

When we serve others, we bless others, as well as blessing God and ourselves. We all have heard the word “blessing” for most of our lives, but most of us don’t really understand it. For some, the word “blessing” seems archaic and anachronistic, for others it seems familiar and comfortable, but for all the exact definition remains elusive. This week we will spend time looking closely at what it means to be blessed, and also what it means to be a blessing.

Day 1

Blessing Relates to Fertility

The idea of blessing relates first and foremost to the idea of fertility, which seems very strange in our modern world. While the ancients seemed obsessed with fertility, we modern people do not think of it much at all. With a looming population collapse due to low birth rates worldwide and very few people earning a living from farming, it is clear that fertility is not on our minds. In the ancient world, however, fertility was something that was an ever-present concern. So, what is this weird connection between fertility and blessing? The first two times the word blessing is mentioned in the bible, God is blessing the animals and telling them to multiply and fill the earth, and he is giving the same blessing to mankind. Most of the time, when we speak of blessing in the modern world, nothing could be further from our minds than these two biblical references. So, what is the connection between blessing and fertility? We must understand fertility in its largest sense to get a good handle on this. Fertility comes as the result of unity, and when two things are united, a third, new thing is created. This new thing is a new life. Fertility is all about life, and life is created through union. When we are blessed, we have an expansion of our lives. We see a new house as a blessing, or a new job, or a new relationship, and in each of these things we feel our lives are expanded. This new life is not just a benefit to us, it also comes with responsibilities and it must be looked after and cared for, just as the new life of a baby animal or a child, so blessing always comes with an obligation. Do you want the obligation that comes with blessing? Spend some time meditating on this today!

Verses: Genesis 1:26-31, Genesis 9:1-10, Deuteronomy 7:12-16

Prayer Topics: Unity, Fruit, Responsibility

Day 2

Blessing’s Context is the Land

Blessing, in Israel, always had the context of land whenever it was used. The people and the land were connected, and the blessing of one always had links to the blessing of the other. In Israel, the blessing of a good harvest meant more people could be supported, and the birth of more people meant the land could be more effectively worked and protected. You see this in the first blessing to Adam and Eve, where God blesses them by commanding them to fill the earth and subdue it. God could have just commanded them to multiply, but instead he connected this multiplication to the filling and subduing of the earth. Why is this? The idea of blessing is one of a mutually beneficial relationship. The husband and wife mutually benefit each other, and this results in the new life of a child. The earth and mankind mutually benefit each other, and all these blessings reinforce and multiply each other. The blessing of the

husband and wife also blesses the earth, and the blessing of the earth blesses the husband and wife. We can think of this as a multi-tiered positive feedback loop. The important concept here is that the blessing always flows from the greater to the lesser, but it benefits each of them. In order to bless someone, you must have what they lack. Our culture would say that the one that has should keep it for themselves, so that they will not experience lack. The bible, however, says that in giving to the one in need the one who has abundantly will actually benefit as well, in fact he will be richer if he gives. There is no doubt that this is true. Spend some time today meditating on this truth, seeing if you can think of all the ways its truth is manifest.

Verses: Deuteronomy 15:7-11, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, Psalm 37:11

Prayer Topics: Exchange, Mutual, Glory

Day 3

Blessing Comes From the Word

In the ancient world, the blessing was formalized as a saying or word that came from someone and had the power to change the future. This was seen often in the context of a father giving a blessing to his sons, as in the story of Jacob and Esau. We find it strange to think of reality this way in the modern world, but could there be some truth in the way the bible perceives this reality? How many times do you find yourself doing or saying something that your parents did or said? How many times do things that a parent said haunt you, even if you try to get away from it? If a parent said you were dumb, do you have a hard time believing you are smart? If a parent said you are hardworking, do you see that as part of your identity? We really cannot manifest anything in our lives outside of a word birthing that reality in our lives. If someone influential told us that we are going to be a great doctor, that may put the idea of being a doctor in our minds. We might start to think of all the benefits to us and others of pursuing this vocation, and when we are tempted to quit that person's word might inspire us to continue in our studies. There really isn't any reality created in us that doesn't start with a word, and so words continue to have power, even in the modern world. Are the words that you speak to others a blessing to them? Are the words that you speak to yourself a blessing to you and others? Do you speak to yourself, about yourself and others, in a way that results in a blessed future for all involved? Think about how you might change your words for a more blessed future.

Verses: Genesis 27:26-29, Proverbs 18:20-21, Psalm 119:11

Prayer Topics: Beginning, Foundation, Intention, Purpose

Day 4

Blessing Has Power

The concept of blessing is the concept of the expansion of life through unity. This concept is perhaps one of the most powerful concepts in existence. When you think of your company, do you include yourself? As an example, when your company screws something up do you see it as something personal, or something others have done? Do you find yourself saying things like, "I

wish my company would get it together,” or “My company had a bad quarter”? Or, do you say things like, “We had a good year this year,” or “We really blew it this time.” One sees a lack of unity, there is a distinction between us and them while the other sees the presence of a unity that ties the company and the individual together. Why is blessing so powerful? Because it recognizes that my good can’t come in isolation from the good of those around me. We are all in this together, and if we act like it we will all lead better lives. The people in my company, my neighborhood, my church, and even all of those driving on the road with me are all linked together, and if we choose to act like it we will all be blessed. If you have ever driven in a third world country, you know how bad the experience of driving can be. It can be chaotic, exhausting, and dangerous. How much better it goes when we all see ourselves as a part of a greater whole, where all of us can be blessed by recognizing that fact. What can your life be like if you see it connected to others in a powerful way? How might your work, school, church or other place in your life become different by seeing yourself connected to it, instead of judge over it?

Verses: Hebrews 10:24-25, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Romans 12:3-13

Prayer Topics: Community, Perspective, Home

Day 5

Blessing is Conditional

In the bible, blessing was conditional. This meant that the blessing had an “if-then” structure. If Israel would have God as their God, then they would be His people. If they would keep his commands, then the land would be fertile. If they did not keep his commands, then the land would spit them out. Why is the blessing from God conditional? Because unity with God is a desire that God has for us, but we have a choice in whether to participate. God unites himself to us in His word, meaning that every command God has for us is the presence of God to us if we unite ourselves to that command. Many people will say that they wish Jesus was still here now, but the reality is that he can dwell within us in His spirit, but most of the time we see taking on the attitude of Christ or following His commands as a chore. How foolish! To long for Christ, even as we reject His presence in His commands is perhaps the definition of senselessness. Let us live out the spirit and command of Christ by loving one another and serving one another as He did, receiving the blessing He desires for us.

Verses: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, John 14:21-24, 2 Peter 3:9

Prayer Topics: Repentance, Reconciliation, Refining