

Sunday, January 30, 2022 am

## **CLOSER TO GOD 2022 (4)**

### **How God Blesses us Today**

We are continuing our examination of who God is as we consider our need to draw closer to God. We have discussed our need to 1) Know God and 2) Trust Him. In this lesson, I want to talk about the blessings of God. How does God bless us today? And how can that draw us closer to Him?

#### **I. Blessed by God**

- a. The word “blessing” or “bless” as used in the Bible can mean many things –
  - i. The Greek word (NT) often translated “blessing” is the word from which we get our English word, *eulogy*. Primarily, the idea is to speak well of someone – to praise them and recommend them.
  - ii. Or to invoke favor, especially divine, upon another.
  - iii. It can also mean the favor (grace) we receive from our circumstances or others.
  - iv. Spiritually, consider each of these as they relate to God directed toward us. When we bless God, we praise and speak highly of Him. When we speak of being blessed by God, we note His favor toward us in every way. This is the focus of our study today.
- b. Scriptures about being blessed –
  - i. Ephesians 1:3 – He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.
  - ii. 2 Corinthians 9:8-10 – God is able to make all grace abound toward you...
  - iii. Matthew 5:3-12 – the *beatitudes* are about being blessed by God and in life, and how such makes us “happy” or being highly favored when we are living how we ought to be.
  - iv. Jeremiah 17:7, *Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose trust is the LORD.*

#### **II. Count Your blessings**

- a. We sometimes sing the song “Count your blessings”. And how appropriate it is. When we are struggling with life’s ups and downs, we always need to pause and count our blessings.
- b. **The blessings of nature** – our world is filled with blessings. Beauty, the world’s ability to sustain us., our abilities as man to do what we need to protect ourselves, our abilities to be able to comprehend and grasp just how wonderful and powerful He is. Truly, nature declares God.
  - i. Psalm 65:9, “You visit the earth and cause it to overflow...
  - ii. Hebrews 6:7, the earth receives blessing from God
  - iii. Matthew 5:45 – His sun shines on all
- c. **The blessings and stewardship of mankind** - Genesis 1:27-26 the first recorded blessing to man, after woman was created. God blessed them and said, “be fruitful and multiply”.
- d. **Our needs** – God has prepared this world to sustain us. When things are as they ought to be, typically we are taken care of. Matthew 7:9-11 notes that God knows how to give you what you need. It was also emphasized prior to this as He taught about not worrying.
- e. **Our abundance** – the Bible is filled with examples of the godly, whom God blessed with great abundance – Abraham, David, Job, Solomon, Barnabas, etc. And not many of us, and in the circumstance where we have just enough to get by. We have great abundance and in that we need to be grateful (cf. Philippians 4:12). The song reminds us that when you look at others who have more, you should pause and consider what you have. A great perspective with this is to also realize how much MORE you have than others. That is true for all of us!
- f. **Spiritually** – Ephesians 1:3ff. When we think of the blessings of God this is the most prevalent and we will address this more in our next section.

### III. How God blesses us?

- a. **Through natural means as mentioned above** – we all enjoy many blessings in life that are undeserved, etc. God created this world for us. Looking at nature – the sky, a beautiful sunset, animals, plants, etc. We can see the blessings of it. Our minds
- b. **Our spiritual blessings** – Ephesians 1:3, James 1:17, John 1:16
  - i. God's word – a perfect guide to His will and even a good and productive life.
    1. Psalm 119:105 - A lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
    2. Psalm 19:7, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul..."
    3. Matthew 13:16 – blessed are your eyes because they see...
    4. 2 Peter 1:2-4 – His divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue...
  - ii. Forgiveness of sins – Ephesians 1:7, Romans 4:7-8 – blessed is the one whose lawless deeds are forgiven
  - iii. Our freedom in Christ – Galatians 5:1 calls for us to stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free. When our sins are forgiven and we consider the magnitude of that blessing, it is spiritually liberating. John 8:31-32 notes that we are free indeed.
  - iv. The church – a divine institution that was part of God's eternal plan (Ephesians 3:10-11). Within the church, properly managed, we find the strength we need to overcome the sins and struggles of this world. We find strength and fellowship, both with God and man. We find His avenue of corporate worship with draws us closer to Him and one another. Truly this is a spiritual blessing.
  - v. Through answered prayer –
    1. Philippians 4:7-8 calls for us to pray to God and such will give us peace
    2. James 5:16 notes that the effective fervent prayer of the righteous accomplishes much.
    3. 1 Peter 3:12, His ears are open to their prayers.
    4. No wonder, we are continually urged to pray – 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Ephesians 6:18
- c. **Through our obedience** – there are blessings associated with obedience.
  - i. James 1:25 – when we are doers, we are blessed in what we do.
  - ii. A study of the history of Israel, and His demands since time began shows that God blesses the obedient. When we disobey and rebel it can lead to the withdrawal of His blessings and even being cursed. That was the warning to Israel in Deuteronomy 28-30.
  - iii. When we refuse to obey, how can we expect these blessings from God?
- d. **As we overcome temptation** –
  - i. James 1:12 – notes that the one who endures (meaning to face it and resist) temptation is blessed.
  - ii. When you overcome temptation, you are made stronger because of it. God designed us to be in control of ourselves. We are called to self-control – 2 Peter 1:5-8, Galatians 5:22-23
- e. **Through our brethren** –
  - i. We mentioned the church a moment ago dealing with God blessing us spiritually. Here my point is more than just being part of the church.
  - ii. When we are the family God intends for us to be, we will be there for one another. Genuine and loving brethren care about us and will do whatever they can for us and with us. Think of the blessing of that. Romans 12:10 speaks of being kindly affectionate and preferring one another. 1 Corinthians 12:25 notes that we should have the same care for one another. Galatians 5:13 we serve one another, Galatians 6:2 we bear one another's burdens, etc.
  - iii. I can tell you countless stories of brethren who have stepped in to help someone without asking for anything in return.

- iv. And sometimes this help is unnoticed even by the recipient – it might be anonymous, or something done secretly. It may just be prayers offered up on their behalf. It may be someone stepping up in your defense to calm a disgruntled brother or sister. Who knows where such things will lead?
- v. All I know is that godly brethren are a blessing.
- f. **Peace of mind** – Philippians 4:6-7. What a blessing it is to live life with real purpose. What a blessing it is to know that you are at peace with God and have peace within. Christians can enjoy a peace that the world does not understand.
- g. **In ways unknown** – we do not know the workings of God.
  - i. Providentially God can accomplish whatever needs to be done. In whatever way that involves us, we may not know or understand. But we should still be thankful. Just like Paul was thankful for Onesimus (Philemon 15-16).
  - ii. We know that He is accomplishing His purpose in life - Romans 8:28.
  - iii. Sometimes, others are a blessing to us. Here, I simply mention how others helping us is NOT limited to our brethren. Sometimes others do care and take actions on our behalf.
  - iv. This also applies during those times of struggle in our lives – rather than blaming God, as we noted last week – trust Him and let Him do His work in His way.

#### IV. Some thoughts about our blessings

- a. **Are we thankful?**
  - i. When it comes to the blessings of God, we need to be thankful. That is why we count our many blessings.
  - ii. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 notes that in everything we are to give thanks
  - iii. Ephesians 5:20 notes that give thank always for all things to God through Jesus.
- b. **Are we content?**
  - i. Philippians 4:11 – Paul noted he was content no matter what state he found himself in.
  - ii. 1 Timothy 6:6 – godliness with contentment is great gain.
  - iii. When we are truly content with what we have, it gives us the disposition we need to pursue closeness to God.
  - iv. **Discontentment is not a blessing.** In fact, it is a curse – you curse yourself to a life of misery and ingratitude. Fear, suspicion, bitterness, envy, confusion, “every evil thing” (James 3:14-16).
- c. **Am I using my blessings to bring glory to Him?** As I consider His blessings, I should not seek to keep this to myself. I let my light shine so that He may be glorified – Matthew 6:14-16.
- d. **Am I using my blessings to bless others?**
  - i. Galatians 6:10 – let us do good to all. (Also James 1:27)
  - ii. Hebrews 13:2 – when you do good to others, who knows who you are helping. Consider Matthew 25:31-46 where Jesus noted how you tended to those who belong to Him has bearing on your eternal destiny. It is as if you were doing it to Him – vs. 40.
  - iii. Even our enemies, Matthew 5:44-46, Romans 12:17-21 – overcome evil with good
  - iv. 1 Peter 3:8-9 -rather than reviling others, be a blessing to them, “that you may inherit a blessing.”
- e. **Realize that the blessings of this life are temporal** – you cannot take them with you. This is about perspective. Think of how Jesus taught us to lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven – Matthew 6:19-21.
- f. **Our blessing are not done with when life ends.** IF we are faithful to God we have hope beyond this life. We have hope of spending eternity with Him and others of like minds. What a blessing that will be.

And thus, we consider some thoughts about the blessing of God. When we consider how He blesses us and how blessed we are by Him, that ought to draw us closer to Him. How are His blessings, blessing you? Think about it!