

December 28, 2025

“Be Part of the Blessing”

Numbers 6: 22-27

Intro:

At Christmastime, especially, we try to teach our kids the lesson that it is more blessed to give than to receive. I admit this teaching is not always easy as we also encourage our kids to write wish lists for Christmas gifts. It isn't a bad thing to have fun with that part of the Christmas tradition, but we do need to try and bring attention back to how we view the giving and receiving of gifts.

For our purposes this morning, I am going to shift away from the term “gifts” and instead talk about the concept of blessing.

Quite often in church, the benediction, or blessing, given at the end of the service is the blessing from Numbers 6 that we read earlier. This is a common way to offer encouragement to people as they leave, as well as to pray for God's presence and involvement with people as they go about their day-to-day lives.

When I was in the touring choir during my Bible College years, we ended every concert by singing a version of that blessing. It was such a strong tradition within the school that it was also always a part of the graduation ceremonies, with the choir singing and those members who were graduating that year feeling an especially significant experience as they sang it both to their fellow classmates and to themselves.

As we close out the year this week, I thought it would be appropriate to focus on this blessing and how each of us can be a part of that blessing and not just passive receivers of words that are spoken from the front. In our prayer time following the message, we will take time to pray blessing on other people in our lives, so feel free to start thinking about that even now.

Aaron's Blessing:

The blessing that we are reading is the one that Aaron and his sons – who represented the High Priests or the top of the priestly order in Israel – were to pronounce upon the Israelites throughout the year. This prayer of blessing reminded the people that God was on their side and present with them, that He did and would continue to provide for their needs, and that they were bearers of God's name among the other nations.

It is this “among the other nations” piece that is significant for us this morning. The Israelites were, ultimately, chosen by God as His children for the purpose of making His name known among the other nations. His people were to be different – to live differently, to treat one another differently, and to show the world what it meant to worship and live for the Living God, the Creator of the Universe. Yes, the blessing that Aaron was to proclaim was a benefit to the Israelites, but it did not mean that God intended to be exclusive in doling out his blessings. The idea that His chosen people would play a part in how God would be revealed and how He would bring a blessing to all nations goes all the way back to His covenant with Abraham.

In Genesis 12:2-3 (NLT) God says “I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”

If you study all the instructions and commands that God gives to Moses about how the Israelites are supposed to live after being liberated from slavery in Egypt, you will find that a good many of them deal with how other people are to be treated. God intentionally includes foreigners (those non-Jewish people living in Israel) in His instructions. The instructions are not restricted to rules about how the foreigners should live; they also tell God's people how the foreigners are to be treated. Again, all of this is part of the big picture of making God's name known, the Israelites being the ones who carry that name with them.

As we move further along the Jewish historical timeline, we find the addition of the temple to the Israelite order of worship. God allowed Solomon to build a temple that would house the name of the Lord. Throughout the generations following Solomon, the temple was always at the heart of how the Jews understood their worship. People travelled to Jerusalem for the high feast days to celebrate and to worship at the temple. It was not just a pretty building exclusively for the use of the Israelites, but it was meant to be a place of inclusion and blessing for all people. Listen to part of Solomon's prayer of dedication found in 2 Chronicles 6:32-33 (NLT).

"In the future, foreigners who do not belong to your people Israel will hear of you [God]. They will come from distant lands when they hear of your great name and your strong hand and your powerful arm. And when they pray towards this Temple, then hear from heaven where you live, and grant what they ask of you. In this way, all the people of the Earth will come to know and fear you, just as your own people Israel do. They, too, will know that this Temple I have built honors your name."

When Jesus went into the Temple and threw out all the money lenders and merchants, it wasn't because he was opposed to Temple worship or that he was trying to make a statement about the sacrificial atonement system (He would be the ultimate expression of that!). It was because the religious leaders had turned the temple into a place that excluded people instead of including them. The foreigners, and to a lesser degree women, had been forced to interact with the temple from a distance. And the limited areas that they were even allowed to come near to had been turned into a marketplace where people could get the things they needed for offering and sacrifice. It had ceased to be a place of blessing, and God's people had ceased to be a people of blessing.

A Royal Priesthood:

Jesus changed what was going on. He turned the situation around and permanently opened up the worship of God to all people. What were supposed to be the marching orders of the Israelites were re-engaged with Jesus. There are

two great commands or instructions that Jesus gave his followers. The first is that they were to Love God and Love people. There is no fine print exclusion on this. The second is that they were to go out and make disciples of all people – baptising them and teaching them everything about Jesus and God’s gracious love.

In this way, Jesus put into place a new priestly system. No longer was it just up to the high priest and his descendants to pronounce a blessing. It is now up to everyone who claims to be a follower of Jesus. 2 Peter 2:9 (NLT) says, “But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.”

You are part of the blessing. You are part of the group of people interceding before God to bless others.

What a joy and privilege this is. But it also comes with some challenges.

Conclusion:

What does it mean to ask for blessings for others?

First, it means that we must honestly have submitted to the Lordship of Christ. We are asking for His best for people. We need to know what that is before we can ask it for others.

Second, it means that we need to develop true humility about ourselves and joyful desire for the good of others because it is very likely that as we pray for God’s blessing for others, they will receive a greater blessing than what we perceive we have received. There is no room for comparisons or grudges here. Our attitude needs to be one of true and honest joy over how God blesses others. Remember that blessings are not put on a scale to see how good or bad they are. The blessing we ask for is one that trusts God to provide for each person what they need – in every area of their lives. It might be a physical need, or emotional

or spiritual. God does not show favoritism. He acts from his character of true and gracious love.

So, go forth and ask God's blessing on those people you live with, work with, and play with. Rejoice with them as God answers those prayers. Help them to see where God has blessed them. And in this way, you will be a faithful bearer of God's name to make Him known among the nations, and you will gain a deeper and greater understanding of, and appreciation for, the ways that God has blessed you.

Let's pray.