

# Sermon Notes

REFLECTIONS

Count  
Your  
Blessings?

3/6/11



# REFLECTIONS

*for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, (1Peter 1:3-8 NKJ)*

While listening to the news a few days ago, I was taken by the notion that, from all appearances, the world has lost its bearings if not its sanity. With the Arab world inflamed, the economy in complete shambles, and the lawlessness of our leadership evident, it would be easy to completely lose heart. For the first time in my life, a sitting president decides that he can choose which laws he will enforce and which he will not enforce. Teachers in many states have abandoned their students and taken bogus “excuses” from “doctors” to protest the government in their states while still getting paid for teaching. All this with our children looking on as their future begins to disintegrate.

I changed the channel to a religious broadcast, and heard a preacher abuse the truth of the Gospel as he urged his listeners to expect financial blessing if they will only send him their “seed” money. I tried another religious channel only to hear another preacher telling his listeners to just think positive and happy thoughts and their lives will be complete. It was enough to shout Ichabod, which was a name given to the son of Eli the priest’s daughter-in-law upon learning that the Ark of God had been captured and her husband and father-in-law were dead. His name means no glory or “the glory has departed”.

It seems a strange way to suggest that we count our blessings when we have just rehearsed all the devastating news in the world, but, in the midst of all this seeming chaos, a portion of the Scripture came to mind. *Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! <sup>2</sup> Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! <sup>3</sup> Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! <sup>4</sup> Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! <sup>5</sup> Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! <sup>6</sup> Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 150:1-6 NKJ)* Here then was the needed encouragement in a world gone mad: Praise the Lord! Then I turned to Peter’s epistle and read... *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

*<sup>4</sup> to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are kept by the power of God through faith*

Now those are blessings you can count! In spite of the news, and in spite of the strange “gospels” being spread from many pulpits, and even in spite of personal sufferings, we can count our blessings. It’s not just finance, not just perfect health, and not just worldly pleasures that are the blessings to be counted, but rather the privilege of being assured that, in Christ, we can rejoice in His eternal provision for us even though the world falls apart all around us. We can rest in Jesus because He has been where we’ve been, in a world where sin, and men under its influence, have wreaked violence and degradation on the world where He walked. He knows what it means to be pursued by men trying to kill Him. He knows what it means to suffer at their hands. He knows too that He has defeated all the spiritual forces that are arrayed against us and He knows who we are and what we are facing in our lives and, best of all, He has promised that we can live in Him eternally. Yes, these are indeed blessings that we can count!

With all the bad news, the reality of our spiritual wholeness in Jesus, His promise of inexpressible joy, and His promise to never leave us even to the end of the age, we can live our lives in peace, in joy, and in the knowledge that we are His children. Here then is the way of gladness. To know Jesus, to know His Word, to pray diligently, to live and walk in His Holy Spirit, and to praise Him for His excellent greatness.

When we praise Him, it becomes easier to become joyful. When we serve Him, it becomes easier to see purpose in life. When we love Him, it becomes easier to love others. When He becomes our hope, it becomes easier to live joyfully in a hopeless world. When eternity with Christ is seen as our future, it becomes easier to encourage our children to place their future in His hands. When we pray for our leaders even those who seem to be enemies of God, it becomes easier to stay fruitful in the face of adversity. We have not been promised a rose garden without thorns, rather, we have been given Jesus, the Rose of Sharon. Let’s praise Him together and count our real blessings! **Pastor Doug**