**The Lord’s curse is on the house of the wicked,
but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.
Proverbs 3:33 – A Proverbial Story
By Ted Hildebrandt and Chatgpt**

In the quiet village of Gray Hollow stood two houses, separated by a white picket fence and decades of bitter resentment. On the left side of the fence lived Elias Granger, a man whose wealth was the talk of the town. His estate was vast and lavish, but void of love. On the right lived Miriam, a widow with her three children in a modest cottage with little more than a vegetable garden.

Years ago, Elias had made his fortune by ruthless means—swindling neighbors, bribing officials, and taking land that was never his to claim. Miriam’s late husband had been one such victim, forced to surrender his farmland during a drought, only to die a year later from the heartbreak over the loss. Many in the village turned their faces away from Elias out of disdain or disgust, but Miriam never ceased to greet him with a kind nod, even when he would scoff at her.

One evening, a storm rolled in from the sea, darker and more furious than any the village had seen. Lightning slashed the sky, and the winds howled like beasts. Trees fell, and roofs tore like parchment. Elias’s manor, despite its grandeur, could not withstand the fury. Lightning struck the lofty peak of his house, setting it aflame. The fire roared. Initially, no one came to help.

But from across the fence, Miriam’s eldest son saw the smoke. Without pause, he roused his mother and siblings. Buckets in hand, they rushed toward the inferno. Miriam called for help, and the villagers followed, led by the woman they had come to admire. Together, they saved what they could. Elias stood in stunned silence, his grand mansion smoldering, his pride in ashes.

In the days that followed, Elias was seen sitting on Miriam’s porch, wrapped in one of Miriam’s old quilts, his head bowed. Once inside Miriam’s home, he stared into the hearth where, above the mantel, he noticed an embroidered plaque: “The Lord’s curse is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the dwelling of the righteous.”

The once-mighty man began to change. He gave land back, repaid those he had swindled, and helped rebuild homes. He assisted Miriam and her friends restore what was broken. He sold the remains of his mansion and donated the earnings to rebuild the village school. People noticed the change, not in his wealth, but in his eyes. They no longer burned with greed, but were filled with gratefulness, generosity, and joyful contentment.

One autumn evening, he sat across from Miriam in her living room.

“I never understood,” he said quietly, “why you helped me.”

Miriam smiled, pointing to the old embroidered plaque: “The Lord’s curse is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the dwelling of the righteous” (Proverbs 3:33)

He nodded, tears gathering in his eyes. He had finally found wisdom through the simple truth of that old proverb.