

WE ARE BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

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We serve a God who desires to bless us. He has blessed us in so many ways. A recent blessing for me came in the form of a letter I received from a grandson. He expressed his gratefulness for supporting him both prayerfully and financially as he goes into the inner city of Chicago on a short term mission trip. So far this year there have been 1088 people shot and wounded in Chicago. A person is shot every 3 minutes and a person is murdered every 20 minutes. My grandson's goal is to love on the kids, teach them basketball skills and tell them about Jesus and how much He loves them.

I see this as a win-win-win mission with blessing after blessing after blessing. I have been blessed by God with enough resources to support him and I will be blessed in sharing them. My grandson is blessed with athletic skills and in having a personal relationship with Jesus. God will bless him even more when he shares his skills and his love for Jesus with the kids. The kids will be blessed by being loved, learning new basketball skills and hearing the "good news" that God loves them and desires to have a personal relationship with them.

In **Psalm 67**, the psalmist is singing a song about blessings. In the first verse, he is asking God to be gracious, bless his people and look with favor upon them.

May God be gracious to us and bless us; look on us with favor (:1)

Then, in verse two, he reveals his motive, the deep desire of his heart, for making that request.

so that Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. (:2)

He didn't ask God for wealth, possessions, honor, good health or long life. He asked that his neighbors and the nations would come to know His God and experience salvation. God loves to grant requests that are others' focused. He granted Solomon his request for wisdom and knowledge to rule His people (*2 Chronicles 1:7-12*). God especially loves to answer prayers that focus on fulfilling His Great Commission.

Much like the situation in our nation today, the psalmist wrote his song during a time when evangelism wasn't a priority and many of God's people seemed to keep Him to themselves. It certainly wasn't God's plan then and it isn't now. God has always wanted his people to share Him with their neighbors and proclaim His name among the nations. He called Abraham that he might be a blessing to the world (*Genesis 12:1-2*). He called John, the Baptist, to be a blessing by preaching repentance and proclaiming the coming of the Messiah (*Luke 3:3; Mark 1:7-8*)--- the One who would come to earth, deny Himself, shed His blood, die on a cross, be raised from the dead and save His people from their sins (*Philippians 2:6-11*). He is calling us, His followers, to follow in His steps (*1 Peter 2:21*) by denying ourselves and taking up our cross (*Luke 6:23*), obeying His commands (*John 14:15*) and sharing the "Good News" (*Mark 16:15*).

The Lord blessed the psalmist and He will bless us when our motive is to bless our neighbors by sharing the "Good News" with them. When we share the Lord with a lost person and that person

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comes to faith and invites Jesus into their heart, praise wells up in our hearts. This happened in the psalmist's heart in verse three.

Let the peoples praise You, God; let all the peoples praise You. Let the nations rejoice and shout for joy, for You judge the peoples with fairness and lead the nations on earth. Let the peoples praise You, God, let all the peoples praise You. (:3-5)

The scriptures tell us that even the angels in heaven rejoice when the Lord draws someone to Himself (*Luke 15:7, 10*).

As the psalmist ends his song, he sings:

The earth has produced its harvest; God, our God, blesses us. God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear Him. (:6-7)

God answered the psalmist's prayer for blessings so that they might bless others. The people became channels of His blessings and they were blessed again.

Question to consider:

Do you want the same experience as the psalmist?

God blessed him, he blessed others and God blessed him again. That's God's desire for you and me. Ask God to make you a channel of His blessing by being sensitive to your neighbors' needs, meeting those needs and sharing His love with them. He will empower you by His Spirit to lovingly serve them and verbally share Him.

He blesses us and we bless others so that all the earth will fear Him.

When individuals and nations fear (reverence) God, they will love their neighbors and value them as Jesus does.

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