



## “You Are Blessed”

Genesis 12:1-9

**Idea:** God has blessed you so that you might be a blessing to those around you.

**Intro:** Fighting back from the bloodshed of the Civil War, in thirty-five short years America had grown into one of the most powerful countries in the world. This tremendous advancement the country was experiencing at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was fueled by a group of visionary men who were building a better future. Cornelius Vanderbilt connected the country through the railroad. John D. Rockefeller used his trademark ruthlessness as an oil tycoon to light up homes from coast to coast. Cities were expanding to the sky built on the strength of Andrew Carnegie’s steel. And under J. P. Morgan’s control, electricity had started to power the country.

In thirty-five years, the American nation had changed faster than ever before, which created an enormous amount of wealth for these visionary men. For example, Rockefeller, Carnegie, and J.P. Morgan, at the peak of their power, were together worth over \$1 trillion in today’s money. They were worth more than the entire net worth of the forty richest people alive today. This advancement though came with a high price. Due to their immense wealth, they literally controlled the country. Rockefeller himself was luring 1% of the nation’s economy. Therefore, the rich got richer, and the poor became poorer.

Their stories are reminiscent of Ebenezer Scrooge from Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* or Mr. Potts from *It’s a Wonderful Life*. That is not, however, how their stories turned out. I am not sure we can call these men saints, but each of them became major philanthropists in the later years of their lives. They gave hundreds of millions of dollars away to museums, universities, churches, and non-profits of all kinds. Something happened to them. They learned one of the great truths of the Bible. Jesus said, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35). Perhaps, in some way they began to understand they had been blessed so that they might be a blessing to others.

Today, we are beginning a new sermon series called “Bless Every Home.” Now, there are no Carnegies or Rockefellers here. And don’t worry; this series is not about your finances. You see, each of us who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior have something that is much more valuable than monetary wealth. That stuff is temporary and lacks the ability to transform a person. We possess something eternal and life transforming. We have been blessed with the message of the gospel...the Good News of Jesus Christ. Like Vanderbilt, Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Morgan we too are to be philanthropists. God has blessed us so that we might be a blessing to others. Do you believe that God desires to bless you? For some reason, when we hear that question our minds immediately think of material blessing. And sure, the Bible teaches that we ought to bless others with the

material blessings that He has given us. But do our minds think about the greatest blessing we have been given...the gospel?

Over the next several weeks, we are going to look at how we can be a blessing to every home in our community individually and as a church. This morning, I want us to begin by examining the statement I made earlier. You are blessed. If you know Jesus as Lord and Savior, He has blessed you.

Read Genesis 12:1-9.

**Inquiry:** As we begin to read the first few pages of the Bible and hear the early stories of mankind, we learn that the sin of Adam permeated the hearts of every person. Adam's sinfulness was found in Cain who killed Abel his brother. It created a culture of evil so great that God regretted He had made man (Gen 6:6). In response to this evil, God called out Noah and his family to be saved through the ark but destroyed the rest of humanity in the flood. Sin, however, remained in the human heart. Following Noah a culture of evil began to grow again. In Genesis 11 we discover that this culture sought to set God aside and make for themselves a great name as they built a tower into the heavens. In response to this, God destroyed their tower, confused their language, and scattered the people throughout the earth (Gen 11:7-8).

God, though, did not forsake the apex of His creation. In chapter twelve, He calls out Abram. This man was not a seeker of God. The Bible tells us about his family heritage (Gen 11:27-32). Abram lived with his father Terah and brother Nahor in Ur of the Chaldeans. Sir Leonard Woolley led an expedition in the 1920s and 30s to excavate the ancient Mesopotamian city of Ur. He uncovered the royal cemetery of Ur with its large cache of gold objects and evidence of human sacrifice. He unearthed the remains of Ur's great ziggurat that had been topped with the temple of Nanna (the moon god). He also discovered the palace of Ur-Nammu, the temples of Ningal and Enki, and the "Great Death Pit" which contained the bodies of seventy-three servants arranged in sacrifice around Queen Puabi's gorgeously decorated corpse. These treasures of Ur tell us about Abram's social and religious context. They inform us that it was as sophisticated, pagan, and claustrophobic as that of any Babylonian or Egyptian dynasty. Ur was desolate and barren of knowledge of the true God. Ur was a spiritually dark place just as Abram's heart was. Yet it was into this darkness that God spoke (Gen 12:1). It was into this darkness that called out Abram and promised him a blessing. Today, God speaks in the same way. He calls out into the darkness of our hearts and promises His blessing.

## **I. The Requirements for God's Blessing**

*1 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great..." – Gen 12:1-2a*

Most of us hone in on the "I will bless you" statement in verse 2 when this passage is read. But to enjoy the promise of verse 2 you first have to go through the requirements of verse 1. What was true for Abram is still true for you today. To be blessed by God you have to do two things:

- A. You must go from your old life.
- B. You must go to your new life.

God told Abram to leave his country, leave his people, and leave his family and go to a place not yet revealed. Can you imagine receiving that kind of call? What was God saying? He wasn't telling Abram that family and community were not important. Those are very important and are gifts from God. But God was saying to Abram that he had to leave the culture and lifestyle of pagan idolatry behind and pursue a new life in God. He was to go to a new land and a new Lord.

Today, each of us must answer this same call. God calls us to repent to turn from our sin and idolatry and to turn to Him. He calls us to leave the land of our rebellion and go to the land of His peace. And He tells us that in this new land you will find new life.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

– 2 Cor 5:17

Abram had to make a decision. The Bible says that Abraham by faith believed God and left Ur and the blessing of God followed him (Rom 4:3; Heb 11:8-10). Leaving your old life behind and pursuing your new life in Christ that comes by faith are requirements for God's blessing.

Today, if you have not repented of your sin and received Christ's forgiveness, then this is where you need to begin. You have to make a decision. If you have decided to follow Christ, then you are positioned to receive the ongoing blessing of God in your life. This raises a great question. Why does God bless you?

## II. The Realities of God's Blessing

### A. God's blessing is to be received. (Gen 12:2-3)

In order for Abram to become a great nation and to have a great name he had to receive the blessing God had promised. He had to meet the requirements found in verse one in order to experience the blessing of verse 2. Abram met those requirements. He believed God, which was demonstrated by the fact he left his homeland for a new land.

Today, God desires to bless you. Ultimately, that blessing involves salvation through Jesus Christ. He wants to bless you with new and eternal life. He wants to change your heart and give you new and holy desires. He wants to replace your fear and stress with hope and peace. But like Abram, you must receive it in order to experience it.

### B. God's blessing is to be relayed to others. (Gen 12:2-3)

I heard a story about two friends who hadn't seen each other in a long time. The two friends ran into each other one day on the street. One of the men had a real sad and somber look on his face, so the other man asked, "Joe why do you seem so down?" Joe told his friend that three weeks ago one of his uncles died and left him \$100,000. The friend said, "Well, Joe that is sad, and I am sorry for your lost. But your uncle left you \$100,000. You have been blessed. Why are you still so sad?"

Joe responded, "Well, two weeks ago I had a cousin die who left me \$500,000." The friend said, "Wow! I'm sorry you've experienced two deaths in two weeks. But you have been blessed with two incredible inheritances. Why are you still so sad?"

Joe said, "Last week, I had a great aunt pass away. I didn't even know her, but she left me \$1 million." His friend was blown away. He said, "Man, these past three weeks you have been tremendously blessed. Why are you still sad?" Joe said, "This week no one has died, and no one has left me anything."

You know that is the way a lot of us are at times. God has blessed you and blessed you, but when one thing goes wrong, your respond with, "Where is God? Why is this happening to me?"

Folks, you and I have been blessed not just to receive the blessings but also to relay them on to others. This is God's heart. This is God's missiological strategy.

*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.*

– 2 Cor 9:8

Paul tells us that in Christ we have been blessed so that we might be a blessing to others. This is exactly what God told Abram in Genesis 12:2.

Our God desires to bless every home, every family, and every person. How does He do that? He blesses every home by leveraging the blessings in your lives and my life to be a blessing to others. The greatest blessing He has given us is the gift of His Son. We have heard and believed on the gospel that revealed Jesus to us. Now, God wants to use the gift of His gospel in our lives to be a blessing to others who have yet to hear and believe. The blessing is to be relayed on to others. We are not to keep it to ourselves but to share it.

Just as God desired to bless every nation through the blessing of Abram, He desires to bless your neighborhood through the blessing He has given you. God desires to bless Powhatan through the blessing He has given Red Lane Baptist. God's plan for your life is that you would be a light of God's grace shining in the darkness of your neighborhood and community.

C. God's blessing is not to be returned. (Gen 12:4, 9)

Abram was an old man when God called him to leave his homeland. This ought to be enlightening for us because there are some Christians who think that when you become a senior you no longer can or are obligated to do some things. There is no concept of retirement in God's economy.

It would have been easy for Abram to tell God, "Sorry, I am an old man. I can't travel that far. I am not able to do what you are calling me to do." He could have come up with a list of excuses and returned the blessing, but he didn't. Abram believed God and left for a new land following His new God. In his old age, he became a light shining in a dark world.

D. God's blessing leads to rejoicing. (Gen 12:5-8)

When Abram arrived in the land of Canaan he found something very similar to home. He found an idolatrous and wicked people. Moreh means "teacher" or "oracle giver." The great tree of Moreh was the place the Canaanites assembled to hear the oracles that soothsayers received from the rustling of the leaves. Rather than joining in the pagan practices of the Canaanites, Abram built an altar and worshiped God. Abram worshiped God everywhere he went. He built altars at Shechem, Bethel, Hebron, and Mt. Moriah. He publically proclaimed the name of the Lord. He proclaimed his faith. He rejoiced in God's blessing of salvation. He was a light in a dark world. As he worshiped God in that dark world, he pointed people to the One True God who could transform their lives.

**Conclusion:** God has blessed us so that we might be a blessing to others.

I want you to seriously consider a couple questions:

- Is your neighborhood blessed because of your presence?
- Is our community blessed because of our presence?

What kind of spiritual philanthropy are you doing in your neighborhood? What kind of spiritual philanthropy is Red Lane doing in Powhatan and the greater Richmond metro area? What kind of spiritual philanthropy are we doing among the nations?

Bless Every Home is a tool to help you be a brighter and more effective light in your neighborhood. It's a tool to help us as a church be a brighter and more effective light in our community.

You can go to [blesseveryhome.com](http://blesseveryhome.com) to register.

The tool has four components: pray, care, share, disciple.

Will you pass the blessing God has given you on to those living around you? Will you be a light shining in the darkness of your neighborhood?