

GOD'S BLESSING
PART 1 - WHY DOES GOD BLESS US?
PSALM 67

INTRODUCTION

If I were to ask, how many of you would like God's mercy and blessing in your life? How many here today do you think would be for that?

Should we seek and ask for God's mercy and blessing? Or is that being selfish? Quite obviously, the writer of this Psalm didn't have a problem with it

A number of years ago, a fellow by the name of Bruce Wilkinson wrote a best-selling book called, "*The Prayer of Jabez.*" Do any of you recall that? That book elaborated on a rather obscure person mentioned in **1 Chronicles**. The gist of the book was that God's people should seek God's blessing ALWAYS.

In 1 Chronicles 4:10 we read, "*And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst 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? And what was and is the reason for God's blessing?

There are many ways we can answer that question with Scriptural support. **God loves His people!** Isn't that wonderful? Isn't the love of Jesus something wonderful? And because of His great love for us, He delights to do us good because His very nature is good!

But there is ONE FUNDAMENTAL REASON that God blesses His people, and that reason is closely related to the Great Commission given to the Church! Today's text, Psalm 67, gives us that reason.

During this message I want us to consider some questions about this Psalm. But before we do I want us to consider the purpose of this Psalm as it related to God's people, Israel.

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We are not told who the writer of this Psalm is. But this Psalm seems to belong to the sudden period of joy, release, and blessing which overtook the nation of Israel in the days of King Hezekiah.

The angel of the LORD fulfilled the Prophecy of the LORD given by Isaiah the prophet and smote 185,000 Assyrians who were about to invade Judah and slew the wicked and vile Assyrian King Sennacherib in his own house using his own sons.

The Psalm has the joy of prosperity ringing through it, as well as the joy of peace. God blessed Israel with peace as well as an abundant harvest! All of this is recorded in 2 Kings 19.

**But here is the question I want to ask and answer this morning:
WHY DOES GOD BLESS US?**

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

In reality though, it more closely echoes the blessing that Aaron and his descendants said over the people of Israel, as recorded in: *Numbers 6:24-26*—"The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: 25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: 26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

Now, 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!**

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, your goodness to all nations.

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The goal in our lives should be that in all we say or do that God may be glorified and His ways may be known on the earth!

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. (e.g. The blessing of Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3)

*Genesis 12:2-3—"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and **thou shalt be a blessing:** 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: **and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.**"*

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.

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

It brings to mind what the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, wrote to the Corinthian Church:

1 Corinthians 10:31—"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

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And it also brings to mind his words to the Colossian Church:
Colossians 3:17—"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

Let's look into this a little further shall we?
(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 then 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 to bless, 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! In fact, we can find it throughout the Scriptures.

There are many passages we could cite, but today let's look at only two. **The first passage is 1 Kings 8:54-61.** The Israelites have just completed the building of the temple. King Solomon then offers a lengthy prayer (verses 22-53), in part asking that God would meet His people's needs. He then stood and blessed all the congregation of Israel gives the reason for his prayer and why God should bless His people in this way: *1 Kings 8:60—"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 (Yahweh), the God of Israel.

i.e. He sees that the purpose for blessing is so that the one true God might be glorified!

But note **verse 61** also, for Solomon tells and reveals to Israel that their **FAITH** and **OBEDIENCE** are the pathway to blessing!

That is still true today! **FAITH** and **OBEDIENCE** are the pathway to blessing! Just like the old hymn we sing says: "TRUST AND OBEY for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to TRUST AND OBEY!"

The second passage is found in John 12:27-28 and concerns Jesus Himself. Here we see the time leading up to His suffering for our sin. 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 and save me from this horrible death!*"? *No!*

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. And His Heavenly Father responds:
"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

And God was glorified and continues to be glorified in Christ's death, burial, resurrection!

God was also glorified in Christ's ascension and present work as our mediator!

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God is glorified in Christ's body—His Church as it is obedient to Him!

God will be glorified again one day in Christ's return for His saints!

God will be glorified in the Tribulation judgments!

God will be glorified in the return of Christ with His saints!

God will be glorified in the Millennial Reign of Christ!

God will forever be glorified in the what Jesus has accomplished!

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 too need to say with Jesus, "Lord God, if this blessing is not going to lead to your glory, don't give it to me!"

Does your heart long for Jesus Christ and God the Father to be glorified in your life? That, my friend is the path to eternal blessing and glory!

1 Peter 4:12-14

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.

It becomes so easy for us to think of God as a heavenly social worker, the One Who's 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 very center of everything! It is His glory that drives His purposes!

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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!

Conclusion

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

For 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 you reject Him, your prospects are only a terrifying expectation of judgment. So recognize Him!

2) Those of you who already know Him, who recognize Him as your Lord and Saviour:

Do you crave God's blessings? I hope you do! For, unless God chooses to bless us, then we have absolutely nothing of true value.

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

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