

05-10-09 - Mother's Day

Be Blessed – Numbers 6:22-27

“The Lord Bless you and Keep you...” – Num. 6:24

Introduction:

JOKE: Brother goes on vacation and leaves his cat with his brother at home... By the way – How's mother doing? Mother? Uh – She's up on the roof!

Have you ever had friends or relatives who **repeated themselves over and over**? Maybe they tell the same jokes again and again. (My Dad – repeats jokes & stories). Or maybe you find yourself lending a listening ear as your friend who struggles day by day to find answers to a child's rebellion or decisions about medical treatment for an aging parent.

Generally speaking, when we repeat ourselves, we do it because the thing we repeat is on our minds and in our hearts. Consider, then, the fact that Scripture repeatedly returns to the idea of God's "blessing." His "benediction," His **"good words" of grace and His promises** toward us are in His heart and on His lips... FOREVER! Over and over again, the Scriptures return to the thought that **our Lord wants to bless his people**. That tells us a lot about what's in God's mind and on his heart! **"The Lord Bless You."** (Num. 6:24).

Getting to the Heart

God's heart toward us is a heart of **love, compassion, and concern**. We easily lose sight of how remarkable that fact truly is! You see, we deserve just the opposite. The Bible tells us **we have rebelled against our kind Creator** **Is. 53:6** – ***"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.***

Despite his goodness toward us, we have failed to thank him (**Romans 1:21**).

Despite his wisdom, we have insisted on choosing our own paths through life (**Romans 1:22**).

Despite his love, we have chosen to live lovelessly, focused on ourselves; we gossip, we envy others, we argue, we disobey our parents, we live lives of sexual impurity, we fail to care about those in need (**Romans 1:26–32**).

St. **Augustine** summed it all up by saying that we are, by nature, "curved in on

ourselves.” We place ourselves at the center of our universe—and we like it like that!

But what a mess that worldview makes! Self-centeredness lies at the heart of family fractions. It lies at the heart of all the grouching and grumbling at work. On a larger stage, it lies at the heart of poverty and pollution, homelessness and hunger, crime and corruption (**James 4:1–3**).

“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

Ultimately, the inward curve of our hearts leads to war and death (**Romans 6:23**) – ***“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*** Sin, and the curse that accompanies it, has spread its tentacles everywhere in our hearts and everywhere on our planet—and even beyond into the rest of the universe –

“I” lies at the center of all “sin.”

Hosea 4:1–3 – *“Hear the word of the Lord, you Israelites, because the Lord has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery: they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying.”*

Sin takes in: *Gossip, Envy, Hatred, Bitterness, Impurity, Greed, Rage, Selfishness, and Quarreling.*

Jeremiah 4:22–28 – *“My people are fools; they do not know Me. They are senseless children; they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil; they know not how to do good. I looked at the earth, and it was formless and empty; and at the heavens, and their light was gone. I looked at the mountains, and they were quaking; all the hills were swaying. I looked, and there were no people; every bird in the sky had flown away. I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert; all its towns lay in ruins before the Lord, before His fierce anger. This is what the Lord says: The whole land will be ruined, though I will not destroy it completely. Therefore the earth will mourn and the heavens above grow dark, because I have spoken and will not relent. I have decided and will not turn back.”*

Sin Produces: Crime, Corruption, Injustice, Loneliness, Death, overtly, Pollution, War, and Hunger.

An honest evaluation of our lives leads us to conclude that we deserve heaven's anger. We deserve—not the blessing—but the curse that sin carries with it. That's what Calvary's cross is all about.

There on Calvary, the white-hot wrath of God, toward your sin and mine, fell on God's own Son, Jesus.

Jesus absorbed into himself the eternal curse we had deserved by our disobedience.

Now, The blessing Jesus deserved falls upon us - - that's Amazing Grace!

Through faith in Jesus, our Savior, we have become the sons and daughters of God. His blessing rests upon us—now and forever! Remarkable!

Again and again in Scripture, we read about this blessing. God repeats himself again and again, as if to convince us of his kind intentions toward us. The psalms overflow with promises of this blessedness. Consider Numbers 6. Here, God commands that Aaron and his sons after him speak words of blessing over the people as they gather to worship. Aaron, Israel's High Priest, raised his arms week by week, month by month, over the people of God as he invoked heaven's blessing on them:

"The LORD bless you, and keep you" (Numbers 6:24).

Perhaps you hear these words as little more than the kind thoughts or wistful hopes of those who shepherded God's ancient people. But they are far more! Much, much more!

These words are **God's Word! God's Blessing!**

Still today, these words of blessing carry with them the power to bring the blessing into reality in our lives because God himself has connected his promises to them! Speaking about the Old Testament priesthood and about the priests' duty to bless his people, God said,

"So they will put My name on the Israelites, and I will bless them." (Numbers 6:27).

Think of that! **We carry God's name into the world.** That name identifies us as his beloved children through faith (**1 John 3:1**) – ***"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God."***

During our District Assembly this weekend, we attended a teaching seminar. The speaker told us how we are no longer under the repetitive sins or habits or traits of our family of origin. Once we receive Jesus as Savior and Lord, we are adopted into the family of God. We no longer have to follow the ways of our “father” because we are now able to follow the way of our “Father” in heaven.

That name is a strong tower to which we continually run to find **safety and peace (Proverbs 18:10)**.

That name **energizes our service (Hebrews 6:10)** and

That name **gives focus to our witness (Romans 1:5; 10:13)**.

God puts his name on us in blessing, and we *are* blessed.

God gave the exact words of this blessing.
(Read Numbers 6:22–27).

Did you notice that these words are quite general, rather than specific? This leaves the door of heaven open, as it were. It gives the blessing a kind of “fill-in-the-blank” flavor. It’s your Savior’s invitation, just as though he was saying, “I will bless you. What do **you** need right now?” How would you answer that question?

“The LORD bless you, and keep you.” In what ways do you need to be blessed? Through what challenges and changes, dangers and opportunities, do you need to be kept? In what situations do you especially need to know the sunshine of his smile, the peace of his favor? Ask! He is gracious and merciful in Jesus. He can’t wait to open heaven’s windows and pour out his blessing upon you!

Taking It Home

Today you will take home **(Be Blessed – devotional book)**. I pray that each time you use it and every time you see it, you will recall God’s mercy and grace toward you in the cross of our Savior. I pray that you will receive the blessing your Savior has in mind for you—in all its fullness, especially the joy of knowing a deeper and deeper relationship with him – the Living God.

God bless you! Amen.