

Blessed to be a Blessing

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 February 2019

[0:00] Please be seated and turn to Genesis 12 if you've got your Bibles and we'll get there shortly.! I had in mind really a song that we won't sing at this stage but one and it will surprise you what the Lord had done. Count your blessings, name them one by one.

Count your blessings, see what God had done. We'll surprise you what the Lord had done. I'd like to prompt us to think about blessings. Blessings. And the Lord gives us fresh blessings every new day doesn't he? Day by day, day after day. You are blessed. You are blessed. Truly blessed. And blessed to be a blessing. Blessed to be a blessing. That's what Abraham found. Abraham found that blessed to be a blessing. We see that God told Abraham he was going to make him into a great nation and there's children of Abraham here tonight. Amen? Children of Abraham by faith here tonight. God told Abraham that he and his family would be a blessing in the world. And you are by faith children of Abraham.

Genesis 12 from verses 1 through 2. Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land that I'll show thee. 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. I will bless thee and make thy name great and thou shalt be a blessing. Abraham believed God and he went. Abraham gave glory to God. Abraham went to Bethel and built an altar unto the true God and he called on the name of the Lord.

And these altars really were not only a place of worship but a place of witness weren't they? As that altar was a tangible evidence of the people of God worshipping the true God. A place of worship and a place of witness. A testimony to the lands around. We know him and we make him known. We're blessed and we are a blessing. God mightily blessed Abraham and Sarah with a child in their old age.

[2:59] Think of the blessings tonight. Think of the blessings that you have as God's blood-bought people. What bounty, what blessing, what abundance, what abounding that we each can have.

We can reflect on that. I'd like you to interject shortly with some blessings. You might just cast your mind to think, my life gone and my present situation and my trust in the Lord.

What can I count as some blessings? I'll get you to interject shortly as you just start to think, just start to put it into your mind. What God has done for me? What God is doing for me?

You know, God mightily blessed Abraham and Sarah with a child in their old age. It was just something astonishing, wasn't it? And may we not take God's blessings in our lives for granted. Sometimes we can. The bounty, the blessing of God that he has shown us such grace and mercy. And we think of brothers and sisters of ours, if we had been per chance born and been living in some other country on this planet at this present time, it might be a different situation.

[4:12] Yet they're blessed too. Even in countries where there's persecution, where the gospel is forbidden, where it's a death penalty to convert to Christianity, they're blessed too.

But we know when we think of, as it were, those things that you could reckon a blessing, think of those places where, as it's a fact that every year, more than 100,000, 100,000 Christians are killed for what they believe.

You know, and yet they're blessed people too. How much more blessed are we in a land of comparative freedom and liberty, of freedom to take the gospel as many?

We do that by leaflet dropping, by personal testimony, by sharing the gospel face to face in whatever means and fashion we can.

And for us, we can do that freely in this land for the time. We can do that with liberty. But today, 200 million Christians, 200 million Christians in 60 countries are denied basic human rights.

[5:22] And it's because of their faith. 200 million, 60 countries. Six zero, 60 countries. And today, 300 million people don't have a Bible available in their own language.

Imagine that. We take this book for granted. That men and women of God have bled and died so we can have these words in our common tongue of English. People have died.

So we can have this precious book. And yet, 300 million people today do not have the scriptures in their own native language. And that should make us consider the blessing.

The blessing we have. The freedom. The wonderful privileges we have. That God has granted us so much that we take it for granted.

So let me put to you now to consider, and feel free to interject shortly, think of the many blessings that you have. You have personally. Let it come to your mind.

[6:23] Count your blessings. Name them. One by one. Someone has counted some. They did a bit of a count. And they kept a bit of a list. You know, count your blessings.

They actually made a list. And they came up with, someone counted 1,000. So now I won't give you 1,000 tonight. I've written a few of them down here. I might tick them off as you tell me some that are on my list too.

But make a list. Count your blessings. May we not take them for granted. So tell me some blessings. Shout them out loud and clear. Who's got a blessing here tonight?

Food on the table. Food on the table. Yep. God's word. Amen. Yeah. Amen. He died for my sins. Branson. Salvation. My salvation. Glory. Eternal hope. Yep. The fruit of the spirit. Yes.

[7:26] Glory to God. The same saviour. The same yesterday, today and forever. Whatever. What about over this side? Freedom to witness.

To tell others. His love for us. The air conditioning. I could hear that without you saying anything, brother.

Just see the pointing at the... The worship. The fellowship. Amen. Glory. Glory. It's a foretaste of heaven to come, isn't it? The indwelling of the spirit.

Perfect help, mate. A perfect help, mate. Back on the back row there. Come on, you can shout something out. Feel free.

Babies. Babies. They're a blessing, except when you're trying to get to sleep. Let me name a few to you.

[8:27] And we can all think, recount some of these and think, wow, that sure is a blessing. I never even thought of that. Even the breath that we breathe. Think of that. The life that we have.

We've got life. We've got blood in our veins and it's pumping. We've got family. We've got friends. We've got clean water. How would he take that for granted? Clean water. They don't have that in some countries where you can't get water out of a tap.

Forgiveness. God's grace in my life. Hope was said before. Our home. We've got a home. We've got a place to call home. We've got furniture in that home.

And appliances we can turn on. We've got electricity. We don't have a power failure. We've got my senses. You know, sight, smell, sound, hearing, touch, the senses.

Some people don't have that today, do they? My voice. We can speak. We can communicate. We've got God's protection. God's provision. God's many gifts. We've got trials.

[9:29] Sometimes they can be a blessing. Even trials. Prayer. That's a blessing, isn't it? What about joy? Freedom. Freedom. The beauty of creation all around us.

The knowledge and wisdom we can garner. There's so much, so many resources at our fingertips now. And health and modern medicine. Even when you've got to go to the dentist, you think, I'm in safe hands.

It's going to be minimal pain in the scheme of things. I know someone's talking to me this morning about having to make a visit to the dentist. And I can empathise with dentists.

And someone said, even dirty dishes. Dirty dishes is what one woman, well, I'm presuming it's a woman. One person testified, dirty dishes are a blessing.

Though I tire of washing them, they are a reminder that I am blessed to have them a kitchen, hot water, food, and a family to dirty them. Dirty dishes.

[10:30] We can think so many things can be a blessing, can't they? Amen. Count your blessings. Name them one by one. Really and truly what matters are the spiritual blessings, aren't they?

The spiritual blessings. As some have talked about, and we might say more shortly on that. That our blessed God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.

Think of that. As we read in Ephesians 1, you might want to turn there to Ephesians 1. Just to see some of these blessings that we can count.

And be reminded of, be prompted to think of as we go through our day-by-day lives and think, wow, I've never thanked God for such a thing as that. I've never stopped to thank him.

I've never stopped to be thankful for such things as that. And we see from Ephesians 1. We'll read through and I'll comment as we go. Ephesians 1, verse 1.

[11:27] It's hard to say faithful when you've got a tooth missing.

The faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be to you and peace. And he goes on here, verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Verse 4 speaks of his love.

That's a blessing, isn't it? The love of God. The love of God. You know, how does someone write it? You know, I'm trying to think of the, there's a song in our book and it's based on scripture that, you know, how can we pen it?

[12:33] How can we, how can we put it in human words? You know, how does it go? The love of God. How rich, so pure.

How measureless and strong. It shall forevermore endure. The saints and angels song. And it's the one about tongue or pen can never tell. Like you can't write it down, can you?

You can't describe the love of God. That God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.

It speaks of his love. Verse 4, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

He's chosen us. He's given us his love. He's given us such blessing, such wonder of salvation, God's love. It tells us also that he has made us holy, that we should be holy.

[13:32] He's made you a holy people. He's made you his own beloved people. Beloved. That's what you're called in the scriptures. Beloved. Beloved. Praise the Lord.

That's a blessing to think that you are beloved. A beloved people. Verse 5 tells us furthermore we are adopted, chosen, made part of God's own special family.

Verse 5, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. Adopted children of God by faith.

Praise the Lord. Verse 6, another spiritual blessing tells us that he has accepted us. Accepted us. I know it's a scripture that's really spoken volumes to many of recent days.

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved. You know, you might feel rejected. You might feel an outcast. You might feel spurned and scorned.

[14:37] But one accepts you. He accepts you. He accepts us in the beloved. We're accepted. We're made accepted in the beloved. Verse 7 tells us he has purchased our freedom.

Verse 7, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. He's purchased our freedom. Redeemed.

Redeemed. Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Purchased. Set free. Set at liberty. Given perfect freedom and release from captivity and bondage.

And rescued. Taken out of the prison and set free. The bars broken. The chains fall off. The fetters fall. And you are set free.

At liberty. To walk in freedom as God's saved son or daughter. And verse 8, wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.

[15:36] He's abounded towards us. He's given us so much bounty. He's given us so much blessing and abounding and abundance. He's shown us such

generous grace.

Generous grace. Unmerited favor. And he has bounded towards us. He's changed our identity. He's changed our destination. He's changed everything by his grace.

So verse 3, blessed be God. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Truly God has given us so many spiritual blessings. We've seen those as we've talked through there. His love. His granting us his holy nature.

In giving us adoption. In accepting us. In redeeming us. In abounding towards us. In so many measures. And he has done all this work by the finished work of Christ.

[16:41] It was finished. What God intended for us was finished at the cross. Everything that had to be done to save you was done there at the cross.

And now we belong to heaven. So when we think of blessed with all spiritual blessings. What response should that evoke in us?

Thank you Lord. Psalm 92. Sorry. Psalm 95. Really the whole psalm of Psalm 95. But I'll just touch on the first couple of verses there.

Psalm 95. Oh come. Let us sing unto the Lord. Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Come let us sing unto the Lord.

Verse 2. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving. And make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. Psalm 103.

[17:37] Likewise calls us to bless the Lord. Psalm 103. A psalm of David. He was filled with the blessings of God. It was just overflowing out of his mouth.

Out of his soul. He says bless the Lord oh my soul. And all that is within me. Bless his holy name. Bless the Lord oh my soul. And forget not all his benefits.

Forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities. Wow. That's a benefit isn't it? All my sin. Forgiven.

Washed away. Cleansed. Removed. Erased from God's memory banks. He forgiveth all thine diseases. Who healeth all thy diseases. Sorry.

He forgiveth all thine iniquities. Who healeth all thy diseases. You know that great disease of our sin. A foul heart. Deceitful.

[18:32] Desperately wicked. He gives us a brand new heart. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction. Who crowneth thee with loving kindness. And tender mercies. He redeems thy life from destruction.

He saved you from hell. He saved you from a burning eternal hell. He's redeemed your life from destruction. Who crowneth thee with loving kindness. And tender mercies.

Who satisfies thy mouth with good things. So that thy youth is renewed like the eagles. Bless the Lord. O my soul. Let's be like David in Psalm 103.

And Matthew 5 we see our Lord talk about blessings. He talks about a blessed people. Matthew 5 in the Beatitudes. On the Sermon of the Mount. Matthew 5 from verse 3.

Our Lord is there on the Mount. And he gives a short discourse. And he says blessed are some people. Matthew 5.3.

[19:34] Blessed are the poor in spirit. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Now when we're feeling poor in spirit. God says you're blessed. Yours is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn. For they shall be comforted. When we have sadness. He is our comforter. He is our strength. He will uphold you. With the right hand of his righteousness.

He will extend his love to you. When you are feeling a time of grieving and loss. Blessed are they that mourn. For they shall be comforted. Verse 5.

Blessed are the meek. For they shall inherit the earth. You know the world would say. That blessed are the strong. And the mighty. But Jesus says to you. Blessed are the meek. The lowly.

The humble. For they shall inherit the earth. Verse 6. Blessed are they which do hunger. And thirst after righteousness. For they shall be filled. Get that blessed hunger.

[20:29] That blessed thirsting. You shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful. You know show kindness. And consideration. Compassion. Blessed

are the merciful. For they shall obtain mercy.

Learn to forgive. Learn to extend grace. Verse 8. Blessed are the pure in heart. For they shall see God. Exercise that purity of heart.

Keep clean before God. Keep those accounts short before him. Blessed are the pure in heart. For they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers. For they shall be called the children of God.

Be at peace among yourselves. Extend peace. Be peaceful. Not wrathful. Blessed are the peacemakers. For they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake. Well you know you wonder of all those blessings would you pick that one. Blessed are the persecuted. Blessed are the persecuted.

[21:27] For righteousness sake. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. You know I've seen some street preachers where they were throwing carrots at them. And you know all sorts of things. And I saw some footage lately of some street preachers in Israel.

And people were physically spitting on them. You know just imagine the grossness and the shame and the disgusting things that happen.

When someone stands up for Christ. And they might do that as you witness in your workplace. Or as you're an out and out Christian. In your day by day life. You will face persecution.

And so we ought to. Blessed are the you. When you are persecuted. For righteousness sake. Verse 11. Blessed are you. When men shall revile you.

When they shall scorn you. And mock you. And curse you. And hate you. When they shall revile you. And persecute you. And shall say all manner of evil against you falsely.

[22:26] For my sake. For my sake. What does it say? Rejoice. And be exceeding glad. For great is your reward in heaven. For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Rejoice. And be exceeding glad. I think it's got the sense of jump for joy. There's a joy there.

There's a rejoicing. There's a gladness. Even an exceeding gladness. When you are persecuted.

When they shall say all manner of evil against you falsely. For my sake. So there's a whole discourse of blessing there. That we can confess and identify with.

We are blessed to be a blessing. I put to you. We are blessed to be a blessing. Not blessed just for our own benefit. And our own well-being. But we're blessed to minister blessing to others too.

God has blessed us. Not so that we can hoard up blessings for ourselves. And have a. You know. Just be a kind of. You know. Just feeding ourselves.

[23:27] And looking after ourselves. And garnering blessing for ourselves. But we are blessed. Not to hoard it up for ourselves. But to share it. To share his blessings with others. To share his wonderful gospel.

Glad news. To share the wonderful redeeming. And gracious love of God. That we can be a channel of blessing. To others. In our lives. And what a. What a blessing it is to bless.

As our Lord says in Acts 20. 35. It is more blessed to give. Than to receive. That's kind of counter cultural. Isn't it? It's kind of counter. What the world would say.

It is more blessed to. Give. Than to receive. Acts 20. 35. So. There's a blessing. Even in. In losing. There's a gaining.

There's a glory. There's a. There's a joy. A gladness. In. Being poured out. As it were. As a drink offering. God wants us to be abounding. And. 2 Corinthians 9.

[24:25] Verse 8. It says. And God is able to make all grace abound. Toward you. That ye. Always having all sufficiency. In all things. May abound. To every good work. God is able to make all grace abound.

Towards you. In that you. Will have all sufficiency. In all things. That you may abound. To every good work. He. He abounds in us. And we're meant to be abounding. Ourselves.

Towards others. You know. The world would say. Get all you can. And can all you get. You know. Get all you can. And put it in a can. And can all you get. Just keep it for yourself.

As it were. But for the believer. We're called to abound. We're called to overflow. We're called to be fruitful. We're called to have fruit. That abounds. We're called to abound. To every good work.

We're called to live for Christ. And we can know the presence. Of the Holy One. The power of the Lord. So I put to you tonight. Count your many blessings.

[25:22] Name them one by one. Start making that list. As it were. As you could recount. What God has given to me. What I can thank him for. Count your many blessings. Name them.

One by one. We can know his many spiritual blessings. Salvation. Sanctification. He's still working on me. And God helping me. I'm getting closer to that finished product.

That he wants me to be. As it were. Till the ultimate. Glorification. When the total work will be done. As it were. But my salvation is secure. Present tense.

Here and now. For eternity. It's just the finishing touches. Of his working in me. God's love. God's favour. God's strength. Blessed to be a blessing.

Now let me think. Put to you tonight. We talked about being blessed. Now to be a blessing. You can start thinking about. A new list. Of how can I be a blessing. And I'll ask you to.

[26:19] Recount those shortly. How can we. Be a blessing. We have been given so much. How can we be a blessing. To our world. With so many resources.

With so many gifts. And he is sending us. On a mission. Of blessing. Philippians 2 verse 4. Paul says. Philippians 2 verse 4. Look not every man. On his own things.

But every man also. On the things of others. Look not every man. On his own things. But every man. Also. On the things of others. In other words. Don't just look out. For your own interests. Look out. For the interests. Of others. Have that. Not that selfish. Self-centered. Oh me. Me. Me. Me. And I'm just going to look at myself. And what I need and want. But look at others.

What do they need and want. How can I be a minister. Of blessing. How can I be. A servant. To bless. How can I reach out. And extend God's grace. To others.

[27:16] To be Christ's harm. Extended. How can I look. On the interests. Of others. Instead of just myself. How can I have that heart. That giving of my time.

Of my resources. Of my abilities. To extend the kingdom of God. In this place. In this circle of influence. In this extent that I can.

Make an impact. For Christ. Because we are blessed. To be a blessing. How can we bless others. I saw another list about. Such a truth. About how we can bless others.

And someone listed about a hundred ways. A hundred ways. You could think. Probably much more than a hundred. But really there are so many ways. We can bless.

We can bless through our words. And our actions. Look out for ways. That you can bless. For example. Let me. Let you. Let you tell me. Tell me some.

[28:11] How can you bless others. What can you do. Sing it out. Shout it out. Love one another. Talk rightly. Be Christ to all.

Witness to others. And what was that one? Encourage people. What about on the back row here? You quiet ones. You must be the spiritual ones.

Pray. Pray for one another. There's so many one another's in the Bible. Aren't there? Serve one another. Love one another. Pray for one another. Edify one another. Build each other up in his holy faith.

Amen. Edify. Build each other up in the holy faith. Encourage one another. Uplift one another. Especially those. Yeah. People in leadership. Pray for all and sundry.

Reach out. Let's be a blessing. What's some others? Ferry. Teach Sunday school. Teach Sunday school. Yeah. Use your gifts and callings. Let God use what you've been given.

[29:16] To use it for God's glory. I've got another few here I could reckon. Share your abundance. Fruit. Share your abundance. Your fruit. Excess million dollars.

Yeah. If you've got a spare million or a spare hundred. So love. Witness. Share your faith. Talk to people. Listen. Sometimes people just need a listening ear, don't they?

Yeah. You see that one. Something's happening for them. Just sit alongside. Be the arm of comfort. Be the listening ear. Take time. Notice who is missing and reach out to them.

There's some people that are normally here. Maybe we could reach out to those ones that we don't see here tonight. Serve others willingly. Give to others. Be kind.

Care for people. Say thank you. Even down at the shops, it's almost like no one says thank you or please anymore, do they? You know, it might be a blessing to the shop assistant. You know, offer

practical help.

[30:16] When you hear of a practical situation. Volunteer. Say, I'm available. I'm willing to help. Whatever it be. In the church setting or far and wide.

Even at work. Be one of the people who say, hey boss, I've got a bit of spare time. What else can I do to be a useful employee? You know, be a volunteer.

To meet needs around. Blessed to be a blessing. Meet those needs that you see. Bloom where you're planted. When you see a need, meet the need. Share scripture.

Be positive. Go the extra mile. You're blessed to be a blessing. Blessed to be a blessing. How can we use the everyday circumstances of our lives to bring blessing to others?

To impart blessing. To be a witness. To be an encouragement. These are just some thoughts to consider this truth that we're blessed. And not just blessed for our own benefit.

[31:19] But we're blessed to be a blessing. To be a blessed people. Blessing our Lord God. Bless the Lord, oh my soul. Forget not all his benefits. Count his many blessings.

Name them one by one. Perhaps there's a challenge I could put to you tonight. To count your blessings. Make a bit of a list. And that can help you to pray. That can help you to be thankful. That can help you to be praising God.

To be thanking him. To be glorifying him for the many things he has given to you. That you've never stopped to thank him for. You've never stopped to consider God's many gifts. And then consider of the many gifts you've been given.

How can you bless others with your abilities. Your callings. Your ministries. Your availabilities. Your opportunities.

To bless and minister. To be a blessing. And of course the greatest blessing that we can know is salvation. Isn't it? And I'm not taking it for granted that everyone here is a believer.

[32:20] But that is the most glorious blessing of all. Isn't it? To know the living saviour. To know the loving saviour. That he died on the cross. He rose. He comes to those who put their trust and faith in him.

Who receive his love gift. Of his saving grace. Of his substitutionary death. As he was at the cross. In our place. And in his body. Was our sin. And the penalty he paid was our penalty. So we can trust his act.

Fully saving those who put their trust in him. And I urge you tonight. That is the biggest blessing of all. And then to have that blessing. Wow. That's a blessing to bless others with.

Isn't it? The most blessed blessing you can be. Is to share that blessed blessing. With those around you. Isn't it? The blessed gospel. The blessed good news.

[33:21] The blessed saviour. Your blessed salvation. That's the biggest blessing. That you are blessed to be a blessing. To share that glad good news with others today. And all around you.

As God helps you to take that time. That opportunity. Blessed to be a blessing. Amen. Let's close in prayer for this time. Lord we thank you that you have blessed us with all spiritual blessings.

In heavenly places in Christ. Lord we know. It's almost a. We can't get our head around the fact that we're already in heavenly places. In Christ.

We're already. As it were. In the waiting room of heaven. In heavenly places. In Christ. Lord help us to impart something of heaven.

Something of that heavenly blessing. To people in our own lives. Lord whether it be the saved. Or the lost. That we can be a blessing.

[34:19] Pointing others to you. Help us Lord to be mindful. Not just to look out for our own interests. But for the interests of others. Help us Lord to have a heart for others.

And to have a yearning. A longing. To be a channel of blessing. Lord thank you. Help us to count our many blessings. And to be always thankful. And even thankful in the trials.

Even thankful in the persecution. Even thankful in the time of loss. Or suffering. And pain. As life goes by.

We know the challenges we all have. Yet Lord you're always steady. And faithful. And hang in there. Lord we thank you. For that faithfulness. That you stand with us.

And we know you're ever present. In Jesus name. Amen.