

Welcome to “J-Talk”

Sunnyside Road Church of Christ

August 28, 2022

Blessings



“Ahhh chooo!” he sneezed, and someone piped up, “Bless you!”

That’s an old custom left over from when people believed sneezes were caused by demons and we needed God’s help to overcome the sniffles. Perhaps times have changed. We no longer believe colds are caused by demons, but we also rarely think about blessings either.

The Apostle Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians by declaring,

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,” (Ephesians 1:3, ESV), but what does that mean? The New Century Bible changes the wording a little bit to have Paul say, “Praise be to the God.” (See the Contemporary English Version and others.) This recognizes that there are two Greek words in the New Testament translated “bless.”

We know the first one from Jesus’ Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2 ff.), where each phrase begins, “Blessed are ...” That word, makarios, has the sense “congratulations,” “fortunate,” or “happy.” In other words, if you practice this quality, you will be happy.

The second word translated “blessed” is eulogetos. It is an adjective, a description, which portrays something as “worthy of praise.” This is the interesting part: this word is only used of God the Father or Jesus. They are so fantastic that only they are truly praiseworthy. Everything and everyone else pales in comparison.

Now let’s take our new-found knowledge and use it to help us understand what Paul was telling the Ephesians: God is blessed – he is

worthy of praise! (Spend some time thinking about why God is worthy of praise.) God is blessed! But that isn't all Paul tells us. Out of his bounty of blessings, God gives some of that quality to us. His blessings rub off on us through our relationship with Jesus. To the extent, Jesus is Lord of our lives, we receive the blessings of God!

Still there is more. We might think about earthly blessings: a new car, a shiny new gadget - my wish list goes on and on - but the problem with earthly blessings is new cars become old, gadgets new to be replaced, and none of the possessions I might desire will ever really satisfy me. That's why the blessings that come from God are "spiritual blessings." They make me a better person. God's blessings just get better and better with time. But that's not all. These blessings aren't earthbound. They are "in the heavenly places." That means unlike anything else in my life, the blessings of God will travel with me into eternity! Now that's something worth getting excited about.

Blessings,

