# Cursed to Bless

# God Blesses Jesus to Bless the World

Episode: 9

Passage: Acts 2:22-39

Characters: - Host - Sam - Pastor - Ben - Pete - Ruth - Kate

Authors: - Martin Olmos - Richard Utber

Language: en-AU

### Intro

**ATMOS**: Theme music 5 sec, Host background music below host’s volume

**HOST**: Hello, this is Mary, your host. Welcome to Cursed to Bless, the show that asks a big question: Why is life so hard, when God is so good? We hear God blesses us, but how? Money, health, happiness? The answers are found in *Jesus*, in who he is and what he’s done. We see this when we read the Bible as *one big story*, with Jesus as the hero from start to finish.

**HOST**: In this episode, we learn that the resurrection of Jesus exalts him above all powers, and proves that God has removed the curse and has brought blessing to his people.

**HOST**: Remember to pause, read the passage, and answer the questions when you hear the sound. Our first question is: What is the biggest Christian meeting you’ve been to? How did you feel? Pause and discuss now.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then 5 seconds silence

**HOST**: Thank you.

### Bible Study

**FX**: Flasback Outro

**ATMOS**: Host background

**HOST**: Listeners, let’s listen to the friends’ Bible study. They were all sitting at Pastor’s house…

**FX**: Flashback Intro.

**ATMOS**: House living room

**PASTOR**: Welcome everyone. Let’s pray first: “Dear Father, please help us listen carefully to your Word now, and learn together. In Jesus name…”

**ALL**: Amen.

**PASTOR**: Let’s review our memory verse from last time: Galatians chapter 3, verse 13. I will read it out loud. When I pause, say the word that comes next, without looking at your Bible:

**FX**: In each ‘…’ gap below, Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**PASTOR**: (Leave a 2 second pause where you see ‘…’ and say the answer word with emphasis.)  
“Christ … *redeemed* us from the curse of the … *law* by becoming a … *curse* for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a … *pole*’.”

**TRANSLATOR**: Replace this with text from the local Bible translation. Pick the same significant words for the gaps, as much as possible.

**PASTOR**: Thank you. Last week we read about Jesus’ death. But we know that on the third day he rose from the dead. Let’s read about the resurrection from Luke chapter 24, verses 1-12.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then page flicking for 3 seconds.

**PASTOR:** What do you notice in this passage?

**KATE:** It’s the women who first find out about the resurrection.

**RUTH:** And the disciples don’t believe them!

**SAM:** But Peter does run to the tomb to find out for himself.

**BEN:** In verses 6-7 the angel reminds the women that Jesus had told them that he had to die and then rise again.

**PASTOR**: His resurrection was God’s plan. It proves Jesus has defeated death and has removed the curse on his people. He has brought us life in God’s forever Kingdom.

**RUTH**: What a blessing…

**PASTOR**: Yes. Before our next passage, let me remind you what happened after Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus appeared to the disciples over forty days, told them to stay in Jerusalem, and promised them his Holy Spirit. He was then taken up into heaven. Then, about a week later, on the day of Pentecost, the disciples were all together when they heard a violent wind and saw tongues of fire, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. There were Jews from many other nations in Jerusalem at that time. They heard the disciples declaring the wonders of God in their own language. They were amazed. Some people even thought they might be drunk.

**PETE**: Ha! Drunks often talk giberish…

**PASTOR**: Actually, they were declaring God’s goodness in other languages, so that others could understand. Other nations were being blessed by their words.

**BEN**: Oh, just like God promised Abraham!

**PASTOR**: Yes Ben! Now we’re ready to read our passage: Acts chapter 2, verses 22-39. Let’s read it together.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then page flicking for 3 seconds.

**PASTOR**: Thank you. Ruth, what’s happening in this passage.

**RUTH**: Peter reminds the people how they killed Jesus, even though he had blessed them with so many miracles.

**BEN**: And then he tells them that God has raised him from the dead.

**PETE**: If Jesus is alive, where is he now?

**PASTOR**: See verse 33.

**PETE**: Uh… it says he’s exalted to the right hand of God - what does that mean?

**PASTOR**: It’s a picture of power and authority. Jesus is sitting, because he has finished his work and defeated his enemies.

**SAM**: Oh, like a great king, sitting on his throne after winning a great battle.

**RUTH**: Oh, verse 36 says God made Jesus both Lord and Messiah!

**BEN**: So he’s gone from the shame of the cross to the glory of being God’s king!

**PASTOR**: How does the crowd respond to Peter?

**BEN**: Verse 37 says they were cut to the heart!

**RUTH**: Yeah, they feel terrible about their sin. But they repent and put their trust in Jesus.

**BEN**: They sinned terribly - they killed God’s son. But God forgives them!

**PASTOR**: Yes, God’s love is amazing. Their repentance is the powerful work of the Holy Spirit, blessing them with faith.

**KATE**: What do you have to do to get the Holy Spirit?

**PASTOR**: God gives his Holy Spirit to all who repent and believe in Jesus. He is a gift to all believers.

**SAM**: Really?

**PASTOR**: Chapter 2 verse four says that *all of them* were filled with the Holy Spirit. Does that remind you of something?

**SAM**: Oh, those promises from the Old Testament of the new covenant!

**PASTOR**: Yes! And in verses 17 to 18, Peter mentions another Old Testament prophesy, from Joel, that this would happen in the last days.

**BEN**: I love how verse 39 says the promise is for all who are far off. Look at us! We are far away from Jerusalem, two thousand years after, but this promise is for us too!

**SAM**: Having the Holy Spirit sounds like God is living in us - that’s strange!

**PASTOR**: Yes, and it’s true!

**PETE**: What will the Holy Spirit do for me? Any magical powers?

**PASTOR:** I can’t think of a bigger blessing than having God himself living within us. God is doing the powerful miracle within us - changing us to be more like Jesus.

**SAM**: Pastor, Peter quotes the Old Testament three times in his speech.

**PASTOR**: I’m glad you noticed! We need to know the Old Testament to properly understand Jesus.

**SAM**: So the Old Testament has been pointing to Jesus and his work all along…

**PASTOR**: Yes! God has planned this from the beginning of time. And so in all the events, promises, laws, rituals, prophecies and more, God was leading the world to understand Jesus.

**SAM**: I know you’ve said that before, but I think I’m starting to really believe it now! God gives us *all* his blessings, *through Jesus*…

### Questions to Pastor and Application

**PASTOR**: OK, what questions would *you* like to ask?

**PETE:** Pastor, this passage says that Jesus is seated at God’s right hand in heaven. But what’s that got to do with us here and now? Heaven seems so far away.

**PASTOR**: Heaven is where God is, yes, but God is ruling this world from heaven! Heaven is like the centre of power in a country, where all the decisions are made. What is decided in heaven will happen on earth. And Jesus, God’s risen King, is ruling earth from heaven.

**KATE:** Pastor, I didn’t get any special powers when I was baptised. Did I miss the Holy Spirit?

**PASTOR:** Kate, as we’ve just read, if you are a Chrisian you have received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives you the power to live a changed life and become more like Jesus. That is the greatest power! Changing sinful people into people who are like God! And about baptism: it’s a wonderful sign to others that you are now a Christian. It’s a sign of Jesus’ death and resurrection - and *yours*! But it is just a sign. Baptism doesn’t *make* you a Christian, it is a sign that you *are* a Christian.

**KATE:** Pastor, I’ve been to some big Christian meetings with thousands of people. Everyone is so excited and there’s lots of talk about the Holy Spirit. But what you say seems so … ordinary.

**PASTOR:** Well, it’s what the Bible says that matters! In the book of Acts and in the rest of the New Testament we see the Holy Spirit working powerfully. And that happens to people in big crowds, or to families, or just to one other person. I’ve been to big meetings too. They can be exciting, but if they don’t glorify Jesus, that’s not the work of the Holy Spirit. What’s much more exciting is when someone hears the gospel, repents, and follows Jesus. *That* is the powerful work of the Holy Spirit. I’m really excited to see how the Holy Spirit is working in *your* lives.

**KATE**: Thank you.

**PASTOR**: OK, let’s talk about our own lives now. What difference do you think this passage makes?

**PETE**: Not much, frankly. I’m just living my life and doing my best.

**PASTOR**: You know, we are all rebels against God’s Messiah, one way or another. He hang on the cross *because* all of us - and *for* all of us.

**SAM**: I think I understand how the people in the crowd felt. I *am* cut to the heart about my sin and rebellion…

**PASTOR**: And do you trust Jesus for removing the curse of sin from you?

**SAM**: Well… I grew up going to church, but I’m not sure I really understood and trusted Jesus. But now I want to! What should I do?

**PASTOR**: See verse 21. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

**SAM**: But what does that mean?

**PASTOR**: You pray, confess your sin, you trust Jesus, and ask him to help you change.

**SAM**: But my faith feels so small and weak.

**PASTOR**: It’s not about how you *feel*. Jesus himself said you only need faith as small as a mustard seed. Even a small faith is enough, as long as it is faith in *Jesus*.

**SAM**: And how do I know Jesus is enough?

**PASTOR**: God raised him from death to assure us. Do you trust that Jesus is enough for you, Sam?

**SAM**: (Excited)  
Yes… Yes, I do pastor!

**PASTOR**: I’m so glad to hear that Sam. And do you believe that God has made you clean and right with him?

**SAM**: It feels like I’m bragging to say that…

**PASTOR**: It takes a miracle - that’s why we need the Holy Spirit. You can boast in God’s goodness to you all you want - that’s a good thing!

**SAM**: [Calmly reassured]  
Thank you, that helps me.

**PASTOR**: You can be sure that your sins are forgiven and that God has poured his Holy Spirit on you, because God says so.

**SAM**: Yes, God *has* done a miracle in me. He has forgiven my sin and removed the curse in my life. I am really blessed!

**PASTOR**: Yes!

**SAM**: Thank you pastor.

**PASTOR**: Thank you everyone. Let’s read our memory verse on the whiteboard: 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 3. Let’s read it together now.

**ALL**: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

**PASTOR**: Let’s memorise that for our next lesson. Sam, I would love it if you prayed for us - would you do that?

**SAM**: Hmm … I feel nervous Pastor … but OK, I will. Let’s pray. Good Father, thank you for doing this miracle in me - and us. Thank you for the gift of faith - trusting that Jesus removes our curse when we call on your name. We praise you Lord Jesus - you are above all powers, and you have blessed us. Thank you for your Holy Spirit. Please help more of our friends and family to put their faith in you. In Jesus’ name…

**ALL**: Amen.

**PASTOR**: Thank you Sam, it was a blessing to hear your prayer. Thank you for coming everyone, see you next time. Goodbye!

**ALL**: Goodbye pastor.

### Interactive Questions

**FX**: Flashback outro

**HOST**: Listeners, let’s answer some questions now. Say your answer aloud. **HOST**: Where is Jesus now? Is he *at God’s right hand in power* or is he *in hell paying for our sins*?

**FX**: Response prompt, then 5 seconds silence

**HOST**: At God’s right hand in power. Jesus defeated death and sin because he was God’s perfect sacrifice, so his work is complete.

**HOST**: I will say some sentences. For each sentence, say ‘True’ if you agree, or ‘False’ if you disagree.

**HOST**: True or False: The Holy Spirit is given to mature christians once they have been faithful and obedient for a while.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: False. The Holy Spirit is given to all who repent and believe in Jesus.

**HOST**: True or False: the gift of the Holy Spirit means God himself is living in us, and that we are his people.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: True. This is the most brilliant blessing and means we have the inheritance of eternal life.

**HOST**: True or False: Although Jesus’ resurrection proves he is God’s Messiah, the world is not yet under his authority, and that is why it is such a mess.

**FX**: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**HOST**: False. Jesus has total authority *now*, and is patiently using his authority to bring people into his kingdom through the preaching of the gospel.

**HOST**: Here’s another question. Why was Jesus killed on the cross? Was it because *wicked men killed him*, because *it was God’s plan*, or *both*?

**FX**: Response prompt, then 5 seconds silence

**HOST**: Both. Wicked men did kill Jesus, and this was a terrible sin. But they did this by God’s deliberate plan.

**HOST**: Discuss this question: why do we find it hard to believe that God forgives our sins and gives us his Holy Spirit when we trust Jesus?

**FX**: Pause prompt, then 5 seconds silence.

### Outro

**FX**: Flashback outro

**HOST**: Listeners, now we’ve heard about Sam’s day, listen to what he prayed before going to sleep…

**ATMOS**: Soft prayer background effect (e.g. chimes) fade in

**SAM**: Dear God, Today was so special - I’ll never forget it. All my life I’ve felt the weight of the curse. I just didn’t know where it came from, or how to get rid of it. Now I see it’s you, my Lord Jesus, who removes this weight, this curse, from me. Only you could do it. I feel like you’ve lifted me up. Thank you for the gift of repentance and faith. I feel clean… and strong. Amen. ::: {custom-style=“Instruction”} **ATMOS**: Prayer background fade out :::

**HOST**: Thank you for completing this lesson. We learnt that the resurrection of Jesus exalts him above all powers and proves that God has removed the curse and has brought blessing to his people. Will you join me for our next lesson? We will learn the risen Lord Jesus confirms salvation has been achieved and this gospel must be declared to the world. Please read Luke chapter 24, verses 36-53 before then. Now you can discuss how this lesson matters in your life: What difference do you think this passage makes? Goodbye.

**FX**: Theme music fade out.