

The Blessing of Abasement

- I. Abundance and abasement are the two extremes in which we often find ourselves (**Php 4:11-12**).
 1. As ministers and Christians, we must learn how to abound.
 - A. Abound *v.* - 1. To be present in overflowing measure; to be plentiful; to prevail widely. 2. To be full, to be rich or wealthy; to have to overflowing. (Of persons.)
1611 Bible Phil. iv. 18 But I have all and abound.
 - B. Abundance *n.* - 1. Overflowing state or condition, overflow; superfluity; enough and more than enough: hence in a looser sense, plentifulness, copiousness.
 2. We must also learn how to be abased.
 - A. Abase *v.* - 1. To lower (physically), depress, bring or cast down. *arch.* 2. To lower in rank, office, condition, or character; to humble, humiliate; often with the sense of *degrade, make base.*
 - B. Abased *adj.* - 1. Lowered, cast down, downcast. *arch.* 3. Lowered, humbled, in rank, condition, character, feelings, etc. 1611 Bible Phil. iv. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound
 - C. Abasement *n.* - 1. The action of abasing, lowering, casting down, or humbling, in rank or character; humiliation. 2. The condition of being abased; humiliation, degradation.
 3. Either state can be dangerous for us if not handled correctly (**Pro 30:7-9**).
- II. The blessing of abasement for ministers
 1. Abasement helps remind us of our weakness (**2Co 11:21-30**).
 2. It reminds us that we are but mere earthen vessels (**2Co 4:7**).
 3. It gives God an opportunity to use us because He specializes in using foolish, weak, base, and despised things to confound the wise and mighty (**1Co 1:25-31**).
 4. Abasement prevents us from being exalted above measure (**2Co 12:7-9**).
 5. Abasement causes us to rely on God (**2Co 12:10**).
 6. When the sufferings of Christ abound in us (abasement), Christ's consolation abounds toward us (**2Co 1:5**).
 7. Abasement leads to exaltation (**Eze 21:26; Mat 23:12**).
- III. The blessing of abasement for churches and individual Christians
 1. It's better to be abased than to abound with the proud (**Pro 16:19**).
 2. Hard times test our faith (**Hab 3:17-18**).
 3. Abasement is one of God's methods of proving his people (**Exo 16:4; Deu 8:2,16**).
 4. The poor in spirit are blessed (**Mat 5:3**).
 5. It doesn't matter if we are poor and despised as long as we keep God's precepts (**Psa 119:141**).
 6. God gives power to the abased who are faint and weary (**Isa 40:28-31**).
 7. The church in Philadelphia had "a little strength", and yet God set before them an open door that could not be shut (**Rev 3:8**).
 8. Abasement helps us learn contentment (**Php 4:11-12; 1Ti 6:5-8**).
 9. Learning contentment helps us learn to trust in God (**Heb 13:5**).
- IV. Abounding in affluence is usually more harmful to a Christian than being abased.

1. God warned Israel that the affluence of the land of Canaan would be a temptation for them to forget God and be destroyed (**Deu 8:11-20**).
2. The abundance that many Christians would consider a blessing is often a curse which chokes their spiritual life (**Luk 8:14**).
3. On the other hand, the heroes of faith in the scripture experienced violence, weakness, cruel mockings, scourgings, imprisonment, destitution, affliction, torment, homelessness, and death (**Heb 11:33-40**).
4. Think of the churches throughout history which endured much hardship and persecution and yet flourished, such as the Albigenses, Waldenses, Paulicians, Anabaptists, etc. who were like the church in Smyrna who suffered tribulation and poverty, but yet were spiritually rich (**Rev 2:9**).
5. Now consider the churches in America that have lived in opulence and affluence, but yet are dying like the church in Laodicea who were rich and increased with goods, but spiritually were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked (**Rev 3:17**).
6. In this generation, it seems like the only thing that abounds is sin (**Mat 24:12**).

V. Abounding with this world's good alone doesn't satisfy, but godliness with contentment does.

1. Those who love abundance will not be satisfied with increase (**Ecc 5:10**).
2. But godliness with contentment is great gain (**1Ti 6:6**).

VI. Though we may not abound materially or numerically, God will still bless us to abound spiritually.

1. Those that fear the Lord will abide satisfied (**Pro 19:23**).
2. A faithful man will abound with blessings (**Pro 28:20**).
3. We should abound in knowledge and judgment (**Php 1:9**).
4. We should abound in faith with thanksgiving (**Col 2:7**).
5. We should abound in love toward each other (**1Th 3:12; 2Th 1:3**).
6. We should abound in our walk, pleasing God (**1Th 4:1**).
7. We should abound in faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (**2Pe 1:5-8**).
8. In believing, we shall abound in hope (**Rom 15:13**).
9. We can abound even in deep poverty (**2Co 8:2; Pro 13:7**).
10. God is able to make all grace abound toward us that we may abound to every good work (**2Co 9:8**).

VII. No matter what our lot, whether in abundance or in abasement, affluence or attrition, we should be *abounding* in the work of the Lord (**1Co 15:58**).