

# God's Blessing Placed upon You

Ephesians 6:21-24

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## **Introduction**

Today in our regular sermon series, we come to the closing remarks of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians.

- Here we have a rather typical ending for an epistle of the New Testament...
  - The Apostle Paul pronounces a gracious blessing upon the congregation at Ephesus.
    - It is a benediction put upon the people of God.
- This is something that we also do at the conclusion of our worship service each Lord's Day.
  - As one who has been appointed to be a minister of the Word who speaks for the Lord as His representative,
    - I lift up my hands and pronounce God's blessing upon you.
- This ought to be a real encouragement to all of you who believe...
  - It is the way God has appointed to tell you that He earnestly desires to bless you and **will** bless you as His people.
    - It is not my blessing, for I have no power to give grace to any one...
      - But I speak as the Lord's representative.
        - He is the One who made heaven and earth and He is the one who promises to bless you...
        - He is the One who sent His Son to bless you by atoning for your sins and by pouring out His Spirit to turn you away from your sins.
- The Lord first appointed that blessings should be placed upon His people when the patriarchs blessed their families.
  - Then, when God organised His people into a church in the time of Moses, He commanded the priests to pronounce His blessing upon the people.
    - Look with me for a moment at Numbers 6.
      - In Numbers 6:22-27, it says:
        - Num 6:2-27: 22 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: "The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."' So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.

- Look at what this says happens when the blessing is pronounced!
  - God says that He puts His name upon you!
    - You put your name on things that belong to you—
      - If you write a book, you put your name on it...
      - If you own a car, you put your name on the title.
    - By the blessing, the Lord associates His name—His reputation, His person, all that He is—with you as His people!
      - He identifies you as His own!
  - And the result of that is that you are guaranteed that He will treat you as His own...
    - He does not forsake what belongs to Him...
    - He blesses His people according to all that He has promised.
      - What an encouragement this ought to be to you!
      - It is not just a way to end the service!
      - It is God's way of identifying you as a people He has chosen to bless!
- Now someone may say,
  - But how do you know that this is to be done in the New Testament by the minister of the Word?
  - Well, by this—
    - When the apostles sent out these letters to the churches, they included these blessings...
    - And these letters were to be read in each congregation of God's people by the ones who were appointed to minister the word.
      - And one of the things that was to be read were these blessings.
      - By this, the Lord shows us that this is a practice He wishes to be carried over in the New Testament when His people are assembled together.
        - That is the warrant we have for continuing this wonderful practice.

With that in mind, let me now draw your attention to our text, Ephesians 6:21-24.

First, I want to show you where the blessing comes from... what is the source of the blessing...

Second, I want to show you to whom this blessing is given  
And third, I want to show what the blessing is.

## **I. Where does the blessing come from?**

A. Well it ought to be patently obvious to anyone that every blessing comes from God.

- This is the most elementary principle of our existence.

1. This is something that all men ought to know.

a. We were created with a sense of deity—we are made in the very image of God...

- We know of His eternal power and divine nature...
- We know that He is the author of every good and perfect gift...
- We have nothing that we have not received from Him.

b. Where else could our blessing come from—whatever blessing we have?

- If He is our Creator, every blessing must be traced back to Him...
  - Our destiny is in His hands to either bless us or curse us.
  - No human being has the power at last to decide this for us.
  - It is not up to chance or fate,
    - It is up to God and His will.

c. The Scripture tells us that we all know this—but that instead of giving thanks, we became vain in our imaginations and our foolish heart was darkened.

- Now the result is that you have people walking around in this world who were made by God—in His very image—
  - but who do not give thanks to Him or serve Him as their God.
  - Some are so bitter that they deny Him and say that they do not believe in Him.
    - They often say this because they do not like the way He has responded to our rebellion.
      - They will not own our guilt as a fallen sinful world...
      - They will not accept that death and all our miseries are God's just judgements for our ingratitude.

2. And so it is that there are many who deny the simple truth that blessing comes from God.

- a. They spend their whole vain life trying to carve out some sort of happiness for themselves—or at least to avoid the pain and sorrow of life—without God.
  - Some try to obtain blessing (or escape) by amassing material things...
  - Some seek blessing from relationships with others—whether sensual, social, or service...
  - Some from a life of debauchery and corruption...
  - Some from the pursuit of simple pleasures from day to day—just getting along as they go on...
  - Some from setting high goals and standards and attaining them—from achieving great things in sports or business or education...
  
- b. But all this, apart from their creator, is sheer vanity!
  - You cannot bless yourself.
    - At last, only God can bless you.
  - Augustine said,
    - “We were made for God and our hearts are restless until we find our rest in Him.”
  - He also said,
    - “God is our supreme good, we must not stop at anything below Him, nor seek anything beyond, for the first is fraught with danger and the second does not exist. To strive after God then is to desire happiness: to reach God is happiness itself.”
  
- c. God is very longsuffering with us...but judgement is coming...
  - Though He has cursed this world to let us know of His displeasure for our ingratitude and rebellion,
    - He continues to bestow many good things on us in this world...
    - But He has appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness...
      - Then we will see Him as He is!
      - Then we will see how we have been avoiding Him and running from Him and how wrong all this has been...
        - We will see with horror what we deserve and God’s wrath will fall upon us to His glory and honour.
        - All our denials of God will be exposed as nothing other than unjustified bitterness on our part...

- We are the ones who sinned and we have acted as though God is the one who has sinned in punishing us.
- Where we ought to have been deeply humbled, instead we are filled with pride and cursing.

TRANS> But there is good news—

B. The good news is that God has not left all to perish in their sin and rebellion...

1. He chooses out a people to bless—despite themselves!
  - a. A people who are no more deserving than all the rest—
    - A people who, with all the rest of mankind, have not honoured God as God or worshipped Him or served Him or given thanks to Him as their Creator.
    - They are participants in the fall with Adam just like all the rest and have the same sinful nature.
  - b. But our gracious Lord calls them out and blesses them by establishing His covenant of grace with them...
    - He accepts as an atonement for their sins the blood of Jesus Christ whom He sent for the purpose of redeeming them...
    - And He gives them the Holy Spirit to change their rebellious hearts so that they will turn to Christ when He is offered to them and will trust in Him and follow Him as their Lord and Saviour.
    - And then He works in them by His Word and Spirit to transform them more and more into the likeness of Christ.

TRANS> This is something they would never do if left to themselves...apart from His grace...

- But He chooses them out in order to bless them.
2. And so now it is at the end of his letter to the Ephesians that Paul,
    - who is an apostle of Jesus Christ,
    - sent as an ambassador to proclaim the good news to the nations,
    - pronounces God's blessing...
      - the blessing that comes from both God the Father and from Jesus Christ our Lord.
  - a. And by mentioning both the Father and Jesus Christ together,
    - Paul shows that the blessing of God comes from both the Father and the Son.

- By putting them together like this, he shows that the Father and the Son are equals...
  - Only God can bestow a blessing...
  - And God the Son is made equal with God the Father as the one who bestows this blessing.
- b. And there is a reason also that Paul refers to God the Son by His earthly name—Jesus Christ our Lord.
  - 1) By this name, He is presented to us as the one who came from heaven to save His people from their sins.
    - He is shown as the redeemer who was incarnate and who dwelt among us and then offered Himself on the cross for our sins.
  - 2) Because the whole human race is fallen,
    - We cannot be blessed apart from Jesus Christ and the work that He did on the cross.
    - Even God the Father cannot bless us apart from the work, for to do so would be to deny His own honour and justice,
      - and He cannot deny Himself.
  - 3) Therefore, you must understand that God’s blessing only comes through God the Father and Jesus Christ our Saviour together.
    - God the Father sent Him from Heaven to bless us...
      - This is the way the Father blesses—through Jesus Christ—and there is not other name given under heaven by which we may be saved.

TRANS> So my friends, do not go looking for a blessing from any other source!

- You will at last be frustrated.
  - The sole source of blessing for humankind is God the Father and God the Son come as Jesus Christ to redeem us.
- And this leads us to our second question...

## **II. To whom is this blessing that Paul given? Upon whom is it conferred?**

- The answer is given in verse 24...
  - “Grace be with all those **who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.**”

A. Who are these ones that “love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity?”

1. Obviously it is not everyone.

- There are many who do not even profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ,
  - and among those that do profess to love Him, there are many who do not truly love Him.
- The word translated “sincerely” literally means “immortal” or, as an adverb, “immortally.”
  - In other words, this love for Christ is an **undying** love.
    - It is a love that does not evaporate,
      - or grow cold as Jesus speaks about in Matthew 24 when He says:
        - Mt 24:12: “because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.
- Here is an undying love that will not grow cold—
  - A sincere love for Jesus Christ...

TRANS> These are the ones upon whom Lord places His blessing...

- those who love His Son with an undying love.

2. But who are the people that have such love for Jesus Christ?

- I tell you, the only people who have this love are those who know Him as their Saviour.
  - a. There is a certain love for Him that some have in which they admire Him as a great man, a moral example, and inspiration, even as a prophet...
    - but this is not what the Apostle is talking about.
  - b. He is talking about a love that becomes the possession of every sinner who comes to understand and receive what Christ has done for salvation.
    - You cannot but love this Saviour when come to understand that He left the glorious of heaven to bear the shame and guilt of His sinful people...
      - That He went from the highest place of honour and joy to the lowest place of shame and misery—
        - all with a view to reconciling undeserving, rebellious human beings to God...
    - That His love for us and His love for the Father was so great that He wanted more than anything to see us delighting in the Father...
      - beholding and enjoying His glory...
      - living under the fullness of His blessing.

- When you realise what great things He suffered, and what great sufferings He delivered you from...
  - I say, when you realise all this,
    - you cannot help but love Him with an undying love
    - There is no other way, for Spirit has opened your heart to receive Him.
  
- Oh, I know that you don't love Him as much as you should—
  - But that is not what it says here...
    - It is that you love Him with an undying love...
      - not a perfect love, but an undying love...
      - And once you have been saved, you will have this love.
  
  - It is a love that you grow into as you go along and as you grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus...
    - It is the love that increases as you grasp more and more the magnitude of what your dear Saviour has done...
      - of how unworthy you are—and of how unworthy He was to take your place!
      - and of how well you have been loved by Him!

TRANS> Now some of you may have a couple of questions here...

B. First of all, you may want to ask,

- “But how can you say that only those who love Christ have God’s blessing?”
  - “Did you not already point out that every blessing comes from God?”
1. It is true... everything from morality to money is something that both the believer and the unbeliever have from God...
- Even though we fell and He cursed the world, He did not completely cut us off from every blessing.
    - He has left many blessings as a testimony of His goodness—a witness of His kind disposition toward us from the start...
    - These blessings fall on the just and the unjust and this goodness ought to lead us to repentance.
      - If it doesn't, it will vindicate God when He judges the wicked...
        - for they received many blessings in this life when they deserved only a curse,



- and still they did not give thanks to God or repent of their sins.
- He will be fully justified when He judges them.

TRANS> But how is that if blessing comes to those who do not love Christ that this benediction is only for those that do love Him?

2. It is because the blessing here pronounced is much more than just the general blessing that falls on the just and the unjust.
  - It is more than a blessing that only lasts for a time...
  - As we shall see in a minute, it is a blessing that changes both their very condition in life and their very nature.
    - But before we turn to that, let me address a second question you may have.

C. You may be very astute and you may say:

1. “How can any fallen sinner ever obtain this blessing that requires us to love Jesus Christ with undying love?”
  - “We are dead in trespasses and sins...”
  - “So how can we love Christ in order that we may obtain this blessing?”
    - “How can it be conditional upon our loving Christ?”
      - “Is this not like the person searching for a job who is always told that he must have experience...”
        - how can he ever get experience if he cannot get the job without first having experience?
2. Well I will tell you!
  - a. The blessing that Paul is not meant to be a blessing for unbelievers so that they may become believers.
    - This is a blessing for those who have already become believers to encourage them that God wants to bestow more grace on them!
    - The benediction is not pronounced upon unbelievers, but upon believers.
  - b. It is true that those who believe came to believe by the working of God’s grace...
    - And that grace—that initial saving grace—came to them without any conditions...
      - It came to them through nothing that had been done by them or wrought in them.
      - They were dead in trespasses and sins and the Lord made them alive.

- c. But now what can you expect if that work of grace that leads you to salvation has come to you?
  - The Lord tells you what to expect!
    - You can expect His grace to come to you and give you the blessings of His salvation...
    - You can expect peace and love with faith to use the language of this passage.

TRANS> And now I want to turn to look at just what blessings are spoken of here that are given to those who love the Lord Jesus.

- That is our third consideration this morning...

### III. What is the blessing the Lord bestows on those who love the Lord Jesus?

- These are mentioned in verse 23...
  - They are “peace” and “love with faith.”
- A. **Peace**, as it is used in the Christian blessing, is carried over from the Old Testament concept of peace...the word *shalom*...
  1. The word *shalom*, like our word **peace** includes the idea of an absence of conflict.
    - a. We have peace when there is nothing unpleasant to disturb us.
      - Or when those who have been fighting finally give it up.
    - b. Now of course, this is something we have in a major way when we have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.
      - The whole foundation of our peace is that we are no longer at enmity with God.
      - Even though we participated with Adam in highly aggravated treasonous rebellion
        - Here the Lord had given him life and all sorts of blessing...
          - Here he was prepared to rule him with gracious laws that would have made him a beautiful reflection of God’s glory...
          - And Adam and our whole human race cut ourselves off from God to go our own way...
            - And we are still going our own way...
            - Even as believers, we have far too much of our own way.

  - And so in purity and justice,

- the Lord turned against us, and as a just judge prepared himself to avenge all the wrongs we have committed against Him.
  - There is, for all of us, a major lack of peace until we are reconciled through faith in Christ.
    - Jesus turns away the wrath of God by becoming a curse for us.
- c. That is the foundation of peace as an absence of conflict that we already have when God pronounces this blessing of peace upon us...
- And so it involves some thing more than an absence of conflict and enmity with God...
    - Certainly we grow into the reality of this peace and the sense of it, but there is more that this in the word *shalom*.

TRANS> But shalom includes much more than the absence of conflict.

2. **Shalom** involves not only the absence of conflict, but also the presence of the fullness of all that makes life good!
- a. It refers to a positive state of well-being.
- a wholeness and a completeness...
  - a happiness and satisfaction...
  - This speaks of God changing our whole condition from that of misery to fullness of happiness.
- b. This peace is something that we can have even in this world when there is tremendous conflict and struggle!
- It is a peace such as the world cannot give you.
  - It is the fullness of satisfaction with the Lord and what He has promised as the one who is able to bless you and who will bless you.
    - You can have this peace in the very worst of circumstances because you know that the Lord is in these circumstances to prepare you for an even greater blessing in eternity.
      - And because you have communion with Him even in the middle of these trials—a deeper, richer communion than you would have without them.
  - Remember when we looked at this with the helmet of salvation?
    - How the afflictions of life actually produce an eternal weight of glory in heaven?

- When people wrong you and defraud you and hurt you, you can know that God is only adding to your reward in heaven!
- c. Nevertheless, this peace that God gives will not have its ultimate fulfilment until we see Jesus...
- And until every tear is wiped away and every sin is eradicated and this body of death is made immortal and we are enriched with all the fullness of God's blessing.
    - The peace we have now ever increases as our hope and assurance in God's promise grows stronger...
    - It is a complete change in our condition that God gives to us.

TRANS> And that brings us to the next blessing that God gives us...

- It speaks of a blessing that transforms not only our condition in life, but our very character and nature...

B. This next blessing is love with faith!

1. This is an interesting combination of words...

- It is not love and faith, but love with faith—
  - It speaks of the kind of love that is connected to faith!
- I believe the blessing here is the one that Paul prayed for in chapters 1, 2, and 3 when he prayed that the Ephesians would grow in their understanding of Jesus Christ—of His power and His grace—of His love—of what He has done!

2. This is such an excellent blessing!

- We are so dull—our faith is so slender—we just don't grasp the fullness of what Christ has done!
  - We do not see the glory of Christ
  - We do not understand the breadth and length and depth and height of His love...
    - the fullness of the sacrifice that He made for us...
- We need the eyes of faith to believe what God has said...
  - I mean to believe it and understand it and appreciate it more and more—
    - That is what it means to grow in our faith.

- To see just what sinners we really are when God tells us we deserve Hell and that the only way of forgiveness was for the Son of God to be cursed for us...
  - To see just what promises we have in Christ—the preciousness of the peace—that shalom that He has given to us...
  - To see just how lovely He is as He is presented to us in the gospel in all His perfections!
3. And my friends when you see this—when you really see it—as you grow in your faith—
- The result will be that you will love!
    - You will love Jesus Christ with a greater and more perfect love—you will absolutely delight in Him!
    - This is the blessing that the Lord puts upon you as His people!
    - You grow in intelligent love for Him...
      - Love with faith that sees His glory as it is revealed in His Word!
  - And of course this love will not only be toward your Saviour,
    - but it will be toward all your brothers and sisters in Christ...
      - When you see the beauty of your Saviour’s love, you will naturally imitate this love—you won’t be able to help it...
        - the grace of God will see to it that this same love begins to grow up in you.
      - It will be love like the love of Christ—a love that gives and that sacrifices for others—a love that is lovely the way His love is lovely.

TRANS> God wants you to know that if you are a believer, it is His purpose and desire to give you this blessing of peace and love with faith...

- He is going to produce this in you as His child...
  - He is telling you that every time He puts His name on you in the benediction!
  - It is His purpose to give you peace and love with faith if you are among those who love the Lord Jesus Christ...
    - to keep on giving you more and more of these blessings.

C. Now I want you to see an example that is given to us here of this grace...

- It is the example of Paul and Tychicus right here in verse 21-22...
- It says:

- Eph 6:21-22: But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts.

1. Paul is here commending Tychicus,

- the man he has chosen to carry this letter to the congregations in Ephesus as well as his letter to Philemon and to the Colossians.
- a. As you recall, Paul was in prison when he wrote these letters, so he could not deliver them himself.
  - Tychicus was a disciple who had first served Paul at the end of his third missionary journey when he was returning to Jerusalem with an offering from the Greeks to support the persecuted Jewish Christians in Jerusalem.
  - Now, four years later, he is serving Paul during Paul's fourth Roman imprisonment.

TRANS> We do not know a whole lot about Tychicus,

- but here Paul tells us what is most important about him...
- b. He shows us that he is a man who is full of the grace of God.
  - He calls him "a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord."
    - The word grace is not mentioned here, but the grace of God in this man's life is clearly evidenced by these words...
      - "a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord."
  - 1) That he is "in the Lord" tells us that he had union with Christ...
    - It is "in Christ" that we have all spiritual blessings....
      - Every person is either "in Christ" or out of Christ.
    - Those who are in Christ are radically different than those who are not in Christ...
      - They have been reconciled to God through faith in Christ who died for their sins and rose again demonstrating God's acceptance of His sacrifice for them.
      - They believe in Him and are given His Holy Spirit who makes them a new creation in Christ.
        - They are now one who lives unto God when they used to be dead toward God.
        - It is by grace through faith that all of this is so!
  - 2) And when God's grace is powerfully at work in you, it makes you to become a beloved brother and a faithful minister.

- The word minister simply means servant.
  - We do not know if Tychicus was an ordained man or not,
    - but everyone who is in Christ is a servant, and as we grow in grace we become a more and more faithful servant.
- All who are in Christ are also brothers,
  - and as you grow in grace—as God works in you—you become a beloved brother—a brother or sister who is greatly loved...
- In other words, you become one who lives in such a way that you will be loved.
  - God’s grace takes you out of yourself to live for others as your Lord and Saviour Jesus does.
  - Paul once declared that he laboured more abundantly than all—
    - but then he added, “Yet not I, but the grace of God in me.”
- Grace causes you to care for others—to live for their good—to lay down your life for them—to sacrifice for them—to be a faithful servant to them...
  - and the more grace there is, the more that life focused on helping others appears...
  - And the more it appears, the more you are a beloved brother or sister.
    - Oh my friends in Jesus Christ,
      - don’t you want to be a beloved brother or sister like Tychicus?
      - Don’t you want to be a beloved son or daughter of your parents because of God’s all powerful transforming grace?
      - Don’t you want to be a beloved father or mother to your children?
        - a beloved wife to your husband?
        - a beloved husband to your wife?
        - a beloved employee?
        - a beloved fellow member at church?
- That is what Tychicus was by the grace of God...
  - Look to His grace to transform you more and more into a beloved brother and a faithful servant.
    - He delights in doing it!

- c. And you see what happens when you are full of the transforming grace of God...
- 1) Like Tychicus, you are entrusted with more and more service for the Lord.
    - Tychicus has the privilege of carrying this letter to the Ephesians...
      - And you see that he is also given the privilege of communicating with these ones who loved Paul about his circumstances.
    - And probably, he would also be given the opportunity to expound Paul's letters to the churches when he delivered them.
      - They are deliberately brief and designed to be expounded.
      - What a huge privilege he was given!
  - 2) And I tell you that you also, when full of God's transforming grace—when given to faithful service in the Lord,
    - will be given many opportunities to serve.
      - Whether your service is one that is very visible like that of Tychicus, or service is that is not as public,
        - if you, by God's grace, have a heart to serve, you will be given many opportunities to do so—greater and greater ones.
    - We only need think of our Master who came to serve and was given the opportunity to perform the greatest service of all by making Himself an offering for our sins.
      - He is a beloved brother to us all and a faithful servant.
        - And that is what He is making all of us to be!

TRANS> But Tychicus is not only one in whom you see grace in this example of Paul's sending of him.

2. The dearly beloved apostle himself also is full of grace, even in sending Tychicus.
  - a. Just consider his circumstances...
    - Here he is in prison, and what is his concern?
      - It is to comfort the Ephesians!
    - While he might have selfishly insisted that Tychicus stay around and serve him,
      - for you can sure that this dear brother was a tremendous comfort to him while he was I in prison...
        - instead he graciously sends him forth to deliver letters and bring encouragement to these churches that are always on his heart!



- Like the Lord Jesus on the cross who was there for his people, Paul is in prison for the sake of the gospel—for his Lord and for his people...
  - And as the Lord Jesus who prayed and thought of us in His agony, and even provided for the care of his mother,
    - so Paul sends always has the churches to whom he had ministered on his heart.
      - He is no hireling, but a true and faithful shepherd who cares for the flock.
- b. Consider that as Paul described Tychicus as a dearly beloved brother and faithful servant,
- so we can see from the circumstances that Paul is himself a dearly beloved brother and faithful servant.
  - One of the main reasons he gives for sending Tychicus is to let them know about his condition...
    - This shows us how much Paul was loved.
    - They were all very concerned and very interested in him.
      - They loved him because he had so sacrificially served them and now they are eager to pray for him and to assist him in whatever way they can.
        - You remember how the presbytery of Ephesus wept for him on the beach when he told him that they would see his face no more.
      - We see in this the grace that was in Paul, to make him a dearly beloved brother and faithful servant,
        - and the grace that was in the Ephesians to love him so dearly and to care for him as he had cared for them!
    - Here is our dear Lord Jesus reproduced in His people by grace—
      - giving them a heart of love like His heart of love!
        - What marvellous grace!

### **Conclusion**

- This is an example of the grace the Lord desires to bless all His people with!
  - This is the blessing that he will bless all His people with.
    - Let this be a comfort and a joy to you every time you receive the benediction.
- It is the Lord placing His name upon His people...

- claiming them as a His own,
- and making it know that it is His will to bestow His transforming grace upon them to give them all that He has promised.
- Every time you receive the benediction,
  - the Lord is making known His desire to bless you if you if you truly belong to Him.