

It Is Written

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Why The Righteous Do Not Beg

By Andy Sochor

The psalmist had an interesting observation regarding the state of the righteous and how they were blessed by God.

"I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his descendants begging bread" (Psalm 37:25).

This is not to be interpreted as an absolute statement. There may be times when godly people are in such dire straits that they have no other option than to beg. Lazarus was one example of this. We know he was righteous because when he died he was "carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom" to enjoy a place of paradise (Luke 16:22). Yet during life, he was "a poor man...covered with sores" who longed "to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table" (Luke 16:20-21). After he died, because he was righteous, he was "comforted" in a place of paradise (Luke 16:25).

Although there are exceptions, generally speaking, those who are righteous will be far less likely to have to beg than others. Even now when God no longer operates miraculously as He did during Bible times, the psalmist's statement is generally true. Why is that? There are several reasons we can find in the Scriptures that explain why the righteous, in general, do not beg.

God Richly Blesses Us

Paul told Timothy that God "richly supplies us with all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17). James wrote, "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). God has created a self-sustaining world with "rains from heaven and fruitful seasons" which are able to satisfy our "hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17).

However, even though these blessings have been given in abundance, it is possible to squander them. The prodigal son in Jesus' parable did this. After receiving half of his father's wealth, "he squandered his estate with loose living [and] spent everything," then became "impoverished" (Luke 15:13-14). He was not living righteously. Those who are righteous do not only receive blessings (which all men do to some degree), they follow the instructions and principles that are found in God's word.

The word of God contains certain instructions and principles that, when followed, will help keep us from being in a position of needing to beg. So let us notice some things that the righteous will be and will do that help keep them from needing to beg from others.

The Righteous Will Be Hardworking

The wise man said, "Laziness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle man will suffer hunger" (Proverbs 19:15). He also said, "The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, so he begs during the harvest and has nothing" (Proverbs 20:4). If one refuses to work, he can expect to find himself in a position of poverty and begging from others in order to survive. The righteous man, however, will be hardworking in order to provide for himself (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Paul gave this instruction to the brethren in Thessalonica: "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need" (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12).

The Righteous Will Be Good Stewards

Before “he came to his senses,” the prodigal son “squandered his estate with loose living” (Luke 15:13, 17). In the parable of the talents, Jesus criticized the one-talent man for not using his resources wisely (Matthew 25:24-28). The wise man said, “Know well the condition of your flocks, and pay attention to your herds” (Proverbs 27:23). The lesson there is that we must not neglect our blessings, but rather use them properly.

The Righteous Will Be Content

Many today beg from others (parents, friends, strangers, the government, etc.), not because they are truly in need, but because they do not have what they want. We must have the attitude of Paul who “learned to be content in whatever circumstances” he found himself (Philippians 4:11). Paul told Timothy, “If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content” (1 Timothy 6:8). Yet how many people cannot find contentment, even though they possess far more than just these basic necessities? The righteous will be content with these basic necessities, even if others around them have far more wealth in terms of this world’s goods.

The Righteous Will Associate with Other Righteous People

This is important. A righteous person may work hard, try to be a good steward, learn contentment, and still – due to circumstances beyond his control – find himself in need of help from others. Those who are righteous, generally, will have others to whom they can turn because they have placed a priority on developing and maintaining relationships between their family and their brethren in Christ (Matthew 15:4-6; Acts 2:46; Hebrews 10:24-25). When one surrounds himself with righteous people, he is associating with those who are “generous and ready to share” (1 Timothy 6:18), and seek to “do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith” (Galatians 6:10).

Conclusion

God is not going to miraculously provide food, clothing, and shelter for those who serve Him today. Yet Jesus said, “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). If we put spiritual things first, trust in God, and do what we are capable of doing, we will be far better off than one who rejects God and is unwilling to work.

The Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Baptism

By Jonathan Glaesemann

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4). In this passage, we notice three facts about what happens to us when we are baptized.

First, we are buried with Christ in the waters of baptism. In this burial, we take the old man of sin and bury him, becoming submissive and obedient to the authority of Christ.

Secondly, we become dead to sin. This means that when the old man of sin is buried in the waters of baptism, he is destroyed and we become dead to sin. Therefore all of our sins no longer live in us; our slate is wiped clean.

Finally, we are resurrected, arising out of the waters of baptism, having become a new person. The old man of sin is completely gone and in his place is the new man. At this point the person who is baptized has a new beginning.

Sadly, too many people choose to put the old man of sin right back on again and live as though nothing had happened. The significance of becoming a new person is that you have a new purpose or a new goal in life. That goal is not to put the old man back on after you have been made anew, but to start over and live a godly life so that it can truly be said that you were born again (John 3:3, 5).