

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Count Your Blessings

KEY PASSAGE: Ephesians 1:1-8 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 40:8; 41:9-13 | Jeremiah 31:3 | John 14:2-3, 21, 27
Romans 12:6-8 | 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; 15:51-52 | Ephesians 1:13 | Philippians 4:19 | Hebrews 13:5

► SUMMARY

Although there are many reasons to be grateful to God, when was the last time you stopped to count your blessings?

Usually our thoughts immediately go to the material and physical benefits like houses, jobs, family, and health, but there are even greater spiritual blessings that we may not have considered. Every good thing from God that comes to us in salvation should fill our hearts and minds with gratitude and praise.

► SERMON POINTS

The Lord has promised us amazing spiritual blessings as a result of our salvation. They are so great that only the almighty, sovereign God of the universe could have made them.

God chose us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:3-4). His purpose in choosing us is not to ensure that we have a good time or become successful and popular in this life. His goal is that we experience the following spiritual realities:

- “That we would be holy and blameless before Him” (v. 4).
- That we would be adopted “as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself” (v. 5).
- That we would be “to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved” (v. 6).

In addition, we have redemption through Christ’s blood, forgiveness of all our sins, and the riches of God’s grace lavished on us (vv. 7-8). All these blessings make us spiritually wealthy in ways that far exceed any material riches. Furthermore, no one can take them from us because they are secured for us by Christ.

We have been sealed as children of God.

“In Him (Christ), you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1:13). We are forever secure because this seal cannot be broken since it is made by all-powerful God.

The Holy Spirit has gifted us.

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:4). These spiritual gifts are special abilities that are given to believers for the purpose of enabling them to accomplish what God desires. Romans 12:6-8 mentions seven major motivational gifts, and 1 Corinthians 12:8-11 contains another list. They are all important, whether they seem like it or not, because each gift is given by God to be used in service to Him.

God loves us.

“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him” (John 14:21). Although many people go through life feeling unloved, as believers we can be confident that God loves us. When we live in obedience to Him, His blessings come to us, and they are better than every earthly benefit we could imagine.

God's love far surpasses any human love. He says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness" (Jer. 31:3). His love for us never ceases or changes. Although we may wonder why He allows painful and difficult situations in our lives, they don't disprove His love. Because we are His children, He gives us His power and presence to take us through, and turns every circumstance for our ultimate good.

Christ gives us His peace.

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful" (John 14:27). There is inner tranquility and contentment when we belong to Christ because He is with us every moment, binding us together with Himself.

God promises to supply our needs.

"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). When we trust Jesus Christ as our Savior, we come under the awesome umbrella of His protection and care. He knows exactly what we need and will provide it at the best possible time. Even though we may suffer in this life, the Lord is constantly watching over and caring for us. He uses the hard times to draw us to Himself.

Through every situation in life, God will never leave or forsake us. The Lord says in Isaiah 41:10, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." Our faithful God will provide and help us in every circumstance we face, and the more we come to know Him, the greater our trust in Him will become.

We have been given the privilege of prayer.

To have access to the sovereign God of the universe who hears and answers our requests is an amazing privilege.

As we grow to know Him more intimately through His Word, our enjoyment of being with Him in prayer increases as well.

There is a coming resurrection for every child of God.

"Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51-52). We have no reason to fear death because God has promised to give us a new, eternal body when Christ returns. On that day we will see Him face to face.

Jesus is preparing a place for us in heaven.

"In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3). The wonders of our heavenly home are beyond our comprehension, but we know that it is as awesome as the God we serve.

We have the Word of God.

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isa. 40:8). Since multitudes of people don't have Bibles, we should be very grateful to have a copy of God's Word, which is always true and endures forever.

► RESPONSE

- What are the typical things you usually count as your blessings? How often do spiritual blessings come to mind?
- What can you do to make God's abundant spiritual blessings a frequent part of your prayers and thoughts?

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