



## Wasted Blessings

*Then I will make up to you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the creeping locust, the stripping locust, and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you.*

*Joel 2:25*

Several times I have reflected on the years I was a prodigal. Upon coming back to Christ, I found such joy, such peace, such comfort and hope and restoration that I had to shake my head and marvel at the time I wasted, laboring under false assumptions and outright delusions. God is better than I have the capacity to comprehend, bigger than I can grasp, more loving than I have the ability to know.

I wasted a lot of years in my bitter sojourn in the wilderness. I knew, from the years of growing up in church and being raised by God-fearing, Bible-believing followers of Christ, that all it would take is one step of repentance, but I was unable to take that step on my own. Early in my trek into the wilderness I convinced myself that God was a killjoy, a perpetually angry law enforcer ever ready to throw the book at us when we messed up even the tiniest bit. I knew I could never be “good” enough, so I figured there was no use in even trying. Later, after I looked around and saw the destruction, the devastation caused by my own sinful decisions, I convinced myself that I had forfeited my chance to come back to Him, that it was too late now, that this was the bed I’d made and now I had to lie in it.

But God is not content to leave us that way. Oh how thankful I am for that! He reached into my wilderness, past the briars and brambles, the thorns and clinging vines that held me captive, and lifted me out. That alone is reason to praise, reason to bow before Him in humble thanksgiving. I had put myself there, you see. I took every step into that wilderness under my own will. I deliberately threw everything I knew to be right away and stepped into the wickedness of willful sin. The truth that He came to get me, that He reached down and rescued me from myself is overwhelming.

But God, being the loving, gracious Father He is, goes further than that. This promise in the feature verse above is overwhelming to me. He promises to *make up* for the years the locust has eaten. The consequences I brought on myself, the discipline He had no choice but to enact, He promises to make up for them. Mercy, what a thought!

I will never have those years back. God will not restore to me the *time* that I wasted, as that time has gone. But He will restore to me, and has already in many ways, the *blessings* I wasted in the unfruitful drought. For the heart that surrenders fully to Him, He has an abundant, overflowing harvest of blessings waiting to burst into bloom.

*Father, we thank You for Your overwhelming grace, the unmerited favor that You give us every day. We deserve death, but You give us life. We deserve labor, but You give us rest. We deserve turmoil, but You give us peace. We humble our hearts before You today in praise and thanksgiving.*