



## The Gift

### *The Gift Nobody Wants* (Part 2)

Luke 1:5-13, 39-45

*Objective Statement: Everyone can prosper after famine by walking in the steps of Zechariah and Elizabeth.*

**Introduction: Dr. Paul Wilson Brand,** (July 17, 1914 – July 8, 2003) was a pioneer in developing tendon transfer techniques for use in the hands .... Born to missionary parents in the mountains of southwestern India in 1914, Brand attended London University, where he met his wife, Margaret Berry. The two surgeons returned to Vellore, India, to teach at the Christian Medical College and Hospital. During his outstanding career Brand received many awards and honors. One such award was bestowed on him by Queen Elizabeth in 1961 who honored him with the title of the Commander of the Order of the British Empire. He was the first surgeon to use reconstructive surgery to correct deformities caused by Hansen's disease (leprosy) in the hands and feet, and he also developed many other forms of prevention and healing from the disease. He was the first doctor to appreciate that leprosy did not cause the rotting away of tissues (as was supposed), but that it was the loss of the sensation of pain which made sufferers susceptible to injury. He saw pain as vital for the preservation of healthy tissue in anyone leading a normal life and he gives horrifying descriptions of the results of insensitivity in those with Hansen's disease or congenital absence of pain. Pain is a necessary part of one's life experience. Brand contributed extensively to the fields of hand surgery and hand therapy through his publications and lectures. One of his best known books, co-written with Philip Yancey, is entitled *The Gift Nobody Wants* published in 1993 and republished (1997) as *The Gift of Pain*.

**#1. *If you have been overlooked for a blessing today it is simply because you have been set aside for a blessing tomorrow*** (Luke 1:11-19 *your wife will bear you a son* )

**A. *Oswald Chambers: When God says no it is because there is a better yes just over the horizon.***

**1. *God is more anxious to bestow His blessings on us than we are to receive them***  
(*Augustine of Hippo*).

a. Eph. 3:20

- b. *Brother Lawrence:* There is, there must be, so much more in Him than He can give us, because we are so sleepy and because our capacity is so pitifully small. It ought to be tremendously helpful to be able to acquire the habit of reaching out strongly after God's thoughts, and to ask, "God, what have you to put into my mind now if only I can be large enough." That waiting, eager attitude ought to give God the chance He needs.
  - c. **John 14:13-14 ; 15:7**
  - d. **1 Cor. 2:9** But as it is written "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him
  - e. **Is. 55:6-11** God's Word produces its promised results
  - f. *Saint Jerome:* It is ours to offer what we can, God's to supply what we cannot
  - g. **2 Cor. 1:20** *Pastor Dan:* God says yes to all the promises that He has promised.
  - h. *Pastor Dan:* Yesterday's actions are irreversible but today and tomorrow's acts are not. Plant a new crop and reap a new harvest in your life.
  - i. **Hos. 10:12** Sow for yourself righteousness reap mercy
2. **A season for reaping** (**Gal. 6:9** *due season...reap*)
- a. *Question:* If God wants to bless me then why isn't He doing more in my life so His blessing will manifest? **Answer: Ps. 1:3** You will bring forth fruit in season
  - b. *Pastor Dan:* The seeds we plant in life through our acts of faith don't always come quickly but they do eventually come
  - c. **Psalm 23:6; 37:23; John 10:10; 3 John 2**
  - d. *Pastor Dan:* God's temporary no became a future yes that exceeded the expectations which Zecharias and Elizabeth had for their child. We receive more than that which we plant.
- #2. **Focus on God** (**Lu. 1:11** *While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar*)
- A. Luke 1:19** *Eric Liddell; Disciplines of the Christian Life: Circumstances may appear to wreck our lives and God's plans, but the Lord is not helpless among the ruins. Our broken lives are not lost or useless. God's love is still working. He comes in and takes the calamity and uses it victoriously, working out his wonderful plan of love.*
1. **God often waits until our situation becomes impossible before He acts** (**Ps. 107:19-20** *They cried out to the Lord ..* )
- a. *Pastor Dan:* Long after Zacharias and Elizabeth's dream of a child had faded into the past, God supernaturally removed the impossibility from their lives and gave them a miracle son. When it was possible for them to have a child God did not bless them with that for which they sought, and when it was impossible for them to receive the blessing they desired—God came through with a miracle.
  - b. **Jer. 29:11** To give you a hope and a future *Pastor Dan:* God supernaturally manifest Himself through impossibilities so He will get the credit for the miracles He performs in our behalf.

- c. **Is. 49:15-16** God has inscribed our desires in the palm of his hand and anxiously awaits the day when He can bless us with His best
- d. **Pastor Dan:** God uses impossibilities to test our ability to trust Him. God waited until Abraham's situation was impossible and He led the children of Israel through the wilderness desert where it was impossible for the Jews to survive without supernatural intervention.
- e. **3 John 2** **Isaiah 41:10-11**
- f. **John 14:13-14** If you ask anything in my name I will do it that the Father may honored in the Son.

## 2. **God delights in impossibilities** (Lu. 1:37 *With God nothing*)

- a. **Jeremiah 33:1; Mark 11:23-24; 1 John 3:20-22**
- b. **Oswald Chambers:** Our Lord begins [the working of a miracle] where we would never begin, at the point of human destitution. The greatest blessing a man ever gets from God is the realization that, if he is going to enter into His Kingdom, it must be through the door of need. Naturally we do not want to begin there; that is why the appeal of Jesus is of no use until we come face to face with realities; then the only One worth listening to is the Lord.
- c. **Matthew 7:7-11** **Ask and you shall receive**
- d. **Vance Havner:** Too many times we miss so much because we live on the low level of the natural, the ordinary, the explainable. We leave no room for God to do the exceeding abundant thing above all that we can ask or think.
- e. **William Booth:** God loves with a great love the person whose heart is bursting with a passion for the impossible.
- f. **F. B. Meyer:** We never test the resources of God until we attempt the impossible (**Luke 1:37**)
- g. **Saint Augustine:** I should not be a Christian but for the miracles.
- h. **David Smithers:** Until we reach for the impossible through fervent, faith-filled prayer, we will never fulfill our created purpose.

**Closing and Invitation:** **Isaiah 57:1-2** Good people pass away, the godly often die before their time. But no one seems to care of wonder why. No one seems to understand that God is protecting them from the evil to come. For those who follow godly paths will rest in peace when they die.

Lisa Beamer reflects on the loss of her husband in her book, "Let's Roll. "Slowly I began to understand that the plans God has for us don't just include 'good things', but the whole array of human events. The 'prospering' he talks about in the book of Jeremiah is often the outcome of a 'bad' event. I remember my mom saying that many people look for miracles- things that in their human minds 'fix' a difficult situation. Many miracles, however, are not a change to the normal course of human events; they're found in God's ability and desire to sustain and nurture people through even the worst situations. Somewhere along the way, I stopped demanding that God fix the problems in my life and started to be thankful for his presence as I endured them."