



God is Not a Good Luck Charm

1 Samuel 4:3-4

Many people will be celebrating St Patrick's Day this month. When some people think of St. Patrick's Day, they think about a lucky pot of gold, a rabbit's foot or other good luck charms. But let's be careful that we do not take Jesus out of this holiday. Because St. Patrick turned a country that was not believing in God to a country that loves and celebrates our Lord and Savior.

Good luck charms mean something different to everybody. It all depends on what you find to be lucky. Some people carry around an:

- **Acorn:** During the Norman Conquest, the English carried dried acorns to protect themselves from the brutalities of the day,
- **Four-leaf clover:** Each leaf symbolizes a different lucky characteristic: 1) Fame, 2) Wealth, 3) Love, 4) Health
- **Horseshoe:** used to ward off the "evil" eye.

A good luck symbol of any kind is **steeped** in superstition, and tied to the psyche of humanity. This is because symbols of good luck are symbols of our own hopes, and not the hopes of God.

There was this boy who had a pet rabbit. The rabbit lived in a cage. He used to go and visit him every day. But the novelty wore off. He got bored of him. So, he got one of those automatic water dispensers on the side of the cage and one of those automatic food dispensers as well.

How often do we treat God like that? Let's be honest. How often do we visit God when it suits us? Visit him in prayer. Visit him in his Word. When we feel like it. When it's convenient.

In 1 Samuel, this is the way Israel had been treating God. Israel visited God every now and then, whenever they needed help, and God would come and help them. And then Israel would ignore God again. This brings us to our text about Israel's treatment of God as a lucky charm.

Israel asks themselves in verse 3: "Why did the Lord bring defeat upon us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the Lord's covenant from Shiloh, so that it may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies." They ask: "Why didn't God help us win?" Was it because we've been ignoring him? Was it because we're worshipping other gods? NO! It must be because we don't have the "magical" ark of God in our camp! Bring in the magic box with God inside! Bring in the lucky charm! Bring in the magic Genie lamp and give it a rub! THEN we will win another battle.

People so easily put their faith in lucky charms, or tarot cards, or horoscopes, or magic stones. The Bible calls these things idolatry and magic. These things simply take our hearts and our trust away from God alone. Even with "religion", we can exchange our lucky charms with symbols or ceremonies and make them our idols. (Continued next page)

These things can become the focus of our faith, instead of God himself. God is not in a box, or in an object, or in a ceremony. God is in our lives. And today, God is with us through Christ by the Holy Spirit. It is alright to have some external symbols: water, and bread, and wine. But let us not exchange our faith in God for something we can see. Let them be an outward expression of an inward grace!

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