

INTRODUCTION:

1. [Image] I knew a kid in college who always had the same prayer request. It wasn't a recurring health issue. It wasn't for a non-christian friend, or family member. It wasn't for financial issues. Every single week he would ask for us to pray for "smoothness." That's right, "smoothness." He wanted us to pray that everything in his life would go smoothly. He wanted God to bless his life so much that everything was just easy and smooth.
2. [Need] Now we might laugh at this prayer request, but the reality is that deep down we all want God to bless our lives. We might not call it smoothness, but we want that blessing.
3. [Subject] Our Psalm this morning actually talks about the blessing of God and gives us a better way to pray for it. In Psalm 67 we are taught not just how to pray for God's blessing, but we are promised that we will be blessed. I want us to take a look at the Psalm and see what it teaches us about prayer and God's blessing.
4. [Text] Psalms 67
5. [Preview] We are going to look three directions in the sermon. Inward, outward, and heavenward.

First we look inward. Our first black in your bulletin if you are taking notes is that we should **pray for God to bless us. Pray for God to bless us.**

This beauty psalm begins with a prayer.
And the prayer is a request for God to bless.

The prayer might sound familiar to you.
It is taken from the Priestly prayer in Numbers 6:24-26.
At the beginning of Israel's history after being set free from slavery
God commands the prophet Moses to pray this prayer.

And Moses prays it over Israel, Aaron the high priest, and his sons.

We sometimes use it for our benedictions.
Personally it my favorite one to read.

Let me read it for you now.

"The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace."

This Psalm takes those verses and turns them into a prayer.

Verse 1 **"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us."**

It intentionally repeats the prayer.

"be gracious to us"

"bless us"

"make his face to shine upon us."

Israel would have recognized immediately that this Psalm was repeating the priestly blessing.

They would hear it after only a few words.

They'd recognize it just like you recognize your favorite song after a few notes.

Or like a parent can tell their child's cry across a building.

They would recognize it just because they heard it plenty of times before.

They would recognize it also because it was significant.

It is not just a nice prayer,

It is a blessing given from God.

God Himself wrote this prayer.

Moses didn't come up with it.

Aaron and the priests didn't write it.

God dictated it similar to Jesus teaching us the Lord's prayer.

God taught them how to pray the prayer.

And because God wrote the very words of this prayer
We can assume that He will listen to them
We can know that this is a prayer that God will hear
This is a blessing that God will bring

We don't always know if God will hear our own prayers
But you had better believe when you pray scripture,
When you pray the very words of God.
And you are praying them in the context of God's word.
When you do this
God hears the prayer.
So we can confidently pray that God would bless us
Using these same words.

And we can pray this prayer for ourselves.
Because it is a promise that God gives to His people.
It is not just a prayer, but it is also a promise.
God promises that He will be gracious to His people.
He promises that He will bless them.
He promises that He will make his face to shine upon them.
He promises that his countenance will be towards them and he will give
them peace.

And we can confidently pray that prayer as well because through Christ we
have been adopted into God's family.

Let's go ahead and take a closer look at what these words say specifically.
What is it that we are asking God to do?

First, we are praying that God would "**be gracious to us.**"
We are asking God to be kind to us.
We are asking God to treat us better than we deserve.
We are asking Jesus for mercy.

Listen every prayer that you pray to God is ultimately asking him for to be gracious to you.

Because none of us deserve the blessing of God.

None of us deserve to have our prayers answered by God.

And so anything that God does towards us is gracious.

It is not just a prayer that God would do things for us.

It is also a prayer that we would find favor before him.

So we prayed not just for His graciousness we also pray for His Blessing.

The blessing of God is not always something that we understand.

We are so materialistic that we normally can only conceive a blessing in terms of things that we have.

If you have a lot of grandchildren, then you are blessed

If you have a good job, then you are blessed

Do you have a good vehicle that's not breaking down? your blessed
your air conditioner is working your blessed.

On one hand this is true.

It's partially true because it acknowledges that everything we have comes from God.

What it can miss is it can misunderstand that God also blesses us in other ways.

The prayer for God to bless us it's not just a prayer for more money.

It is actually a prayer that God's hand would be upon our lives

That His fingerprints would be throughout our days.

That all of our moments would have His presence.

The God that we worship does not just give us things

He gives us Himself.

Even in the midst of profound suffering, He blesses us.

Even in the midst of poverty, we can have peace.
So our prayer for blessing must be more than just asking for stuff.
The prayer must ultimately be asking for God's presence in our lives.

The last one is my favorite.

We asked that God would **"make His face to shine upon us."**

When I read this verse I think of God's face in the heavens.

And I picture the god of the universe looking down from his throne with a massive smile on his face as he looks at you.

And that your whole body and spirit is warmed and you can feel it.

Just like you can feel the heat of the sun on a bright day.

This is a prayer that God would not hide his face from us.

It's a prayer that he wouldn't look away and ignore us.

Instead it is a prayer that when you look up into the sky you can know that your God is looking down on you.

And his face is shining.

This is why in the new heavens and a new Earth there will be no sun.

No I don't understand that astrological implications of that.

Or if it really means that the sun will cease to exist or not.

What it does mean is that we won't need it.

Because God will be there in his face will be shining.

And he will shine so bright that all the darkness is cast out.

You should pray this prayer.

You should pray over yourself.

You should pray it over your family.

You should pray it over our church family

over our community over our state and over our nation.

I actually pray this almost every single night.

Their two young children we have our nighttime routine.

It doesn't always go according to plan.

Sometimes they don't cooperate or we're exhausted.
But often I pray this prayer over both of my sons.
I put my hands on them and I pray the very words of scripture.
I pray asking that God would be gracious to them
That He would bless them.
And I pray that he would make His face to shine upon them.
God's word never returns void.
We should pray it.

[Trans] So we have looked at how we should pray for God to bless ourselves and those around us. But when we look at the rest of the song we see that this blessing is actually meant to extend further out.

Play number two on your Bulletin is it we should **pray for God to bless the world. Pray for God to bless the world.**

You see as believers we are not simply trying to hoard the blessings of God for ourselves.
Our religion is not about secretly gaining favor from God so that we can have the most blessing.
Or at least more blessings than other people.
No.
Because the fountain of God's blessing never runs out
There is more than enough.

And so is the prayer for blessing starts with ourselves
the prayer begins with the people of God
but then it extends outward to the rest of the world.
We are not just to pray for ourselves our families our churches our communities or our nation.
We are also to pray for all families, all churches, all communities and All Nations.

Let's look at how many times in these 7 verses that the world is mentioned.

Verse 2 **"on Earth"**

"All Nations"

"Let the peoples" verse 3

"let all the peoples" again

verse 4 **"let the nations"**

"the peoples"

"the nations"

"Earth"

verse 5 **"let the peoples"**

"let all the peoples"

verse 6 **"the earth"**

verse 7 **"let all the ends of the earth."**

That is over 10 times in 7 verses that God mentions the world.

Here's a Bible study tip for you.

If something is repeated it is probably significant.

If something is repeated three times you probably really want to pay attention.

If something is repeated more times than there are verses in the passage you had better take a closer look.

It is impossible to read Psalm 67 and not see that our prayers for God's blessing should extend out into the whole world.

And we can pray this because we are asking God to fulfill His plans for the world.

God's plan of redemption always included all people.

It is a fulfillment of the Covenant and promises that God made to Abraham in Genesis chapter 15.

When God chose Abraham he said that he was creating a new people.

God chose to create the nation of Israel from Abraham's seed.

But God's plan was not I'm just going to bless Abraham,

or I'm just going to bless Israel and the rest of you have to figure it out on your own.

The plan has always been that through God's covenant people the entire world can be blessed.

The promise to Abraham was that through you I will bless those who bless you.

The other nations have an opportunity to participate in the blessing of God through you.

It Israel as a nation was meant to act like a nation of priests.

They were meant to draw the other nations into the blessings of God did they can only find in a relationship with Him.

So this prayer is asking God to do what He promised.

It is asking God to continue to draw people from every tribe and tongue and people group and ethnicity and Nation into our family.

Let's look closer at verses 2 through 4 to see how we are to pray for the world.

Verse 2 we pray **"that your way may be known on earth."**

this is a prayer that the nations would know the ways of God.

What does that mean?

It means that they would know the stories of God.

They would know the way that God moves and acts in the world.

It means that they would know the way that we are to live.

That they would know how God wants us to act.

And it is not just that the world would know His ways,

it continues and the rest of verse 2 **"your saving power among all nations."**

is the prayer that they would know the power of God.

But they would understand His might.

That they would know He is the creator who made the world with His mouth.

That they would know He can make a planets stop spinning.
That they would know He has the power to send plagues and disasters.
But He also has the power to calm the storm.

The prayer is not just that they would know His generic power and ability.
It is that they would know **"His saving power."**

He is the god who saves.

He is the god who can deliver from the flood

he is the god who can deliver from slavery

he is the god who can set the captive free.

And most of all he is the god who can save you from your sins.

He is the god who has the power to take you from the devil's grasp.

He is the god who has the power to save you from death.

The God Who is strong enough to bring resurrection and New Life.

We should pray that the world would know that power.

And it is not just they would know it intellectually.

We aren't just supposed to present a series of arguments so they can hear about.

It is not just that we are to pray did they hear the Bible stories so that they are aware.

We are to pray that they would know God.

That they would know his ways because they are trying to walk in them.

We pray that they would know his saving power because they have experienced it and felt it in their soul.

And you see this in verse 3. Because we pray that in knowing these things they would experience them and embrace them and then

verse 3 **"let the peoples praise you oh God; let all the peoples praise you!"**

you see it's a prayer that they would worship our God.

It is a prayer that on Sunday morning all across the globe in every nation people would wake up and go and raise our savior.

That they would join in to our songs.

we pray that they would teach us their songs.

The God would be praised and languages we don't speak and cannot understand.

It continues in verse 4 **"let the nation's be glad and sing for joy."**

again it is a prayer that this praise comes out of joyfully experiencing the salvation of Jesus.

And it's not a solemn quiet song.

It is a joyful shout!

Is a sound filled with the Beats of drums and strings and trumpets.

And all of the the native instruments of Nations who sound we have not yet heard.

We pray that we would hear them making a joyful noise to our Savior.

Verse 4 continues to show us why else the nation should sing for joy.

Verse 4, **"before you judge the people's with equity and guide the nation's upon the Earth."**

The nations can praise God because he is God of all the nations.

He is not just the god of Abraham and Jacob and Isaac and Israel.

He is the God over Assyria and Egypt and Babylon.

And he is a fair judge.

He judges the people's with equity.

This means that he is a good ruler and a good judge.

He does not play favorites among the Nations.

He might have chosen Israel but it doesn't mean that Israel has their sins overlooked while other nations are punished.

It also means that God guides all the nations on the Earth.

He is not just the god of one nation.

I can't make this point strong enough to show how radical it was for the time.

The ancient world believed in National gods.

Believe that each Nation or people has their own Gods.

They run that are in charge of their own Nations.

But God claims sovereignty over every nation.

God is intimately involved in guiding Every Nation all over the world.

Even those who did not know his name.

Even those who know his name and blaspheme against his name.

Every nation on the face of the Earth is under God's Sovereign rule.

what God wants us to see in these verses.

And with the nations are supposed to hear in them.

Is that every nation is welcome in the kingdom of God.

Every tribe and tongue is welcome to receive his Blessing.

Anyone who comes and who throws himself at the throne of grace will find grace.

So the question we should ask ourselves is are we praying for the Nations?

Are you praying that the Nations will be blessed through Jesus?

We all find ourselves in our own particular nation in the United States.

It's good to love our nation

it's good to pray for our nation

it is not good to only pray for our nation.

We need to pray for all of the Nations.

And we need to pray that they would come and join the kingdom of God.

And our prayers for the nation shouldn't be centered around a particular political agenda but you'd be centered around the kingdom of Jesus.

Would you rather a nation of embrace capitalism and democracy the freedom or would you rather than Embrace Jesus?

I'd rather play with the psalmist asks us to pray

That they come to know the saving power of God

[trans] So we know what we are supposed to pray but what about the answer to our prayer?

Your third point is that **Christ fulfills our prayers. Christ fulfills our prayers.**

Verses 6 & 7 have significant phrases where the title of the sermon is coming from.

"God our God shall bless us. God shall bless us."

It is a declaration that the blessing that we have been praying for will be achieved.

And we know now the blessing came and is coming again through Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.

We talked about this a lot recently as we walk through the book of Galatians.

We saw that Jesus is the messiah.

Jesus is the promised Seed of Abraham.

It is through Jesus that all the nations can be blessed.

Because Jesus in Romans 11 has grafted the Gentiles in.

What this means is that Jesus died on the cross for the world.

Jesus did not just die on the cross for the Jews.

Jesus did not just come to adopt the religious Elite of Israel.

Jesus came and died so that every single human being is coming to the kingdom of God.

Every nation can now experience the unique blessing of being God's child because of the blood of Christ.

In the mission of Jesus extended out beyond Israel.

He commissioned his disciples after His resurrection to go and proclaim the gospel in all nations.

The followers of Jesus were meant to go out into all the Earth and Proclaim that the blessings of God were available to them.

A Pentecost. At the founding of the Church of this truth was made clear. The Holy Spirit descended and through tongues of fire the apostles were speaking in tongues.

Another was a crowd made up of people from Every Other Nation they heard the gospel proclaimed in their own tongue.

At Pentecost the Tower of Babel was reversed. The nations were divided because of their sin, but now they could be United through the Holy Spirit.

And the Holy Spirit descended on the Gentiles. Gentiles is just a Jewish word for other nations, or other peoples. What it meant that the Gentiles were blessed by God is that every nation is now blessed by God.

And this was only possible because Jesus died for the Gentiles too. Through Jesus, we can receive the blessing of the Gospel.

And through Jesus, our prayers are heard.

Jesus is our mediator.

He is the high priest who stands between us and God.

If you wonder why should I pray that God?

Why would the god of the universe care and listen to what I have to say?

Well if you have put your faith in Jesus then he stands in the throne room of Heaven advocating on your behalf.

It is like wondering why the president of the United States with care about a problem that you have.

If you sat down and wrote a letter, were you sent an email, are you dial the White House phone number and said I'd like to talk to the president I have something on my mind.

There's a 0% chance you're going to get to talk to anybody important.

Why? Because you need a mediator.

You need to have someone who knows you and knows the president and cares about you and values you and is willing to go before the president and speak on your behalf and say no no you should listen to their petition.

That is what you have in the person of Jesus. That all of our prayers can be answered because Jesus mediates on our behalf.

But Jesus' purpose is not just to talk to God on our behalf.

One day he will come and bring the blessing.

Verse 6 ***"the earth has yielded its increase"***

what this verse means is that the Earth has good blessings.

This seems to be a reference to the Harvest.

Which it makes some think that this song is actually a harvest song

Israel might sing it after the crops come in.

But the point in verse 6 is not that wow look how amazing the Harvest is, The point is to look at the blessings that are here and yet greater blessings are to come.

Jesus has already brought incredible blessings to the world through his son Jesus.

But there are better blessings to come.

One day Jesus will return.

And we're going to study his return in the weeks to come as we look at the book of 2nd Thessalonians.

but the most significant part of the return of Jesus is that it will bring profound blessing.

Jesus's return will bring the final blessing.

Because when Jesus returns the resurrection will come with him.

When Jesus returns the cemetery will be the place to be because the dead will come back to life.

When Jesus returns those who have put their faith in him will ride with him across the sky.

When Jesus returns death will be defeated once and for all.

When Jesus returns sickness will be no more.

When Jesus returns you can throw all your medicine away cuz you won't need it anymore the healer is here.

Would you eat those returns there will be no more tears because you will wipe them all the way from our eyes.

When Jesus returns the lion will lay down with the lamb in peace.

When Jesus returns we will turn all of our swords into plowshares
because war is over.

When Jesus returns true lasting peace will be here.

When Jesus returns the heavens and the Earth will be remade.

"God our God shall bless us."

and that blessing will be realized in the person of Jesus.

"let all the ends of the Earth fear Him."

I don't think that just means you should be afraid because His return will bring judgment.

Although it will.

When Jesus returns the wicked will be punished.

True Justice will be handed down.

Some should fear that day.

But you don't have to.

Jesus died on the cross for you.

The blessings of God are available to you and any who want them.

I have to do is put your faith in Jesus

Give your life to him

And be blessed.

But I do think that when we see Jesus returned

and He reshapes the world with fire.

We watch Him cast out death from our memories and bind Satan forever.

We will be filled with awesome wonder at His power.

CONCLUSION:

1. [Summary] [Main points to be reviewed here.]
2. [Challenge] The blessing of God is coming. It is sure. It is on its way and every day we get one day closer to it. The question is the blessing coming for you?