

“The Lord Blesses You”

Pentecost 1 - Trinity
Numbers 6:22-27
June 16, 2019

May the Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. Amen. (2 Thess 2:16-17)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Introduction – Father’s Day

I probably don't need to remind you, but happy Father's Day. Perhaps you set it to your dad already someone has said it to you. But the question I want to ask you today is this, “What do dad’s really want for Father's Day?” The ads will tell you one thing. They will tell you they have the best gift for dads. Or we can offer to do something for dad to make their life a little easier – we could offer to cut the grass or pick weeds.

But seriously – what does every dad or what does every parent want for their family? I ask that question – b/c we hear from Numbers chapter 6 today – the blessing that the LORD has for every Father and every family. It's what every dad and every parent wants for their own family. And it's what the heavenly father wants for every single one of us.

Background

Perhaps you’ve heard these words before. They are spoken at the end of every church service.

- 24 “ ‘ **“The LORD bless you
and keep you;
25 the LORD make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
26 the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.” ’**

This morning we want to specifically think how **The Lord Blesses You**. How the Lord blesses each and every one of us in our lives. This blessing is typically called the Aaronic Blessing. It was the Lord’s command for Aaron and his sons to speak to the people. It was used at the end of every worship service in the tabernacle. It

was the words that God wanted his people to remember as they would leave and to carry with them until they would meet again. I want you to think of why it would have been important for them to hear this – both for the circumstances that they found themselves in and for familial reasons.

Circumstances

Moses and the Israelites were wandering around in the desert. They had just left Egypt behind. They had enemies all around them. They had the Egyptians who had just recently been chasing them. They did not know where they were going to live as the promised land still seemed far off. They did not know what they were going to eat – until God provided them with manna and quail. With all this uncertainty in their lives, it was important that they hear from their God – how he wanted to bless them in their lives and that he had cared for them and that he wanted to protect and provide for them. If they looked back at past history, the Lord came through every time.

Familial Blessing

But the 2nd reason it was so important was that in that day and age being the 1st born son was a very important thing. It meant that you received the family blessing. You received the land and possessions. You received the title and prestige. You carried on the family name.

And perhaps the most important story that the Bible teaches us this truth comes from the story of Jacob and Esau. Jacob and his brother Esau were born as twins – and not very far apart in age – most likely a matter of minutes. Jacob’s name means “heal grabber” as he was grabbing Esau’s heel – coming out of the womb. God had told Isaac, their father, that Jacob would receive the blessing. But the problem was that Isaac had loved Esau more. Jacob grew up with jealousy of his older brother. So Jacob and his mother Rebecca hatched a plan to go and take the birthright from Esau and get it by deception.

When you think about all that Jacob sacrificed – not just material things, but family relationships – just to receive the blessing from his father, it didn't go well when Isaac found out that Jacob was dressed in Esau’s clothes to deceive his father. And

Esau grew very angry when he found out that he lost his birthright to his younger brother who took it by force. He never received the blessing that he so desperately wanted. Rather, he was forced to wander away from home for a time.

What does it mean that the Lord blesses you?

24 “ ‘ **“The LORD bless you
and keep you;**

Protection

God the Heavenly Father’s protection and providing for us. The word “keep” has the thought behind it of the protection that God provides for each and every one of us. He gives us clothing and shoes; a roof over our head, the opportunity to work to earn a living, to put food on the table. All these blessings come from the heavenly father – all of God's blessings in our lives.

Think also of how he keeps us. He sends his angels to watch over us so that we will not fall. When we look at the section of scripture we think of the Lord blesses us and keeps us, we see the direct results of how the Lord continues to do that for us to this day. God's loving protection...of the heavenly father. He provides for each and every one of us

Not only that, the blessing goes on to say –

25 **the LORD make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;**

Pardon

What does it mean that the Lord's face is shining on you? That he’s smiling on you is a wonderful thing – to have the smile of the father on you...b/c the opposite of that would be to incur the wrath of the father. Have you ever had your dad upset with you? If it’s happened to you...or if you're like me more than a time or two. Perhaps you can even think to the most recent time that this happened. It's not a fun thing to have happen to you. It's not the type of relationship that you want to have with your father.

But do we deserve to have the smile of the heavenly father on us? Do we deserve his love and affection? The Bible paints a completely different picture. It tells us how **the wages of sin is death.** (Ro 6:23) It tells us that **“if we keep the whole law, yet break it at one point, we’re guilty of breaking all of it.”** We fall

far short of God's demand - **Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.** (Mt 5:48)

How do we get that pardon in our lives? How do we get the smile or face shining on us of our heavenly father? It's not something that we earn or deserve, but it's something that God gave us freely through his grace. It happened when he sent his one only son to take away our sins. We deserve to have God look away from us, but he does the exact opposite – he looks to us. Jesus has taken away over sin through his life, death and resurrection. One of the ways that he does this is through the pardon and forgiveness of sins that he won for us on the cross every time that we come to church on a Sunday morning. We receive the blessing that God intends to give us the forgiveness of all our sins. When we come to church we confess our sins; when we leave we are reminded that we have the assurance of forgiveness that we have through Jesus.

The Lord make us they shine on you and be gracious to you. We have the father's love and grace and approval because he's given us Jesus. God's anger and all of God's wrath over our sins was placed squarely on the shoulders of Jesus. We have protection and we have peace.

Peace

**26 the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.” ’**

But finally we have his peace. As much as we deserve to have got look away from us, God turns his face to us and gives us peace. We receive that peace through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is at work in our lives through Word and sacrament. In the word God encourages us to give that peace of mind and peace of heart that's surpasses all understanding. Think of what Paul was talking about when he said that very thing in Philippians 4. He was in prison and yet he had the ability to write – **“The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”** How do you get that peace even in those types of circumstances? It comes from knowing who your Lord and Savior is. It comes from knowing that no matter what you've done or no matter what you will ever do to incur the father's wrath

he's forgiven it all through Jesus. To have that peace of mind and to know that we have the forgiveness of our every sin gives us hope and peace.

What do we do with this blessing? The blessing here in Numbers 6 is a wonderful thing that we hear every time we come to church. But I'd also like you to consider verse 27 which says –

²⁷ “So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

God put his name on his people. Doesn't receiving the blessing and hearing that blessing spoken to us take us back to our baptism? Isn't that where God put his name on us? Through water and the word, we were baptized into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. We became part of God's family. He marked us as redeemed children of God. We have god's name; and we have god's blessing. No matter if we're the best dad in the world or we've made many mistakes and too many to count. Whether we were a great child or one that is rebellious. We have the forgiveness and love of our heavenly father; we have his protection; we have his pardon through his son Jesus. We have that blessing that gives us peace.

Now, what do we do with it? How do we give the blessing to others in our lives? Think about ways in which you can bless other people. Think of ways in which God has blessed you with relationships in life. And think of ways in which you can be a blessing to them. How you can show love to them. How you can encourage them. How you can share the good news of Jesus with them. And God also wants us to seek it out. Go back to God's word to receive the love and reassurance and comfort that God intends to give you his blessing. He gives you protection. He gives you pardon. He gives you peace.

One of the ways that I do that with my family is something that I'd like to share with each and every one of you. It's a blessing that you can share with your family, with your spouse on a regular basis. In the blessing we hear the 2nd person plural pronoun of you with the Lord bless and keep YOU. Change it to 1st person plural. And let's say that now together. And let's have that be the blessing we share with each other.

The Lord bless us and keep us.

The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us.

The Lord look on us with favor and give us peace. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

²²The LORD said to Moses, ²³“Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

**²⁴ “ ‘ “The LORD bless you
and keep you;**

**²⁵ the LORD make his face shine upon you
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