

Myth number eight God Brings Good Luck

Psalms 73:25-26

Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Jesus promised salvation and eternity not the lottery ticket. When we count the cost we will not be blown away by the trial.

Most of us got the idea that God will always give good fortune to His followers from the first moment of conversion. The Four Spiritual Laws, which have been used to great effect in bringing people to a saving knowledge of Jesus, have too often been misread.

Law 1 reads, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." **John 3:16**, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." and John 10:10b, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." are quoted. However, John 10:10a, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;" is necessary for the right context to understand John 10:10b. Jesus is not talking about wealth and wellness but about salvation from the thief who would steal your eternal life.

The bible is filled with examples of people for whom faith in God led to difficulty, hard choices, loss of property, family, health and even life. I received the following email from my nephew David Markey who, along with his wife, and sisters and their husbands and children are missionaries in Kyrgyzstan where ethnic violence has become the norm.

Please be praying for the church here. At about 1:00 in the morning four men climbed over the fence and broke into the back door. A woman, Valya, who was there was badly beaten, tied up with tape, and then beaten more when very little money was found. The rooms were trashed, the safe was demolished, and some music equipment, a computer, and other things were taken.

Please pray also that we will have wisdom in knowing how to secure the church building. There are several outreaches planned in the coming weeks, one in the region surrounding the church, and another in Osh (the city in southern Kyrgyzstan that just suffered from so much violence a couple of weeks ago), it seems like Satan is trying to sneak in and destroy, pray that he won't have any foothold in our church.

Thank you so much for your prayers. Blessings, David & Deborah Markey

Now Valya – was not defending the faith. She was just holding down a job to pay the bills. The thugs who violated her were not attacking the faith – they just wanted something for nothing and violence seemed the appropriate actions. Where was God? Centuries ago a composer of sacred music asked the same question so take out your Bibles and sermon notes and we will learn together the dangers of this latest myth.

If God is God why do the rebellious succeed & the loyal fail?

Psalm 73:1-12

Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.

But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold.

For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong.

They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills.

Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence.

From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits.

They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression.
 Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth.
 Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance.
 They say, "How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge?"
 This is what the wicked are like— always carefree, they increase in wealth.

Only a fool takes on God but:

The first story in the bible after the Fall is a bad guy killing a good guy and mostly getting away with it.

When we believe God will punish the wicked like Cain and even Job's wife – after all, we would – then Satan has us where he wants us. We are now looking for a magician and not God. We are looking for a genie not a savior. We are more satisfied with the 80 years on earth than the eternal life after this finite life.

Avoid Eddie Haskell faith

Psalm 73:13-16

Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been plagued; I have been punished every morning. If I had said, "I will speak thus," I would have betrayed your children.

You know the type even if you don't know Eddie Haskell. He treats the parents, boss, coach, chairman pleasantly in their presence and then berates them and breaks all the rules when not with them. He or she assumes they are stupid. Carefully observing some of the ritual signs of religion without living according to the standards or practicing all the actions is a way of saying God is stupid – I know better – but just in case I will bend a knee to religion.

The foul mouthed coach who prays before the game. The adulteress with a cross on a necklace. The ethically challenged business man with a fish on his business card. The teenager with a purity ring on his or her hand and condoms in their pocket. The reckless driver who cries, "God help me" when pulled over or "praise God" when the policeman does not show up for the hearing. They all believe they can play God for a fool.

But the Israelites found he was not so easily fooled and got a free trip to Babylon to prove it. We have a story of warning in **Revelation 3:14-22**

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my

Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

This is in will. Wealth cannot buy happiness and cannot make us healthy body or my. He cannot offer comfort or fellowship that certainly cannot offer forgiveness. If all that a person has in life is money they are much poorer than those who have no money but have God.

They also prided themselves on their clothing trade. Their garments were famous all over the world and the will of the sheep of Laodicea was a luxury article. Jesus calls them naked. Nakedness was ashamed in the ancient world. Enemies were stripped naked. Opponents who were defeated were paraded naked. And so to receive special clothing was an honor. Remember the prodigal son on his return was given the best robe. When Jesus urges them to buy white raiment his encouraging them to take upon themselves the grace of God to cleanse them.

They prided themselves as famous for their eyes set of. I said hurts when it is applied and the people of Laodicea had no wish to see themselves as they really were. But the beginning of all true understanding begins with seeing ourselves as we are.

Being with God is not a matter of luck it is a matter of discipline. God's word holds us to what is right and what is good so that we do not become poor or naked or blind.

Discipline requires commitment. And the one thing that God will not tolerate his mediocrity. There is no neutrality in our relationship with Christ.

For God's goodness & provision look at the cross & heaven respectively

Psalm 73:17-24

When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.

Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin.

How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!

As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.

When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered,

I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you.

Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.

You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

Good News is still Good News

Psalm 73:25-28

Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.

But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.

Just because God does not promise good fortune and earthly success does not mean we look forward to a life of bad fortune and failure. Properly lived Christianity brings life into perspective so we see and appreciate the good and avoid the outcomes of bad

choices. We must, however, be ready to accept the truth that our peace is based on our final destination and not on the address of our house.

In fact the address for our house could spell danger. Here in Southern California we experience earthquakes from time to time. It just comes with the territory. We do not live in fear but we do take appropriate precautions. So it is that the consequences of choosing Christ are different for us in SoCal than for my nieces and nephews in Bishkek, or the believers in Iran or Saudi Arabia.

Open Doors Ministry: <http://www.opendoorsusa.org/content/view/432/>

International Christian Concern: http://www.persecution.org/suffering/country_info.php

To proclaim that following Jesus should make this life easier or better is a huge mistake. The Kings of Kings is not a good luck charm.

My Next Steps for Today are:

To Memorize Psalms 73:25-26

Stop blaming God for the results of sin in this world and/or my life.

Begin to use prayer as a conversation with my Lord rather than a hotline for requests.

To pray for the people in persecuted countries at least once a week.