

## The Lord Blesses Us

With Protection - Grace - & Peace

## A Sermon on Numbers 6:22-27

Year C - Pentecost 1  
22 - May - 2016

JJ<sup>1</sup>

Have you ever found it strange that you put your name on things you want to keep, but don't like wearing name tags at events? Especially in school and dorm life, you need to put your name on things so that everyone knows that's your stuff. As kids, you probably loved putting your name on all kinds of things. And if you had a label maker, well, then you were set! Kids usually like name tags. It's way for them to say to the world, "Here I am!" As adults you write your name on a plastic cup at a party, but groan when you're supposed to wear a name tag. Maybe it's because we don't want people to know who we are. Maybe you just think they look silly or you don't want the sticky stuff to stick to your clothes. Maybe you're ashamed of who you are.

Often in life we're tempted to not wear our Christian name tag. As the wickedness of the world grows, so does the temptation to try and go unnoticed as a Christian because we're afraid of what people might say. We're ready to put our name on a job well done at school or work. We're ready to be associated with our hobbies and sports teams. We're ready to be known as a person who likes to have a good time. But so often we try and hide the most important thing about us—that we are blood-bought sinners

who have been freed from unbelief through the gift of faith and now wear the name of our Savior-God, the LORD.

While all too often we are ashamed of our name, our God isn't ashamed to put his name on us, even though he should be. Today we are reminded what it means for the LORD to put his name on us as he's been doing for the last 3,500 years with this particular blessing. When the LORD puts his name on someone, he does it because he wants to bless them. As the LORD said through Moses, "So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them."

Today, friends, we see what it means to wear the name of the LORD. Wearing His name means that **THE LORD BLESSES US**. And he blesses us **With Protection - Grace - & Peace**.

Now before we go any further it's important that we recognize the name God is using for himself in this portion of Scripture. Looking at your bulletins you see that LORD is written in all capital letters. This name is unique from all the other names God uses to describe himself. It's not the generic "god" which can be used for any false god too. This name is one that is truly unique to the One True God. Years beforehand, the LORD described his

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<sup>1</sup> JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

name to Moses on Mt. Sinai, saying: "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation" (Ex. 34:6b,7).

Today we see that the LORD who loves us without measure wants to bless his people and wants to bless you and me. The blessing that follows is one we hear almost every Sunday! Because of this we sometimes fail to realize what is being said to us in this blessing. We get used to it and it just goes in one ear and out the other. That's why we take the time today to help us appreciate this blessing and the fact that with these very words the LORD does indeed bless us.

"The LORD bless you and keep you." That the LORD "keeps" us means that he wants to bless us with **Protection**. The LORD protects us from all kinds of danger, both physical and spiritual. The way the LORD often protects us physically is with things he has built into his creation, our abilities and our society. The LORD protects us by giving us immune systems, and when those fail he has provided us with medicines and doctors. He protects us through laws, police, firefighters, soldiers and the like. He protects us by sending his holy

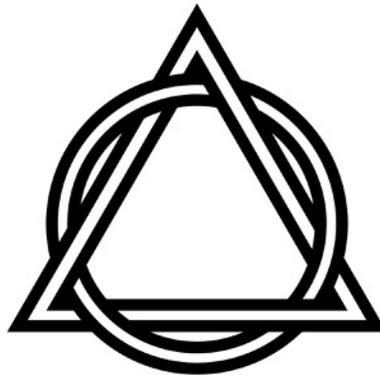
angels to guard us in all our ways. He protects us spiritually through his Word and the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word.

But you might be wondering, "If the LORD wants to bless us by protecting us, why is there such hardship? Why do people struggle with doubt? Why do people get cancer or mental diseases? Why do people have terrible accidents? Sometimes it feels like the LORD has fallen asleep at the wheel!" It's at these times that we especially have to remember the

words of our second lesson where Paul said, "we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Rom. 5:3-

5). The hope is that one day, all those things will pass, all because the LORD chooses to bless us with his **Grace**.

"The LORD make his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you." There's that wonderful word, grace. Grace is one of God's love words. It describes his love as completely underserved. God looked at you and saw a person who was in no way worthy of his attention, let alone his love! Thank God that he doesn't look at us to find a reason to love us! Instead he looks inside himself. God looks inside himself and sees love, pure love. And he



chooses to use that love to bless the crown of his creation. And the Father did just that in the best way he knew possible, through his Only Son.

Everything about Jesus and his work and life in this world was about the grace of our Triune God. Jesus blessed us by taking on our human flesh. He blessed us by humbling himself to submit to his own holy laws. He blessed us by keeping every one of those laws for us. Not because he owed us, but because if he didn't, we'd forever be lost to the eternal prison of hell. He put his grace on display for people to see with their own eyes as he fed thousands and healed the illnesses of so many thankless people. He put his grace on display as he cast out demons from people who had so spiritually compromised themselves that an evil spirit had taken up residence in their hearts! He put his grace on display as he crushed the devil with his sacrifice on the cross!

And that, friends, leads us to the third blessing from our three-in-one God—**Peace**. "The LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." Before any peace is made in this world between warring nations, great sacrifices are made on

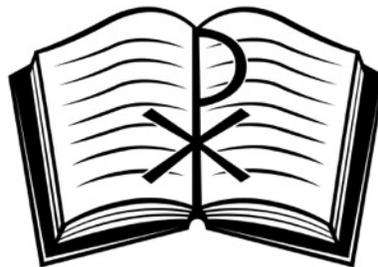
both sides—money, resources, even human lives. But what about the peace made between God and man? Not only did Jesus need to give his life, but the LORD also has to step into our lives personally because by nature we reject his grace and peace.

Paul tells us in our second lesson today that we gain access to peace with God through faith. The LORD blesses us with the gift of faith so that he can bless us with his peace. The LORD's peace is a peace that goes beyond all understanding, because it's completely unlike human

peace. Peace between nations or even people is full of compromise, and even payment. But there is no compromise when it comes to the LORD's peace because the payment was made in full by Christ. Every wrong has been forgiven. Every debt has

been paid.

Friends, all this is yours through faith. All these blessings rest on you because the LORD has chosen to put his name on you and make you his own forever and ever. Wear that name tag with pride and thanksgiving because the LORD blesses you. He blesses you with protection, grace and peace. Amen.



SDG<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> SDG is an acronym for *Soli Deo Gloria*, which is Latin for “To God Alone Be The Glory”. This is a statement of humility used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the end of their work to let themselves and others know that it isn’t about getting glory for themselves, but about giving all glory to God.

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