

Numbers 6:22-27

²² The LORD told Moses ²³ to speak to Aaron and to his sons and to tell them to bless the Israelites with these words: ²⁴The Lord bless you and keep you; ²⁵the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. ²⁶The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. ²⁷In this way they will put my name on the Israelites and I will bless them.

Sermon for Pentecost 1, Holy Trinity, May 30, 2021; St. Paul's Green Garden
Text Numbers 6:22-27

Theme: "The Lord's Name is Your Blessing"

What is the meaning of your name? Was your name given to you because of its meaning? Was it given to you to honor one of your parents or another relative? In Bible times children were often given names that meant something for their own lives or the lives of their parents. But your name really does have meaning when you understand that your name is also your reputation.

Of course, some people's names don't have much meaning for us because we have not heard them before. But think of the name of certain well-known people: John F. Kennedy; Aaron Rodgers; Dennis the Menace. Each have their own separate reputations.

There is much significance attached to a person's name. That's why God, through the centuries has given his name to his people. In the second commandment we learn that God's name is everything he teaches us about himself and every expression He uses to describe himself to us. No matter what it is about God, when he teaches us about himself it is because he wants to bless us.

What is important about a name? It would be better for us to ask, **what is important about the Lord's name?** For all time he wants his faithful people to know that, "The Lord's Name is Your Blessing. I. Its source is God II. It's power is the gospel III. Its goal is that we belong to God.

Right from the first pages of the Bible it is clear that God shows us the meaning of his name. He wants us to know his name so we can experience the blessings of trusting God and his promises. Today we are looking at the blessing God wanted His priests especially Aaron, the High Priest, and all the High Priests following him, to pronounce on the people of Israel.

When you look at this blessing you see that the name LORD is used three times. God intended this three part blessing for a reason—to give us more insight into the divine mystery of the Trinity. Once we understand that the Lord's name is a blessing for us and that all blessings come from him then we want to look at his name more closely to understand what this blessing means for us. This name "LORD" is the special name he used to show himself as the God who freely promises to send a Savior. Every other promise he gives us connected to that one AND he keeps every promise he makes.

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Back in the Garden of Eden when the very first humans turned their backs on God and brought his holy anger down on themselves, he freely offered them the forgiveness of their sins through the promised offspring of the woman, whom we know as our Lord Jesus Christ. The LORD showed his faithfulness to this promise by revealing more and more about the Savior to his people through the centuries.

For instance, through David the Lord showed that the Savior would be a Savior of royal, kingly character: I will raise up after you your seed, who will come from your own body. ... and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. Through Isaiah he showed the Savior who would suffer for the sins of all people. Surely he was taking up our weaknesses, and he was carrying our sufferings. We thought it was because of God that he was stricken, smitten, and afflicted, but it was because of our rebellion that he was pierced. He was crushed for the guilt our sins deserved. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We must always be clear about one thing. Whenever the bible gives a promise about the Savior, more of then than not God's Savior name, the LORD, is mentioned in connection with the promise.

Now the people of Israel frequently tried to tackle the future without God and his blessings. One time in particular they tried to go into the promised land when the Lord had told them not to, because he was punishing them. Many times they did not even believe the Lord was with them and they complained that they had no food or water while they wandered in the wilderness. How angry the Lord must be with us too, when he sees us try to walk into the future without considering him, without giving thanks to him, without seeking his blessing on those things we want to accomplish, and without considering him and his will.

Take a look a your future without God. It is pretty scary isn't it? In a future without God you will find no promises, no blessings, no forgiveness for your sins, no eternal life. But with God's blessings you know that God is the captain of your ship and will guide you through life's storms as well as over the gentle waves. But every time those Israelites heard Aaron give this blessing to them they could be reminded that every blessing comes from God including the blessing of forgiveness of sins. How wonderful it is that we, too, can hear this blessing God and know that the source of all blessing and goodness is God himself. This blessing of God is a constant reminder to each of us that no matter what our past, no matter what we have done to harm another person, no matter how far we have strayed from God, we are still his children by faith in Jesus.

When we know God is the source of all blessings that gives us confidence to move ahead even though we can't see the future. We have God's blessing always present with us. He can give us his blessing because its power is the Gospel.

In this blessing we get a very definite indication that the Triune God is at work on behalf of his people. It says, "The LORD bless you and keep you." In this part of the blessing God is promising every divine blessing, both material and spiritual and that they

come from him. James points out “**Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the lights, who does not change or shift like a shadow.**” So in this blessing, God is promising everything you could possibly need, from the shoes on your feet to the hat on your head, to the faith that the Holy Spirit works in your heart to believe that God has declared you not guilty for Jesus’ sake. With the words, “keep you” God assures you that he will guard and protect you by keeping evil from you or by making it turn into good for you. This work of providing for us and protecting us we especially ascribe to God the Father though it cannot be restricted to the Father entirely.

In the second part of this blessing we find the promise of god’s free and undeserved love. **the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.** This refers more expressly to God’s action on our behalf to save us from the punishment of hell we deserve because of our sins. He is really saying that he beams and smiles warmly upon us. His forgiven children. This is clear in his words, “**and be gracious to you.**” We sinners stand in God’s undeserved love and favor only because of Christ’s perfect life which He sacrificed to pay for our sins. As Paul says, “**God, for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.**”

For Christ’s sake we stand in God’s divine favor as expressed in the third portion of this blessing. “**The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.**” (more literally, the Lord turn his face toward you”) The picture God wants us to see is that of a subject coming to a king or nobleman with a request. If the king would lower his eyes or turn his face away from the subject he would know that his request would not be granted. But if the king lifted his face up and turned it toward the subject asking for something he knew his request had found favor with the king.

God turns his face toward us each time, he, in his word assures us of the forgiveness of our sins. His personal assurance gives us peace within our hearts and peace with God. Now, it is the Holy Spirit who gives us this knowledge and assurance that we are acceptable in God’s sight and through that knowledge we have peace. You can see how the power of this blessing is in the gospel. The Triune God gives us all his promises through which he protects us, buys us back from eternal death and strengthens our faith as his children. Through this blessing we possess everything He does for us to make us his own.

In the years that the Lord grants us here on earth yet, whether many or few, each of us probably has some new and exciting things to look forward to. No matter where the Lord leads you, you take this blessing of the triune God with you. That doesn’t mean that you won’t experience trials or trouble. Children may experience frustration with an adult who doesn’t understand them. Frustration for both adults and children may cause our anger to flare up. Adults and children alike may sometimes avoid living up to their various responsibilities. These and other sins will probably be part of each of our lives in the future. But you know God’s forgiveness is full and free. Through Christ, who won

your freedom, the Holy Spirit gives you the power to avoid sin and deal with all situations in life as a forgiven child of God.

You see, that is really the goal of this blessing. The LORD gives us his blessing because he wants us to belong to him and finally live with him forever.

The LORD told Moses, “**In this way they will put my name on the Israelites and I will bless them.**” God has put his name on us. In effect he claims us as his children through Jesus. It is much the same as what many of us do in order to claim ownership of a certain article. Mothers put the names of their children on clothing and pencils so their children, as well as teachers and other pupils know who owns them. The Savior-God put his name on us so that we are certain that we belong to God. And that makes a difference in our inward beings as well as our outward actions.

When God labels us as his children we have all the assurance in the world that we belong to him. That means that no matter what; even when our actions don't always show that we belong to God's family. Haven't you sometimes done something that did no show you were a member of your earthly family?

Imagine that this happened to you. You are about ten years old and you love to play with matches and watch them burn. You get more and more careless with them until one day when your parents aren't home, you are again playing with matches. But you get careless and let a still smoldering match drop to the carpet. Then you go out to play. Sometime later a neighbor notices flames inside the house and smoke pouring out the windows. He calls the fire department, but its too late. Your home is destroyed.

You are very afraid that your parents will be so angry with you that they'll want nothing more to do with you. You fear they will disown you. But when they get home to find the charred ruins all they can think of is you. They want to be sure you are all right. Even after you manage to tell them through tears that it was your fault they can only say, “You are our child. We love you. We still want you to live with us. And I guarantee you probably would not play with matches again.

Dear friends, that is what it means to be in God's family. The Triune god will never throw you out. Many people have walked away from God's family because sin seemed more fun to them, but God will never turn his back on a repentant sinner. Through Jesus, you belong to him forever. He wants you to celebrate your membership in his family for eternity, basking in the warmth of his love in heaven.

Whether we are young or not so young, each of us will probably meet lots of new people in our lives and need to learn new names and faces. It is my prayer that there is always one name that will be more important to you than all others and that you will want to know more about. That name is the name of our Triune God and the blessing he wants to give you every day through his name. Never forget his name. Keep it on your mind and in your heart and live according to what his name stands for, because your Lord wants his name to be a blessing for you. Amen.