

Curses Resulting from Disobedience

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Last two Sundays ago, i.e., July 24, 2011, I shared with you a lesson titled “Blessings Resulting from Obedience” or “Blessings on Obedience.” I shared with you the promises of God to His obedient servants as recorded in Deuteronomy 28:1-14. In these few verses, God through Moses spelled out what kinds of blessings an obedient servant can receive from God. Today, let us tackle the opposite of blessings, i.e., curses. If obedience results to blessings, disobedience results to curses. Today, we will just continue studying Deuteronomy 28. Again, we will use the the Old Testament because it was recorded for our learning (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:6;11). This means that even if we are under the New Testament, we can learn good principles from the great teachings found in the Old Testament.

Let us study Deuteronomy 28:15-68. I hope we have observed that God spelled out more curses than blessings in Deuteronomy 28. What does this mean? I believe this means that God really hates disobedience. That is why He spelled out more curses than blessings. He wants to punish severely the disobedient. Let us be reminded that this is intended for the Israelites to know. Remember that this passage of Scriptures is there for us to learn how God blesses the obedient and curses the disobedient.

Verse 15 starts by saying that if we do not obey the voice of the LORD our God, to **observe CAREFULLY ALL** His commandments and His statutes, then curses will come upon us and overtake us. Verses 16-19 are exactly opposite of verses 3-6. But take note that God made the 4th set of blessings as the 2nd set of curses (verses 5 and 17). It appears that God emphasizes food as the 2nd thing that God curses. Remember we like food a lot.

Brethren, there are so many curses spelled out by God as we can read from the number of verses devoted to curses compared with the number of verses devoted to blessings. We cannot discuss all of them today. You just read them when you are back home today. I will just focus on a few of the curses that we can commonly see almost everyday.

Verse 21 mentions the plague that will cling to God’s people. It is not specified, but we know that plague is undesirable. But verse 22 seems to spell out what are included in this plague. It says, “***The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.***”¹ We may not be able to understand all of these, but some of them are very familiar to us and sometimes happen to us. What are they? We have fever, inflammation (all the *-itis* like *arthritis*, *tonsilitis*, *appendicitis*, *meningitis*, etc.), and severe burning fever. One way or another we have experience these kinds of illness. The LORD added another list as described in verse 27, which says, “***The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed.***” Here the list includes boils, tumors, scab, and itch that cannot be healed. Verse 35 adds, “***The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.***”

The LORD reiterated with increase degree of punishment for people who do not carefully observe the words of God (verse 58). Verse 59 records, “***then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues-great and prolonged plagues-and serious and prolonged sicknesses.***” Here it mentions extraordinary plagues, great and prolonged plagues, and serious and prolong sicknesses. Then the LORD added more sickness as we can read in verse 61, “***Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in this Book of the Law, will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed.***” This may include HIV, AIDS, etc.

¹ All Scripture quotations were taken from the New King James Version of the Bible.

So all these verses tell us that God inflicts different kinds of illness to the disobedient people. I single out sickness from among the different curses that God gives to the disobedient people because of the following reasons:

⬆ **This is the most undesirable of all.**

Who wants to get sick among us? Who is very happy to announce that he/she is sick?

⬆ **This is one of the causes for headaches.**

Headaches happen when you try to figure out where to get money for hospitalization. Who has not scratched his/her head in thinking where to get the money for hospitalization for the sick person? If you had someone who was sick, but you did not worry about money, then you must be rich.

⬆ **This is the cause for absences from our work, class, or church assembly.**

Who has not been absent because of sickness? But have we noticed that it is easy to be absent from the church assembly than from our work or class when we are sick. But if we understand that God is in the midst of our church assembly, and God is the source of sicknesses, then I believe we have to make the other way around. If you came to the church assembly despite your illness, I am sure God was very happy with you. It was not in vain!

Let me share this with you. For almost 24 years of being a Christian (*I will be 24 this September*), I cannot remember that I was absent from church assembly because I was sick. Not that I did not get sick sometimes on Sundays, but I did not make it as my excuse for being absent. If I am sick, the more that I have to stay with God in the church because He is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the King of kings, and the Doctor of doctors. He is the great physician or healer. I will discuss later that there is another source of sickness. So if I will make sickness as my excuse, he will continue to make me sick so that I cannot go to church on Sundays.

I was not a church-goer before I became a Christian, but after my baptism, I made it a point not to miss the assembly. I missed it in Japan because of the distance. We tried once by taking the earliest bus, and we arrived around 11:30 a.m., when the assembly was about to end. Even when I traveled, like when I went to Vienna, I surfed the net for the church worship place. The church just moved to a new location when I arrived at the old location. But I managed to find it and be there ahead of the regular church members. So I believe if our heart is healthy, even sickness cannot become an excuse for missing the assembly.

I had two occasions wherein I missed the assembly. One was last June 1, 2006 when we had the faculty outing in Sta. Fe in Bantayan Island. But I baptized sister Jannette Cabardo during that time. The other one was when we were in Guimaras sometime in April 2009. We were enjoying the beach and boating because the sea was very calm. But suddenly the sea was very rough to the extent that the pump boat engine stopped. We were in a very dangerous situation because the rocks nearby, where we would be possibly tossed by the waves, were very rough and sharp that could make us die when we hit them. So it was a bad experience on a Sunday away from the church assembly.

Brethren, many people realize the wrongs that they have done only when they are already sick. I think we are familiar with the government warning that says, "Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health." Who heeds this warning? It falls on deaf ears! People still keep on smoking. When will they stop? Normally, they stop when they already have cancers. That is why the saying is true, which says, "Cancer kills smoking." But do we have to wait for cancers or other types of illness to afflict us before we stop our vices? Do we have to wait for sickness to cling to us before we obey God?

Brethren, another source of sickness is Satan. The faithful Job (Job 1:1) suffered a lot because of Satan. He wanted Job to curse God and be destroyed. First, he challenged God that He take away Job's material possession because he believed that Job would surely curse God after doing it (Job 1:6-12). After Satan took all of Job's possession including family members, Job was still faithful to God. In fact, Job still worshiped God despite the loss (Job 1:20). In Job 1:21, Job said, ***"Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."*** The following verse tells us that Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong (Job 1:22). How about us? If it was done to us, do we think we can do the same? Do we still bless the name of the LORD and worship Him?

Then Satan challenged God again. This time Satan wanted to destroy Job by inflicting illnesses to Job (Job 2:1-6). Then Satan struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head (Job 2:7). In Job 2:9, Job's wife now challenged him and said, ***"Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"*** In Job 2:10, Job replied, ***"You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?"*** The last part of the verse says, ***"In all this Job did not sin with his lips."*** In the end, Job was blessed by God more than his beginning (Job 42:12-16). How about us? If we get sick do we forsake God? Can we still come to God and worship Him? Can we get more blessings or curses after we get sick? Or are we forever lost after getting sickness?

Brethren, I hope whatever happens we should continue to be faithful to God, because in the end God is able to bless us even more. If we give up, we will be the loser. Satan is the sure winner. Let us remember that our God is an omnipotent God. He can inflict us with illnesses if we disobey Him and heal us if we obey Him. If we are sick, let us contemplate on what we have done. If we have not done anything that displeases God, maybe Satan is trying to destroy us. But God is able to help us win if we allow Him to help us win. 1 Peter 5:6-9 has good pieces of advice to ward off the devil. It says, ***"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."*** James 4:7 tells us, ***"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."***

Brethren, if we are obedient to God and faithful to Him, we should not worry about sickness and other evil things. God is able to protect us from all these things. So to close this, let me read to you Psalms 91:1-11, ***"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.' Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day, Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place, No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways."***

Thank you very much. May God bless us all as we strive to diligently obey His words by observing them carefully!

Preached: August 7, 2011
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Occasion: Morning worship