

Title: Battles and Blessings

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 1:1-7; Matthew 4:1-10

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;

²To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

³To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

⁴To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

⁵A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

⁶To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

⁷The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

²And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

³And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

⁴But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

⁵Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

⁶And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their

hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

⁷ Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

⁸ Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

⁹ And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

¹⁰ Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Revelations 2:7 says, 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

'He who overcomes' is a continuing theological emphasis on battles and the need for perseverance on the part of the Christian.

Battles is the experiential evidence of a true conversion.

Jonathan Edwards said, 'Sure proof of election (salvation) is that one holds out to the end.'

W.T. Conner said, 'The salvation of a man elected to salvation is from all eternity certain in the mind and purpose of God, yet it is conditioned upon faith, and a faith that perseveres and conquers.'

The term 'paradise' is used in two senses. One it refers to the righteous part of Sheol/Hades. Two, it refers to God's presence, God's heavenly throne room; the third heaven. That is the ultimate blessing.

1. Learn to steer through battles and blessings

Proverbs 1:1-7 is written so that we'll know how to live well and right. It is a manual for living; for learning what's right and just and fair. It provides a practical wisdom for everyone -both the inexperienced and the experienced.

The purpose of Proverbs 1 is to enable you to steer your course rightly. Wisdom is the art of steering through the battles and blessings of life, and living skillfully in whatever conditions you find yourself in.

Wisdom starts with the 'fear of the Lord' which is the 'beginning of knowledge. The 'fear' of the Lord can be translated 'reverence' It means to respect and honor the Lord as God.

The most important lesson you can learn about life is to 'start with God'.

So firstly to steer through battles and blessings, you need to receive and come to Christ. That is wisdom.

Jesus also cry out in Wisdom when he was here on earth. And he gave a very powerful illustration concerning houses

Our lives are like these houses, yet their significance is for all eternity.

The most important feature of any house is its foundation.

You will face 'battles in life'. They will come in many forms; misunderstandings, disappointments, unfulfilled longings, doubts, trials, temptations, setbacks and satanic

attacks. Success, too can be a test. There is also pressure, suffering, sickness, bereavement, sorrow, trauma, tragedy, persecution and failure

The 'rain, torrents, winds, is used of battles in life.

Secondly you need to learn instruction.

Sometimes the same Hebrew word instruction is translated by the word, 'chasten'. To chasten means to actually give instruction. Actually many a times when you read the bible, you are chasten by the LORD and given instruction by the LORD

Thirdly it is judgment. Judgment means that you and I are to make judgments. It is the same as making a decision.

Fourthly fear the Lord. It is to reverence God.

2. Learn how Jesus dealt with battles and blessings

The best person to learn from when facing battles and blessings is Jesus. We can learn how he deal with battles and blessings.

Matthew 4:1 says, 'Next Jesus was taken into the wild by the Spirit for the Test.' The temptations start with the words, 'If you are the Son of God,' The devil is tempting Jesus to presume on his identity, and thus to test His Father. Sometimes the devil comes to us and say, 'If you are a Christian, then you are better than others.' Or 'If God forgives everything, it doesn't matter how you live.' We should learn to respond by following Jesus' example. Jesus faced three powerful temptations.

A. Instant gratification (economic).

See how Jesus dealt with the battle of instant gratification.

B. Testing God (religious)

See how Jesus dealt with the battle of testing God.

C. Wrong means (political)

See how Jesus dealt with the battle of wrong means.

To each temptation Jesus responds with a verse from Deuteronomy.

Life is not just a matter of defensively seeing of the attacks: there are also positive advances to make.

3. Learn how others have coped with battles and blessings.

We see in the creation passage in **Genesis 1-11** that the blessings outweigh the battles.

First, look at Creation. Human beings are created in the image of God.

Second, the Fall. Noah faced a major

Third, Redemption.

Fourth, Glorification.

Jesus is known as the BLESSED ONE WHO CAME IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. But He became the ACCURSED ONE on the cross of Calvary after He was hailed with HOSSANAS by the people on the Palm Sunday. If there is one who experienced BLESSINGS AND

BATTLE at the same time, it is Jesus. He became the ACCURSED ONE and the LOSER on

the cross so that today, if you are going through this two-way street of blessings and battle, Christ can give you His blessing and victory over whatever battle you are facing right now.

All He asks from you is to seek Him - the GREATER WISDOM. Christ is the embodiment of WISDOM in the book of Proverbs. You are not left alone fighting the battles of life. He has blessed you with the book of Proverbs so that you can have His Wisdom to confront the battles of your life.

Christ has won the battle at the cross. You are fighting now NOT FOR VICTORY but you are fighting FROM THE VICTORY Christ has won at the cross for you.

Christ became the ACCURSED AND THE DEFEATED ONE AT THE CROSS so that today

you can have blessings and victory in every battle you are facing.