

You’ve all heard the saying, “Count your blessings.” Well, God gives us more blessings than we can count. Today we are looking at the blessing that we usually say at the end of our worship services. It’s called the “Aaronic blessing” because God told Moses’ brother Aaron to say this blessing over the children of Israel.

The blessing has three lines. It doesn’t quite work out this way in English but in Hebrew each of the three lines gets a little bit longer. The first line “The LORD bless you and keep you” is three words in Hebrew. The next line is five words. And last line is seven words.¹ Each line gets a little bit longer. And that underscores the fact that God’s blessings keep coming to us more and more, like a steady stream of blessings from our God.² More blessings than we can count. So today we are going to see that

We are Blessed by the Triune God

- I. Blessed by the protection of the Father**
- II. Blessed by the grace of the Son**
- III. Blessed by the peace of the Holy Spirit**

I.

First, we are blessed by the protection of the Father. Today is Fathers’ Day. Fathers are known as protectors. Fathers want to protect their children. Well, the first line of the Aaronic blessing promises us God’s protection. It says, “**The LORD bless you and keep you**” (Numbers 6:24). God *keeps* us in his protection. The LORD protected the Israelites while they journeyed through the desert to the Promised Land. And the LORD protects us as we travel through the desert of this life toward the Promised Land of heaven. In Psalm 121 it says, “**The LORD will keep you from all harm – he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore**” (Psalm 121:7-8). As we come and go we are blessed by the Father’s protection.

But as much as we need physical protection, and we do, we need spiritual protection even more. On the night before he died Jesus prayed to his Father, “**My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one**” (John 17:15). We also pray for the Father’s spiritual protection in the Lord’s Prayer when we say, “**Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**” The devil seeks our spiritual ruin, but we are blessed by the Father’s protection.

And the way that God keeps us in his spiritual protection in through his word of Law and Gospel. The Father blesses us with his word of Law and Gospel to protect us spiritually. The Law warns us against sin and convicts us when we’ve committed sin. The Gospel reminds us that the Father sent his Son. And the Son took away all our sins by his death on the cross. We are blessed by the Father’s protection through his word of Law and Gospel. “**The LORD bless you and keep you.**”

II.

Second, we are also blessed by the grace of the Son. Our passage continues: “**The LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you**” (Numbers 6:25). Throughout the Bible God is proclaimed as a gracious God. When God explained who he is to Moses, God said, “**The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness ... and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin**” (Exodus 34:6-7).

¹ I owe this observation to Timothy Ashley, *Numbers*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

² I again owe this observation to Timothy Ashley.

God's grace is shown most of all in Jesus Christ. Because of what the Son did for us, now God's face shines on us. Both the second and third lines of the blessing mention God's face. **"The LORD make his face shine on you ... the LORD turn his face toward you" (Numbers 6:25-26)**. When the Bible talks about God hiding his face, it sometimes means that he is angry because of sin and he turns his face away in his righteous anger over sin (Deuteronomy 31:17-18). And if God were to completely turn his face away from us, we would die. It would be like if the sun were all of sudden gone (Psalm 104:29). That's what we deserve because of our sin, but on the cross, God turned his face away from Jesus in our place. We have been cleansed from every sin because of the death of Jesus. So God does not turn his face away from us. He turns his face towards us. **"The LORD turn his face toward you."** And when God turns his face towards us, his face is shining.

"The LORD make his face shine on you" (Numbers 6:25) Today of course is Father's day. And isn't it great when a father's face beams with happiness over his children. Well, the Father's face beams with happiness over you because of what Jesus has done for you. Jesus lived a perfect life in your place. So when God looks at you, he doesn't see the sinful things that you have done. Instead he sees the perfect life that Jesus lived. And the Father is even pleased with the good works that we do. Even though the good works that we do are tainted with sin, they are washed of every stain in the blood of Jesus and the Father is pleased with them. Because of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father's face shines on us.

So we are blessed with the protection of the Father. We are blessed with the grace of the Son. And, finally,

III.

We are blessed with the peace of the Holy Spirit. The blessing concludes: **"The LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:26)**. The Holy Spirit is the one who works faith in our hearts. He gives us peace by connecting us to Jesus. When we are connected to Jesus we have peace.

In the Bible, peace is not just the absence of conflict, it is also the presence of blessing. "Peace" has the idea of "wholeness." Sin has taken away so much from us. Our sin has caused so much wreck and havoc in our lives. But when Jesus returns we are going to be completely restored.³ Even right now, through the forgiveness of sins our souls are restored and we have peace. We are blessed with the peace of the Holy Spirit.

After God gave the words of the Aaronic blessing, he said, **"So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them" (Numbers 6:27)**. This blessing put God's name on the Israelites. In the Bible God's "name" includes everything that reveals about himself in his word. The true God, the triune God, has revealed himself to us and has put his name on us, marking us as his people.

God put his name on us in a special way when we were baptized. Jesus told his disciples to baptize in the name of the triune God. He said, **"Go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."** (Matthew 28:19) When you were baptized, God put his name on you which means that you belong to him. When you were baptized, God poured out on you the protection of the Father and the grace of the Son and the peace of the Holy Spirit.

"Count your blessings." God has given us so many blessings it is impossible to count them, but we will praise God for those blessings, now and through all of eternity. Amen.

³ In the song, "We Will Feast in the House of Zion," Christian artist Sandra McCracken talks about how we will feast "with our hearts restored."