

Get In The Game

Week 2 Devotional

For me, this week's devotional would have worked equally well in our last message series, "Frequently Asked Questions." Because when I read through the scripture for this week I was reminded of one of my "Frequently Asked Questions". That is, if God's love is unconditional, why are there so many conditions on His (our) blessings? The short answer, because He's God and I'm (you're) not. The right answer, and yes, it is repetitive, is because He loves us unconditionally.

Deuteronomy 5:33 ESV

You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess.

Exodus 19:5 ESV

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;

Job 36:1 ESV

If they listen and serve him, they complete their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasantness.

These are the scriptures I referred to earlier. They are all examples of God's conditional blessings. And as much as anything, God wants us to receive them all. But as I said earlier, there are conditions, or maybe I should say, there is a condition. That condition is our obedience. God wants to bless us, but our obedience to Him is required. And that creates a problem. Because while God places these blessings in our path, to serve as guardrails to guide us to Him, there are forks in the trail created by our "free will" that want to pull us away. So, at some point along the trail, there will be a choice to make. Do we take the path that leads to our wants, our desires? Or do we take the path that leads to the blessings of a God who loves us without condition? Do we take the way that fulfills our humanity? Or do we take the way that leads to spiritual fulfillment...that leads us to God? Or in terms of this week's message, do we take the path that "puts us in the game?"

So, what does it matter if I am “in the game”? Just think back to last week’s message from Revelation and the church in Laodicea. This is a church that, in its early days, was most likely a dynamic, on-fire, church, but it grew to become lifeless, backslidden, and complacent. It became a church that had no need for the blessings of God. The problem with that, at some point, God really had no need for them. Jesus goes as far as saying, if you are going to be like lukewarm water, I would just assume spit you out of my mouth (my translation). Those choices we must make are suddenly more dire. They are not just choices about receiving a blessing, or not. They are choices that leads to life, or not. But the good news, we follow a God that loves us without condition. But we also follow a God that loves so much that it pains Him to watch us flounder our way through life, without His guidance, without His conditions. But we must choose to receive it. I’ve probably used this before, but I remember this quote from a Max Lucado book. In it he said, “God loves you just the way you are, but he also loves you so much that he doesn’t want you to stay that way (paraphrased).” My prayer is that we don’t.