

I Will Bless You – Numbers 6:22-27

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Read Text

22 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: **23** “Speak to Aaron & his sons, saying, ‘This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:

24 “The LORD bless you & keep you;

25 The LORD make His face shine upon you, & be gracious to you;

26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, & give you peace.”

27 “So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, & I will bless them.”

1. Not long after God said this to Moses, the nation of Israel packed up their tents at the foot of Mt. Sinai where they had just spent an entire year, & set out on their journey to the Promised Land.
2. Little did Moses & Aaron know that the next nearly 40 years would be filled with such trouble.
 - a. they were about to see cycles of . . .
 - 1) whining & complaining, 2) challenges to their leadership, 3) outright rebellion
 - b. that would stretch their patience to the breaking point.
3. They would witness the judgment of God on the rebels in the camp of Israel time & again.
4. God knew Moses & Aaron would be brought to the brink of despair & that their anger would rise against the people.
5. So before all of that began, He gave them this crucial word about their role as leaders.
6. They were to *bless* the people, not *blast* them!

B. What's Your View of God?

1. What's your view of God? How do you see Him?
2. In our modern, scientific age, some people see God as a quaint, old-fashioned idea that is now rather *irrelevant*. They don't need to resort to 'God' to explain the mysteries of the universe because that's the job of science & reason.
3. Others see God as a rather *senile old man*, a grandfatherly figure who rocks away on His heavenly chair, smiling benignly at all people with a 'live & let live' kind of all-encompassing acceptance.
4. Then there are those who see God as a *divine concierge*, a deity who sits patiently to the side, ready to perform some service when He's needed – but content to stay out of the way till then.
5. But one of the most common views people have of God is that He's *angry* & ready to hurl bolts of lightening to earth to fry all the wretched villainy & scum.
 - a. this view of God is so common because many of God's people *present* Him that way – as an angry God who is just *itching* to smite sinners!

- c. protests, placards, boycotts, angry editorials, insults all combine to give people the impression that God is angry & ready to blast them.
 - 6. Now, it's true God is angry at sin & will judge it.
 - a. but the reason why He delays judgment of sin is because in His love for sinners, He gives them space to repent!
 - b. God doesn't want to blast them, He wants to bless them!**
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- 7. These words, spoken to Moses to be given to Aaron show us that God desires to bless - not curse us.
 - 8. He longs for us to know the goodness of His love & the benefits of His favor.
 - 9. Let's look at it more closely . . .

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 22-23

22And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: **23**“Speak to Aaron & his sons, saying, ‘This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel.

- 1. As the priest of Israel, it was Aaron's duty to stand before God on behalf of the people & perform the duties of sacred worship.
 - 2. But that was only *half* of his job. The other half was to stand before the people on behalf of God & convey His blessing on them.
 - 3. God wanted the people to realize that being in covenant relationship with Him would result in *incredible blessing*.
 - 4. When Adam & Eve were created, they were in intimate relationship with God & enjoyed the blessing of His unrestrained favor.
 - a. their home was paradise, their lives unending delight & joy.
 - b. peace reigned over all creation. Their existence was the *epitome* of blessing.
 - 5. But they turned from God to sin & self. The curse replaced blessing.
 - a. paradise became a battlefield, joy turned to sorrow & pain.
 - b. war came to planet earth.
 - c. & all Adam's descendants have been born into a world marked more by the curse than the blessing God originally intended.
 - 6. God has made a way for Adam's sons & daughters to come out from under the curse & re-enter the blessing.
 - a. this way is by entering into a *covenant relationship* with God.
 - b. just as Adam & Eve turned from God to sin & saw the blessing lost to the curse,
 - c. so Adam's progeny can turn from sin *back* to God & see the blessing restored.
 - d. in the OT, the way of restoration was through the covenant God made with Israel.
 - e. in the NT, the way of restoration is through Christ.
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- 7. God wanted the children of Israel to know how passionately He loved & wanted to bless them.
 - a. so He told Aaron that when he came out of the tabernacle after officiating at the altar on their behalf,
 - b. because they had given themselves to the Lord in their sacrifices -

- c. He would give Himself to them, showering His favor upon them.
- 8. But this favor wasn't just God's *feeling good* about them.
- 9. No, His favor would take *tangible* form – they were to *experience* it! & so the words of the blessing . . .

B. V. 24

Say to them:

24 “The LORD bless you & keep you;

1. The word used for blessing here referred to *material prosperity*.
 - a. if you were blessed in this way it meant you enjoyed plenty of descendants, flocks, & harvests.
 - b. it meant your external life was doing super-well; business was booming.
2. It's important we realize the blessings God intends for His people aren't all just *spiritual* things.
 - a. He wants our *whole life* to be blessed.
 - b. since we *are* physical creatures living in a physical world, He wants us to experience blessing in *that* realm too.
 - c. now, there will be seasons in which some lesson the Lord wants to teach us will require that the physical experience of blessing is *withdrawn* so the deeper, eternal blessing of the inner person can be learned.
 - d. but we must not think God's desire to bless us is confined to just spiritual things.
 - e. He wants to bless us materially too!
3. But God knows that material prosperity can be *dangerous*, so Aaron was to say - “The Lord bless you & keep you;”
 - a. many *neglect* the Lord when things are good.
 - b. plenty can be dangerous if it results in our forgetting God.
 - c. so Aaron was to place the Lord's *keeping power* on the people, that their prosperity would not move them to forget the Lord, or think they didn't need Him anymore.
 - d. this is a blessing of *protection*, not just from physical enemies without but *tendencies within* that would distance us from the God of blessing.
4. We see this idea echoed in the Lord's prayer when Jesus said we were to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.”
 - a. we are to look to God for our physical provision, for material blessing.
 - b. but how much do we pray for? Today's needs!
 - c. “Bless me Lord with what I will need *today*. & tomorrow I'll be back for *its* portion.”
 - d. in Proverbs 30:8-9 we find this wise rule for living -

Give me neither poverty nor riches—Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full & deny You, & say, “Who is the LORD?” Or lest I be poor & steal, & profane the name of my God.

5. So Aaron was to show the children of Israel that God desired to take care of them materially & to protect them from both external & internal harm.

“The LORD bless you & keep you;

C. V. 25

1. Then he was to say . . .

The LORD make His face shine upon you, & be gracious to you;

2. A shining face meant a smile.

a. if one's countenance had fallen or darkened, it meant a frown of disapproval.

b. a shining face meant *approval*, delight, joy, all expressed in a smile.

3. God want so much for the people to realize that He delighted in them!

4. When they were giving themselves to Him in worship, it totally stoked Him!

5. He wasn't angry with them, fuming at their stupidity, & chomping at the bit to smite them with plagues.

6. He loved & delighted in them!

7. Yes, there were times when like little kids they did foolish things that required His discipline but God's general disposition toward them was one of joy & delight. They brought a smile to His face!

8. The blessing Aaron was to impart was the realization that God likes His people! That He likes being with them!

9. We know God *loves* us, but do we realize He *likes* us?

a. I suspect sometimes we think God loves us because, well, He HAS to!

b. He's God & God is Love & all that so He loves us because it's sort of part of the package of being God.

c. we need to realize it's far more than that – God *likes* us!

10. Occasionally you'll hear a parent say about a child they're having a problem with, "I *love* him but I do not *like* him very much!"

a. we understand this because we can sympathize with the uncompromising & unconditional love a mother or father has for their child -

b. & how at the same time the child's attitude & behavior can be so hurtful & damaging that the parent finds nothing to *like* about that child.

11. God wanted the people of Israel to understand that not only was He committed to love them no matter what as their Heavenly Father – He also LIKED them! They made Him smile when they gave themselves to Him.

12. In the Bible, the Lord's face refers to His *immediate presence*.

13. When Aaron said –

The LORD make His face shine upon you . . .

a. the people were to realize that God was not some far off deity who attended to matters from a distance.

b. He was *right there*, present among them, & digging every minute of it!

14. Is this your understanding of God?

a. you've come here to worship God - do you realize He's stoked by that & smiling from ear to glorious ear?

b. He's here right now & digging this! God doesn't just love you – He *likes* you!

d. He wants to be *more* than your God; He wants to be your *best & closest friend!*

15. There's more – v. 25 . . .

The LORD make His face shine upon you, & be gracious to you . . .

a. this word "grace" is a bit different from the one we find in the NT.

- b. this speaks of the benefits that come to a person because of a covenant they've made with another.
 - c. Aaron is saying – The Lord is pleased with you, **enjoy** His good pleasure!
 - d. as your truest friend, He is here now to provide you whatever you need!
16. Do you have any friends who are powerful, rich, or influential people?
- a. if your best friend was **Michael Eisner**, you'd probably get free passes to Disneyland anytime you wanted.
 - 1) you'd get to see the inner workings of Disney Studios
 - 2) attend the initial screenings of every new movie & meet the stars
 - 3) that friendship would open doors closed to others.
 - b. if your best friend was **Shaquille O'Neal**, you'd get season tickets to the Lakers & would be invited to special parties where you could hobnob with the whole team.
 - c. if you were best friends with **Bill Gates**, you'd get to go on unbelievable vacations to exotic locales & eat food made by the world's finest chefs, as well as have the cutting edge of electronic technology.
 - d. if you were best friends with the **President of the United States**, you'd get to meet world leaders & the cream of the crop of today's national celebrities. That friendship would open any door to you!
17. Aaron is saying to the people – **you are best friends with God**. That friendship has opened doors for you that are beyond comprehension!
18. God has showered you with favor!
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19. [LPFM & land]
- a. have thought – “If only we had some connection, some ‘in’ with someone in the decision making process.” (grease the skids of our app)
 - b. we do! Our best friend is the King of kings & Lord of lords.
 - c. He over rules in the affairs of Earth.
 - d. Jesus, would You please show us favor & push through our permit for the tower & gives us favor with the land owners?
20. Where do you need favor? Where would you like to see God's influence & power work?
21. Tell your Best Friend who is here & smiling His delight on you right now.

D. V. 26

1. Then Aaron was to say . . .
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, & give you peace.”
2. God wanted them to understand that He was paying attention to them.
3. He'd not **hidden** His face from them but was gazing intently on them.
4. They must never think that God plays hide & seek or that He's too busy with something else to take care of them.
5. They are the object of His attention 24/7/365.
6. The word 'peace' is *shalom*.
 - a. it meant far more to the children of Israel than just the **absence** of war.
 - b. peace was the state of being whole, complete, lacking nothing.
 - c. peace spoke of **provision without & rest within**.
7. Only God can bring this kind of peace for only God can satisfy the longing of our hearts for purpose & meaning.

8. As Augustine well said, we were created for God, & our souls are restless until they find their rest in Him.

E. V. 27

So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, & I will bless them."

1. It's with these words the high priest would *mark* the people as being in covenant relationship with God.
2. And with these words, **the blessing would come on them!**
3. Note something here – this wasn't a *prayer* or a *teaching* Aaron was to give.
 - a. he wasn't to say, "**May** the Lord bless you."
 - b. it was the *pronouncement* of blessing, the *means* by which blessing would come on the people. Look at the last words of v. 27 - "**I WILL bless them.**"
 - c. in v. 23 God said . . . "**This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel.**"
4. God didn't want Moses & Aaron as the leaders of the nation to blast the people but to *bless* them.
5. **God** would take care of the work of discipline when the people erred, but Aaron's task was to continually, daily remind the people that God's heart was to bless them!

III. CONCLUSION

A. Blessing

1. God has not changed. His heart for His people is the same today as then.
2. A new covenant has come but God's heart remains the same –
 - a. He wants to bless you & take care of all your material needs.
 - b. He wants to *protect* you & keep you safe from all enemies, both those without & within.
 - c. He wants you to know just how much He *likes* you & how close He wants to be to you, showering you with all the benefits He has to bring.
 - d. and He wants you to know that you are the object of His closest attention & to enjoy the fullest life a human being can have.
3. All of this was repeated by Jesus in John 10 where we read . . .
I have come that they may have life, & that they may have it more abundantly.
4. Jesus came to bring us not *mere survival*, but *abundant* life
 - a. the Lord yearns for us to experience *all* of His love & grace.
 - b. to enjoy being His best friends!

B. All Priests

1. What Aaron was charged to say over the children of Israel, you & I have the privilege to say to one another!
2. For as Peter says in 1 Peter 2:9, in Christ we are *all* priests!
3. What are your life & words saying to the people around you about the heart & desire of God?
4. Are you blasting or blessing?

24 "The LORD bless you & keep you;

25 The LORD make His face shine upon you, & be gracious to you;

26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, & give you peace.”