

#24 Northside Natter

2 September 2020

Today I'm looking at **LUCK**.

We have all felt lucky at one time or another: lucky to be alive, lucky to have the family we were given; lucky to have a great job; lucky to have stumbled across a faithful church; lucky to have won the meat tray in a raffle, lucky to have made it home in a dodgy car; lucky to have avoided hail damage, lucky, lucky, lucky.

What is luck? According to the dictionary, it's the chance happening of fortunate or adverse events; good fortune or prosperity; or one's personal fate or lot in life.

The word luck is not used in the bible, instead it's related as chance. A chance happening can also be good (fortuitous) or bad. But in modern times, chance doesn't seem to have the same ring about it as luck does.

I have another definition for luck: **Labouring Under Correct Knowledge** leading to blessings. I like that definition better.

Matthew 5:42-45

*⁴²Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.
⁴³Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy.
⁴⁴But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you;
⁴⁵That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

If verse 45 is anything to go by, what we might call a lucky happenstance is actually something God put in place, even to the evil and unjust on the earth. (*Of course, we could say this verse means much more than that especially if we consider the sun to be Jesus and the rain to be the Spirit*). Our doing good to everyone, regardless of their evil or hate, can be the very thing that turns them to God. Our doing good clearly shows to them who our father is.

Proverbs 25:22 *For so will you heap coals of fire on his head and the Lord will reward you.*

Hang on, we were just told to love our enemies and those that hate us. What's going on? Not setting people on fire! I think it's more about leaving them thinking of the kindness they have undeservedly received from you and having it play on their minds until it is burned into their memory and that memory then convicts them of their sins. With any luck, they will repent of their evil and turn to God. Better result than setting them on fire.

Does it ever feel like the evil and unjust get way too much of a good thing – way too lucky?

Psalms 37:1-2 *Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity, ²for they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb.*

It's not our business. God will bless whom he will bless.

We know that all Earthlings are God's creation. We know that God withholds punishment of the evil and unjust until judgement day. We know that God wants all to come to salvation. We know too that this won't happen, but God is about giving people time, many chances and a taste of his goodness and mercy. He's about finding ways to encourage them to turn around and listen to him. He's about repentance and salvation. Everyone has equal opportunity to access eternal life and to experience his compassion and generosity. Earthlings are his creation and he can decide what he will or will not do to or for them.

Just think about this: what the stubborn evil and unjust get in their lifetime is all they'll ever have. For them, there is no more. For them, death is eternal. For them, they'll never know God, peace, mercy, forgiveness or unconditional love. For them, that's sad.

God tells us that he will continue to rain on the just and the unjust and give good things to the evil and the good. He wants us to turn our thinking around and do the same. Hate your enemy? Love your enemy – but not the things they do. Hate the wickedness and evil in this world, but do good to those that practice these things because, as Jesus said from the cross, they know not what they do. If they had one iota of understanding between them, they might turn and repent and accept God as their father. You were given the opportunity, or lucky happenstance, to do just that so why not extend it to others?

So, what is labouring under correct knowledge. How do we do that?

2 Timothy 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

If we study the word of God, we will come to know our father. I'm not talking about reading the bible here and there in dribs and drabs. I'm talking about actually methodically delving into the old and new testament books and really studying them to understand what is behind them culturally, historically and behaviourally. Also learning the lessons that they hold, getting to know the difference between the covenants that were made and understanding why God did things the way he did.

Of course, while we are all called to study the word of God, the depth of study will depend on our vocation in the church. Those who are willing will teach others what the scriptures contain and explain them plainly to expand the person's understanding. This is why we have regular meetings. This is why no-one can go it alone and expect to understand it all. We have the gift of discernment and can judge the things we hear and are told, and we can check them out in the scriptures for ourselves. It is our duty to do so especially when we hear something new.

Have you ever noticed that in a teaching setting, we can learn more than by studying at home by ourselves? Do you know why that is? It's because we have a one-eyed view of what we take in. Each person's perception is different from the other. When we gather in groups and openly discuss what we study, we can hear things that we failed to notice. Does this mean the other person is smarter than us? No. It just means that they read it in a different light, and perhaps they have prior knowledge and experience that helps them to do so. We may even be astounded to find that our own comprehension of what we read, which to us seems simple and logical, informs everyone else of what *they* missed. Our

uniqueness is what makes each and everyone of us so vital in our church, and to the work of the Lord.

Labouring under correct knowledge makes us very blessed with such good fortune that we must share it with others. We show ourselves approved and those round about us know that we are children of God. Yes, we have trials and tribulations but we handle them a lot better than we would without the Lord in our lives. We know and understand the promises of God and we rely on and rest in those promises to get us through. Our testimony shines from us in the way we live our lives and in the words we speak and the things we do. Let's go share some blessings today.

That's it from me. Thank you for your continued support, participation, and prayer. God bless you all brothers and sisters.