

January 1, 2023

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (The New Year Worship Service)

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: ““What is the Perfect Blessing in Life?”

— Aaron’s Blessing —

Text: Numbers 6:23~27

6:23 “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

6:24 The LORD bless you and keep you;

6:25 the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

6:26 the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

6:27 “So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

Introduction

We come to the New Year 2023.

I am wishing for all of my dear friends, a New Year full of receiving God’s blessing.

By the way, this year’s New Year’s day is a Sunday which is an important day for Christians. It is a very blessed day. In the beginning of the year, let us consider **the perfect blessing that we receive in our lives.**

A superior person bestows a blessing to a person of a lower position.

For example, an American president has the right to grant **a pardon**. A criminal is pardoned by one word of the president. It seems to be done in many cases where there is a political background.

However, the blessing that the Bible teaches of is not like a level of blessing that

people receive in this world. It is the blessing that God, who created the heavens and the earth, gives. What does His blessing look like?

Generally, in Christian churches, a pastor says the word of blessing at the end of the worship service. What do we think about that blessing? Do we think it just a sign for the end of the worship? No, not at all.

Aaron's Blessing has been said at the worship gatherings of Kitahama Church since the beginning of the church. It is the most wonderful blessing that God gives us.

I would like to pick up **Aaron's blessing** today at the New Year Worship.

Main Points

1. The Blessing that the Israelites Receive

1) Numbers, Chapter 6

6:24 The LORD bless you and keep you;

6:25 the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

6:26 the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

As you know, Aaron was Moses' brother and a priest. He stood between God and the people of Israel. **Aaron's blessing** is said to be **the first blessing** in the Bible that the Israelites received.

God said as below,

6:23 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

It is interesting that the Lord God said them they **should bless** the people of Israel.

What does blessing mean? There are various definitions of blessing. However, the original meaning of Hebrews is that God leaned over to serve us. I think the blessing is to be put under God's grace.

2) Aaron's Blessing

By the way, **Aaron's Blessing** is composed of three parts as below.

① **6:24 The LORD bless you and keep you;**

The verse above records in a singular form like, **"The Lord bless you."** Before that verse, it is written in the plural form (people). God personally blesses you.

God personally speaks to you and personally gives His blessing to you.

The expression means the Lord's protection. As Psalm 23 says, God is the good shepherd. Jesus said, **"I am the good shepherd." (John 10:11)** According to the documents of Judaism, the priests said **Aaron's Blessing** at the temple every day. Like this, Jewish people keep praying **Aaron's Blessing** at the synagogue even today.

② **6:25 the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;**

When the Lord makes His face to shine upon you, you will receive His grace. His grace is forgiveness, compassion, spiritual gifts, peace, fellowship with the Lord and so on. When the Lord makes His face to shine upon you, you fall under His grace.

The Psalms record many praising songs of God's grace. They are responses to **Aaron's Blessing**. We are able to study the relationship between God the Lord and the Israelites, the chosen people. (It is also the relationship between God and ourselves.)

③ **6:26 the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.**

When the Lord lifts up His countenance upon you (personal looking at you), you will receive peace. Peace originally means **salvation** in Hebrews. A word give means **to give things, to complete something and to work out.**

Christ is our real peace. Jesus said, **"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." (John 14:27)**

Like this, **Aaron's Blessing** prays for God's blessing, protection, light/radiance, love/favor and peace.

① **Protection of God the Lord 6:24**

- ② The Lord makes His face to shine upon you 6:25
- ③ The Lord gives you peace. (His personal viewing of you) 6:26
 - ⇒ God's blessing becomes stronger and more exalted.

This prayer is not of human desire but it is **the prayer of blessing** that Aaron prayed according to God's commandment. Therefore, it is the prayer of blessing where God guarantees His blessing.

The prayer of blessing is the word of God that blesses each person. The word of blessing is given personally, and the Lord keeps his blessings. We should accept that the Lord's blessing will be completed. If we don't trust His word, it will seem empty.

3) The Blessing of Melchizedek

By the way, Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7:1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,

Melchizedek was not a member of Israel. He received a tenth part of offering and blessed Abraham who was given God's promise. Usually, he who blesses is greater than he who is blessed.

The Bible records the blessing both in the beginning and the closing of almost every epistle.

My friends, how about you? We sometimes write "I am praying for your health," at the end of the letter. But sometimes, we don't pray for them. However, the blessing in the Bible is quite different.

The blessing means that **God leans over to serve us**.

⇒ It means that **we are put under God's grace**. It declares that there is God's grace there and it contains the deep meaning. It happens as it is declared. Those who accept it seriously are blessed.

We cannot live comfortable lives without God's blessing. In a true sense, we can live a blessed life only with God's blessing. One of reasons that we go to church to

worship God every Sunday is come close to God and receive His blessing.

In the days of the Old Testament, priests offered animal sacrifices so that sinners came close to the Holy God. However, when Jesus Christ who is the High Priest and equal to Melchizedek came to this world, the way for us to come close to God opened. Jesus said, **“I am the way and the truth and the life.”** The Bible says that the true way, truth and life are found in Jesus.

Therefore, we are able to come close to the Holy God through Jesus Christ the Son of God, not through offering animal sacrifices. How blessed we are!

2. The God's Blessing that the Saints Receive

1) The Blessing that God Gives Us

God wants us to receive blessings. He gives two kinds of blessings that are ① a spiritual blessing and ② a material blessing. Those who want benefits only pray for ② the material blessing.

The Bible teaches that these two blessings are necessary for our Christian lives. And balance is important between these two things.

- ① The spiritual blessing is to experience God's blessing, God's grace, God's love and God's compassion ⇒ **Aaron's Blessing**
- ② The material blessing is the necessary blessing for every situation of our lives.

{Illustration}

Paul Mayer, who was an American industrial counsellor, said, “The happiest situation of a man is to be totally blessed.” This means to be blessed on all fronts such as spiritually, economically, in family life and social life.

The Bible encourages as below,

Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. 3 John:2

The Bible teaches that God wants us to totally receive spiritual blessings and

material blessings. Therefore, we should be under the blessing that God provides us.

2) The Blessing that Abraham Received

Let us remember the blessing that Abraham received from God. As God's promised word, he was told that his offspring would be as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the seashore (countless). On top of that, Sara, his wife, was barren and it was impossible to have a child. Then, what was he asked to do?

⇒ **He needed faith(trust) in God.**

God promised Abraham the land of Canaan. God surely gave the promised land to the people of Israel. Then, what was he asked to do ? **He needed faith(trust) in God.**

3) The Blessing that Job Received

Let us remember Job who was a man of sufferings, of trial and of perseverance.

He had seven sons and four daughters. However, his ten children were killed. At that time, Job said as below,

Job 1 : 21 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

1 : 22 In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

After that, he experienced countless trials. What did he say in his later years?

42:2 "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

42:12 And the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning.

And he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys.

42:13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.

My friends, what was Job asked to do?

⇒ **He needed faith(trust) in God.**

The Bible records lives of people who received God's blessing. Let us pray to God to receive His blessing. Then, what are we asked to do?

⇒ **We need faith(trust) in God.**

How can we come to have the faith to God? We need to come to Jesus, who is the perfect One and became a man, believe, and follow Him as Christ (the Savior). We should trust in God and faithfully and follow His Word. Then, God gives us His blessing. God promised it, do we trust in His promise?

His promise is to give us His blessing, that is "shalom" in Hebrew.

Hebrew word of "shalom" has following meanings; peace, prosperity, health,, sufficiency, wisdom, salvation and victory

6:27 "So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them."

Conclusion

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Today, we studied from the text that the saints who believe in Jesus, the perfect High Priest, are given the perfect blessing.

Let us remember the following two points today.

- 1 . God's blessing is given through Jesus, the perfect High Priest.
- 2 . The saints who believe in God are given spiritual blessings and material blessings.

God's blessing is given by His grace. Therefore, we worship God and live Christian lives.

* God bless you!