

V.O.C. – October 2018

October 7, 2018: Our blessings and God! [Prov. 10:22]

Dear Listeners,

At this time of the year we celebrate *Thanksgiving Day*. That's still a national holiday. All Canadians give thanks for harvest and labour, for food and drink, for peace and prosperity, and for all the blessings we enjoy in our life in our beautiful country. We give thanks, but *to whom?* We may no longer be a *Christian* nation, really, but still we give thanks to God, the giver of all good! We might even know the song, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!" We thank God for favourable weather this past growing season. We thank God for a growing economy. We thank God for health and strength, for jobs, contracts, employment, etc. We thank God for living in a *rich* country!

In this meditation on The Voice of the Church, dear listeners, I would like to reflect on this word "*blessing*," and on its true meaning. When is our health, our job, our crop, our life *blessed* truly? What is it that makes us *rich* truly? The answer to those questions I would like to share with you in the light of a *proverb* in the Book of Proverbs that King Solomon left us. In Proverbs 10:22 we read, "The blessing of the LORD makes us rich, and toil adds nothing to it." A proverb is like a *motto* for a certain aspect of life, and the rest of the Bible is needed to know its message. Proverbs are like *secrets* that are pondered in our heart; they're *riddles* that must be considered over and over to come to the true wisdom in it.

Who are the people that will *benefit* from such wisdom? People who want to live for *God*, who fears the LORD. The LORD is a special Name of God that's used by people who have a special *relationship* with God. They believe in God; they live for God; they trust in God. Then the LORD is the God who tells them: I am there for you! I am with you always and will be! Such people share in the *wisdom* of God's Word, also in the wisdom expressed in this proverb. "The blessing of the LORD makes rich and toil adds nothing to it." These are people, dear listeners, who know from experience how true this is. They may be people who learned the hard way, or even hit rock bottom. O sure, they gave themselves to their work; worked hard, did everything they could to get rich, to get ahead. What *benefit* did it give them though? They ran stuck in their business, in their inability to control the outcome; due to the brokenness of life, due to illness, a disease, a disaster, and economic depression, they lost what they had. They came to experience that there is a *curse* on life and labour in this world in and of itself.

Now *these* people, dear listeners, learned that the riches of this *world* won't last, aren't safe. Thus they start looking for *true* riches, lasting riches. Then they will find it in this *wisdom* of God's Word! You will have to be with God for that: the blessing of the LORD makes rich! No, then Solomon isn't speaking about spiritual riches or so; he's talking about growth and prosperity, harvest and labour, money and profit! You will receive that *only* through the blessing of the LORD, and in no other way! You won't get it by toiling, by saving, by success, by a rich father, by a big inheritance, by great intelligence, by a pretty face, not even by the gift of ten talents. The blessing of the LORD makes

rich! How come? Isn't it true that lots of people got rich by hard work, smart business sense, a good saving- and investment strategy? True, there are lots of people who did. Then this proverb says: that's not richness! What Solomon is speaking about is for a special kind of people only: those who *fear* the LORD, those who find their *life* in Him and in His Son Jesus Christ (who is more than Solomon)!

Believers, dear listeners, are people who have come to see the *truth*, the *true reality* in this world. They have come to *know God*; they have learned to live with a deep respect for God, who made heaven and earth and who upholds all things by His hand. They have learned to trust Him, to depend on Him, and to know Him in His love for them. They have seen *His love* in the gift of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into this world to take away the *curse* from life. They know His work in this world, and they listen to His Word in their life. They know the LORD as the owner of this world, as the one who bought them for Himself with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. He bore the curse of this world, the curse on our labour, and the curse over our sins, when He died on the cross. Then after three days He rose from the dead to life! Well, all those who believe in Him will *share in His benefits*, including this gift of life! They will share in the *blessings* of the LORD! They're the people who are *rich in God*, and who want to become rich from the hands of God!

So, *blessing*, dear listeners, what is that? *Blessing*, is that God's goodness; the good and nice and joyous things God gives (like a wife, children, harvest, abundance, you name it)? Well, these are all wonderful gifts no doubt. Yet, we know that unbelievers have these gifts too. The difference comes in, however, when you see *believers give thanks* for these gifts because they know that we don't deserve them. Believers receive these gifts, not just for their own enjoyment but *to be used* in the service of God, in a life in the fear of the LORD. So how do we share in the blessing of the LORD? When we *seek the LORD* with our possessions and receive our riches by faith in the LORD. Then our riches won't make us uptight in our life, or dark, but by the goodness of God it gives you room in this world, and purpose, and peace! Indeed, that's what it does today already: your income, your possessions, your real estate, your health, and peace of heart and mind, you use in thankfulness to God, you use for God's work in this world! Then, as the Lord Jesus showed, you're even gathering *treasures in heaven*!

Then what about the brokenness of life, the reality of sickness, crop failure, and bankruptcy, which happen to believers too? True! Still, then this proverb is true nonetheless, for all other riches don't count, won't survive the curse, while in Jesus Christ our life and labour are *not in vain*! He conquered sin, death, the curse and gave us *life*, and that's what *blessing* is: life and fruitfulness and a future! That's what He left behind when He ascended into heaven! That's what He showed when He ascended, blessing His church! His presence in the throne of God, also, is the anchor of our hope for our labour and for God's blessings on earth! That's how we may stand in this world, fulfil our calling, and depend on God's goodness! That's what the Word of God tells us over and over, and it is that Word that we hear proclaimed and explained in the church! Thus, also the Voice of the Church as you hear it regularly on this program urges you to find *true blessings*, and *true wisdom*, and *true life* and riches in the Church!