

Numbers 6:22-27
June 16, 2019 – THE HOLY TRINITY, Father’s Day

Blessed by the NAME

- ☆ **secure in the Father** (vv.22-24)
- ☆ **shining in the Son** (v.25)
- ☆ **peaceful in the Spirit** (vv.26-27)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, dearly loved of God:

Have you ever experienced the euphoria, the elation, the ecstasy of TSA PreCheck? Experienced travelers can debate whether it’s worth paying for, but when it pops up for free on your ticket, it’s great. You’ll sail through security faster and even keep your belt and shoes on. Does it bother you to be separated from fellow travelers? Or are you like the boy on the bus with his father at the Oshkosh “Fly In,” laughing, “They’re out in the rain and we’re in here”? Fathers must teach love and kindness to kids.

“Separated ones” under Moses’ law were “Nazarites,” Samson the most famous. Numbers 6 before the Aaronic Blessing spells out Nazarite law. Even the most devoted Nazarites needed a remedy for failure, also in Numbers 6. But when the Lord commands Moses to have Aaron put the divine **NAME** of blessing on God’s people, there is no condition or obligation. God’s free, faithful kindness in Christ is already apparent in this Aaronic Blessing. God’s face turns toward us in peace as the Holy Spirit works through His Word and sacraments. **Blessed by the NAME** solves three major problems. First...

☆ **secure in the Father** (vv.22-24)

We trust chance / government / self to secure our future. Like muck in a barnyard sin sticks to us and sinks. We can’t help getting dirty by the world’s worship of chance development in evolution, worship of government as the solution to all human ills, and the “You-have-to-help-yourself” mentality, especially in America. Worldly filth wants to rob us of this blessing of being **secure in the Father**.

Here comes the shower of God’s grace that cleanses us. Did you catch who pours it on? **“The LORD said to Moses, ‘Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them....’** The **NAME** [יהוה] describes God as “the God of absolute independence. He is the great I AM. You and I exist because God has given us life; God exists because he’s God. His existence is absolutely independent of anyone or anything else. Similarly, his grace is not dependent on your or my reaction to it; his grace is its own reason for being. The name LORD describes the covenant God also as the God of absolute constancy, absolute reliability.”¹ It was in that unchanging Savior God that God’s children take refuge. God convinces us of His goodness and makes us **secure in the Father** by this blessing.

Just as you can’t make it rain, you can only receive the Benediction. **“Say to them: ‘The LORD bless you and keep you.’”** Many refuse this blessing like King Ahaz stomping his foot at God. Yet *the God of free and faithful grace* in unfathomable mercy spoke again to that wicked king stubbornly stomping at God’s kindness. God gave that most beautiful promise of **Immanuel, “God with us.”** (Isaiah 7:10-14) God knows He will be rejected, yet for 3500 years our heavenly Father commands His people to be **Blessed by the NAME** and **secure in the Father**. Our Creator assures us: **“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”** (1 Peter 2:9 NIV84) What dreadful sin to seek security anywhere else but God. By our second problem we could only self-destruct.

¹ Jeske, John C. *Job 1:6 – 2:10 - The Enemy at Work*. MN District Pastoral Conference, Rochester, MN – 5/02/2000, p. 5.

☆ shining in the Son (v.25)

It's a Hollywood hoax that torments music and movies which always end in broken hearts and bitter death. *We keep looking for love in all the wrong faces in all the wrong places.* Warm fuzzies want to sanitize "the circle of life," but *Lion King* still dies. Folks forget the faces of loved ones. Grief needs to be **Blessed by the NAME**: "*the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.*"

Like kids in a candy store we keep wandering down the aisles or onto the websites where personal pleasure destroys the boys and girls. Our loving heavenly Father keeps calling us back to the only face that can soothe our soul and keep us with Him. *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*" (2 Corinthians 4:6 NIV84) **Blessed by the NAME**, we keep **shining in the Son**, God's Son Jesus.

Christ demonstrated on Calvary's cross the only way we could be delivered from senseless, self-destruction. On Calvary's cross Christ also showed God's deep desire to have all people come under His benevolent care. He Himself absorbed the penalty for our perverseness, stating clearly, "*All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*" (Isaiah 53:6 KJV) Thus in a second very real and vital sense I truly belong to Him simply because He has bought me again at the incredible price of His own laid-down life and shed blood."²

Blessed means more than "happy." It means joy through tears. It's why I love the PRAYER OF THE DAY. *Blessing* God's people, "The Lord be with you," I hear, "And also with you." Such childlike faith shown in one of our developmentally disabled members. When William Snow received Christ's body and blood in His Holy Supper, with trembling hand he'd try to trace the sign of the cross. William was *blessing* the pastor as he received the *blessing*. Now he celebrates with saints and angels above.

☆ peaceful in the Spirit (vv.26-27)

What robs us of this peace? *We magnify our problems instead of magnifying the LORD.* Remember the Psalmist: "*Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!*" (Psalm 34:3 ESV) Mary's *Magnificat*: "*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior....*" (Luke 1:46 ESV) We need our Triune God to keep us under His ownership, to keep laying Himself out for us, interceding, ever guiding us by His gracious Spirit. His reputation as הוה' depends on always giving His creatures every reason to praise and thank Him continually. Sometimes our best examples come from Jesus Cares Ministries where developmentally disabled Christians love so simply and sweetly. They don't complain like the rest of us. Complaining about our troubles prevents others from seeing God's goodness. "O give thanks to the LORD for he is good! His mercy endures forever." We need to be **Blessed by the NAME** to stay **peaceful in the Spirit**. As one experienced Christian said, "If all the Gospel I heard in worship was the Benediction, it would be well worth going." Would a mere million dollars get you to church instead?

The Bible isn't filled with good wishes, but real blessings that work. It's not empty hope, "I wish God would forgive you," but truly powerful forgiveness: "*I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*" You're not being punished for your sins if trouble comes; all your sin was punished on Jesus. There is no double jeopardy with God. "*The LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.*" Like a warm blanket God's *peace* transforms your life, making all things work for your eternal good. (Romans 8:28) Fathers, teach your children by word and example to trust God when everything seems chaotic. Remember Luther's favorite preacher. That little bird outside his window would sing praises to God all day, then tuck his little head under his wing at night and go to sleep. We cling to Christ like the bird on the branch all night. Rapids may rage beneath us, but God's faithfulness is like a mighty mountain that cannot move. God's *peace* warms hearts and homes and makes God's men champions of grace. *In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.* Amen.

² Keller, Philip. *A Shepherd Looks At Psalm 23*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.
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