

THE BIG IDEA: God doesn't just want to bless you; He wants to bless through you.

The Take-Off

This morning, we're going to blow up one of the biggest lies to ever hit the church, and in the process we're going to understand the simple truth behind why grumpy people are lonely.

But to do that, we need to quickly do a little backtracking from part 1 last week.

Last week we discovered that God really does want us to be happy, and that the best way to stay happy (the same word for blessed in the Bible) is to attach our happiness to what never changes - the work of Jesus on the cross.

We did admit that there are times when we don't feel happy, and next week we'll be addressing that. Simply put, though, it boils down to sin, situations, and stupid people. (so next week we'll address what to do about the stupid people in our lives)

So, if it's true that God wants to bless us - that He wants us to be happy, happy, happy - then we've got to ask the question that every 2 year old should have trademarked: WHY?

What's the point behind God blessing us?

That's the question we want to answer this morning, and to do that, we're going to step into some specific times in the life of Abraham.

First, let's see what's going on in Genesis 12...

1. Leave it all to get it all!

- a. It's never hard to get people to jump on the blessed bandwagon, is it?
- b. But as we learned last week, that's because we think of blessings as happiness, and we attach our happiness to external things.
- c. So, in Genesis 12, if Abraham and his wife, Sarah, were attaching their happiness to their surroundings, they were having a bad day, because God calls them to leave it all behind.
- d. Moving is bad enough when you have a plan, but this?
- e. We're going to see that this is part of the plan to bless Abraham, but moving without a destination seems like an odd blessing, doesn't it?
- f. Again, we know that God wants us to be happy, but remember who Jesus called happy in Matthew 5?
- g. The poor, the mourners, the unsatisfied, the persecuted.
- h. Here, he promises to bless Abraham, but he had to leave it all to get it all! So will we.
- i. Let's visit Abraham a few chapters later in order to set up the next point
- j. In Genesis 15:5, God tells a childless man that he'll have more offspring than the stars - blessed!
- k. One more stop in Genesis 21 will complete the picture of a blessed man - Isaac is born (v. 2)

2. The biggest lie that we can buy

- a. So, Abraham left it all and appears to have gained it all.
- b. He has wealth, influence, and now he has a son when before he had none.
- c. Let's visit him in Genesis 22 and see if we can find the biggest lie that any of us in the church could buy
- d. In one of the most bizarre chapters of the Bible, God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son. THE son.
- e. You can read it for yourself, but let's pick it up at the very end after the angel stopped Abraham and let's see what God said.
- f. Verse 16 - The Lord is talking, and what He is saying is directly related to Abraham's NOT withholding his son
- g. Verses 17 and 18 contain an amazing promise that are the result of Abraham's choice
- h. What choice? The choice to NOT buy the greatest lie the enemy wants to sell us.
- i. That God just wants to bless you.
- j. Abraham could have chosen God's promise TO him over God's promise THROUGH him, but he didn't.
- k. So many of us do. We take the very things that God has blessed us with and we hold onto them.
- l. But when we do that, we miss the truth that Abraham remembered: we are blessed to be a blessing.
- m. Our Big Idea says it this way: **God doesn't just want to bless you; He wants to bless through you.**

3. Letting God play through

- a. Have you ever played Putt-Putt and gotten behind a big group that didn't let you play through?
- b. It's frustrating and it doesn't make you like that group at all, does it?

- c. That's what happens when we close our hands around the blessings and don't let them pass through us.
- d. We turn others off to the God who actually wants to bless them.
- e. It is CRITICAL that we learn to allow God to play through!
- f. If we don't, we'll cut ourselves off from the generous flow of God through us. (see Proverbs 21:13)
- g. Generosity is in God's DNA (John 3:16), and if we're filled with his DNA, it will be in us, too. (1 John 3:17)

The Landing

Let me tell you what will happen when we allow God's blessings to play through us: God will become known by our generosity.

2 Corinthians 9:11 says that your generosity through us results in praise to God

When we're generous, people are attracted to us. When we're stingy and grumpy, we're often alone.

Generosity influences culture.

The early church was generous in caring for widows, orphans and social outcasts, and that generosity caught the eye of people and many converted to faith as a direct result.

Theology won't mark us, but generosity will.

Story of Milton Hershey and how his generosity lives on

He knew that God's blessings weren't just for him, but were meant to go from him to others.

He knew that God doesn't just want to bless you; He wants to bless through you.

Let's pray.