

May God's Face Shine on You

Psalms 67

Online Sermon:

http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

Ever since we heard those terrible words of the curse, “by the sweat of your brow you will eat your food” (Genesis 3:19), people have strived to mitigate the pain of living in a fallen world through a variety of different ways. For some the key to obtaining an “easy and good” life they believe can only be found through hard work and cunning to take beyond their share of money, fame, and power to “buy” the favorable circumstances needed to make them happy. For those born of the water and Spirit (John 3:5-8) Scripture states we are to seek happiness in life not from our own abilities alone but primarily from the sovereign God who promises to always do good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28). We want God to bless us beyond all measure by shining His face upon us, but we must admit that too often we struggle in both defining blessings and in seeking them rightly. For instance, is it right to ask God to take us from obscurity and being poor to fame and riches like He did Joseph or King David if this would mean it might rob us

of spiritual maturity in Christ because we would buy our way out of many of our trials and tribulations?

And while Jesus promises to give unto us anything asked in His name (John 14:13) surely to keep from giving us “stones masqueraded as the bread of tidings” (Matthew 7:9) He must have some criteria in which requests are granted! If there were no criteria, then even His own would be tempted to treat Him like a genie in a bottle and our selfish desires would be our god and not Him!

The following sermon is going to review Psalms 67 and suggest that blessings are given not for the express purpose of making the recipients life easier but are meant to be a profound witness to the world of God's grace and mercy.

May the Lord Make His Face Shine on You

The Psalmist begins with a song¹ that is an “echo”² of the Aaronic Blessing of Numbers 6:24-26. It originally was a prayer given by God to Moses to be used in tabernacle worship by Aaron and his sons.³ As he reflects on the contents of this

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 56-87*, vol. 3 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 128.

² Robert L. Jr. Hubbard and Robert K. Johnston, “Foreword,” in *Psalms*, ed. W. Ward Gasque, Robert L. Hubbard Jr., and Robert K. Johnston, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 278.

³ Roger Ellsworth, *Opening up Psalms*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 110.

prayer the Psalmist begins his song with a cry for mercy and forgiveness of sin.⁴ Lacking any “legal hopes or claims of merit”⁵ the only way to be blessed he thought must come from God Himself shining His face upon His own. Perhaps the Psalmist



thought “a shining face is the opposite of an angry or scowling face, and a face turned toward someone is the opposite of a face turned away in indifference or disgust. A shining face implies favor, the favor of the one whose face is shining, and it implies the

friendliness of warm personal relationships too.”⁶

Since the material wealth of the Aaronic blessing if viewed and used improperly could become “hollow and a dangerous deception and snare,”⁷ the Psalmist focused on the far greater and more important part of Aaronic blessing, to know and be close to God who grants a personal relationship⁸ with those who seek and obey Him.

⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 56-87*, vol. 3 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 128.

⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 56-87*, vol. 3 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 128.

⁶ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42-106: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 546.

Grace was the bases of this blessing and truly the only way a fallen human being under the curse could have any hope of pleasing He who is sinless, without blot or blemish and wholly other! So, the Psalmist begins by singing about this God-given, unmerited hope for here he finds is the key to not only making living in a fallen world bearable but enjoyable as well!

May thy Ways be Known Upon Earth

Psalms 67 invited Israel and us to change our way of thinking when it comes to being blessed.⁹ I remember the first time I flew in an aeroplane how small and insignificant the world appeared the higher I went up into the sky! Above the clouds all I could think was how awesome and great our God is to have created and maintain such incredible beauty! Too many of us in our day-to-day grind tend to focus on things that are of lesser importance.

Israel and we too often become so focused on what was temporary and ground level that they forgot what was eternal and heavenly.

For instance, in the Old Testament wealth and prosperity were often synonymous with holy living and having God’s favor. The

⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42-106: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 546.

⁸ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42-106: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 546.

⁹ Tony Evans, “[Impacting the World for God \(Part 3\)](#),” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 67:1-7.

Israelites felt this way because just before entering the promised land they had learned on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal that blessings and curses of a material nature were a direct result of

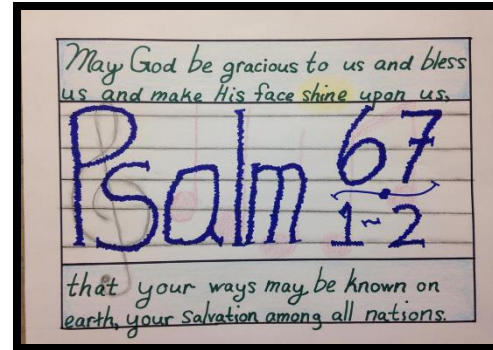


either obeying or disobeying God (Deuteronomy 28). In his song the Psalmist invites us and Israel to look at the big picture when it comes to God's blessings.¹⁰ Like Israel too often we are nearsighted and

only choose to yearn for the temporal things of this world. Despite Abraham being materially blessed was not his primary focus to be a light of God's grace that shined so brightly that those who saw how he loved and lived for God might see His grace and mercy (Genesis 12:1-3)? And when it comes to blessings is not God to be our portion (Lamentations 3:24)? What specifically did Abraham take to heaven besides his faith and love of God that alone made him right in His sight (Genesis 15:6)? The Psalmist rightly began his song by saying grace and the shine of God's face in a loving relationship with one's creator is all one truly needs to be blessed!

While the opening verse of the Psalmist song might appear to be selfish¹¹ that impression melts away when one

realizes he is singing about what is required to be blessed by God. In the New Testament Jesus promised that His own would receive anything they ask for in His name (John 14:13), with the right motives (James 4:3), in faith (Matthew 21:22), and in accordance with His will (1 John 5:14-15). Here the Psalmist adds one more criterion for receiving blessings, missions!



“If you are not involved in

bringing people to Christ and growing them in the faith, you're on ground level. And you will always be consumed by things that are not bigger, but they are bigger simply because you're so low.”¹² Like Abraham God blesses us to be a blessing to others.¹³

To go from being babes to mature saints in Christ then our interest simply must go beyond making comfort our god¹⁴ to seeking first the overarching goal of His kingdom ... to give the lost every opportunity to be saved (2 Peter 3:9)!

¹⁰ Tony Evans, [“Impacting the World for God \(Part 3\),”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 67:1-7.

¹¹ Roger Ellsworth, [Opening up Psalms](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 110-111.

¹² Tony Evans, [“Impacting the World for God \(Part 3\),”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 67:1-7.

¹³ Tony Evans, [“Impacting the World for God \(Part 3\),”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 67:1-7.

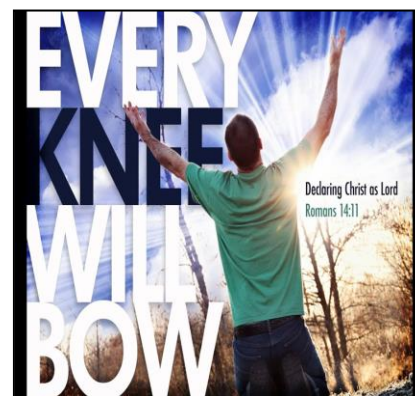
¹⁴ Roger Ellsworth, [Opening up Psalms](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 111.

There are almost 8 billion people in this world many of which are not saved¹⁵ who desperately need to see the evidence of God's mercy¹⁶ and grace "lived" so deeply in your heart¹⁷ that no tribulation, injustice, or disease can shake your faith or desire to boldly come before His throne with rejoicing! As Christ's ambassador and royal priest (2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Peter 2:9) show the world by the way you think, act, and speak that God offers to those who believe in the atoning sacrifice of His son (John 3:16) the blessings of His presence, protection, grace, and love that far outweighs anything this world has to offer! While not everyone is called to be a missionary remember everyone is called to give the reasons why we have hope in the Lord (1 Peter 3:15)! To receive blessings then, one must be a missionary blessing to all!

May the People Praise Your Name

To be a missionary blessing to the world one must demonstrate and teach the world how to praise God rightly. Living in a world that is truly interconnected means opinions and belief systems "tend to compete."¹⁸ As those eternally grateful for being grafted in the Vine our missionary role is to tell the world that God's voice is not to be but one amongst many. When the "nations boast of their power and their independence as

sovereign states" we are to remind them that God alone determines their boundaries (Acts 17:26) and even their leadership (Daniel 2:21).¹⁹ While their rule might result in temporary riches, peace, and freedom nothing but bowing their knee before the sovereign God²⁰ of all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16) will satisfy the eternity God has placed within



their hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). God alone can heal the broken-hearted, free the captives from the bondage of sin, comfort those who mourn (Isaiah 61:1-2) and save us from this body of death of the curse (Romans 7)! God alone rules rightly, provides justice to all regardless of their race, color of skin, nationality, or genealogy.²¹ The heavens

declare the glory of God and the skies proclaim the works of His wonderful hands (Psalms 91). We as His ambassadors need to tell the world God is not one voice amongst many but the only voice by which creation exists (Genesis 1)! Tell them there will come a day when every knee shall bow and tongues confess (Psalms 86:8-9; Romans 14:11) He is Lord and the nations will sing, "lifting their voices, as the noise of many waters and like great thunders."²²

¹⁵ Tony Evans, "Impacting the World for God (Part 3)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 67:1-7.

¹⁶ Roger Ellsworth, *Opening up Psalms*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 111.

¹⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42-106: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 547.

¹⁸ Tony Evans, "Impacting the World for God (Part 3)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Ps 67:1-7.

¹⁹ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980-1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 56-87*, vol. 3 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 129.

²¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 56-87*, vol. 3 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 129.

²² C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 56-87*, vol. 3 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 129.

Above all tell the nations when the Lord returns while this Great Judge will separate the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:31-46) He is also full of mercy and grace and will forgive and forever seal them as His own the moment they believe in the atoning sacrifice of His Son.

Since their ways are not God's ways (Isaiah 55:8-9) implore them to be reconciled unto God and live!

Yield of the Harvest and the Fear of the Lord

The Psalmist finishes his song of reflection on the Aaronic Blessing by asking that God would grant the land its harvest and that the ends of the earth might fear Him. While nothing has been said thus far “about harvests or any specific material blessings”²³ the Psalmist does not preclude them from what God offers to those who praise Him. While one of God's first words to humanity was that we would eat by the sweat of our brow we must not forget that God still offers grace to those who love Him.²⁴ There has and always will be an “intimate relation between moral and physical evil, and between spiritual and physical good.”²⁵ When we go through trials and

²³ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42–106: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 549.

²⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 56-87*, vol. 3 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 129.

²⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 56-87*, vol. 3 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 130.

tribulations of various kinds we must not forget that we can rely on God to provide for our basic needs²⁶ and divine comfort when we focus on the eternity He has placed in our hearts! While food, water and shelter are necessary to keep us physically alive the Psalmist is more concerned with what our souls need to be right



in God's presence. There is a glorious day vastly approaching when the Lord will return and justice, peace, worship, and the universal rule of our Creator will be restored amongst all nations.²⁷ No longer will nations war against one another

(Isaiah 2:4) and “ignorance shall be removed, insolence subdued, injustice banished, idolatry abhorred for the Lord's love, light, life and liberty shall be overall, the Lord Himself being King of King and Lord of lords.”²⁸ How we look forward to the day when the Garden of Eden shall be restored, a place where there will be no more sorrow, pain, death, or sin (Revelation 21:4, 27). To walk and talk to the Father and sing eternal praises to His name who truly is our portion is a blessing that forever motivates us to praise His name!

²⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 56-87*, vol. 3 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 130.

²⁷ Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 442.

²⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 56-87*, vol. 3 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 130.