# Cursed to Bless

# God Blesses his People Forever

Episode: 12

Passage: Revelation 21:1-5, 21:22-22:5

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

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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 curse has been removed through Jesus, and God’s blessings will be restored and increased.

**HOST**: Remember to pause, read the passage, and answer the questions when you hear the sound. Our first question is: Can you tell us of a time when you returned home after a long and hard trip? 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: 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 12. 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.)
“Live such good … *lives* among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing … *wrong*, they may see your good … *deeds* and glorify … *God* on the day he … *visits* us.”

**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. Today, we’re reading two passages. First, Revelation chapter 21, verses one to five. Let’s read it together.

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

**PASTOR**: Thank you. Ruth, what are the main ideas in this passage?

**RUTH**: God makes everything new - it’s an amazing picture!

**KATE**: All the suffering is gone. God wipes away all our tears…

**BEN**: Yes! God now lives with his people. There’s no separation.

**SAM**: No more crying or death! It’s hard to imagine something so good, when I think of my life now.

**RUTH**: Yes, but verse five says these words are trustworthy and true. That helps me wait - it’s all worth it.

**SAM**: Yes, you’re right Ruth - thank you.

**PASTOR**: This is the wonderful future that God has prepared for us. Jesus will come again to end this cursed world, and bring God’s new creation.

**SAM**: So… now we must wait patiently, persevering through this hard life.

**PASTOR**: Yes! Revelation is all about living well through this hard life …

**SAM**: … as we wait for Jesus.

**PASTOR**: Yes. OK, I have a second reading for us. It’s Revelation, chapter 21 verse 22 to chapter 22 verse five. Let’s read it together now.

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

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

**RUTH**: Oh, the tree of life was in the *garden,* back in Genesis. But now it’s in the middle of the *city*!

**BEN**: And the city has no temple - because God is right there! And the gates are always open - because it’s *safe*. Nothing impure will ever enter it.

**RUTH**: And look at chapter 22 verse three: No more curse, ever! This curse has been with us from Genesis. And after all the books and stories we’ve looked at, it’s finally gone!

**PASTOR**: It wonderful! Now we have God’s Kingdom perfected! God’s *people* are living in…

**BEN**: God’s *place* …

**RUTH**: enjoying the *blessings* of God’s *rule*!

**PETE:** But all this is in the future. I want some blessings *now*!

**BEN**: Pete… We *have* blessings now! I know God loves me now, and that I’m forgiven now.

**RUTH**: And I’ve got a joy now that I wouldn’t have if I didn’t know Jesus.

**SAM**: And I’m changing into a better person now.

**KATE**: And Christians have each other! This group has been such a blessing to be part of! And we can love and help each other as Christians do all around the world! We can share our possessions and give to those who are needy.

**PASTOR**: Yes, That’s what Jesus is talking about when he says those who follow him will receive many things in this life. You can read that in Matthew 19 and Mark 10. But remember, although we receive great things from God now, heaven will be far, far better. This world is evil, still cursed. Heaven will be perfect!

**PETE**: I still don’t get it. Why is my life so hard, if God is so good?

**SAM**: I asked that in our first lesson!

**PASTOR**: Are you ready to answer it, now we’ve learned the Bible’s whole story?

**SAM**: Yes… I think so. Life is hard now because we live in a cursed world. People continue to rebel against God. There is so much evil in this world. But God is so amazingly good that he sent Jesus to take the curse on Himself.

**BEN**: Jesus was *cursed* … to *bless* us.

**SAM**: So we can’t receive all God’s blessings now in this cursed world. But we *will*, when King Jesus returns and takes us into His new perfect world, the new creation.

**PASTOR**: So how should we live now?

**SAM**: Following Jesus means we deny our sinful selves. And as we persevere through these hard things, we show other people that God is worth suffering for. God uses hard things to bless us, by making us more like Jesus. So we live for God’s glory now!

**PASTOR**: I’m glad you could answer your question, Sam.

**SAM**: Pastor, I feel very blessed that I joined this group. Thank you, it’s been a great help.

**RUTH**: Yes, it’s been… a *blessing*! I’ve loved getting to know you Sam, and seeing God change you and grow you.

**SAM**: I… I’ve loved getting to know you too, Ruth.

### Questions to Pastor and Application

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

**BEN**: I know life will be wonderful when Jesus returns. But I’m not sure my family have a real faith in Jesus.

**PASTOR**: Yes, we must rejoice now that Jesus will return, and it is right to be concerned for your family. We must pray for opportunities to speak to them about Jesus and to live good lives so that they will see what Jesus has done in us. Only God can change their hearts, and he will do what is right.

**SAM**: Pastor, these Bible studies have been very helpful. But the Bible is a *big* book! How can I keep learning?

**PASTOR**: Keep reading the Bible yourself! Ask God for help to understand it. Read it a lot, and read whole books of the Bible. Try to summarise the passages you read and fit them into the context of the whole Bible. Then work out how they point you to the Lord Jesus. And then pray and think about how you need to change because of what you now understand.

**PASTOR**: OK, let’s talk about our own lives now. How can we persevere through this hard life as we wait for heaven?

**BEN**: We can keep meeting together like this. This has encouraged me a lot.

**KATE**: Yeah, I learned a lot from all of you - thank you.

**RUTH**: I’m practicing being thankful. Before I go to sleep, I think of three ways that God has blessed me. It helps me end the day with joy. All the troubles of the day seem smaller when I think of God’s big picture for me.

**PETE**: It would help me if God gave me a better paying job, so I could afford that motorbike. I would feel blessed then.

**SAM**: I’ve started reading the Bible by myself in the morning. This group has given me confidence that I can understand what God is saying to me. Would you try that Pete? We could do it together if that helps.

**PETE**: Maybe. You’ve changed a lot in the last few weeks, Sam. I know it’s real because I live with you.

**PASTOR**: Thank you everyone. Let’s read our memory verse on the whiteboard: James chapter 1, verse 12. Let’s read it together now.

**ALL**: “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.”

**PASTOR**: Let’s memorise that. Sam, could you pray for us to finish our studies?

**SAM**: Yes Pastor, I’ll do my best. Good Father, we praise you for your amazing generosity, not only restoring but *increasing* your blessings, and including us in them. Lord Jesus, we praise you for removing the curse. We *long* to live with you, blessed by your perfect rule forever. Give us the faith and strength to wait patiently. Fill us with a loving and generous heart as we share our lives with others in this broken world. And thank you for pastor, and for our group. It’s been so good to see your big story of salvation throughout the Bible, and Jesus as your hero. Now we understand how to live when you are so good but life is so hard. In Jesus’ name…

**ALL**: Amen.

**SAM**: So Pastor, when do we start our next studies in this group?

**BEN**: Yea, what will we look at?

**PASTOR**: Ha! I’m glad you’re so excited. Well, let me think about it and I’ll text you some details.

**SAM**: Great. Pete, will you come?

**PETE**: Maybe… if all of us come. Will you come, Ruth?

**RUTH**: Of course!

**KATE**: Me too.

**PASTOR**: Well, it looks like everyone’s in. 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**: How does God use other christians to bless us now, while we wait for heaven? I will list a few options one at a time. For each, say ‘yes’ or ‘no’.
They share their lives with us. [FX: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence] Yes.
They love us. [FX: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence] Yes.
They pray for us. [FX: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence] Yes.
They share their possessions with us. [FX: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence] Yes.
They rebuke us when we sin. [FX: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence] Yes.
They encourage us with wisdom. [FX: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence] Yes.
They share insights about Jesus. [FX: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence] Yes.

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

**HOST**: True or False: God requires we prove ourselves by persevering through suffering before he will bless us.

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

**HOST**: False. God has blessed us *now*: by removing the curse from us, making us his people, giving us his Holy Spirit, the fellowship of his church, and in many other ways. We are God’s people *now*, and in heaven we will live in God’s *place*, enjoying the *blessings* of his *rule* over us forever.

**HOST**: True or False: Christians have all they need to live for God.

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

**HOST**: True. Although our lives are hard, and sometimes we suffer greatly, God always gives us what we need to live for him.

**HOST**: True or False: God wants churches in each ethnic group to reach out to other ethnic groups and not just look out for their own people.

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

**HOST**: True. God wants people from every tribe, language and nation to trust in Jesus.

**HOST**: True or False: Christians in poorer countries have little to contribute to wealthier christians.

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

**HOST**: False. They can be a great example and encouragement by persevering faithfully through suffering, praying for other Christians, and working together for the gospel.

**HOST**: Let’s review a summary of who we are and how God has blessed us in Jesus. I will say a sentence. When I pause, say the word that comes next:

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

**HOST**: (Leave a 2 second pause where you see ‘…’ and say the answer word with emphasis.)
Because of our Lord Jesus, we are God’s … *people*, and will live in God’s … *place*, enjoying the … *blessings* of his … *rule* over us forever.

**HOST**: Discuss this question: What are some of the blessings we enjoy as members of God’s church?

**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, I’m so glad I joined the Bible study group with Pastor and my friends. Thank you! I feel so blessed being your child, with brothers and sisters around the world. I’m ready to wait for the new creation, and to persevere through this hard life. Please come Lord Jesus! I want to live forever in the new creation under your rule. Until then, I want to rejoice in you always. Amen. ::: {custom-style=“Instruction”} **ATMOS**: Prayer background fade out :::

**HOST**: Well listeners, thank you for completing this series. I hope you enjoyed learning that the curse has been removed through Jesus, and God’s blessings will be restored and increased. Jesus was cursed to bless us.

**HOST**: Now you can discuss how this lesson matters in your life: How can we persevere through this hard life as we wait for the new creation? Goodbye.

**FX**: Theme music fade out.