



Count Your Blessings



"When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,
when you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings - name them one by one,
and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

"Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings - every doubt will fly,
and you will be singing as the days go by.

"When you look at others with their lands and gold,
think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings - money cannot buy
your reward in heaven nor your home on high.

So amid the conflict, whether great or small,
do not be discouraged - God is over all;
Count your many blessings - angels will attend,
help and comfort give you to your journey's end.

"Count your blessings, name them one by one;
count your blessings, see what God has done.
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
count your many blessings, see what God has done."

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." - Ephesians 1:3

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits." - Psalm 68:19

The word "blessed" is one of the most frequently used words in Christian vocabulary these days. We often wish each other a "blessed day" or "blessings," and we refer to the birth of a baby as a "blessed event." We commonly equate being blessed with good fortune, and we use the word "happy" when we experience the effect of some favorable circumstance. The Bible speaks of the kind of happiness that comes from God's favor being poured out upon us, but that feeling of well-being comes from knowing God's goodness even in the trials of life.

Material blessings are certainly part of God's favor, but the Bible ascribes a much fuller meaning. In the Beatitudes, Jesus used the term "blessed" to describe the inner qualities of a faithful servant of God. He was talking about a spiritual state of well-being and prosperity - a deep, joy-filled contentment within a person who has their focus on things that money cannot buy.

You can read the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12 and Luke 6:20-26. In them, Jesus speaks of happiness that is more than a surface emotion. They are a series of 8 blessings in which Jesus tells us how to lead a happy and blessed life. But what He says is contrary to the ways we normally pursue happiness.

The world says that happiness is to be found in riches, fame, abundance of possessions, honor, leisure, and generally life turning out exactly as we would want it to. The real truth is the very opposite. Jesus teaches us that genuine joy comes to those who are "poor in spirit," which is the opposite of self-sufficiency. It speaks of the deep humility that leads one to recognize their spiritual poverty apart from God. Those who mourn experience godly sorrow that leads to repentance.

Gentleness, or meekness, is not a sign of weakness, but power under control. The blessed person has learned to show mercy to others, knowing that the mercy of God has been shown to them. The pure in heart will see God, not only by faith now, but in the glory of heaven one day, face to face.

We are blessed when we are peacemakers, for we are proving ourselves to be God's children. And the last blessing is for those who have been and will be persecuted for their righteous lives, bearing the insults and lies of those who slander them because of Christ. Jesus assured His followers in Matthew 5:12:

"Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

I am reminded of another favorite old hymn that relates to "Count Your Blessings." The first verse of "It is Well" says,

"When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll; whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, 'It is well, it is well with my soul'."

Let us count our blessings every day. We could never number them all, for they would be far too many to count. But be on the lookout today for every good thing that the Lord is doing in your life and remember all the good things He has done in the past. That is where true blessing comes from, as we say with David, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name!" (Psalm 103:1)