

## How can we bless our generation?

### General Introduction:

+ We need to differentiate between two different types of input that we should receive from the Word of God; namely, “*message*” & “*meat*”.

When we read the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit stirs our hearts while reading, we understand that He wants to speak to us and deliver a message to us. So, we receive it in faith and obedience. I believe we are all familiar with this.

However, after that, we need to find the “*meat*” related to this “*message*”. Finding the meat requires studying the different truths included in the message, pray, and wait on God until we receive the fullness of the “*meat*” that we can receive during that time.

*The message* is the word that God wants us to receive and then deliver to the church, but, *the meat* is the other part that we need to receive for our spirits to nourish on so that we can mature more, receive deeper messages with more authority and with richer meat.

*If we are used to live on milk only, receiving meat would be a difficult thing!*

This time we are going to have some training in receiving the meat. We will apply this spiritual principle on our topic today.

+ In the course of the talk, we shall read many biblical references. Here, I want to highlight an important principle.

Usually, when I am delivering a talk and we come to reading the scriptural passages, people say “*oh, yea, we already know that; we are familiar with it; we want the talk/the message; we are familiar with the Word of God and we know it well; just tell us the first few words of the reference and we shall know it; we do not want to lose time in reading long scriptural passages*”. However, this should not be the case.

The early fathers stressed that when we are in a meeting, we should learn how to hear the Word of God differently; we need to receive it as a food given to us to help us be truly united –since we are eating the same food together for a purpose.

This is actually one of the things that help us be united and restored to God’s purposes. Thus, we need to learn how to listen attentively and ask the Holy Spirit to open our inner man to receive the Word of God, not only by our minds, but, by our inner ears.

## Readings:

### ➤ Genesis 12: 1 – 3

*Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

### ➤ Genesis 17: 1 – 7

*"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you."*

## Main Points:

### I. We should not make personal suggestions of how to bless our generation, but we need to search the scriptures to understand God's mind in this matter:

+ God's mind does not change. The pictures may vary and the application can take various forms according to the economy of the Holy Spirit, yet, the truths remain the same from one generation to the other.

+ God worked with Abraham and blessed him and Abraham became a blessing.

God's work with Abraham comprised 2 matters; namely, **"the promise"** (Genesis 12) & **"the covenant"** (Genesis 17).

#### The Promise:

We need to understand that when God gives a promise to a person, the promise is not only limited to that individual, but, it extends to every believer as long as this believer keeps and obeys the conditions related to the promise.

An example for this is:

God promised Adam to give him the ability to have children. God does not need to repeat this promise to every couple uniting in marriage; they can still bear children because of the promise that God gave to Adam.

The same applies to Abraham.

The promise of blessing to Abraham is called “*Abraham calling*”, according to the early writings. This promise can apply to every believer in both Testaments provided that they obey and keep the conditions related to that promise to Abraham. The Bible says that all believers are blessed through Abraham [Galatians 3:14]

Quite often we say that God will bless us as He had blessed Abraham. However, we sometimes forget this important principle that it is necessary to obey and fulfil the conditions related to the promise.

The main feature of Abraham’s calling is: “to be separate”, “set apart”, “leave” his nation and “come out” to follow God.

Thus, in order to be able to receive God’s promise of “*Abraham’s calling*” and to be real men of God according to that calling, we need to be “*set apart for the Lord*” and be “*separate from the world*”.

Remember that we are talking about how to bless our generation. Thus, we need to receive God’s blessing not to keep it for ourselves but to release it to the generation. To do so we have to follow the biblical principle of Abraham’s calling. When God called Abraham, He told him that He will bless him so that he can be a blessing.

We need to “*come out*” and be “*set apart*” for the Lord. Let us look at some references in this context in the New Testament.

*“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”* **2 Corinthians 6: 14 – 7: 1**

*“...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.” Titus 2: 14*

God wants to find “*His special people*”; they will be “*different*”, “*peculiar*” and possibly “*odd*” because they are “*set apart*” and they live a holy life.

+ In the old days, God set apart the tribe of Levi to watch and vigil over God’s Holies and God’s people. In the New Testament, the whole church is a spiritual tribe that is set apart for the Lord.

*“...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.” Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,” and “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” 1 Peter 2:5 – 10*

+ The lack of “*coming out*”, “*being separate*” and “*being set apart for the Lord*”, hinder the promise of blessing.

This is because this allows the Spirit of the world to come into our lives.

The Apostles warn us against this spirit of the world:

*“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” James 4:4*

*“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2:15 – 17*

The Covenant:

+ God wants **a man of faith** who knows the promises, respects their conditions and vigils on their fulfilment (i.e. seriously and sincerely looks out for their fulfilment) [by faith, not necessarily by sight].

Abraham is an example of that. He did not physically move from one place to the other to bless everybody, nor did he see all the promises fulfilled in his life time, but he rather lived the promises from a distance and held unto them and hence they were fulfilled.

Thus, Abraham became the Father of Faith, the father of all the believers!

**Hebrews 11:8-10, 13**

If we read the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob carefully, we will notice that:

- Abraham received the promises by holding unto them and then he passed them on to Isaac and Jacob.
- Isaac and Jacob inherited the promises and then the promises were fulfilled.

+ God also wants **a man of the covenant**. The man of faith knows how to hold onto the promises and practise his true faith that does not depend on sight. Similarly, a man of the covenant knows and realises the privileges of the covenant and its responsibilities.

Like in any partnership, *a covenant involves commitments*.

Christ has completed everything on our behalf; He completed everything as a man of the covenant after the Old Israel failed in it.

Though Christ has completed everything for our sake and we have actually entered into the covenant as parties in the covenant; **we still have responsibilities and commitments**.

#### **Examples of these responsibilities and commitments:**

a. Justification is free

This is absolutely true, yet we are still required to bear the fruits of righteousness.

*"...being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God"* **Philippians 1:11**

*"Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord."*  
**Ephesians 5:8 – 10**

According to the Greek language, "*justification*" and "*righteousness*" are synonyms.

***Jesus has justified us, but we still have to bear the fruits of this justification/righteousness.***

b. Grace is free, yet it is not cheap!

[This is the expression that **Bonheoffer**, the German theologian, used in talking about grace]

*“...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is short-sighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:4 – 11*

c. Christ's resurrection

*“...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places...” Ephesians 1:18-20*

+ It is clear in the above verses that Apostle Paul was struggling with the language synonyms trying to convey to us the richness, greatness and power of resurrection which are available for us; all this richness is for us and is directed towards us to work its effectiveness in us.

+ In order to practically understand the association of this with our responsibility to bless our generation, we need to remember Christ's encounter with His disciples on the evening of the resurrection day:

*“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them*

again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." **John 20:19-22**

Notice that the divine commission [*"I send you"*] is accompanied by the strengthening of the Holy Spirit [*"He breathed on them"*]. This is the commission that was given to the church of God on the day of resurrection.

### Summary:

In order to bless the generation, we need to hold unto the biblical principles.

God wants a man of faith and a man of the covenant: a man of faith who is trained to hold onto the promises and a man of the covenant who understands the responsibilities and commitments of the covenant.

These are the general biblical principles that we need to know; yet, we also need to know the economy of the Holy Spirit for our generation because each generation has its own economy. We need to search the scriptures to find this economy of the Holy Spirit.

## **II. Our generation is the generation of the End Times:**

+ In order to understand and realise our responsibility in blessing our generation and how to accomplish this, we need to bear in mind the distinct state of our generation. Our generation is, in fact, the generation of the End Times in which evil, confusion and lack of faith abound.

+ Let us, therefore, find out and try to understand God's economy for ministering in this era.

*"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."* **Malachi 4:5**

+ The initial fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi was seen in the person of John the Baptist;

*"He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."* **Luke 1:17**

Yet, the final and complete fulfilment of it is still to be witnessed in the End Times.

+ There is a need for this special anointing of power that characterised Elijah and the Baptist.

Both ministered to a sleeping and dying generation in spirit. They were able to shake and awaken them. Elijah restored Israel to worship God and the Baptist prepared/paved the way for Christ to come.

*What is the mystery of this anointing?*

### **It is the Power of Resurrection!**

Elijah and his disciple Elisha after him –who received the same anointing from Elijah’s spirit –raised up the dead. Elijah raised up the son of the widow of Sidon and Elisha raised up the Shunammite’s son. We do not hear any other story of raising up the dead, in the Old Testament, except these two.

It is well known, according to all books of theology, that Christ alone has the power of resurrection. This power of resurrection works backwards in the Old Testament and works forward towards its full manifestation in the New Testament.

+ Let us look at the characteristics and features of the ministry of Elijah and the Baptist to find out the lessons that are necessary for us and which we need to learn in order to bless our generation (there is usually some similarity between the 1<sup>st</sup> coming and 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ).

### **Elijah’s ministry:**

There are 3 main important principles in the ministry of Elijah that can reveal the power of his anointing.

#### **The 3 components of Elijah’s ministry are:**

- a. Battling in Spirit to deal with the evil powers that deceived Israel and caused them to go astray and worship Baal:

We all know quite well what Elijah did before starting his work and ministry. He never moved at random, as is the custom of today’s ministry. He battled against the power of the enemy by prayer first after which he moved forward to accomplish the required role. He completed the unseen battle in the spirit first before moving outward to do the visible work.

- b. Building the broken/ruined altar:

This story is written in 1Kings 18: 17 – 40 [Confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal].

This is the altar of Israel's offering according to God's plan; its fire –as we read in Exodus and Leviticus –should never be quenched. Similarly, we are required to build altars of worship in our houses, churches and ministries on which we offer the New Testament sacrifices on which the fire shall come and shall never be quenched.

*“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” Hebrews 13:15*

*“...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...” 1 Peter 2:5*

The apostles' referred to *“rebuilding the tabernacle of David which has fallen down”* and the effect of this on attracting the gentiles, the non believers, to faith in Christ:

*'After! this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things.’” Acts 15:16-17*

**c. Faith despite the apparent opposites:**

The story of Elijah expecting the heavy rain is written in 1Kings 18: 41 – 45.

This story reflects the type of faith that Elijah was exercising. The bible tells us that the sky was clear, yet, Elijah sent to the king telling him that there will be heavy rain soon. Elijah then started to pray and he sent his disciple to check the sky and the disciple said that the sky was clear.

If we were in Elijah's place, we would have probably said: *“oh, what is this; we are so confused; where are you Lord; what an embarrassing situation with the king!”*

Yet, Elijah did not say so; he continued to pray again and again with steadfast heart and faith. He continued to send his disciple to check the sky from time to time and there was nothing. He did this seven times; *“seven times”* signify that his faith was stretched to the end.

We may have struggled with the word *“faith”* in our spiritual walk. From what I have learned from the Lord, one has faith as much as he knows God. I would be able to say that so and so shall happen because I know “my friend”, my heavenly friend, God! If I live in close friendship with God, I would know His heart; I know what He would do and what He would not do without speaking much!

We need to know God and know Him closely and then faith will work in a different measure.

*Faith is effective to the extent that we know God.*

*“God, who...calls those things which do not exist as though they did...”*

**Romans 4:17**

The above were the main components of the anointing of Elijah and the lessons that we need to learn from Elijah to be really able to bless our generation on biblical bases. We may have the heart to bless; we may have the concern/burden for the generation, but, we need to know the biblical principles to work on strong foundations and follow sound bases that would never fail.

In such a way, we can receive the blessings from God and release them to the generation.

God desires to bless the generation and is searching for who would release the burden on His Heart; He needs instruments and channels. In the book of Hosea we read:

*“...My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred.” Hosea 11: 8c*

According to the Hebrew origin, the verse says that God’s mercies and compassion are boiling in His belly. These compassions want to be released, but there are no channels.

We are the channels!

### **The Baptist’s ministry:**

- A Vision
- A Message
- A sacrifice

#### **a. A vision:**

The Baptist was a voice crying in the wilderness. How difficult this could be? Who shall listen? Who will accept?

Can anyone accept being sent by God to the desert?!

Yet, the Baptist knew quite well that *the truth can never be lost; it can never die.*

*“Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways” Luke3:5 [ESV]*

Mountain = Pride and the ego;

Valley = uncleanness and lack of self control;

Crooked places = lack of righteousness and straightness in the heart and in speech; Rough places=diversity of theological ideas & different spiritual schools

**b. A message**

The Baptist's message was:

- “REPENTANCE”

A lot of dirt accumulates without being cleansed or dealt with.

*How can we receive God's power to serve and bless the generation while this dirt is accumulating and is not being dealt with?*

Repentance is a renewed message that cuts down the heart and transforms the whole life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Going back to the old paths (the lost apostolic inheritance of the church)

*“Thus says the Lord: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'" Jeremiah 6:16*

**c. A sacrifice:**

John the Baptist was a living sacrifice, as is well known about his life.

*“My life is continually in my hand...” Psalm 119:109*

Yet, it is a privilege:

*“...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death...” Philippians 3:10*

*“For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake...” Philippians 1:29*

**The same principle worked in the life of Apostle Paul:**

*“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24*

*“As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Romans 8:36*

But let us remember the motivation behind all this which is Christ’s love:

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Romans 8:35*

And let us remember His victorious promise:

*“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.” Romans 8:37*

Amen

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