

God Bless You

A sermon based on Numbers 6:22-27

Pastor Grant van Boeschoten

Some fun with origins to start the message.

- “God Bless You” - AD 590 Pope Gregory I commanded unending prayer and to say God bless you after a person sneezed, since sneezing was one of the first signs of the plague
- “Good Bye” - from 1565, the original phrase was “God be with ye” became contracted down to Good bye”
 - when someone says Good bye to you, you can reply, “And God also be with you”

At the end of our church services, we always have a Benediction

- Benediction is latin word.
 - Bene = Good
 - Diction = Word
 - In Genesis 1, as God created the world, he would make this comment daily, “It is Good”.
 - And so the benediction is God’s good word and approval on what he has created and is sustaining.
 - The benediction is at the end of the service then, because it is at the conclusion of what God has done here, and will continue to sustain in his church.

Our text today is often used as the benediction at the end of the service. It is taken from Numbers 6:22-27.

- I want to show both the meaning to this blessing as well as examples of how God throughout time has enacted this blessing on His people.

Numbers 6:22–23 (HCSB)

²² The Lord spoke to Moses: ²³ “Tell Aaron and his sons how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

Aaron and his sons had been chosen to be Priests by God himself.

- This blessing takes on a very special tone, when we realize that it is God commanding his priests to bless his people.
 - God is not forced to bless us
 - This is His decision, this is His desire
 - The words that I will go on to explain today are God’s desires for his people.
 - we will see how God makes these desires possible for his people, for apart from God, nothing that follows could happen in any of our lives.
 - But with God, all of this is not only possible, it is certain. (2 Cor 1:20)

The structure for this blessing is worth pointing out.

- 3 sets of 2 promises, with the second one always building on the first

- God states his name, “Yahweh” three times here, perhaps one time for each member of the trinity.
 - Typically, when this benediction is pronounced, we conclude with the three persons of the trinity, “In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.”

Numbers 6:24 (HCSB)

²⁴ May Yahweh **ble**ss** you** and protect you;

What does the word “bless” mean?

- Tim Keller explains blessing in the context of the Family Blessing that was given by the Father to his children. ¹
 - In one sense, the father declares all of the good things that he desires for the child to accomplish.
 - In the other sense, he is dividing up his property and bestowing it on that child so that the good can be achieved.

When God blesses us, He is saying that he longs for these good things to happen for us, and what’s more, is that he gives us Himself in order to secure that blessing in our lives.

It is God consistently bringing good into our lives.

How will the blessed life look?

Psalm 1:1–3 (HCSB)

¹ How happy is the man who does not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path of sinners or join a group of mockers! ² Instead, his delight is in the Lord’s instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted beside streams of water that bears its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

- Can you say that you never once followed the advice of the wicked, and never took the path of sinners and never joined a group of mockers?
- I bet that we would all like to say that our delight is fully in the Lord’s instruction, and that as a result we are like the fruitful tree of Psalm 1, prospering in all we do.

But even though we pray this over our lives, we see its true fulfillment in Jesus Christ. He is the one without sin, the one who never failed in the face of temptation.

A blessing is God’s desire for us that he could consistently do good in our lives, but because of sin, we cut ourselves off from God.

- God not only pronounces his blessing on us, he also makes it possible to bless us.
- This is accomplished through Jesus Christ. He became the curse, so that we could be blessed.

¹ Tim Keller, “Benediction” 2008

Children of God, you are most blessed, because God has chosen to bless you, and to bring about his blessings for you. It is more than mere words, it is a gift.

Ephesians 1:3

³Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens.

(does not say and every material blessing on the earth)

To be blessed by God means that you can smile. Reflect on what God has done, and what God is doing and will do, and smile.

Numbers 6:24 (HCSB)

²⁴ May Yahweh bless you and **protect you**;

God wants to protect his people.

- Who is stronger than God? Who can stop his will from happening?
- The All-Powerful God of the universe says that he wants to protect his people, he wants to protect you.
- When we understand this, we declare...

Psalms 46:1-3

¹God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble.

²Therefore we will not be afraid, though the earth trembles and the mountains topple into the depths of the seas,³though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with its turmoil.

What is the main goal of God's protection for your life?

- that you will never get hurt? that you will always be out of harm?
- No, those things will happen in this present world.
- God's main goal of protection for your life is to keep you in covenant with Him.

John 6:37-40 (HCSB)

³⁷ Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ This is the will of Him who sent Me: that I should lose none of those He has given Me but should raise them up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of My Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

To be protected by God means that you can sleep without worry. He won't let you go, He won't lose you. Your eternal life with God is absolutely secure.

Numbers 6:25 (HCSB)

²⁵ may Yahweh make **His face shine on you** and be gracious to you;

We should remember that it is God himself who is saying that he will make his face shine on us, or more personally, on you.

- If you want to know what a shining face looks like, find yourself a grandparent and watch their face shine on their newborn grandchild ²
- It's a delight that expresses itself through joy in smiles, and eyes and raised cheeks.

Zephaniah 3:17 (HCSB)

¹⁷ Yahweh your God is among you, a warrior who saves. He will rejoice over you with gladness. He will bring you quietness with His love. He will delight in you with shouts of joy.”

This delight is not intended to be a one way delight, where God delights in us and we just receive it and enjoy it.

God shines his face on us, as our face is fixed on him. And we don't fix our face on God to get more of his blessing, we simply look to him because he is our only true source of life, joy, peace, hope, faith, goodness, righteousness and love.

Psalms 37:4 (HCSB)

⁴ Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you your heart's desires.

Yes, God wants to make his face shine on you, but this is not a face that shines on sin.

Isaiah 59:1–2 (HCSB)

¹ Indeed, the Lord's hand is not too short to save, and His ear is not too deaf to hear. ² But your iniquities have built barriers between you and your God, and your sins have made Him hide His face from you so that He does not listen.

So how Can God make his face to shine on a fallen people?

It is by also being gracious to us.

Numbers 6:25 (HCSB)

²⁵ May Yahweh make His face shine on you and **be gracious to you;**

There is a wonderful hymn that proclaims

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see His face,
Will you this moment His grace receive?

Grace, grace, God's grace,

² Dallas Willard, "Living in Christ's Presence"

Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin.³

Psalm 51:1 (HCSB)

¹ Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithful love; according to Your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion.

This prayer is answered for all of us through the work of Jesus.

John 1:16–17 (HCSB)

¹⁶ Indeed, we have all received grace after grace from His fullness, ¹⁷ for the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Jesus is our best picture of what Grace looks like.

- Acts of kindness and generosity given to ultimately bring the restoration of lives.

it is because of God's grace, that we can be blessed.

It is because of God's grace, that we can be protected.

it is because of God's grace, that his face can shine on us.

Because of God's Grace, we can look our enemy in the eye, and forgive them and bless them, just as we have been forgiven and blessed by God.

A forgiven face is a face that can shine.

Numbers 6:26 (HCSB)

²⁶ May Yahweh **look with favor on you** and give you peace.

"Look with Favour" is more or less synonymous with "shine your face"

- Its amazing that God more or less repeats, or re-emphases this part of the blessing.

What would it mean for your personally for God to look on you with favour?

- If a King were to look on you with favour, it would mean you had his audience, you had his value.
- If a father were to look on you with favour, it would mean that you had his approval.
- If a guide were to look on you with favour, it would mean that you were being led well.
- If a teacher were to look on you with favour, it would mean that you were learning.
- If a friend were to look on you favour, it would mean that they appreciate you.
- If a priest were to look on you with favour, it would mean you have God's blessing.
- if a prophet were to look on you with favour, it would mean that good things were in store for you.

³ Julia H. Johnston, "Grace That is Greater Than All Our Sin"

These are just some of the titles of God, he calls himself by these titles to help us gain perspective and understanding for who he is, and what he is like, and how he wants to relate to us.

God wants us to see him as King, Father, Guide, Teacher, Friend, Priest and Prophet. As he looks on us with favour, we know that we

- have his approval (2 Timothy 2:15)
- are being led well, (Romans 8:14)
- are learning about him (John 14:26)
- are his friend (James 2:23)
- have God's blessing (Ephesians 1:3-14)
- can anticipate God's good things in store for us (Romans 8:28)

Because God looks on you with favour, you can be amazed.

What is left then but to see that all of these things must result in a sort of a heavenly peace for our lives.

Numbers 6:26 (HCSB)

²⁶ May Yahweh look with favor on you and **give you peace**.

Peace was what the nation of Israel was waiting for. Their hope was that when God's promised Messiah arrived, he would usher in a Kingdom of Peace.

This hope multiplied as the nation of Israel went through the pain of the exile from their homeland, with only a portion of the Israelites returning to rebuild over the next couple of centuries.

- The rise and fall of empires would no longer see the nation of Israel as a world power, instead they were subjected to other empires.
- By the time the Messiah arrived, Israel was under the tyranny of the Roman empire, with guards on every corner, and Rome having the final word in the lives of Jewish citizens.
- God, come, usher in your Kingdom of Peace, was their prayer.

God the Son came to earth, the Prince of Peace arrived. But he brought a better peace than what was hoped for. He made it possible for people to have peace with God.

Romans 5:1 (HCSB)

¹ Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

John 14:27 (HCSB)

²⁷ "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Your heart must not be troubled or fearful.

Peace isn't the absence of trouble. Peace is what happens in the midst of trouble when you are able to have a confident trust that you have everything you need in God, and that he has you.

The person who has peace can open their eyes in the midst of life's worst storms, and not be afraid of where they stand with God, and where their eternity will be spent.

Numbers 6:27 (HCSB)

²⁷ In this way they will pronounce My name over the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

Even though this line comes after the blessing is pronounced, it might bear the most significance, for it talks about the very core of who we are and how we are identified.

God says that his name will be pronounced over his people.

There is value in names.

- God is willing and wanting to adopt you.
- When you are adopted, his family name is put on you
- ex. I'm not just Grant, I am Grant, son of God.

Do you feel the weight, the privilege and the responsibility that comes from having God's name pronounced on your life. Child of God, that's what we are, that's who we are in Jesus Christ.

At the end of the service, I will pronounce God's blessing on this church, on his people. Its for all who will put their faith in Jesus Christ.

John 1:12 (HCSB)

¹² But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name,

During this closing song, you might want to get your life right with God. You might want to confess your sins to him, to believe on him for forgiveness, and to become adopted as his child.

Pray something like this...

God, I don't just want your blessing, I want you. My sin is keeping me from you, my sin is overwhelming me. Please forgive me for all my sin, please give me a new heart, please put your name on my life, and I will live for you. I receive Jesus, the Son of God, as the Saviour and Ruler of my life. Amen.