



*“You are blest when you stay on course, walking
steadily on the road revealed by God”*

Psalm 119:1.

Discovering God’s Blessings

Read: Mark 9:38-48

In the gospel we hear Christ admonish his disciples for prohibiting a man who did not belong to their company from performing miracles. Using rather graphic language, he draws their attention to the inherent danger of misplaced priorities.

The line, “Whoever is not against us is for us”, always stands out in my mind. I often think it could be rephrased as, “*whatever* is not against us is for us”. In other words, the things in my life that draw me closer to God should be fostered and those things that make me lose sight of God should be re-evaluated, and, if necessary, removed. This is precisely Jesus’ point.

Today people place their focus on materialism rather than God, the root of which can be traced to financial means. God warns us that wealth can be treacherous (Hab. 2:5), and if we are set upon accumulating it we will never be satisfied (Eccl. 5:10). That’s why 1 Timothy 6:10 warns us that, “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil”. Not that money itself is evil but the misplaced love of money can cause us to place our priorities on things that do not serve God. Money can be a blessing or a curse.

So what are we supposed to do? The gospel gives us a clue. Recognize and prioritize what is important. How does this apply to money? In the gospel Jesus says that those who are for him will be blessed. If you are wise with your money, using it for God’s purposes, God will “bless all the works of your hands” (Deut. 28:12). Being wise with our money means we must trust God by giving back a tenth of what he has given us (Gen. 28:22).

Now this might seem rather lofty and impossible for some people. We are all at different stages in life, but God does not want money to be a “stumbling block” to our spiritual growth. That’s why God encourages us to “bring the whole tithe into the storehouse...try me in this, says the Lord of hosts: Shall I not open for you the floodgates of heaven, to pour down blessing upon you without measure?” (Malachi 3:8b-10). Notice that God says, “try me in this”, almost like he’s daring us. God is never outdone when it comes to generosity. If we trust him, he will abundantly bless us. God uses tithing to free our hearts so that we can make him a priority in all we do. When we give financially to God, he promises us that we will not “lose the reward”.