for signs and wonders in Israel, in the world, in the church. You’ll make a difference! God has a plan and purpose for you. Let’s find it!”

In the passage we studied last Sunday from Genesis 27, when Isaac blessed Jacob, he spoke of nations serving him and people bowing down to him. Jacob had nothing when those words were spoken to him, but it put a picture in his mind that God was going to be with him and would bless him and use him.

Pastor Jeff Walker has bestowed blessing upon hundreds and hundreds of students over the past 14 years as he declared this passage from Jeremiah 29 over their lives. **“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11**

Think what happens when you speak words filled with hope and potential, words that picture a special future. Words of blessing have the potential to transform the lives of our children, a spouse, a friend. The words we say, the future we picture for them helps develop their thinking pattern. The bible says, **“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Romans 12:2** The words you speak, the future you picture helps renew and transform their mind. They come to expect God’s help. They grow up desiring God’s will, God’s way. My parents, Sunday School teachers, pastors, family members, spoke that into and over my life. “God has a plan for you. God wants to use you, your gifts, your talent. You can affect the life and the destiny of others.” God called me, God gifted me, but others let me know God could and would use me if I surrendered to Him.

God wants to use you to picture a special future for someone in your life, in your circle of influence. The devil, the world is trying to picture a future without God, without a higher purpose. The devil wants to limit you and your future by telling you you are nothing, nobody,

you can't do anything. Listen, you are valuable. Your gifts are valuable to God. He has gifted you. There is a higher purpose and calling for you than just taking up space, partying and drinking, throwing your life away, getting into relationships where you are abused and misused. God has a plan for you. Hear what I'm telling you! And then go in turn and speak blessing to others and picture God's future and God's destiny for them.

Maybe you feel like you don't have anyone in your life to speak hope and blessing to you. Why don't you bless yourself? Start picturing a special future, a God-blessed future for yourself. Start picturing yourself living out the good plans God has for you. If all you see is failure and brokenness like everyone else in your family, start picturing a different future, one that includes you obeying God and making wise choices and following Him! If all you can see is yourself sitting in a wheelchair in a nursing home somewhere, start picturing another future. "Lord, I'm willing to be used by you, wherever you want, until I draw my last breath." Picture a future of involvement. Picture a future blessed and used by God, regardless of your age or the season of your life. Single, married, old, young. God wants to bless you and he wants you to bless others.

Here is the fifth element of the blessing. **Bestowing blessing requires an active commitment.** Meaningful touch, spoken words, expressing high value, picturing a special future – these are all essential to the blessing, but there has to be an active commitment to seeing this happen. James said, **"...faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."** **James 2:17.** We can say good things but we need to follow through. Bestowing blessing requires a commitment to action. To bless your children requires commitment, follow through. To bless your spouse, your friends, co-workers, requires action. It means being there for each other. It means listening and learning and loving. Let me quickly share some ways to have an active commitment to blessing others.

**Commit the person being blessed to the Lord.** Pray for them, regularly. Do you pray for your children? Your spouse? Your friends? Trust him to provide but pray faithfully for those in your life.

**Actively commit yourself to their best interest.** If you are a parent with more than one child, each child is different with varying needs. Remember Jacob blessed each child "giving each the blessing appropriate to him." Gen. 49:28 Just because they share your dna doesn't mean they are going to love the same things or need the same things. Get to know your child.

Your spouse will change over the years and their needs will change. What was best, what met their needs 25 years ago won't necessarily be the same today. How can you best serve and bless those in your life? Which brings us to the next point.

**Become a student of those you wish to bless.** What are their interests? What will bless them and encourage them to grow and serve the Lord? Become a student of your child. What do they dream about becoming? What are their interests? Who and what is influencing them right now? Help them see that God has a plan for them, that God wants to be a part of their lives, in every way, in every choice and decision. Model that for them!

**Spend time with those you want to bless and give them your full attention.** Giving someone your full attention communicates acceptance and value and worth. Be an active listener in your own home. Put down your phone!

**Blessing children will also mean discipling and disciplining children.** If you are a parent, you need to disciple your children. Show them how a follower of Christ lives. Live a life worthy of following. And you will have to correct them and discipline them as well. Not just punishing them for something wrong they have done, but correcting their path, their choices, so they will turn and follow the Lord.

If you look at Jacob blessing his sons in Genesis 49, you'll find him pointing out some areas where they lacked discipline, where they needed to change. Part of blessing will include training and correction and loving reproof. It can't all be flowery words. Not everyone gets a trophy. You'll teach them how to accept defeat graciously. You'll point them towards redemption. Remember the bible says, **"Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."** Hebrews 12:10-11 It takes effort to disciple children, or anyone else, but we are in it for the long haul, right? It's not easy. You may not see results from blessing your family or others in your life right away, it may take years, or it may make an immediate difference, you can leave the timing and the results up to the Lord. But the benefits can be eternal. Bestowing blessing makes a difference.

Some of you need to commit yourself to bestowing a blessing in your home, bestowing a blessing upon the lives of those in your circle of influence. Some of you have never known what it meant to receive such a blessing and your heart and life are still stinging, like Esau's was that

there was no blessing for him. It feels more like you've been cursed than blessed in your life. To curse means to esteem lightly, to dishonor. Instead of high value you've been de-valued; instead of honored you've been dis-honored. There is a healing and blessing for you.

There was a time in Israel's history when a man named Balaam called down curses upon them and refused to honor them and bless them. But the bible says, **“However, the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you.” Deuteronomy 23:5**

God loves you. Maybe no one else has valued you or blessed you, perhaps someone has devalued you, cursed you, but God loves you and he wants to bless you. He loves you so much he sent his one and only Son to bear the punishment for your sins and die on the cross in your place. He wants to save you and father you and love you and bless you. He has a plan and a purpose for you, for your life. You see, he breaks the curse by becoming your Heavenly Father. You are now his child if you trust in Him and in His Son Jesus. And he places you in a spiritual family where you can be embraced and loved and nurtured and encouraged.

I don't know who I'm talking to. Some are recognizing your need to change the way you speak to your family, children, friends. God will bless you as you turn to him. And some are suffering because the blessing has been withheld from you. You've been living under that pain, under that curse. Hear the word of the Lord: he wants to turn the curse into a blessing for you because he loves you. Believe that word today. Come to your heavenly Father, surrender your life to him and be blessed!

Let's break free from the curse and be blessed in the Lord and in turn, let's bless others! Commit to sharing the blessing! **“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26**