

What Does It Really Mean to Be Blessed

by Tim Conway

This sermon delves into the true biblical meaning of being blessed, contrasting it with the worldly definition often associated with health, wealth, and success. It emphasizes being counted righteous by God apart from works and not being offended by Christ as key aspects of true blessing. The sermon also highlights the blessing of understanding and perceiving the truths of Scripture, being a doer of the Word, and the contrast between God's definition of blessing and the world's standards.

Scripture: Romans 4:6, Luke 6:20, Matthew 11:6, Matthew 13:16, John 13:17

Topics: "True Blessing", "Righteousness by Faith"

Description

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Transcript

The next question is this, the word blessed is mentioned everywhere in the Bible. It's used in Christian circles, even by the lost. Now I didn't write this question or state these statements.

So to say that it's used in Christian circles, even by the lost. Well, typically I take Christian circles to mean that the people are saved. But I think what it might mean is in church circles, where the churches have lost people in them, or even when you have people that are somewhat religiously raised, who are lost, or I don't know what all is being assumed there, but the world does use the term blessed.

People talk that way. Churches, people in religious circles use it, people out in the world use it, that's all true. Oftentimes being blessed in the estimation of the world has to do with good health, good relations, wealth, successful career.

Of course, health, wealth, prosperity circles, charismatic circles, that's generally the emphasis. But what does it truly mean to be blessed in the Bible? So that's a good question. I like that question.

You know what? The word blessed is, that is a word that is, it's special, it ought to be precious, and yet it is flagrantly misused. It is profaned, it is dragged through the mud. Everybody talks about blessed.

It's almost like the, I remember one time I was out on the streets evangelizing in San Antonio, and there was a group out there from a different religious group, and I was talking to them, and I was asking just some theological questions about what they believed. And I believe I asked a question about just something about what the gospel is. And, oh, I think they were throwing, they were possibly throwing around the term anointed, but anointed and blessed, those are two words that just, anyway, I was thinking of the wrong word there.

But let me tell you, let me tell you what it biblically means to be blessed. And you know what? I'm not going to say that if you get a new job, that's not a blessing. I'm not going to say that if you get a new house, that's not a blessing.

I'm not going to say that. I'm not going to say if grandma dies and leaves you a sum of money that you never expected, that that might not be a blessing. Now, it might be a curse, too.

I don't know that, but it could be a phenomenal blessing. So, and listen, if somebody's sick and they pray for healing and God heals them, I'm not going to say that's not a blessing. The problem is that when you listen to the health, so many of these preachers, televangelists, they immediately want to run to money and health and success.

And that's what it's all about. But you know, when that question comes to me, what does it truly mean to be blessed? My mind immediately went to Romans chapter four. Let's turn there.

We're just going to very quickly do a biblical survey on the doctrine of blessed. The term blessed, it just, let's try to define it. I know that you probably have heard it just synonymously compared to happiness.

I always, I'm not going to say that there's not obviously some connection there, but I think it goes beyond that. I think the idea is it has to do with being privileged. It has to do with being a recipient of God's smile.

A recipient of God's good, a recipient of the divine favor. Listen, a lost guy who may tomorrow die and be in hell, he may be very happy tonight. Sometimes when I just hear it, blessed just basically equated with happiness, it feels too shallow to me.

But let's look at Romans chapter four. You want to know about blessed? Here it is. Verse seven.

Verse six, David speaks of the blessing of the one whom God counts righteous. Okay, you want to know what one of the biggest blessings in all the Bible is? It is the blessing that God counts you righteous, even when you have not lived a righteous life. Brethren, it doesn't get any better than that.

That is the greatest blessing imaginable, that we can do the things we did, live lives like we have lived, break the commandments like we've broke them, spit in God's face like we have, turn our backs on him, raise our fists in rebellion, and yet come to the place where it's possible for God to designate us as righteous. That is the blessing upon, this is what it says. David speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness, apart from works.

In other words, I become righteous in the sight of God, not by my works, apart from that. And here it is, verse seven. This, of course, is an Old Testament quote from Psalm 32, but Paul loves it so much, he brings it right up here when he's expounding his gospel to the Roman Christians.

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven. You ever do any lawless deeds? I have like lots of them, like untold numbers of them, like I can never count all of them. Broken the law, that's what lawless is.

It is contrary to the law. Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven. God doesn't hold them against us.

And whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin. That is the blessing.

And then here it is. Is this blessing only for the circumcised or also for the uncircumcised? In other words, is it for the Jew only or is it also for the Gentiles? And he says this faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. How is it counted? Before or after he was circumcised.

And he says it wasn't after, it was before. And it was specifically before because it was before he was circumcised. So he was uncircumcised.

So it's for all of us. It's not partial to just the Jews. Do you want to talk about a blessing? Do you want to talk about an indication of God's favor? An indication of the divine smile? There it is right there.

And it doesn't get any better than that. It is that God sent his son into this world to make it possible for us to have a standing before God, to where God isn't going to hold our sins against us anymore. That is the greatest blessing that is.

Now, that isn't the only way that God blesses us. Let me show you. One of the things that you're going to recognize, one of the things you're going to see.

Brethren, I'll tell you this. You go search through your Bibles. Search through your New Testaments and find out how often blessing is connected with wealth.

I mean, physical earthly wealth. Like, I don't think you're going to find it. How often is it connected with being healthy? Don't think you're going to find it.

You know what you find? You find it's connected to having your sins forgiven, no matter how much money you have. Oh, better to be a poor pauper. Better to be in the poorhouse.

Better to be without a job, no money in the bank, and have all your sins forgiven. Better to be sick with cancer and to be unsuccessful and to have all your sins pardoned and cast behind God's back than to have all that stuff. That stuff is a shallow blessing compared to this.

Here's another one, Matthew chapter 11. By the way, when you get these statements in Scripture that talk about certain people being blessed, we call those beatitudes. And I'll show you one here in Matthew 11, verse 6. Who is the truly blessed man or the truly blessed woman? Blessed is the one who is not offended by me.

You know what? That one doesn't get rehearsed a whole lot among the health, wealth, prosperity preachers. And yet you want to know who the blessed people are in the world? The blessed people in this world are the people who don't trip over Christ. They don't stumble over Christ.

They're not offended by Christ. They're not ashamed of Christ. That's what he says here.

The people, what do you think? Let me ask you this. Blessed is the one who is not offended in me or offended by me. What do you think that is? What does that look like? Who is this person? What does it look like not to be offended by Christ? What would be true of the life or not true of the life? Not ashamed to confess him before, man.

That would be one thing. You're not afraid to speak up for him. You're not afraid to tell people what he said.

You're not afraid to tell people who he is. And I'll tell you this. You're not afraid to tell people that he is the only way that a person can have eternal life and that without him you can't.

And it doesn't matter whether you are a follower of Muhammad and Allah. It doesn't matter if you're following Joseph Smith. It does not matter if you're an atheist.

It doesn't matter. There is life. There is one way to God.

There is one truth. And Christ is at the center of this. Christ is the only savior of mankind.

Am I going to be chided? So yes, that's the reality. Blessed is that person. I'll tell you this.

That person who is going to proclaim Christ even though they get mocked, even though they get laughed at, even though they get harassed, even though people want to distance themselves, even though there's persecution that comes. Oh, what a glorious day. You have to recognize what it means when Scripture says blessed.

It means it is going to turn out so good for you in the end. It means that God is going to be for you and God is going to reward you and God is on your side. And you want to be blessed by God.

And what we saw is this. You're blessed if He counts you righteous and you're blessed if you're not offended in Christ. This is the way Scripture speaks.

How about Matthew 13 verse 16? Here's another one. Another beatitude. Blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear.

For truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous people long to see what you see and did not see it and to hear what you hear and did not hear it. Right before this, He says this. This is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah.

He says, you will indeed hear, but never understand. You will indeed see, but never perceive. For this people's hearts have grown dull.

You know what you need to recognize is this. You know who is really blessed in this world? People that have heard the teaching of the Word of God and have understood it. Because do you recognize the vast multitudes that come across the Word of God? They do not understand it.

They do not understand it savingly. They do not hear the truths. I mean, they don't have ears to hear.

They hear, but they don't have eyes to see. They remain in the dark. They remain deceived.

They remain believing a lie. Blessed are your eyes. Oh, brethren, I can tell you.

Some of us, we know this. We know that this was a dead letter to us. And that day came when suddenly this book.

Ruby, my wife describes it as, you know, it's like she was sitting in a room that was dark and somebody turned the light on. Maybe for some of us, the light came on more like the rising of the sun than the immediately shining of the light at the throw of a switch. But the reality is, oh, I remember.

I remember as a kid going with my parents to a nursing home where my stepdad's mom was. And they had a track rack there. I don't know if it was, I don't know who did it.

But I remember getting these portions of scripture. A lot of times they were psalms. And I remember reading them.

And it just, it was like foreign. My wife was telling me just recently, she was talking to somebody. And somebody who was sat in one of our services.

And Ruby was saying that right there at the end of one of those messages, she felt like the gospel had very clearly been stated. And she was talking to a woman afterwards. And the woman said, I couldn't understand a thing your husband was saying.

I was just telling somebody recently the story. I remember riding in the truck with my dad one time. And I had what I believed.

I purposely did this. I knew I was going to have time with my dad. I knew we were going to drive somewhere together.

And so I specifically went through my literally hundreds of MacArthur sermons. And I found the one that I thought out of all of them was the clearest gospel presentation. It was back in the day of cassette tapes.

And I took that tape. And when my dad and I were driving along, I stuck that tape in. And I said, Dad, I want you to listen to this.

And I am sitting there driving along just rejoicing, thinking this is so clear. My dad could not hear a more clear gospel message. After about five or 10 minutes, my dad reached over and discussed.

And he ejected the tape. He said, I cannot understand a single word that man is saying. Brethren, I'll tell you this.

Do not take it for granted if you are able to understand what Scripture says. For you to look into this book and see this for what it is. Jesus says this.

He recognizes right off that there are lots of people who they hear, but they do not understand. And they see, but they do not perceive. And he said, if you can, you're blessed.

So you see what's happening. Who are the blessed people? Who are counted righteous? Whose sins are not counted against them? Also, those who are not offended at Christ. Also, those who see these truths and have a grasp.

What else? How about John 13? John 13, 17. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. Wow, you got to like this.

Because the last one was, look, you're blessed if you perceive these things. If you have eyes that see. But you know what? He takes us further right here.

He says, if you know these things, that's good. But you're blessed if you do them. Do what? All the things we've been talking about.

He says, I've given you an example. Washed your feet. I mean, again, it comes to loving each other, to laying down our lives, serving one another.

He says, if you know these things, you're blessed if you do them. You don't want to just be hearers, you want to be doers. Those are the blessed people.

The blessed people are the people who've been so impacted by the Word of God and by the God of the Word that they're not just hearers. The Word abides in them. That's what Jesus says.

That wise man who builds his house on a rock, he hears the Word of God and he does it. That's the wise man. And that's the blessed person.

Well, I guess I would just turn this around. The opposite of blessing is cursing. You obviously know that.

The scripture says, whoa, whoa, whoa. Cursing. If blessing is basically to have, it's to be a recipient of the divine favor, then you know what woe is or what curse is.

To be cursed is the opposite of blessed. Woe is the opposite of blessing. That's the idea that you don't have the favor of God.

And we'll just end right here. Look at Luke chapter 6. The reason I want to look here is because these health, wealth, prosperity guys, they want us to believe that, well, if you're really blessed of God, God will heal you. If you're really blessed of God, you're going to be successful.

If you're really blessed of God, you can name it and claim it. You know what's very interesting? God's Word tells us you're blessed if you're poor in spirit. You're blessed if you're merciful.

You're blessed if you're meek. You're blessed if you hunger and thirst after righteousness. You're blessed if you're a peacemaker.

You're blessed if you're persecuted. They don't typically put that one in there. Notice Luke chapter 6, verse 24.

Here are the woes. These are the opposite of the blessings. If you go to verse 20 of Luke 6, it says, blessed are you who are poor.

Blessed are you who are hungry. Blessed are you who weep. Is this what the health, wealth, prosperity guys tell us? Just the opposite.

Blessed are you when all people hate you, exclude you, revile you, spurn your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice. I mean, you want to talk about blessed.

He says, rejoice in that day and leap for joy. For behold, your reward is great in heaven. For so their fathers did the prophets.

Okay, now let's get to the curses. Whoa, that means cursed to you who are rich, to you who are full now, you who laugh now, and all people speak well of you. You see, it's just the opposite of what the world says, and it's the opposite of what these false teachers say.

Brethren, they've got it all backwards. We need to be able to see these things through the proper lenses. There is a blessed man.

I'm going to read about the blessed man. You can go back to Psalm chapter one. You can go to the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter five.

There is a blessed man. There is a blessed woman. It's typically not by the definition of the world and not by the definition of so many false teachers and preachers today.

Anyway, that's a snapshot of what the biblical counts as being blessed. Anybody have any additional comments to that? Did I put everybody to sleep? I always think of that one with Mary. You know, when Mary gives praise up to the Lord and says, you know, now all generations will call me blessed.

And a lot of the Catholics would then refer to Mary being the blessed Mary, and she's kind of referred to as that. But the rest of the context, she doesn't really mention all the fact that she's been impregnated with the Holy Spirit. She actually speaks about God being her savior.

And I just kind of, I like that because, you know, that kind of drives home a lot of the other truths that you said about being blessed. You know, the fact that Mary, like, recognized she was blessed because of what God's done for her in salvation. And not necessarily like, you know, what happened to her in this miracle.

Yeah, listen to this, because that is something to think about. Here's Mary. Mary is in her Magnificat.

It's Luke chapter one. And actually in 142, Elizabeth is the one who says, blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And verse 45, blessed is she who believes that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.

And so yes, scripture speaks about the blessing. But listen, I mean, we have to recognize, was she blessed? I mean, did God show favor to her? Undoubtedly. I mean, think about the privilege that she had.

She had the privilege to raise a perfect child who was a God man. Not everybody gets that privilege. But we don't want to take the blessing further than what we ought to.

We don't want to take it where the Catholics take it. She says this, my soul magnifies the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

So one of the things she's acknowledging right off is she needs a Savior, God my Savior. He's looked on the humble estate. She recognizes she's a nobody.

And she's admitting it. She doesn't think she's anybody great. And she says this, from now on, all generations will call me blessed.

Why? For he who is mighty has done great things for me. That's a pretty great thing that the God man is suddenly showing up in her womb. No man involved, miraculous, fulfillment of Isaiah 7. His mercy is for those who fear him.

She recognizes she's a vessel of mercy. He's shown strength with his arm, scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts, brought down the mighty from their thrones, exalted those of humble estate. I mean, do you realize what's happening? God's in the midst of changing the whole course of the world.

Listen to what she says. He's filled the hungry with good things. Well, who's the hungry? She is.

The rich he sent away empty. He's helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy. I mean, you realize what's happening.

Christ is coming on the scene. They've been waiting for the Messiah. All the women of Israel wanted to mother the Messiah.

And here God is changing redemptive history. The greatest event in all of redemptive history is at hand. I mean, this is the greatest event in all of human history.

And the most important three decades, I mean, these 30 years of Christ's life, in all of time, and where is God? Where is God at work? A barren old lady and what? I mean, two obscure women, one old barren beyond her age, and the other, a young virgin who herself recognizes she's nobody great. She's the wife of a carpenter. And this is where God's at work.

I mean, you got to recognize that God pours his blessing out on the kind of people that the world isn't overly impressed with. Well, that's all for tonight, folks.

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