

Sunday, July 11, 2021

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

Those blessings are sweetest that are won with prayer and worn with thanks.
—Thomas Goodwin

In verse 3 of the Scripture reading above, a form of the word “blessing” is mentioned three times! This reminds us of the importance, not only of *receiving* a blessing from the Lord, but *being* a blessing to others.

Followers of Jesus try to live in a way that blesses others. As the apostle Paul says in our text, we have received “every *spiritual* blessing” (emphasis added), so now we try to offer to others every *tangible* and emotional blessing that we can. In all we do, we bless others; our lives are blessings in action.

- People who are blessed do not curse (see James 3:9-10).
- People who are blessed do not listen to complainers and naysayers (see Psalm 1).
- People who are blessed do not feel entitled — they feel grateful.
- People who are blessed tend to pay their blessings forward; in other words, they are generous.
- People who are blessed are vividly aware of their blessedness and are humbled by it.
- People who are blessed see the sacred and holy in every aspect of their lives.

This last thought is particularly significant. The apostle Paul had some incredible adventures, which included shipwrecks, floggings, imprisonment, false accusations, the misunderstanding of colleagues and illness. But Paul always regarded himself as blessed. *He wasn't blessed on some days but not on others.* He lived and breathed in the blessing of God!

Perhaps this awareness of the providence of God came, in part, from his upbringing and education as a Jew. This cannot be understated because, as one rabbi has noted, “Judaism is chock-full of blessings.” Rabbi Fred Dobb says, “We’ve got blessings for seeing heads of state, Torah scholars, and ugly people. Blessings over sunsets, meteors, rainbows, reunions, and bad news. Blessings for bread and baked goods and fruit and vegetables, all different.”

A blessed person perceives blessings when others are oblivious. In turn, a blessed person blesses everything! In the Talmud, Rabbi Meir “suggests reciting 100 blessings each day... one every ten minutes of our waking lives.”

How about 10 a day?

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for blessing me. Channel your blessings through me to others that you might be glorified. Amen.

*Blessings
Linda & Pastor Ben Metz*

DREAMERS IN THE BIBLE

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Acts 3-5

Monday: Isaiah 40-42

Tuesday: Isaiah 43-45

Wednesday: Isaiah 46-48

Thursday: Isaiah 49-51

Friday: Isaiah 52-54

Saturday: Psalms 73-75

Many stories in the Bible involve dreams. Can you match the dreamers on the right with the correct clues on the left?

_____ 1. His brothers were irritated when he told them of his dreams.

_____ 2. He saw angels going up and down a ladder.

_____ 3. This ruler dreamed about some skinny cows eating fat cows.

_____ 4. She had an unpleasant dream about Jesus and told her husband to have nothing to do with him.

_____ 5. He saw a statue whose feet were smashed by a stone.

_____ 6. He was warned to take his family to Egypt.

_____ 7. He saw a vine produce grapes and he squeezed their juice into a cup.

_____ 8. They were warned in a dream about Herod's evil plan.

A. Pharaoh, Genesis 41:17-21

B. The Magi, Matthew 2:12

C. Jacob, Genesis 28:12

D. Pharaoh's cupbearer, Genesis 40:9-11

E. Joseph, Matthew 2:13

F. Joseph, Genesis 37:9

G. Pilate's wife, Matthew 27:19

H. Daniel, Daniel 2:31-35

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD:

Across — 2. loyal; 8. stripes; 10. flag; 11. colonies; 13. citizenship; 16. celebration; 19. picnic; 23. constitution; 24. British; 27. Congress; 28. bell; 29. anniversary. Down—1. bands; 3. freedom; 4. union; 5. cannons; 6. Jefferson; 7. government; 9. patriotic; 12. Philadelphia; 14. democracy; 15. declaration; 17. independence; 18. England; 20. fireworks; 21. birthday; 22. stars; 25. states; 26. July.

BACKWARDS GEOGRAPHY

Think of the last place you visited on a holiday — a city, state or country. This visit might have happened last week or last year or several years ago. Doesn't matter. Then, think of any place in the world that begins with the last letter of your starter location. For example, if you said RENO, then your next location would start with an O. Perhaps OLYMPIA, and so your next place would start with an A, and so on. Do this until you have ten (10) places in the world to complete this backwards geography ladder. *WRITE YOUR ANSWERS HERE:*



God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. —Psalm 73:26

ANSWERS TO
DREAMERS IN
THE BIBLE:

1F 2C 3A 4G 5H 6E 7D 8B

FUN FACTS ABOUT DREAMS

1. 95 percent of dreams are forgotten.
2. You dream two hours per night.
3. Negative emotions are often a part of your dream.