



## Time to Redefine April 22: Blessings

**Series Summary:** There are a lot of words that we hear and use as Christians, whether that be inside or outside of church walls. We use some terms loosely, lose the original meaning, or use certain words in a way where we want them to mean what we selfishly want them to mean. We need to get back to the original meaning if we truly want to understand the Lord, and our faith, better.

**Big Idea:** One of the most common words we hear in church settings is the word “blessing”. Even the world tosses that word around commonly, and it’s easy to get caught up in the world’s definition of “blessing”. How does the Bible define blessings, and how does it compare to the worldly definition?

**Schedule:**

- Live Teaching
- Small Group
- Cafe Open

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## LIVE TEACHING

**Tonight:** One of the most common words we hear in church settings is the word “blessing”. Even the world tosses that word around commonly, and I think it’s easy to get caught up in the world’s definition of “blessing” or if we’re “blessed”

**Think to yourself:** How do you think the world defines the word “bless” (“I’ve been blessed, or I’m so blessed”)

- Something along the lines of “I got what I wanted”, “my life is easy”, “I’m happy in life right now”, “I have a lot of money”, etc.

Not to say that these couldn’t be true depending on the situation or person, but this can easily become a shallow and superficial way of understanding what it means to be blessed.

## THE “EASY SIDE” OF BLESSINGS

This is how we typically think of blessings- things come into our lives, or we attain something, and it makes us happy. Our innate reactions take us down this train of thought.

We allow our emotional impact, or comfort level, to dictate what we think is a blessing or what isn’t.

Blessings are often tied to obedience and stewardship, not emotions.

- Oftentimes, we get what makes us happy or comfortable, and we think “okay I’m just gonna enjoy it now”...it’s easy for us to ignore the stewardship and obedience aspect.

Don’t be confused: God does want us to enjoy things of this life. He gives us gifts, blessings, and privileges to enjoy in this world.

- But don’t get caught up in the consumerism mentality. God didn’t HAVE to give you those blessings and privileges.
- That friend circle, that job (even if you hate it), that money, that dating relationship, that future college degree, etc...God is not obligated to give us those.
- The second we start thinking with entitlement is the moment we risk lording our heart over to those things.
- All in all, God does give blessings to enjoy, but we have a job to do with them, or else they can easily backfire on us. We’re going to revisit this later on...

## THE DIFFICULT SIDE OF BEING BLESSED

Matthew 5 mentions what are called the ‘beatitudes’ and is the beginning of Jesus’s most famous sermon called the Sermon on the Mount.

- In Matthew 5 we see Jesus “redefine” what it means to be blessed- blessed in ways that we may have never considered.

**Matthew 5:3-12** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **4** Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. **5** Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. **6** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. **7** Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. **8** Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. **9** Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. **10** Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **11** “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. **12** Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The blessings in verse 9-12 are specifically for those who are persecuted because of their faith. The blessing stems from them being so inline with the Lord that they are willing to face the roughest of persecution.

- These individuals are told to rejoice and be glad for their persecution because their reward in heaven is great.

**Vs 3-** “Blessed are the poor in spirit”

- “Poor” does not mean money, here. This means that those who humble themselves and understand that they can’t save themselves in this life will turn.
- Think of this way- blessed are those who are humble/blessed are those who are not self-reliant.

**Vs 4-** “Blessed are those who mourn”- this one is difficult for us to wrap our heads around at some points. This is a blessing that completely defies our innate understanding of blessings being tied to happiness.

- What we easily forget about mourning is what follows it- that being comfort and joy.
- That’s not to say that these moments won’t be easy, some will be very difficult. But this is to say that our mourning should drive us to the Lord. Instead of finding satisfaction in what satisfies us emotionally, we should find restitution in the Lord because He is where we find fulfilling comfort, rather than momentary comfort from a broken avenue.
- Consider this: what if your mourning from a lost friend circle, failed life plan, failed dating relationship, the loss of a loved one, brought you back to a deepened relationship with Jesus (or is keeping you relying on Him)...that

sounds like a blessing to me because that sounds like a good spot to be spiritually.

- Understand this: there's a future promise tied to the end of that blessing-comfort. Our mourning won't go in vain because our God will provide comfort and joy, He just may not give us a timetable and that's okay.

**Vs 5-** "Blessed are the meek".

- The world takes pride in being in control, being rich, finding power in success, etc.
- Jesus is saying that those who are humble and trust in the Lord with everything in their lives will find blessing.

## A REALITY TO FACE WITH BLESSINGS

**Vs 6:** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

The more we seek after His righteousness, the more we will see and understand God's favor and blessings in our lives.

If there's ever been a time in your life where you thought something was a blessing to you (probably on the basis of how happy it made you), and it's no longer there...did it benefit you spiritually, or did it simply just make you happy?

- It's not uncommon for people to get a particular job, a new friend/friend circle, a dating relationship, more money- and they become really happy, but they change for the worse.
- Their attitudes, demeanors, and personalities change...they become more prideful...they become codependent on it (idolize it). In other words, we're bad stewards of that thing, and it takes an effect on us.
- There's been plenty of instances where an individual loses something that makes them the most happy, and with time they show spiritual maturation as a result. If you can relate to this then this begs the question- was that thing really a blessing to you, or did it just make you happy?
- If you can relate, then learn from it! If it was a friend circle then set up personal emotional and spiritual boundaries so it doesn't affect you in a negative way again. If it was a dating relationship, maybe singleness is the blessing you need- to solely seek after the Lord. If it's a post-high school plan then seek righteousness daily and the Lord will make your paths straight.
- We see numerous times, through several testimonies in scripture, that what determines if something blesses someone is how they steward it. We can

easily lord over our hearts elsewhere, other than Jesus, if we're not good stewards of our privileges and opportunities.

**Colossians 3:23-24** Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, **24** since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

- We will find blessings in our lives when we adhere and abide to God's instructions and plans that we see in His Word; when we live to glorify him in all that we do regardless of what it is.

**Transition to Groups:** So much of our lives we worry about God blessing us and supplying for us, and we get stuck in a consumer mindset. We end up losing sight of blessing the Lord with our lives. How does blessing the Lord with our lives bring blessing to us?

**Transition to groups:**

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

**What are some popular things, or areas of life, that people expect to be blessed with?**

**Note:** Almost anything and everything material. Money, relationships, education, etc. It's not uncommon for us to lose sight of our spiritual habits because these things fill a lot of voids in our lives.

**Why do you think it's easy to get caught up in material blessings and only focus on those?**

**What are some of the intangible blessings that you can think of that God's Word talks about?**

**Note:** This is to shift gears from material things, and remember the promises that God has made, and kept, for us. Some potential blessings/answers:

- God protects us (Isaiah 54:17, 2 Thess 3:3)
- God gives us strength (1 Cor 5:13, 2 Cor 12:9, Phil 4:13)
- God forgives and is merciful (1 John 1:9, Heb 4:16, Rom 6:14)
- God gives us provision (2 Cor 9:8, 2 Peter 1:3)

**What do you think is the trap of only focusing on receiving blessings rather than giving blessings back?**

**Note:** We know that the Lord will provide and sustain in due time, we shouldn't be fearful or worrisome about that. Our calling as Christians is to live holy and pleasing lives to Christ, not live as consumers of what this world has to offer. An easy sign that we are focused only on receiving blessings is if giving back within our faith feels like a chore or an obligation.

**Psalm 103:1-5 (ESV)** Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! **2** Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, **3** who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, **4** who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, **5** who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

**What do you see in this passage that we should bless God's name for?**

**How does blessing God's name create a balance between receiving blessings and giving blessings back?**

**Note:** We never see Jesus act, speak, or think with a mentality that was focused on receiving blessing after blessing. All of his ministry was about blessing His Father by preaching the gospel and preaching Truth, and by serving others and loving them regardless of situation.