

## SERMON FOR TRINITY SUNDAY 2023

TEXT: NUMBERS 6: 22-27

THEME: THE BLESSING

**22** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, **23** “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them, **24** The LORD bless you and keep you; **25** the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; **26** the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. **27** “So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

Our text for today is from Numbers chapter 6. The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace” (Num 6:24–26). Are those tired, old words to you? You’ve heard them Sunday after Sunday, year after year—since you were a child those words have been spoken to you by pastors.

The words might be old, and they certainly should be familiar, but they are not tiring nor are they tiresome. These words speak the blessing of the Lord upon you, the same blessing the Lord spoke upon His people of old. These words deliver the goods! They say what they mean and mean what they say! The Benediction gives you the promises and blessings of the Lord:

Forgiveness, grace, and peace. Blessings given all on account of Jesus. And oh, how we and the world that we live in need these blessings today!

The blessing bestowed upon the people of God in the book of Numbers occurs when they are in the wilderness. The children of God look around and see nothing around them. They are on the road to the Promised Land but the desert that they are now living in looks anything but a place where anyone would want to stay. The Lord, though, blesses His people in the wilderness, on the way to the Promised Land, because they need His blessing to even exist!

When you and I look around, this life looks anything but a promised land. There is hatred, murder, lying, stealing, not to mention the shameful things that are an abomination to the Lord. The world that we live in is not only cursed, but many people living today treat God as merely a curse word.

We need the Lord's blessings because the world that we live in is cursed. Today many people like to believe and think that they are self sufficient, that they don't need anyone's help and assistance. Some even live by the motto, "God helps those who help themselves." And so they turn from God to themselves, seeking to look to their own abilities in order to be blessed. And yet, the world in which we live in, and we ourselves, including those who live

by this motto, are cursed as well and as such, do not have the ability to obtain a blessing because of the curse of sin.

The Scriptures talk about this curse of sin, which is a curse that hangs over all people, Jews and Gentiles alike, because everyone of us fails to keep and observe God's Law. Listen to what the Word says: For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." You must be perfect, even as the Lord your God is perfect.

The Lord desires to bless us. After all, He created everything and in everything He created He called it good. But the crown of His creation, Adam and Eve, rebelled against Him and in doing so their sin and rebellion has so corrupted His creation that all of creation by nature lives a life apart from God, cutting all of creation off from the blessing that the Lord so desires to give us.

So what does the Lord do? He sends His only son into the world, not to condemn the world but to redeem it. The Father places His blessing upon His Son Jesus at Jesus baptism, and the Holy Spirit descends from heaven to anoint Jesus for His saving work here on earth.

The Father blesses you and me by cursing His only begotten Son on the cross. The Bible says that cursed is anyone who hangs on a tree, so Jesus, who knew no sin became sin for you, suffering and dying and damned in your place so that you might be blessed by the Father with His love, forgiveness, and peace.

This blessing is given to you here in worship each and every Sunday. After you confess your sins they are forgiven in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Before the Lessons are read the pastor blesses you by saying “The Lord be with you” and you return the blessing to the pastor when you say, “And also with you.” The Lord bestows upon you His blessing at the beginning of the sermon, for grace, mercy, and he is yours in Jesus. You are blessed at the end of the message for the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will keep you in Christ Jesus. Before you come to the Altar the Pastor blesses you again “the Lord be with you” and again, that blessing is returned. At the Altar, the children kneel to receive a blessing and after the Sacrament the Pastor blesses by saying the true body and blood of Christ keep and preserve you in the true faith. And at the end of the service, Aaron’s blessing is given, to bestow upon you God’s gifts for another week.

Sadly so many spurn the Lord's blessings that He offers and gives. They would rather stay away from the Lord's House and His blessings and find something else to do on a Sunday morning. They offer all sorts of excuses as to why they can't attend church, and in doing so, they remove themselves from the blessing of the Lord. And in spite of all of this, the Lord still desires to bless! Why? Because the Living Lord is the Source and Giver of every blessing in heaven and earth. All blessings come from Him. Every physical blessing is His and He blesses so that all may benefit. He blesses so that the ones He blesses may pass on those blessings to others. Parents may bless their children. We can greet one another with a blessing when either meeting someone or when we leave their presence.

And even when these physical blessings here on earth will eventually end, and they will end, either at our death or when the Lord Jesus returns, the Lord will continue to pour out the blessings of His Spirit upon all who are His children in Jesus Christ for the Bible says: "**22** But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, **23** and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, **24** and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant."

You have been blessed to be a blessing! This is the meaning of Aaron's blessing or benediction that we use at the conclusion of every service. This blessing blesses you with the holiness of the Lord as you depart from here for the week ahead. This blessing equips you and empowers you for the responsibilities that the Lord has for you to fulfill in the coming week. This blessing puts God's Name, the Lord's Name upon you and in your heart so that you can carry the Lord and His blessings with you to share them bodily in your life, thereby bringing the Lord's blessings to others that you meet.

In your Baptism the Lord has made His claim upon you. You belong to Him! Blessed by the Lord, He is with you, wherever you go. Whatever may happen to you, you are under the Father's care. And every time the benediction is spoken to you, the Lord is reminding that He is always with us, even to the end of the age. He is kind to us and continues to bless us. He causes His face to shine upon us so that we may know and do His will here on earth, and in doing so we fulfill His will of bringing and blessing others by sharing the eternal life that is for everyone who believes in Jesus. And so we go, asking that the Lord bless us and keep us, that He make His face shine upon us and be gracious to us, and that He look upon us with favor and give us His peace. Amen