

THE LIFE GOD BLESSES

Selected verses

Good morning! I'm so blessed to see everyone of you here this morning. Aren't you blessed to see me, too? Some of you are going, "My wife just dragged me into coming." Why don't you say to your neighbor, "You're a blessing!"

We're in the 4th part of our series on "Arise and Shine". We're talking about how to shine as God's people in this dark and weary world. We live in difficult days. Many people are in darkness and they don't know the way. This is a time when we either rise up in faith or recoil in fear. This is a time we either move forward or retreat backwards. This is a time when we show others the way or get lost ourselves. God tells us to arise and shine as followers of Jesus. We are the light of the world as Jesus himself is the light and we reflect his glory.

This morning, I'd like to share with you a message how your life can shine by being a blessing toward others. But first, you've got to know how God blesses your life.

The Bible says that everything you have in your life is a gift from God. You wouldn't have it if it weren't for the grace of God. In fact, without God's grace you'd have nothing in your life. Grace is a blessing from God.

What are some of God's gracious blessings? We're saved by grace. We're forgiven by grace. The Bible says we're strengthened by grace. We're set free from problems and sins by grace. All of the talents you have were given to you. You didn't choose them. They were just gift of grace that God gave you. The Bible says we're kept saved by God's grace. You didn't save yourself so you can't keep yourself saved. God just does it by grace. You're transformed by grace. And we grow by grace.

God's grace is what holds everything together. If it weren't for God's grace your life would fall apart, your family would fall apart, this nation would fall apart, the world would fall apart. It would stop spinning on its axis. There would be no gravity. The universe would either explode or implode. It is all held together by God's grace. Everything in life is a blessing from God.

I want us to look today at how do you live a life that God blesses. Because the Bible is very clear that God blesses certain things. Specifically four things He blesses. If you want God's blessing on your life you need to do these four things. If ever there was a week to take notes this is the good week. Because if I were to ask you how many of you want God's blessing on your life every one of you would raise your hand. Yet God says I'm waiting on you. I want to bless your life. So how does He do it? Here are the **four keys to being blessed by God.**

1. You must receive God's blessing through Christ.

Everything God does for you and to you and through you and with you and in you and by you He does because of Jesus Christ. Not because you're a good person but because of Jesus Christ. He does it because of His Son. If you want God's blessing on your life you need to learn to love Jesus. Because it's all tied up in a relationship to Christ. If you want God's blessing on your life it doesn't start with a principle, it starts with a person.

Ephesians 1:3 (GW) "Through Christ God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing that heaven has to offer." All of God's blessings are wrapped up in Jesus Christ. He is the source. This is so important because it's the exact opposite of what every other religion teaches you. You don't get God's blessing through religion. You don't get God's blessing through rules. You don't even get God's blessing by following certain rituals. The only way you get God's blessing on your life is through a relationship. A relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ. Through Christ God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

How do you receive God's blessing? God has already taken the first step so you can be blessed. *Romans 5:10 says, "For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"*

Let me just pause here and take ninety seconds to explain Christianity 101. If you want to know what the Bible says in a nutshell this is it.

First, God made you. You didn't make yourself. God made you. And He made you to know Him, to love Him, to serve His purposes here on earth and then to live with Him in eternity.

Two, you have not done these things. You have not known God. You have not loved God. And you have not served His purposes here on earth. In fact, in the morning you don't get up and say, "God, what do You want me to do?" You get up and say, "What am I going to do today?" And when you get your check you don't say, "God, how do You want me to spend this money?" You say, "How am I going to spend my money?" And when you plan your time you don't say, "God what do You want me to do with my time?" You say, "I'm going to do my own thing with my time." The Bible calls this sin and it says we've all done it. We've all gone our own way. I could go weeks, months – I could probably go years without thinking about God if I wanted to. I would just go on my merry way planning my life with my dreams and my ambitions and my goals without even considering the fact that God made me for His purposes. The Bible says that's wrong.

So point three, God sent Jesus Christ to come to earth to bring you back to Himself. He came and died on the cross so that all the things you've done wrong could be forgiven so you could come back to God.

The purpose of Fil-Am church is to help you grow and understand that.

Now that you've settled this first key and most of you have already done this, you're ready for the second key of God's blessing on your life.

2. Celebrate God's blessing in worship

What do I mean by that? Thank God for what He's already done for you. God loves to bless people who are grateful for what they've already got. God's not really excited about people who are always saying, "What's next, God? What are You going to bless me again with?" when you're not even pausing to thank Him for what He's already given you.

When you do that, that's called worship. Remember, worship is far more than just a church service or music. Worship is a lifestyle. It's an attitude of gratitude where you continually thank God for everything in your life. That's worship. You can worship all day. You get up in the morning: "God, thank You that I'm alive. You gave me another day." You start taking a shower: "God, thank You for hot water." Here in the States it comes out automatically. In the Philippines, you have to boil water. Aren't you blessed here in the States? You put on your clothes: "God, thank You for the clothes You've given me." You go downstairs and cook breakfast and say: "God, thank You for the breakfast You've given to me. You've given me food." As you get into your car and drive to work you go, "Thank You that I've got a car to drive and I've got a place to go to work and I live in a free country." You live in an attitude of perpetual thanksgiving. That's called worship.

When God sees you do that, He wants to bless you more. Because you're grateful for what you've got, He wants to give you more.

If you're ungrateful why would He want to bless that? He doesn't. So you celebrate the blessings that you do have through thanksgiving and through worship.

Romans 5:11 (NIV) "Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."

It says Jesus Christ died for our sins. He paid for our blessings with His life. Everything you have in life, that blessing is because of Jesus. Grace is free but it is not cheap. Because it cost Jesus His life. Jesus said, “I never want you to forget the sacrifice that I gave for you when I died for you on the cross. I never want you to forget that everything in your life is because I paid for it with My life. All the good things.”

When Jesus died for you on the cross He solved your biggest problem, your eternal destiny, your eternal salvation. What does that mean? It means every other problem you have in life is minor by comparison. If He loved you enough to pay and solve your biggest problem He certainly loves you enough to handle the little problems in your life.

The Bible says in **Romans 8:32**, *“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”* If God loved me enough to pay for my eternal salvation He certainly loves me enough to help me with my finances and my health and my relationships and every other area of my life. So I don’t need to worry.

Chuck Colson writes this story. “Near the city of San Jose in Brazil is a remarkable prison facility. Twenty years ago the Brazilian government gave up on this prison and so they turned it over to two Christians who renamed the prison and decided to build this prison based on Christian principles. With only two full employees all the work is done by inmates.” Chuck Colson visited this prison in Brazil and he said this, “I found the inmates smiling particularly the murderer who held the keys to the prison open the gates and let me in. Wherever I went in the prison I saw men at peace. I saw clean living areas. I saw people working cheerfully. This is the power of the gospel. The walls were decorated with Bible verses. Then my guide escorted me to the notorious prison cell that had once been used for torture. He told me that it now houses only one inmate.

As we walked down the long hall and he put the key in the lock he paused and asked, ‘Chuck, are you sure you want to go in?’ ‘Of course,’ I said impatiently. ‘I’ve been in isolation cells all over the world.’ Slowly he swung open the massive door and I saw the solitary prisoner in that cell. It was a wooden statue carved by the inmates of Jesus hanging on the cross. My guide said softly, ‘He’s doing time for the rest of us.’”

Think about that for a minute. Jesus Christ took your place on the cross. He’s doing time for you so you don’t have to do time in hell. He paid the penalty for your sin.

Once you’re set free, once a prison sentence has been paid for and the doors open do you hang around the prison? No. You walk out into the light. I’m saying to you today, whatever has had you imprisoned in Jesus Christ you can walk out of it.

Some of you have been imprisoned by guilt. You can’t forget what you did. Some of you have been imprisoned by resentment. You can’t forget what other have done to you and you’re still locked in the prison of bitterness and hatred and anger and resentment. Or you’re locked in the prison of loneliness. Or worry and anxiety and fear. Or you’re locked in the prison of addiction. You can’t stop it no mater how hard you try. I want to tell you today. This power, the power of Jesus Christ, is there to help you to walk out of that prison and be free. God wants to bless your life. You receive Him through Christ. You celebrate Him through worship, just like we’ve done today. I want to remind you and challenge you to never let a day go by that you don’t thank Jesus Christ for the cross.

Here’s the third key to God’s blessing in your life.

3. Expect God’s blessing by faith.

You receive it in Christ, you celebrate it in worship, and you expect it by faith. God blesses people who trust Him. God blesses people who believe in Him.

It is faith that brings the blessing of God in your life. The Bible says *“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”* (Hebrews 11:6) How many things did you do this week that were unpleasing? I did a lot. Every time I chose to worry instead of have faith I was unpleasing to God. The Bible says whatsoever is not of faith is sin. How many times did you sin this week? I did a lot. All those times I chose to worry instead of trust God.

In the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus gave He said, you really only have two alternatives in life. You can either worry or trust. Those are the alternatives - worry or trust. Trust God or worry about it yourself. He says this in *Luke 12:24 (NCV), “Look at the birds... God feeds them.”* If anybody’s on God’s welfare roll it’s birds. They don’t do a whole lot. They just kind of twitter and chirp and tweep and eat. Luke continues, *“And you are worth so much more than birds...Don’t have so little faith. Don’t always be thinking about what you will eat or drink and don’t keep worrying...Your Father knows you need them. But seek God’s kingdom, and all your other needs will be met as well.”* (Luke 12:24-31)

In all the entire universe there is only one thing that God has created that worries – human beings. Nothing else that God’s created worries. Everything else in creation trusts God. Animals don’t worry, plants don’t worry, rocks don’t worry at least I don’t think they do – the only thing in creation that worries is human beings. We’re the only people who doubt our creator. We say, “God, I really don’t think You’re going to take care of me.”

Notice *“Your Father knows.”* Your Father knows you need them and He’ll take care of you. God says, “I want to bless you. You’re acting like I don’t. I do. I want to bless you.”

So here’s what I want you to do right now. I want you to think up your greatest fear or your deepest need. Put it in your mind. What is my greatest fear or my deepest need? Think about that.

Once you've got that in mind I want to say this to you. That need that has you worried, God thought up the solution to that need before you even knew it was going to be a need. God isn't limited by time. He's present, past and future all at once. We're limited by time on an earth that spins around but God is not. The need that you have in your life right now that has you up tight, God knew it before you knew it, planned the solution before you even knew the need was going to be there and God is just saying, "Are you going to trust Me?" He wants to see if you will expect Him to bless you.

There's one more key. If you want God's blessing on your life in a great, great way...

4. Share God's blessing with others.

You receive it through Christ, you celebrate it through worship, you expect it by faith, and you share it with others. God doesn't want to just bless your life, He wants to use your life in a great way. God doesn't want to just bless you so you can feel good and go, "Isn't this great? I feel blessed." No. He wants to make you a blessing to other people. The more you share with others the more God is going to bless your life.

2 Corinthians 9:8 (NCV) says this *"And God can give you more blessings than you need. Then you will always have plenty of everything—enough to give to every good work."* God says, I bless you abundantly so you can bless others abundantly. Some of you are saying, "Rick, I don't have any abundance." Oh, yes you do! Do you know that every one who lives in the States is in the top eight percent of wealth in the world? You have been blessed abundantly. So don't give that excuse.

Here's how it works. You start blessing others with what you've got and God will give you more. You start sharing what you've got and God will give you more.

You don't say, "When I get to a certain level... When I achieve a certain thing... When I get more time... When this happens in my life... then I will start sharing." No! You start sharing what you've got and God will give you more.

I am blessed to be a blessing. God wants to bless you so you can bless others so He can bless you more so You can bless others more so He can bless you more so you can bless others more and on and on and on.

But here's a verse I want you to memorize this week. Acts 20:35 (CEV) is a statement of Jesus *"...remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"* If you want God's blessing start being a blessing.

So let me close with a couple of very practical questions. Here are some things you need to ask yourself:

What am I good at that I could do for other people? Not for profit. Just do it for others to be a blessing. What am I good at?

What do I know that I could pass on to other people that would be a blessing to them because of my experiences that would be a blessing? What do I know?

What do I have that I could give to somebody who needs it or at least loan it to somebody who needs it in order to be a blessing?

Who do I know who needs to know Jesus Christ and I could invite to church next week? The greatest blessing you could give anybody is to introduce them to Jesus Christ. There is no other greater blessing than that, to bless a person's life than to introduce them to Christ. You could secure their eternal destiny. Is anybody going to be in heaven because of you?

If someone died for you wouldn't you want to know it? Of course you would. And He did. Do you think your neighbors want to know it? Yes they do. If somebody died for them, they'd want to know it too.

And so would your coworkers and so would your friends and so would your relatives. So this week be a blessing by telling somebody about the good news.