

A Survey of Benedictions

10/20/2019

James 3:1-18

Our Scripture reading has a lot to say about the use of the tongue. But it is not about the mere use of words. It is about what is in our heart that affects the use of the tongue (Matthew 12:33-37). The real reason that it is so hard to control the tongue is because it is so hard to control the thoughts and passions of our heart (Jeremiah 17:9-10; Psalm 19:12-14; 139:23-24; Proverbs 4:23).

James 3:8-18 may be summarized by these thoughts:

- The tongue is supposed to bless and not curse (Romans 12:14; Matthew 5:44-48).
- It is hypocrisy for man to bless God and curse man with the same tongue/heart.
- The tongue reveals either a heart that is full of earthly, unspiritual, demonic envy and selfish ambition, or a heart that is full of heavenly, reasonable, pure, peaceable, gentle, and merciful goodness.
- It brings confusion, when men talk as if they had two hearts!

Let's get to blessing with our heart and tongue.

We have many times referred to a benediction as a blessing. A benediction is given to wish or confer something good for someone. It is a request for God to do something good – a way of showing a desire for someone to receive beneficial things. A blessing can also be used to consecrate something or someone, making it / them holy and sacred.

The English word “bless” comes from An Old English word “blestian,” which in turn comes from another Old English word, “blod (pronounced “blode”), referring to blood that was used to consecrate things in religious rituals. It is right, then, that the blessings that we would confer on each other are based on the sacrifice of Christ’s blood, by which he provided us with the right to be called the Sons of God – members of his forever family. The blood of Christ has also caused us to become kings and priests to our God (John 1:12-13; Ephesians 1:3-7; 2:11-19; I Peter 1:1-5,18-22; 2:9-10; Revelation 1:5-6). This would indicate that we have a ministry, using our hearts and tongues to worship and bless God (Hebrews 13:10-15; Romans 15:5-6).

We also have a ministry of blessing men. The Hebrew word most often used for “bless” means “*to bow the knee.*” Our ministry of blessing others is an act of worship to God (Ephesians 3:14-19; Philippians 1:2-11; 2:1-5,19-22; I Corinthians 10:23-24,31-33. For the sake of Christ’s shed blood, and with a bent knee, let us make benediction a part of our life!

Let's look at the language of the benedictions and discover the blessings of:

- God's gracious work in our lives through His Word (Acts 20:32; Romans 16:25-27).
- God's people united and full of hope (Romans 15:5-6, 13).
- God's benevolent power bringing Him glory in the church (Ephesians 3:20-21; I Timothy 1:17).
- God's grace, peace, and love to His people (I Corinthians 16:23-24; Galatians 6:18; Ephesians 6:23-24; I Thessalonians 5:28; II Thessalonians 3:16, 18; Revelation 20:21).
- God's work of sanctification, creating holiness in heart and life (I Thessalonians 3:12-13; 5:23-24; II Thessalonians 2:16-17; 3:5; Hebrews 13:20-21; I Peter 5:10-11; II Peter 3:18; Jude 1:24-25).
- God's people saved and serving through the sacrificial love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 13:20-21; Revelation 1:5b-6).

Let's explore the spirit of the benedictions applied to life – Romans 11:33 – 12:21

- After eleven chapters of explaining the grace and mercy of God in His dealings with sinful men, God is blessed for His infinite wisdom, knowledge and, power – His sovereign grace! (Romans 11:33-36)
- With God's mercies in mind, we are to unite with others to present our bodies as a singular, unified, living sacrifice for God to use as He wishes. (Romans 12:1)
- Our minds are to be submitted to God (not the world) for transformation, so that we can demonstrate the wonderful works and will of God. Our transformed minds are to operate in a humble, sober, and faithful way. (Romans 12:2-3)
- We are to discover our place in the body of Christ (our spiritual gifts). We are to develop and deploy our spiritual gifts, gracefully ministering to others. (Romans 12:5-8)
- All that the Scriptural benedictions embody are described in the good-will attitudes and actions prescribed to the follower of Christ. (Romans 12:9-20)
- In summary, it is described as taking all the goodness and goodwill of God and using it to overcome this evil world (Romans 12:21 cp. Romans 12:2; I John 5:1-5)