

# Barriers To Blessing

**Introduction.** In Mark 2:1-12, Jesus is preaching in a house. A crowd had gathered and filled the whole house and overflowed into the courtyard. Down the street lay a sick man. Although he was a sick man he was a fortunate man, for he had four friends who wanted to bring him to Jesus. His friends went down to get him, but they could not bring him into the presence of Jesus because of the crowd. The crowd was a barrier between the man and the blessing that Jesus had for him. His friends took him on the roof and let him down to Jesus.

The Lord has promised to bless us both materially (Matthew 6:25-34) and spiritually (Ephesians 1:3) beyond belief. We in turn are able to go out and bless the world (Romans 10:15). A barrier is defined as "something immaterial that obstructs or impedes; something that separates or holds apart." If we are not living righteously, or if our hearts are defective, we erect barriers that keep blessings from us and from others. If we have the wrong spirit, blessings can never flow to us or through us. We need to study these spirits and rid them from our hearts.

## I. ***A Covetous Spirit Is A Barrier To Blessing***

- A. Achan coveted the forbidden possessions in Jericho, and because of his covetousness he brought defeat to Joshua's army and death to himself and family (Joshua 7:1-26). God would have blessed Achan and his family, but he ruined his blessing by his covetousness.
- B. Covetousness is antithetical to God's nature (Exodus 20:17; Colossians 3:5). Sometimes we look out and see others enjoying what we do not have, and immediately something terrible and hurtful rises within us -- covetousness. We ought immediately to kill that spirit as we would a venomous snake, for covetousness cuts off the blessings of God.
- C. God asks, "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me" (Malachi 3:8). And then He tells how the blessings are cut off because of covetousness. There is a real blessing for the cheerful giver (Malachi 3:10; 2 Corinthians 9:6). If you love money but keep it for yourself, if you keep from God what belongs to Him, you are erecting a barrier. Why not trust His promises and give Him a chance to bless you?

## II. ***A Worldly Spirit Is A Barrier To Blessing***

- A. There is nothing more encouraging than a young man dedicating his life to serve Christ. Demas started out in an exemplary way (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24). He was right by Paul's side. He was a joy and a help to him. But they journeyed to the great city, and the bright lights of the world blinded the eyes of Demas (2 Timothy 4:10). Therefore

Demas cut off every blessing for himself and for others whom he might have served and taught.

- B. There are so many like Demas in the world! They start out for Christ in a wonderful way, and then one day the world calls to them. They listen; they follow. From that moment, Christ and His church have no room in their lives (Matthew 13:22). At that point they become the enemies of God (James 4:4).

### III. ***A Prayerless Spirit Is A Barrier To Blessing***

- A. James 4:2 tells us that God wants us to have the blessings, but that we choke the channels when we neglect to pray (Matthew 7:9-11). The prodigal son sat in a pig pen starving until he came to the realization that he had to go back to his father. Had his father known, I am certain he would have given him anything. How foolish it was for the man to starve because he refused to ask (Luke 15:13-19).
- B. God has all we need (Ephesians 3:20). Someone once wrote, "I asked for strength that I might achieve, I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey. I asked for health that I might do greater things, I was given infirmity that I might do better things. I asked for riches that I might be happy, I was given poverty that I might be wise. I asked for all things that I might enjoy life, I was given life that I might enjoy all things. I got nothing that I asked for, but everything I had hoped for. Despite myself my prayers were answered. I am among all men most richly blessed."
- C. The inspired account of the history of the church is a story of constant victory and progress. In Acts 2:42 and 6:4, we learn the reason for that victory. They constantly devoted themselves to prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouses of God's infinite grace and power. Abraham Lincoln: "I have went to God in prayer many times by the overwhelming conviction I have no place else to go."

### IV. ***An Unforgiving Spirit Is A Barrier To Blessing***

- A. Jesus had the right spirit. On Calvary, three crosses were outlined against the sky. On these three crosses three men were dying in agony and blood. The crowd taunted and jeered these men. From the center cross a voice was heard. Was He condemning? Was He cursing? No. He was praying (Luke 23:34).
- B. Did we hear Him correctly? Yes, that was His prayer. Though they were killing Him, He asked forgiveness for them. If you do not have this same spirit, you are not a disciple of Christ, and the blessings of God cannot flow to you or through you (Matthew 6:14-15; Acts 7:60; Ephesians 4:32; 2 Timothy 4:16).

- C. You are hindering someone if you have an unforgiving spirit. We are most like beasts when we kill; man when we judge; God when we forgive (Proverbs 19:11; 2 Corinthians 2:10-11). One must love to forgive, and God is love (1 John 4:10).

V. ***An Indifferent Spirit Is A Barrier To Blessing***

- A. Gallio was a deputy at Corinth, and he had a chance to hear a great man deliver a great message when Paul was brought before him. But we read of his character in Acts 18:17.
- B. This is true of so many people today. God blesses a congregation in a wonderful way: souls are being saved and fellowship is being enjoyed. You ask someone on Monday, "Were you at worship yesterday?" "No, I was not there," is the reply, and then you must listen to a long string of excuses. But the sum total of all these is the same as Gallio. Our assemblies are designed to strengthen you spiritually by hearing the word of God and by the fellowship of the saints (Psalm 65:4; 84:2, 10; 122:1; cf. Hebrews 10:25).
- C. Our congregations have thousands of members today, but most of them have an indifferent spirit (Zephaniah 1:12; Luke 17:26-27). Yet our communities would not be worth living in if they lost the influence of our congregations. Let us be different from Gallio. Let us show that we do have a real concern for the affairs of God.

VI. ***A Rebellious Spirit Is A Barrier To Blessing***

- A. God wanted to bless Jonah and make him a blessing to the people of Nineveh. To this prophet He said one word, "Go" (Jonah 1:2). The preacher said to God, "No." That is a small word, but it cuts off the blessing. God conquered Jonah's rebellious spirit, but the Lord had to send Jonah through a lot of trouble before the prophet learned his lesson.
- B. People rebel against God. A loved one dies; they do not think it is right; and they cry out, "He should not have been taken away from me!" Or they have a hard time and say, "Why has this happened to me?" God is blamed for all of their trouble. With their rebellious spirit they build a wall, and no blessings can get over it.
- C. Saul was chosen by the Lord for a mighty work. He had a great future as the leader of God's people. But when he disobeyed the voice of God, God took the kingdom away from him and gave it to another (1 Samuel 15:23). Contrast Saul to Paul (Acts 26:15-19). Because of Paul's obedience to the Lord sent blessings through him to multitudes of souls (cf. 2 Timothy 4:8). God has a plan for your life, but if you rebel against that plan you cannot expect the blessings of God.

**Conclusion.** Do you have any of these spirits within your heart? If so, you are hurting not only yourself but others. God wants us to be channels, not reservoirs. There are many around us who need His blessings, but if our lives are choked with wrong they will never receive them. Find what stands between you and God, tear it out by the roots, cast it aside, then the blessings of God will flow into your own life and refresh the lives of others.