

Let the Nations Be Glad

Psalm 67

Rev. Brian Bill

September 6-7, 2025

Every single day, more than 90 million selfies are taken and posted online. Think about that for a moment. That's millions of people turning the camera around on themselves, wanting to be seen, liked, and remembered.

Sadly, through the end of 2024, there have been 480 selfie-related deaths across 49 countries. One example took place in Arizona, when a 21-year-old hiker tragically slipped backward off a cliff while trying to capture a selfie against the city skyline at night.

Psalm 67 challenges us to stop living selfie-centered lives which can lead to our demise and start living Savior-centered lives as disciples of Christ.

Please stand and let's read it together: ***“To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song. May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah; that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth, Selah; Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!”***

Let's make a few observations.

- The word ***“bless”*** is used three times (1, 6, 7).
- The words ***“peoples,” “nations,”*** and ***“earth”*** are used twelve times, making this a missionary Psalm.
- The word ***“all”*** is used in verse 2: ***“all nations,”*** in verses 3, 5 we see the phrase: ***“all the peoples,”*** and in verse 7: ***“all the ends of the earth.”***
- The word ***“Selah”*** is used twice. As we've seen in several other psalms, this phrase urges us to pause, ponder, and pivot.

Here's our main idea: *God blesses His people, not so we can hoard His goodness, but so we can herald His glory among the nations.* We're called to be conduits of God's blessings to the world, not containers that keep those blessings to ourselves.

We're not to ask God just to fill our buckets with personal blessings, but to use those blessings to bless all peoples and nations. We're designed to be rivers, not reservoirs because God desires to use you and me to reach the globe with the gospel for His glory.

Let me demonstrate with this bucket and watering can. We can go through life asking God to fill up our buckets or we can redeem the time by pouring out God's blessings to others. If we selfishly keep filling our buckets, the things inside will sour and stagnate. On the other hand, if we selflessly give what we've been given, God will keep filling us up so we can give even more. Brothers and sisters, it's time for us to stop living selfie-centered lives which can lead to our demise and start living Savior-centered lives as disciples of Christ!

1. A prayer for God's blessing. This Psalm begins with a three-fold request in verse 1: ***"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us, Selah."*** The first request is to ask God to ***"be gracious"*** to us. This word means, *"underserved favor"* and has the idea of receiving God's compassionate kindness, not because we deserve it, but because we don't. Actually, we don't want to get what we deserve, do we? The second request is to ask God to ***"bless us"*** by providing His peace, protection, and provision.

The third request is to ask God to ***"make His face to shine upon us."*** The word ***"shine"*** means, *"to light up with a smile."* This phrase was used by Moses when he told Aaron and his sons to use this benediction as a way to bless God's people in Numbers 6:24-26: ***"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace."*** This request is repeated in Psalm 4:6: ***"Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!"*** and Psalm 80:3: ***"Let your face shine, that we may be saved!"*** Proverbs 16:15 says, ***"In the light of a king's face, there is life."***

Here's a question: Do you see God as smiling or scowling when He looks at you? Let's try an experiment. Look at the person next to you and give them a big smile. Now, turn that smile upside down and give them a scowl. How did you feel when you were smiled at? How about when you received a scowl? If you're a born-again believer, Zephaniah 3:17 says God not only smiles at you; He also breaks out into song when He thinks about you: ***"...He will exult over you with loud singing."***

Psalm 67:2 helps us see that even our prayers are not to be ultimately focused on ourselves, but on others: ***"that your way may be known on earth, your saving***

power among all nations.” We’re to ask God to be gracious, to bless us, and to shine upon us *so that* God’s way will be known in the whole world. God blesses us for the specific purpose of making His glory and His gospel known to all the peoples of the earth.

The phrase **“all nations”** is picked up by Jesus in Matthew 28:19: **“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...”** Isaiah 49:6 says, **“I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”** We could say it like this: The face of God shines *on us*, so the fame of God can shine *through us* to others.

I thought it would be helpful to share where we’re headed in our next series:

September 13-14	Blessed to be a Blessing	Genesis 12:1-3
September 20-21	God’s Reluctant Missionary	Jonah 1-4
September 27-28	The Mission of God	
October 4-5	Putting Compassion into Action	Matthew 9:35-38
October 11-12	The Great Omission	Luke 24:44-49
October 18-19	Compelled by Love	2 Corinthians 5:14-21
October 25-26	The Mission Fulfilled	Revelation 7:9-10

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2. The promise of God among the nations. In this next section we see the use of an *inclusio*, which is a Hebrew literary device used to make a strong point. Like bookends, an important phrase is placed in the middle of two identical sentences. In a culture that focused on oral learning, this practice aided in memorization. We see the two identical sentences in verse 3 and verse 5: **“Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!”**

In Hebrew, the word **“peoples”** refers to nations, ethnic groups, or tribes. These distinct groups of people are organized by shared ancestry, language, or territory. It’s not just “lots of individuals,” but all the different people groups of the earth.

Are you aware that Edgewood is 120 years old? In 1905, over 40 charter members of Edgewood covenanted together: *“...to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expense of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through **all nations**.”* This makes me think of a memorable

quote from Oswald J. Smith that Aaron Langworthy shared with the staff this week: *“The church that doesn’t evangelize will fossilize.”*

I’m grateful that Edgewood has Go Team partners in over 30 countries, with many serving in the least reached parts of the world. The Joshua Project estimates there are 17,000 people groups in the world, with about 7,000 of them still unreached by the gospel, making up over 3 billion people, or 42% of the world, still in need of the gospel!

Verse 4 is the main point: ***“Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon the earth, Selah.”*** The phrase, ***“Let the nations be glad”*** is the title of a highly recommended book by John Piper. This book was life-altering for me. Here are a few excerpts:

- *Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.*
- *The highest of missionary motives is... zeal—burning and passionate zeal—for the glory of Jesus Christ...If you love the glory of God, you cannot be indifferent to missions...*

One reason we’re committed as a church to the Great Commission is because we want to see more people gladly give praise to God as we read in Psalm 97:1: ***“The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!”*** I’m praying for God to give us an extraordinary burst of passionate zeal for the glory of Jesus Christ as we give and go so all the people groups of the world will worship God.

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3. The provision of God for His people. When we put God’s priorities first in our lives, God will provide for us. We see this in the first part of verse 6 as described in agricultural terms: ***“The earth has yielded its increase...”*** God made it clear throughout the Old Testament that obedience leads to blessings. We see this in Leviticus 26:3-4: ***“If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.”***

Isaiah 1:19 says, ***“If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.”***

Warren Wiersbe writes: *“A blessing is a gift from God that glorifies His name, helps His people, and through them reaches out to help others who will glorify His name.”* Commenting on this, H.B. Charles adds, *“Mark it down: God blesses us that we might be a blessing to others. And God will soon stop sending blessings to you if He cannot send blessings through you.”*

I think of the many ways God is blessing Edgewood right now as we’re seeing revived zeal for His glory coupled with unbridled joy and unity of spirit. This is an answer to the prayer we’ve been praying from Psalm 85:6: ***“Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?”*** Many are coming to Christ and following Him in baptism. The jail ministry on Friday nights regularly sees salvations. We took two disaster relief trips and saw God’s people give over \$80,000. As a result, we’ve put together a Disaster Relief team and are pursuing a partnership with Samaritan’s Purse. I’m delighted that we participate in Operation Christmas Child each year, as well as the Baby Bottle Project for Pregnancy Resources. I’m glad we serve the needs in our community through Curbside Christmas each December. We meet monthly to pray for the unreached people of the world. I’m also thrilled with how God is using our newly formed EdgeMissions team and all the work they have been doing on Go Con.

Our attendance and offerings are up, allowing us to fund special projects for several missionaries including purchasing new chairs for a church in Japan, contributing to a church building fund in Spain in honor of Leslie Belasco, helping with One Eighty’s HVAC system, and coming alongside a refugee family in the Quad Cities with plumbing problems.

We’ve also been able to support some short-term missionaries like Blake Hillhouse, Grant Williams, Addy Holmquist, and Emma Janecek. In addition, because of your generosity last year, we’ve set aside \$60,000 to support special projects and needs our missionaries have. Maddie Hart, our missions intern, has been in communication with all our partners and has put together a list of needs that the EdgeMissions team will present to the deacons.

We’re not focusing on our seating capacity, but on our sending capacity. We’re expanding our parking lot while asking God to move us out of park as He mobilizes us to live on mission among our neighbors and the nations.

Let's remember that every gift God gives us is meant to extend His glory to the nations. I believe God will continue to bless us as we strive to bless the nations. One pastor says it well: *"If God wants His good gospel to get to the nations, then He will fill the truck that's driving toward the nations. He will bless the church that's pouring itself out for the unreached peoples of the world. When we move toward the unreached peoples, we are not earning God's blessings, we are leaping into the river of blessings that is already flowing to the nations."*

Here are a few stats which are rather jarring:

- 2,509 languages have no Bible whatsoever.
- Only 3.4% of missionaries serve among the unreached.
- For every \$100,000 that Christians make, only \$1.83 goes to the unreached.

Haggai 1:6 shows what happens when we don't put God first: ***"You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes."*** God hit their agriculture and their economy hard because they were living unholy lives.

Friend, *if God is not at the center of your life, even if you get what you think you need it won't be enough.* Micah 6:14 says: ***"You shall eat, but not be satisfied, and there shall be hunger within you."***

Let me say it as clearly as I can: *If we put our purposes above God's priorities, we will never get what we're after.* Here's a news flash: *Only God can satisfy your soul.* Until you worship the Lord as number one, life won't work. The more we marginalize Him, the more we live without margin.

This is expanded in Haggai 1:9: ***"You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house."*** The tense of the phrase, ***"looked for much,"*** indicates they were continually looking for more stuff to put in their buckets. The word ***"behold"*** has the idea of certainty and could be translated, ***"look now."***

Don't miss who is behind their difficulties. It's not Satan or a spouse or a neighbor or a co-worker or a classmate. God says, ***"What you brought home, I blew away."*** This is literally translated, ***"I did blow away."***

God links their situation directly to their misplaced priorities when He says emphatically, ***“Because of my house that lies in ruins...”*** The word ***“ruins”*** refers to dry and desolate. To ***“busy themselves”*** means they were *“running each to his own house.”* It has the idea of excitement, intensity, and urgency. It was used of horses running at full gallop. They loved being busy with their own business so much so that they stopped doing God’s business.

Do you feel like all you’re doing is running around from thing to thing, from activity to activity, from event to event? Have you ever noticed how many times people answer the question, *“How are you?”* with this phrase, *“I’m busy.”* It’s like we need to validate our lives by letting people know how busy we are. When people tell me why they haven’t been to church for a while, the number one answer I hear is, *“We’ve just been so busy.”* Listen. Our busyness can keep us from God’s business. Let me say it strongly: *If you’re too busy to regularly gather with God’s people on Saturday nights or Sunday mornings, you’re too busy.*

I realize some of you will be out of town or have other commitments, but as one of your pastors I’m strongly urging you to register and attend Go Con on Saturday, September 27. Here are some highlights:

- Five of our Global Go Team partners will be here – Paul and Roxanne Wilson, Kishor and Sikha Pandagade, Bobby and Lisa Bechtel, Connie Gill, and Aaron and Amanda Langworthy.
- All of our local Go Team partners will be participating in a mission’s fair – Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Child Evangelism Fellowship, Pregnancy Resources, Safe Families, Youth Hope, One Eighty, and InterVarsity.
- Two of our national Go Teams will have reps here – Voice of the Martyrs and Samaritan’s Purse.
- The 10 of Those Bookstore will be here and a ministry called Latitudes will be selling artisan-made products from around the world to support microbusinesses.
- We’ll have three different breakout sessions – *Raising Kids with a Heart for Missions*, *Ministry in the Mess*, and a *Missionary Panel*.
- The free lunch will have an International flair to it.

I know I need to be constantly revitalized and recalibrated to God’s purposes, and my guess is you do, too. *He will bless the church that’s pouring itself out for the unreached peoples of the world.*

We thought it would be helpful to watch a brief clip of Dr. Todd Ahrend speaking.

Play Todd Ahrend Clip

I love the last couple sentences: *“God was slowly changing my small purpose that revolved around me to His global purpose that revolved around Him. The question was, ‘Would I continue with my me-centered purpose, or would I live for God’s?’”*

To hear more from Todd, be sure to watch this week’s episode of the 4G podcast by simply going to the Edgewood YouTube channel or listen to the audio on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

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God blesses His people, not so we can hoard His goodness, but so we can herald His glory among the nations.

4. The purpose of God’s blessings. The last part of verse 6 and verse 7 reinforce the truth that we are blessed in order to bless the ends of the earth: **“...God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear Him!”** The Psalm begins with a prayer for God to be gracious, to bless us, and to smile upon us. It ends with a declaration that God **“shall”** bless us, and it’s repeated twice. The purpose for this blessing is for all the ends of the earth to **“fear Him.”**

As we review Psalm 67, we see that we should give and go with the gospel so that all people groups in all nations may *know God’s way* (verse 2), *praise Him* (verses 3, 5), *be glad in Him* (verse 4), and *fear Him* (verse 7).

This week, I was quite moved by the words of another pastor who preached on Psalm 67.

Please hear me. This is not a mission’s sermon...it is a sermon about the mission of our lives. It’s the reason for which we have been created. It is the reason for which we have been saved. I am saying to you based on the authority of Scripture that God has blessed you; He has blessed this church with a global purpose behind it. He wants His greatness, His salvation, His mercy, and His majesty to be made known in all nations. And I believe that is why God has created you, that is why He has saved you, not ultimately for our sake but for His sake in the nations. And that means a totally new way of

looking at our lives where it is not about us and how we can gain success but how can I most effectively make the glory of Christ known in all nations with the life that God has entrusted to me?

In other words, instead of checking things off of my “bucket list,” I need to start focusing on pouring out the bucket of blessings He’s given to me so my neighbors and the nations will be blessed.

Action Steps

- 1. Pray Psalm 67 every day between now and our Go Conference.**
- 2. Register for Go Con today.** We already have 100 registered, but that’s only 10% of our weekly worship attendance. Some of you don’t think this conference is for you but actually missions is not a program for a few, but it’s God’s purpose for everyone. Maybe you’ve been afflicted with FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) on something else that weekend so you’re putting off registering. Actually, my greater fear is you will miss out on GO CON and wish you had come once you hear what God did during it.
- 3. Sign up for a Growth Group for seven weeks if you’re not in one yet.** If you’re not in a group, check out “Group Connect” in the lobby. There are a couple new groups beginning, including a single’s group for those in their 30s and 40s and a new women’s elective class at 10:45.
- 4. As a matter of obedient stewardship, some of us need to commit or recommit ourselves to give at least that basic 10% God asks from all of us.**
- 5. Financially partner with one of our Go Team partners.** Or you could serve with one of our local partners. If you’re a guy, consider becoming a M.O.V.E. mentor with Youth Hope.
- 6. Identify a blessing you’ve been hoarding and use it to help someone else.**
- 7. Read a book on missions.** We’re making a free book available called, “Missions” at the EdgeCafe and at the Missions Display. We also have a “Missions Lending Library” with biographies and other resources. Todd Ahrend has written two books, and they are available for \$11 each. In addition, we’ve invited a mobile bookstore to our conference so you can purchase additional resources then.
- 8. Go on a short-term mission’s trip.** Eight people are attending Engage Global this weekend. A Disaster Relief team will be serving in Milwaukee in a couple weeks as we prepare to become part of the Disaster Assistance Response Team with Samaritan’s Purse. We’re also pursuing hosting one of

their Disaster Relief vehicles at Edgewood so it can be ready to be used in this region.

9. **Befriend someone from another culture.** Many nations of the world have moved to our community. Are you aware, that according to a study from several years ago, there are 44 languages spoken in the Quad Cities? I experienced this on Friday when I did a prayer walk at Augustana during my lunch hour. Meagan Gottcent, our Go Team partner with InterVarsity, shared with me there will be a student led Bible study for sorority women and another one for the Track and Field team this semester. They were looking forward to the Club Fair to reach out to new students. Oh, and the Cru meeting at UW-Whitewater had 400 students, with 71 professions of faith! Our Mainspring ministry is also on fire for Christ!
10. **Attend the Unreached Prayer Night on Monday at 7:00 p.m.** We'll be praying for Uganda.

In the late 1700s, a poor English shoemaker named William Carey kept a map of the world on his wall. Every day, as he made shoes, he would look at the map and weep over the nations who did not yet know Christ. While most of his peers were content with the gospel staying in England, Carey believed the message of Psalm 67 that God blesses His people so that His saving power will lead to all peoples praising God.

When he urged churches to send missionaries, one older pastor reportedly told him: *“Young man, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine.”* But Carey didn't sit down. Instead, he preached his famous sermon containing these words: *“Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God.”*

That vision carried him to India, where he spent 41 years without ever returning home. He translated the Bible into multiple Indian languages, started schools, fought against unjust practices like widow-burning, and sparked the modern missionary movement. William Carey received God's blessings, but he didn't put them in a bucket. Rather, he poured them out to the nations.

Will you do the same?

Communion

Psalm 67 begins with this prayer: ***“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah; that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.”***

Since the word **“Selah”** means to pause, ponder, and pivot, let’s take some time to focus on the Savior, not ourselves. It’s time for us to stop living selfie-centered lives which can lead to our demise and start living Savior-centered lives as disciples of Christ!

This prayer for God to be gracious to us has been fully answered in Jesus Christ when His grace was poured out at the cross. Believers have been blessed with forgiveness of sin and have been given power over death, the devil, and our depravity through the resurrection. And God has made His face shine on us because when we look at Jesus, we see the very face and grace of a smiling God turned toward us in love.

The bread reminds us that Jesus gave His body for us. The cup reminds us that His blood was shed for our salvation. Communion is not only a time of remembrance, but also a time of renewal. After we receive the bread and cup, we will be sent back out into the world to make Christ known as we live as winsome witnesses.

When we come to the Lord’s Table, we rehearse the gospel message by proclaiming Christ’s sacrifice was not just for one people group, but for all peoples everywhere. The prayer found in Psalm 67 is answered in Revelation 7:9-10: ***“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”***

The bread and the cup remind us of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus. But they also redirect us to the scope of His mission. His death wasn’t limited to Israel, or just to America, nor to one culture, language, or ethnicity. Jesus said in Matthew 26:28, ***“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”*** That word “many” stretches across continents, cultures, and centuries.

As we eat and drink today, we are joining a global family of blood-bought believers in villages and cities, jungles and deserts, house churches and cathedrals. Communion is both a memorial of what Christ has done and a preview of the great

wedding feast of the Lamb, when all nations will be glad as together we gather around His table to give Him praise.

Let's not only remember what Christ has done for us, but also long for what He is still doing among the nations. Let's thank God for including us in His forever family and pray for the day when the task will be completed, when every tribe, tongue, and nation will be represented at the eternal table of the Lamb.

Distribute Elements

Commissioning of Addy Holmquist

Benediction

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace as you give and go with the gospel to your neighbors and the nations so that God's way may be known on earth, His saving power among all peoples everywhere.

Distribution of Go Con Booklets and Invite Cards