

**GOD’S BLESSING
PSALM 67**

INTRODUCTION

Don’t you just love the blessings of God on your life? Amen!
Though life in this sin-cursed world does come with its share of troubles at times—nevertheless, we are truly blessed by God better than we deserve!

There was this little best-selling book that I have in my library that came out back a number of years ago now by Bruce Wilkinson called *“The Prayer of Jabez”*. Anybody remember this book?

I remember it being all the buzz when it came out. It elaborates on a rather obscure person mentioned in 1 Chronicles 4. **The basis of his book was that God’s people should seek God’s blessing always.**

In 1 Chronicles 4:10 the Scripture reads, *“And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.”*

Why did God grant what Jabez asked? What was the reason for God’s blessing in Jabez’s life and what is the reason for God’s blessing in our lives?

There are many ways we can answer that question with Scriptural support. **God is good! God loves His people! He delights to do us good!**

But there’s one fundamental reason that God blesses His people, and this reason is closely related to the Great Commission given to the Church. Today’s text, **Psalm 67**, gives us that reason.

During today’s message I want us to consider three questions about this Psalm. Here is the first:

I. WHY DOES GOD BLESS US?

This Psalm begins in some ways that sound very similar to prayer of Jabez.

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In reality though, it more closely echoes the blessing that Aaron and his descendants said over the people of Israel, as recorded in Numbers 6:22-27.

Nevertheless, I want you to see that Psalm 67 goes deeper than the prayer of Jabez, telling us why God blesses his people. **Let’s look at the first two verses of the Psalm.**

The Psalmist Asks For Blessing So That God’s Ways May Be Known On The Earth! (Verse 1-2)

The Psalmist is saying, in effect, *“Bless me Lord, so that I might glorify you; bless me so that I might show your power, your love, your majesty, and your goodness to all nations.”*

Note that the Psalmist is not saying:

- **He is not saying, “Bless me so that I can be comfortable.”**
- **He is not saying, “Bless me so that I don’t have to work hard to make a living.”**
- **He is not saying, “Bless me so that others will be envious of me.”**
- **He is not saying, “Bless me so that I can be successful in the eyes of the world.”**
- **Now listen carefully: He is not even primarily saying, “Bless me so that I can bless others.”** Although that is a Biblical reason for God’s blessing.

(An example of which can be found in the blessing of Abraham in Genesis 12)

By all means, God blesses us and gifts us so that we might serve and bless others. But still, this is not the underlying, fundamental reason for God’s blessing.

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God blesses us first and foremost so that we can bring glory to His name!

Let's look into this further. (First of all in this Psalm itself and then in other parts of Scripture.)

Much Hebrew literature is structured with a central point in the middle, and ideas that parallel each other the further away you get from the center. This structure is sometimes subtle, but in Psalm 67 it is particularly obvious: **note that verses 3 and 5 are not only parallel but identical.**

Verse 4 is thus the literary center of the Psalm, and as such is emphasized (for an important reason we will come back to).

Moving further away from the center, we would then expect to find that **verses 1 and 2 are in parallel with verses 6 and 7.** Let's read these last two verses.

The Psalm begins by asking that God will bless us, and ends by underlining that He will indeed bless. It then concludes by once again giving us the reason for the blessing: That all the ends of the earth will fear Him. Fear who? Fear God!

So this Psalm begins and ends with the statement that **God's blessings lead to His glory.** That is the main reason God blesses us.

But this idea is not limited only to Psalm 67 - we can find it throughout the Scriptures.

There are many passages we could cite, but today let's look briefly at only two.

The first is 1 Kings 8:60. The Israelites have just completed the building of the temple. King Solomon offers a lengthy prayer, in part asking that God would meet His people's needs. He then gives the reason why God should bless His people in this way: *"That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God and that there is none else."*

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Solomon asks for blessings, so that all people everywhere might know that there is one God and that all other so-called gods are false, and that the true God is Jehovah or Yahweh, the God of Israel. He asks for blessing so that the true God might be glorified!

The second passage is found in John 12:27-28 and concerns Jesus Himself. On the night before the crucifixion, Jesus is faced with a dilemma. All of His humanity rebels at the thought of the spiritual and physical suffering of the cross.

How should He pray to God? What should He ask for? Does He say, *"Father God, bless me! Save me from this horrible death!"?*

John 12:27-28 records for us Jesus' thoughts and prayer at this time:

Jesus does not ask for physical safety or comfort. He does not ask for worldly success or for status in the eyes of others. He instead asks for what? **For God's glory.** "Father, glorify thy name." And God the Father responds: *"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."*

God glorified His name in the life of Christ...then God glorified His name in the death, burial, resurrection, ascension of Christ...and one day soon He will glorify His name in Christ's return!

Jesus rejected the blessing of a longer life on earth and being kept safe from oppression, for He knew that those blessings would not lead to God's greatest glory. We need to say with Jesus, *"Lord God, if this blessing is not going to lead to your glory, don't give it to me!"*

So Psalm 67, and indeed all the Bible, emphasizes that God blesses His people for the glory of His own name, so that His goodness, mercy, and love would be recognized and praised by men and angels.

This is a fundamental biblical truth, but unfortunately we don't hear this very often in our Churches today.

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It becomes so easy for us to think of God as a heavenly social worker, the One Who is up there to serve us, to provide for us, to comfort us, to care for us. We get self centered instead of God centered in our view of things.

But God is at center of everything! It is His glory that drives His purposes!

This shows the deep Biblical understanding of those ministers of the Gospel who met at Westminster in England 350 years ago to develop a common confession and catechism. (A catechism is a teaching tool, where the student learns questions and the answers to each of those questions.) The first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism is, *“What is the chief end of man?”* And the answer is: *“The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”*

This is a wonderful summary of Biblical teaching. **God does not exist to meet our needs; rather, we exist to glorify Him.**

So why does God bless us? God blesses us so that we might fulfill our chief end. To glorify Him!

Let's move to our second question:

II. GLORIFY HIS NAME AMONG WHOM?

God blesses us so that we might glorify His name among whom? Among those who are already believers? Among those who call themselves Christians? Among other Americans? Among those who are similar to yourself?

The second part of verse 2 and verse 3 show that God's goal is much broader:

God aims to glorify Himself not only among those already identified as His people, not only among those who are similar to His people, **but among all nations and people.**

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Look at **Revelation 7:9-10**. Here John has a vision of the eternal state, where God's people are around His throne praising Him. Note the types of people found there.

In this vision of the vast multitude around the throne of God, John sees those from every tribe and tongue and people and nation praising God. No group of people is left out; every cultural group, every language group is represented before the throne of God.

Why is it important for God to bring to Himself those from every people group? Think about if any group was left out. Some would surely want to say that God was prejudiced against them.

So, God gives us the mandate, and He promises to empower us to fulfill that mandate, so that believers will come to Him from all the nations.

So Psalm 67 tells us that God blesses us so that all the nations and people will praise His name.

So we've asked two main questions and seen two answers:

- What is the purpose of God blessing His people? To bring glory to His own name.
- Second, God desires to be glorified among whom? Among ALL nations and people.

Let's turn now to our final question:

III. WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON THE NATIONS AND PEOPLE?

Some might be thinking, *“I thought missions was about helping people, meeting their physical and spiritual needs. By saying that all this is for the glory of God, aren't you diminishing the importance of these people themselves? Aren't you downplaying the importance of meeting real human needs?”*

Verse 3 and 4 answer this question - and remember, verse 4 is the literary center of the Psalm, and thus is emphasized heavily in the original language.

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When the nations and the people praise God, that is, when God is glorified in their lives, what happens to them? What happens to the people? Praising Him leads to gladness and joy! Those who don't praise Him, those who are walking in darkness, those who are bound by fears of false God and idols - those people are without true joy.

The last part of verse 4 explains, in part, why this is the case. No other ruler, no other God, will be just, straight, upright in his dealings; no other ruler, no other God will govern them in the paths of righteousness (indeed, we find the same Hebrew word translated **"govern"** here in Psalm 23:3: *"He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake".*)

Animists, Muslims, Buddhists, nominal Christians - all those who are without a vital relationship with the only living and true God – do not have what the Apostle Peter calls *"joy unspeakable,"* which is the deep gladness and joy of knowing God Himself.

For if God is at the center of all things (and He is!), if He is the most beautiful, most loving, most powerful of all beings (and He is!), then recognizing who He is, being in a relationship with Him, being led and guided and governed by Him, is the source of the greatest joy imaginable!

So there is no conflict between glorifying God and the gladness of the nations and people! The nations and people have joy as they glorify God! Indeed, the more joy they have in Him, the more they glorify Him!

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me ask you three more questions:

1) Do you know Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as both Saviour and Lord?

Without Him, all other blessings - health, wealth, life itself - are brief, temporary, of no lasting value. He is the only way to true blessings. If we reject Him, as the author of the book of Hebrews writes, our prospects are only a terrifying expectation of judgment.

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2) Those of you who do know Him, who recognize Him as your Lord and Saviour: Do you crave God's blessings?

I hope you do! It's OK to!

3) But why do you seek God's blessings?

Do you acknowledge that your chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever?

Ask God to bless you in such a way that you can bring great glory to Him!

Ask God **not** to give you any temporal blessing that won't give Him glory!

Ask God to bless you in such a way that people who have never praised the only living and true God might do so.

Ask God to enable you to witness boldly and lovingly to the those you encounter all the time who are by nature the children of wrath, who are walking in darkness, who are without hope, without God in the world.

Ask God, "Is it me you want, Lord? I will go, Lord, wherever You lead me."

Ask God to help you send and support others to go.

Ask Him for all this, so that God might be recognized, proclaimed as supreme and feared in every nation, people, and language on this planet, so they too can be glad and sing for joy!