

# Accepting the Blessings of a New Year

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

## Introduction:

- A. Every congregation of the Lord's people faces challenges:
1. A beloved evangelist moves to another work; the new evangelist is not quite up to the task; the eldership dissolves or one of the elders goes rogue; the average age of members of the congregation is increasing and many are experiencing serious health problems; many beloved persons have departed for their eternal home; the numbers have diminish significantly over the years; and, it seems that each generation our nation and even our families are steadily moving away from spirituality, morality, honor, and courtesy.
  2. All of those things that impact us collectively burden us individually as well. We often have to carry additional loads at home, work, school, and community that sap our will and burns through our resources.
  3. Discouragement and a sense of futility begin to set in; the Adversary is piling one burden upon another on us individually; it is getting harder to put one foot in front of the other spiritually speaking. What will we do? Is there any help for this?

## I. BLESSINGS

- A. Deut. 33:24-25 - "And of Asher he said: 'Asher is most blessed of sons; Let him be favored by his brothers, and let him dip his foot in oil. Your shoes shall be iron and bronze; as your days, so shall your strength be.'"
- B. Gen. 49:20 - "Bread from Asher shall be rich, and he shall yield royal dainties."
1. And yet historically, Asher fared little better than his brothers, and his tribe was no better off than any other tribe. What did prophecy mean?
  2. The answer lies in verse 25:
    - a. His shoes, a metaphor for his journey through life, would be tough enough to handle whatever path he took.
    - b. Therefore, God said that whatever a day brought him, he would have what he needed to handle it.

C. "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day" is a book about a little boy named Alexander who is having one of those days. It is a day where nothing goes right, and everything goes wrong. He has back to back disappointments. When he wakes up in the morning, he comments:

"I went to sleep with gum in my mouth and now there's gum in my hair. When I got out of bed this morning, I tripped on my skateboard and by mistake I dropped my sweater in the sink while the water was running; and, I could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day."

After a terrible day at school, an awful visit to the dentist and an unpleasant stop at the shoe store, Alexander slumps in his chair at supper. His troubles continue:

"There were lima beans for dinner and I hate lima beans. There was kissing on TV, and I hate kissing. My bath was too hot, I got soap in my eyes, my marble went down the drain, and I had to wear my railroad pajamas. I hate my railroad pajamas. When I went to bed, my brother Nick took back the pillow he said I could keep, the

Mickey Mouse night light burned out, and I bit my tongue. The cat went to sleep with my brother Anthony, not with me. It has been a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day."

1. In contrast: After a Midwestern tornado a few years ago, a woman hugging her family close after losing her home and everything in it, homeless, insufficient tornado insurance, husband's factory damaged and shut down for repairs... said, "I am so happy!" She had what was important; circumstances were not relevant.
2. It is about deciding what is truly important and being content with that alone; all other circumstances are changeable and do not add to or take from that contentment.
3. Matt. 5:3-12 - Beatitudes - these things are important to contentment. All other things do not have the power to add to or take away from peace of mind and happiness.

## II. THE BLESSINGS

- A. The word "beatitude" means "supreme blessedness or happiness."
  1. Jesus was answering two questions people would have been asking:
    - a. Who will be the citizens of the kingdom of heaven?
    - b. What benefits do they receive?
  2. Citizens of the kingdom of heaven will be poor in spirit, mourning for their sins, meek, hungering for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and willing to suffer persecution. It does not appear to be a pleasant condition; **however...**
  3. What blessings do they receive as citizens of the kingdom?
    - a. Are the blessings worth the effort to endure the hardships?
- B. Blessed is the first word of the sermon.
  1. The first word of the Psalms 1:1; the beginning words of Revelation 1:3; nine times in the opening of the Sermon on the Mount.
  2. This word involves great joy and gladness; literally means, "how very happy!" Verb form is in Matt. 5:12 - "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad."
    - a. Luke 6:23 - "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy!"

## III. WE HAVE THE BLESSINGS THAT COUNT

- A. Matt. 5:3 - "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven" - the blessings are both present and future.
  1. Matt. 25:34; 2Peter 1:10-11; Heb. 12:22-24
- B. Matt. 5:4 - "They shall be comforted."
  1. We are comforted now - 2Cor. 1:3-4
  2. We shall be comforted in the future - Rev. 21:4
- C. Matt. 5:5 "They shall inherit the earth."
  1. In one sense, we inherit it now, as a result of putting the kingdom of God first - Matt. 6:33; Mark 10:28-30
  2. In a fulfilled sense in the life that is to come - 2Peter 3:13
- D. Matt. 5:6 - "They shall be filled."
  1. With the righteousness we need, found only in Christ - Phil. 3:8-9
  2. Received now through the precious blood of Christ - Rom. 5:9
  3. Received in fullness in heaven - Rev. 19:5-9
- E. Matt. 5:7 - "They shall obtain mercy."

1. Those in the kingdom enjoy the forgiveness of sins now - Rev. 1:5-6
  2. We shall also be shown mercy in the future by escaping the righteous wrath of God in the Day of Judgment - 1Thes. 1:10
- F. Matt. 5:8 - "They shall see God."
1. Presently, we can see God through Jesus Christ - John 14:6-7
  2. But in the future, we shall see him face to face - Rev. 21:3, 22:3-4
- G. Matt. 5:9 - "They shall be called sons of God."
1. Even now we are called the sons of God - 1John 3:1-2
  2. How much more so in the future in a fulfilled sense - Rev. 21:7
  3. Similar to Matt. 17:5 - "This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased."
- H. Matt. 5:10-12 - "Great is your reward in heaven."
1. We have it now - 1Peter 1:3-5
  2. We will have it then, too - 1Peter 5:4

Conclusion:

- A. Perhaps we can better understand why those in the kingdom of heaven are truly called blessed, even though:
1. We are poor in spirit, we have the kingdom of heaven.
  2. We find ourselves mourning for sin and suffering, we are comforted by God Himself.
  3. We are meek in our relationships with God and man, we shall inherit the earth.
  4. We are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, we are being filled by what God has supplied.
  5. We must be merciful to others, we have and will obtain mercy that has an eternal effect.
  6. We must be pure in heart, we can and will see God.
  7. We must labor to bring peace, we are identified as the sons of God.
  8. We may be persecuted for righteousness' sake, we have the kingdom of heaven.
- B. We have what really counts!
1. The blessings of the kingdom outweigh anything this world has to offer, or any pain it might inflict.
  2. There are the true God given blessings now in this life.
  3. And there will be greater, fulfilled blessings in the life that is to come.
- C. However, those blessings are only enjoyed by those in the kingdom who appreciate that the blessings in Christ are the ones that really count.
1. Those outside of the kingdom and those with one foot in the kingdom and one foot in the world cannot have and enjoy these blessings.