DEREK PRINCE
MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Sermon

Curse vs Blessing



Atonement
By Derek Prince

In our previous sessions we've been looking at certain aspects of the exchange that took place when Jesus died on the cross. If my memory is correct, we've looked at four aspects. Let's see if we can recapitulate. First of all, Jesus was punished that we might be forgiven. He was wounded that we might be healed. He was made sin with our sinfulness that we might be made righteous with His righteousness. And, He died our death that we might share His life. After you believe that, what do you do? That's right.

Now we're going on to the fifth aspect which is curse versus blessing. This is very clearly stated in Galatians 3:13–14, which we'll look at.

> "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree..."

And in biblical language, the cross was a tree because the word tree is used for a piece of timber whether it's growing or whether it's cut down. Incidentally, for interest, the same is true in the Swahili language in east Africa. Going on in verse 14:

> "...that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Well, the exchange is very obvious there, isn't it? The evil is curse, the good is the blessing. And Jesus, it actually says, was made a curse for us, in our place. In other words, upon Him came all the curses that might have come upon us that in return all the blessings that were due to Him might be made available to us. And in particular, it says that we might receive the blessing of Abraham. Now, that's exciting!

Keep your finger in Galatians 3, if you have it there, and turn for a moment to Genesis 24:1.

> "Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age, and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things."

© 1990 - Derek Prince Ministries, International, Inc.

In how many things? All things. So what is the blessing of Abraham? It covers what? All things, that's right. And that's the blessing that's made available to us through faith in the exchange that took place when Jesus was made a curse for us on the cross. So this is exciting!

In fact, I have to keep telling you if you don't get excited about what I'm telling you it's because you're not really believing it. Because, it is exciting!

What we need to do is, first of all, look at the background of this statement of Paul, which is very interesting. And then we're going to analyze somewhat the nature of curses and blessing. Let's look at the background first. If you look at the top of the chapter, the first verse of the chapter, chapter 3 of Galatians, it says:

> "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified?"

Now, Paul goes on to point out that these Christians had received the Holy Spirit and were witnessing miracles. In other words, if you want to use contemporary language, they were Charismatic. I would say almost super Charismatic. And yet, Paul says they were bewitched. That's an amazing statement, isn't it? Why did he say they were bewitched, what was the evidence? The evidence was that they had lost the vision of the cross. He said Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified but you've lost the vision. Something has happened to you that has obscured your vision of the cross. An evil, satanic force has moved in and shut off your understanding of the cross. And he called that force witchcraft.

Now, I'm not going to go into the analysis of witchcraft today, but it's very important to understand that the fact that you are saved and baptized in the Spirit and speak in tongues and all that—which is very wonderful—and see miracles doesn't guarantee you exemption from deception. Is that right? And it's still possible for satanic influences to move in among us and the main aim of Satan amongst the people of God is to obscure the cross. Because, the cross is the only basis for God's total provision for us. And when we lose the vision of the cross we no longer have a basis for God's provision. Secondly, which I'm not going to point out but it's important, is that the cross is where Jesus defeated Satan and his kingdom. He stripped principalities and powers of Satan's kingdom, triumphed over them, made an open spectacle of them in the cross. That's in Colossians 2:13–15—we won't turn there right now. Satan can never undo the defeat which he received through the cross. But his strategy is to keep Christians from realizing what was done.

And so, Paul was tremendously concerned about these Galatians Christians. It's rather interesting, you analyze Paul's epistle, almost every epistle he wrote to churches he started by thanking God for what He'd done for them. Even the church at Corinth. And later he was going to reprove them for having incest, adultery, drunkenness at the Lord's table, but he starts by thanking God for the grace of God given to them. But when he comes to the Galatians he's so upset that he doesn't even thank God. He said, "I marvel that you are so soon turned away from the gospel." What was the problem in Galatia? It wasn't drunkenness, it wasn't immorality, what was it? Legalism. He was much more upset about legalism than he was about some plain sin of the flesh.

The results of witchcraft, which we are not going to analyze in detail, were twofold. Or you could say three. They had become carnal. The only thing that can keep us from being carnal is the cross. Once we lose the vision of the cross we can be very religious and very carnal. And having become carnal, they became legalistic. They returned to trying to keep laws in order to achieve righteousness.

Let me give you two simple definitions of legalism because it's often used as a term to criticize other Christians with. So I'll give you two objective definitions. Number one, legalism is the attempt to achieve righteousness with God by keeping a set of rules. And God has ruled that out forever. I see some of you look a little somber at that point.

I was talking to quite a large group of Christians once, a year or two ago, and in the course of my talk I said something which, for me, was totally casual. I said, "Of course, Christianity is not a set of rules." and they looked at me in astonishment! I think if I had said there is no God they would have been less shocked. But that's the truth. Christianity is not a set of rules. Do you agree? And keeping rules is not the way to achieve righteousness with God. He has ruled that out forever.

My other definition of legalism is adding any requirement for righteousness to what God has already stated in His word. No one has ever been authorized to add to God's requirement. And God's requirements are very simple, they're stated at the end of Romans 4.

> "If we believe in Him who raised Jesus from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses

> and raised for our [what?] justification [don't forget that word], we shall be saved."

Nothing more is needed. And no one has ever been authorized to add any requirement to that. So, what was the result? They went into carnality, they went into legalism. And, they came under a curse, which is always the end of people who become legalistic. And so, Paul sums it up in Galatians 3:10:

> "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law to do."

All right. You set out to achieve righteousness with God by keeping a law, if you break any law at any point, any time, you're under a curse. You're obligated to keep the whole law all the time or else it's of no avail to you for righteousness. So, he's dealing with the problem of these Christians who, in turning away from the gospel of grace to a gospel of works, had come under a curse.

But then, praise God, he doesn't stop there. He says there is a way out from under the curse. Because, on the cross Jesus was made a curse that we might be redeemed from the curse and come into the blessing of Abraham. And as I pointed out already, the blessing of Abraham covers everything. The blessing of Abraham covers every area of our lives. That's the blessing that has been purchased for us by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

The problem today is that the majority of Christians that I meet, and I meet a lot, have no clear concept of what a curse is, how it operates or how to recognize it. I mean, if we're sick we usually know we're sick. If we're sinning we frequently at least know we're sinning. But when we're under a curse we don't know what the nature of our problem is or how to recognize it or how to deal with it. So I'm going to devote two sessions instead of merely one to this truth that we can be redeemed from the curse because on the cross Jesus was made a curse with the curse that was due to us that we might receive the blessing.

If you look at the picture of Jesus on the cross as He died, you wouldn't want to be under a curse. There He hung in shame and agony, rejected by earth, refused by heaven, under a supernatural darkness, uttering a cry of agony, forsaken by His disciples, rejected by His own people, and absolutely with nothing in this world. That's a curse. How foolish to want to be under a curse!

Now I want to try to explain to you briefly the nature of curses and blessings, or blessings and curses. My problem is I'm writing a book about it and I'm already into the 10th chapter and I'm only about halfway through the book. It is a vast subject. I never realized how vast it was until I got involved in it. I would also say that the lessons that I've learned in this context, in which I've preached around the world, have made a more powerful impact on the people that I've preached to than any other message that God has ever given me. It is a life-changing revelation, when you can receive it.

Curses and blessings are essentially words. They may be written, they may be spoken, they may be simply thought inwardly. But they are words that are charged with a supernatural authority and power. And they impact people and change them. And this is the really significant thing, is very frequently they continue on from generation to generation to generation until something is done to terminate them. There are blessings and curses in the Bible which have been in effect for 4,000 years and are still in effect today. Their outworking is still continuing today.

Why this concerns us is that there may be things in our lives which are problems to us for which we cannot find the source. And the reason is the source can be way back in history. Generations back. And so, we are groping ineffectively with something we don't know how to deal with until we can identify its nature. So one of the distinctive features of both blessings and curses is that they continue from generation to generation. Not necessarily forever but mostly they continue for several generations. For instance, just to take one example, in the Ten Commandments God said if you worship false gods or make idols, it will come upon you and the succeeding generations to the third and fourth generation. That's typical of a curse. And having dealt in Southeast Asia with multitudes of people whose ancestors two or three generations back were idol worshipers, I've seen how true that is. I've also seen the tremendous effectiveness of releasing them from that curse.

Now, the real key source for the revelation of blessings and curses is Deuteronomy 28. It's a long chapter, it contains 68 verses. The first 14 verses deal with blessings and the next 54 verses deal with curses. That's a lot of curses. By the time you've read through them, if you've got any sense, you don't want a curse in your life.

I have here my little summary of the blessings and the curses. It's not divinely inspired, you could change it. But I think I'll put it on the board, putting it in front of your eyes. You've got it in the outline if you've got it there but I think it's rather good to... So, here are the blessings. We'll write B for blessings.

Number one, exaltation. You know what that means. It means being lifted up.

Number two, I put reproductiveness. I hope you can read my writing. I don't hear any loud ahs so I rather doubt whether you can. That's the only word I could find to describe the fact that a person who is blessed reproduces in every area of his life. He's a fruitful person, whether it's physically or financially or artistically.

Number three, health. How many of you would agree health is a blessing? You probably don't appreciate how much of a blessing it is until you've been sick and then you wish you'd thanked God more often for the blessing that you had while you were healthy.

Number four is prosperity or success. And let me say that prosperity in the Bible doesn't mean what it means to modern Americans. It's unscriptural to interpret prosperity that way. For instance, the Lord promised Joshua that whatever he did would prosper and he'd have good success. And he spend the next how many years in warfare, sleeping in the open fields, leading the tough life of a soldier in war. It wasn't a luxurious life, it wasn't an abundance of physical pleasures or luxuries but, it was successful. He accomplished God's purpose. The proper definition of prosperity is to succeed in doing God's will.

Number five is victory. Blessing brings victory.

Number six, I put head, not tail.

And number seven, which goes very closely with it, is above, not beneath.

Now, I was reading that some years ago and I said, "Lord, what's the difference between the head and the tail?" And the Lord gave me, I think, a very simple answer. He said, "The head makes the decisions and the tail gets dragged around." So I'm asking you this morning, how are you living? Like a head or a tail? Do you make the decisions? Are the things you plan carried out successfully? Or are you the victim of pressures and forces and circumstances that drag you around and you just don't know what will happen next?

The curses are actually the opposite. Curse number one is humiliation.

What's the opposite of reproductiveness? Failure to reproduce, barrenness. And I would say barrenness is almost invariably the result of a curse.

Number three, sickness of every kind. And let me say there's one type of sickness or one category of sickness which is particularly indicative of a curse, which is what they call hereditary, which goes from generation to generation.

The next one is poverty and failure.

The next one—they're really self evident because they're just the opposites—is defeat. I told you that I worked in east Africa. I worked among a certain tribe which I won't name. I worked among other tribes. Going on.

Number six, tail, not head. And most of my students were Christians. But they never could believe that God was stronger than the devil. Ultimately, the person they feared most was the devil.

Number seven is beneath, not above. And so, I learned this monotonously repetitive phrase in Swahili, nemay shindwa, I have been defeated. "Please sir, it has defeated me," they would say. That is a curse.

These are taken from Deuteronomy 28. I mean, you could read the chapter for yourself and I recommend you do. Decide whether you agree with my summary.

But now I'm going to give you seven indications of a curse which I have learned by observation in dealing with people. I made them independently of Deuteronomy 28, but it's remarkable in my sight how much they agree. Here they are. You've got them in your outline but I'll read them out.

I want to say if you have only one of these problems it may or may not be a curse. Although some of them are pretty likely. But if you have a lot of these problems, you could be almost sure you're under a curse.

Number one, mental and/or emotional breakdown.

Number two, repeated or chronic sicknesses, especially hereditary. Why? Because that's the nature of a curse.

Number three, female problems (barrenness, miscarriages, menstrual cramps and a whole host of others). As far as Ruth and I are concerned, when we minister to the sick, if a lady comes forward with those problems we simply assume it's a curse. And very seldom are we wrong. I have a whole pile of testimonies of women who have been completely set free from those conditions not when we prayed for their healing but when we broke the curse over their lives.

© 1990 - Derek Prince Ministries, International, Inc.

Number four, the breakdown of marriage and family alienation. In other words, where families just can't stick together and husbands and wives break up and divorce, remarry and very often divorce again. That is usually a curse.

Number five, financial insufficiency. Most of us go through times of hardship financially. I'm certainly no exception to that. But if you never make it, if you're always struggling, if you never have enough, basically I would say that's a curse.

Number six, accident prone. You're one of those people to whom it always happens. You step off the curb and break your ankle. Or you're in a car and somebody slams into you. And it's always the fault of the other person but it's you it happens to. Do you understand?

And number seven, of course, this is in a family, a history of suicide or unnatural death.

Now, that's the end of my little list but in our next session I'm going to continue. I'll give a general picture of a curse and then we'll deal with how to come out from under the curse.

Sermon
Transcript: MV-4277-101-ENG
Last Updated: 16 Sept 2026
Website: Derekprince.com/en/resources



© 1990 - Derek Prince Ministries, International, Inc.