

Reading: Numbers 22:7-18

*“Though Balak were to give me a palace full of silver and gold,
I would not go beyond the Word of the Lord my God” (Num 22:18)*

No doubt obedience is a condition to receive God’s blessing. But we don’t obey God with the primary motive of wanting to be blessed by Him. This is one of the gross errors at the root of the modern health and wealth gospel. The purest motive of obedience to God must be to please Him. I may or may not be blessed; but God must be pleased. We obey Him because He is Lord! Not for any other reason! This is the logic of the first of the Ten Commandments: “I am the Lord your God!” (Ex 20:2a).

We repeatedly turn to Abraham to learn obedience. He was abundantly enjoying the earthly blessings in Ur. But to him obeying God was more important than holding on to the comforts of a settled life. Isaac was a blessing Abraham had longed for, for many many years. But again obeying God was more important to him than holding the cherished blessing tight against his bosom (Heb 11:8,9,17,18).

It is God who gives us fields, flocks and families. They are His blessings. But how disappointed is He when these blessings become barriers for us to obey His missionary call! The endowments become excuses! (Lk 14:18-20). While talking to prospective missionary candidates, I have found that most of their excuses fall into one of these three. Is not the Blesser more important than the blessings? We also present a clever argument for our disobedience. “I will use these blessings to support God’s work!” This is what King Saul said when Prophet Samuel cornered him (1 Sam 15:15). Beloved, God first of all wants YOU, not yours!

God in His mercy may continue to bless us even if we do not obey Him. God’s blessings are not endorsements of our ways. Beware of being blinded by blessings!

We must also learn to distinguish between the blessings of obedience and the benefits of disobedience. If we disobey the laws of the government and cheat the tax department, our savings will mount up. Tithing and offering from such dishonest gains is abominable to God (Rom 13:1-7). The devil is after us with his attractive offers. They are ours if only we can make some compromises. A promise of promotion by the boss if only we would bribe or write a false account. A job or a scholarship if only we would state a small lie in the application form. Prophet Balaam’s reply to King Balak’s fabulous offer is today’s memory text. It’s a timeless truth!

MAY 20

PRAYER

Subject: Obedience

Reading: Num 22:7-18

Memorising: Num 22:18

Father God,

We worship You as the Supreme Blessor. You are the Giver of all good gifts. We thank You for the physical and material blessings You shower on us. But Lord, many times, these blessings blur our spiritual vision. We confess that we get so overoccupied with them that we begin to idolize the blessings rather than worshipping You the Blessor. Forgive us, O Lord, this carnality of our fallen nature.

Thank You, O Lord, for keeping before us patriarchs like Abraham as examples of obedience. It thrills us to realize that with no Bible in his hand, he chose to implicitly obey You forsaking even the blessings You had bestowed on him. Dear Father, You have made him the father of all of us believers. Help us to follow him as his children of promise.

Father God, we thank You for presenting before us Your Son as the perfect pattern of obedience. He never ever disobeyed You though obedience at every step meant suffering for Him. Deliver us, O Lord, from our addiction to comforts which makes obedience to Your call difficult. Help us consider all Your blessings as enablement for delightful obedience.

Father God, we thank You for the blessings of fields, flocks and families. Sorry Lord, many times these endowments become our excuses for disobedience or delayed obedience. For several of us these blessings have become barriers to obey Your missionary call. Give us the spirit of obedience that characterized the pioneer Missionaries like Adoniram Judson, David Livingstone, Hudson Taylor, Mary Slessor, Thomas Walker and William Carey. Stir up our youngsters, O Lord, to throw away the nets and forsake the boats to jump into mission fields when called.

Dear Lord, when obedience becomes costly, we slow down in our spiritual race. We pray that You pump fresh energy into our faltering feet, weak hands and feeble knees. Strengthen us again, O Lord, through another filling of Your Holy Spirit. Let obedience to You become the way of life for us. Keep our children from the spirit of disobedience that dominates the present age. Let all Your blessing become boosters rather than barriers for obeying You in everything.

In the Name of Jesus our Forerunner, we pray! Amen!

*(Jas 1:17; Heb 5:8-10; 10:5-7; 11:8,9,17,18,19; 12:12,13; Gal 3:7-9;
Rom 4:16-18; Lk 5:11; 14:18-20; Eph 2:1-3)*