

1Peter 10-10-22a

This is Friday the 22nd of October 2010. We continue our study in the book of 1st Peter. We resume this evening at verse 3. We'll pause as we begin to give each of us the opportunity to spend a short time in prayer to ask God's blessing and enablement for the speaking and the hearing and our fellowship in between and that each of us can benefit, be a blessing as we spend this time together.

Shall we pray? Father, we recognize how important it is as we spend so much of our time in the material world dealing with the circumstances and events and tasks that face us to remind ourselves of our genuine identity, our spiritual identity through the Lord Jesus Christ as your children, as members of his body and bride, as those who are destined for the eternal future and to keep in mind that this time is preparation, it is training, it is brief, it is effervescent, it is of such short duration and yet we are so easily distracted and so easily consumed and immersed that we easily forget these things. We thank you for the truth of your word, the enablement that it gives us. We thank you for the presence of the Holy Spirit who reminds us of the reality of invisible things.

We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus who through his death and his life has made this existence possible for us and has given us the hope of eternal life. We pray that as we study his work on our behalf and your provision for us in this section of First Peter that each of us will find in this portion of your word those truths that will genuinely motivate and encourage and guide and direct us in the days ahead so that we can make the most effective use of the time that remains to us. We thank you for this passage.

We thank you for the presence of each believer here and we ask your blessing on our study in Jesus' name. Amen. As we resume in First Peter chapter 1 verse 3, having given the greeting, having identified his hearers and having basically already set a very optimistic tone, we saw this by the way if you remember in Philippians where Paul writing from prison at the outset also focused on the positive.

He said you've heard that I'm in prison and you've sent Epaphroditus here to cheer me up and so on but let me just tell you how this is all working out for the good. And we saw that view the glass as half full or view the glass as entirely full. If you look at the Apostle Paul, Peter is doing the same thing.

He's writing to people who are dispersed and this is sort of like visiting someone in the hospital or showing up for a funeral. The first thing you want to do is sort of express condolences. You might want to say Peter to the people in the dispersion, I'm sure sorry to hear that you've been scattered, you lost your property and you've been away from the homeland even under good circumstances for however many months or years.

You can't come back and celebrate the feast and whatever may be their circumstance. He says no, this is great. You have been chosen by God to be right where you are and we've reviewed that over these last few weeks.

And the purpose of it is that in obedience and in the sanctification through the work of Christ, not only are they blessed, not only are they strategically positioned to be blessed, but they are strategically positioned to be a blessing. The sprinkling of the blood of Christ is a double thing. It is sprinkled on them, it has sanctified them and they recognize this from their Old Testament background.

Read Hebrews, nothing was sanctified, nothing was made pure in the Levitical system without the sprinkling of blood. Without the shedding of blood is no remission. Nothing was sanctified, nothing was put into service in worship without the sprinkling of blood.

The tabernacle, the priests, the altar, the utensils, every accouterment was sanctified by blood. So he says this is part of God's purpose. He chose you in his foreknowledge for the sprinkling with a view toward the sprinkling of Christ.

You yourself are sprinkled and fit for service. Now you are going to go serve and you are going to be the means of spreading and sprinkling the blood of Christ throughout the Gentile nations and this harks all the way back to the promise to Abraham. Through you and your descendants all nations of the earth will be blessed.

You and I sitting here right now are products of the dispersion. If it was not for the spread of Christianity outside of Israel into the Greek speaking world into the Roman Empire through that first and second generation of Jewish Christians you and I wouldn't be here. It is because of what God did through these people and others that we have had the Christian faith for the last 2,000 years.

If it had remained a small sect of ingrown Jewish apocalyptic expectationists they'd be living in some hole in a cliff somewhere in the desert in Israel and we wouldn't have a Christian faith. God designed this. It was part of his commission that the gospel spread, that the word of God spread, that the truth of Jesus Christ spread.

These people are that sprinkling and it is inevitable. When you think about the sprinkling of the blood of Christ what was a necessary precursor? Go back to the Levitical system. Go back to what it says in Hebrews when it describes it.

In order to sprinkle blood and sanctify everything what had to happen first? It had to be a sacrifice. The blood had to be spilt. It had to be shed.

That's not necessarily good in anyone's book from a human point of view. We're going to take one of our best animals that's without spot and without blemish. We're going to bring it up.

It could be a breeder. It could be a heifer. It could be a bull.

It could be something that would help our stock grow. This is the reverse of all the Darwinian thinking that's ever been that you're going to take the best and brightest and most prolific of the flock and kill them. Leaving behind the spotted and the damaged and the less than great.

Well you know we had three bulls. One was really healthy and great. The other two were kind of sickly but we took the best one down to the Lord and sacrificed it.

What are we left with? There was a built-in system of faith if you think about it. To be obedient and to sacrifice all of your best animals. Give the best to the Lord.

I mean even in those days they understood that breeding sickly with sickly is going to yield less healthy animals and you want to keep the healthy. God said no give the healthy to me and when they did that God blessed them. He said I will make your crops fruitful.

I will make your flocks and your herds fruitful. Trust me give me the best and I will give you the best. Those obedient Israelites that did that saw miraculous contra evolutionary results in their flocks and in their herds.

Every time they took the best bull down well here's another young calf that came up that was even stronger. It's just contrary to all expectation but that was the blessing of God on faith. So here when Peter says this is all done with a view toward the sprinkling of the blood of Christ there's an awful lot in that that we're not going to go into in detail but I don't want to overlook it either.

A necessary precursor to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ is the sacrificial work of Christ. A necessary precursor to these people being a blessing to the Gentiles is that they endure the sacrifice of losing their place and their home and in some cases their possessions and being scattered by whatever means. Some of these people were scattered by persecution some were scattered by choice but you know there is a sort of an inbuilt longing in the Jewish heart to be in Israel to be in Jerusalem and it's always a hardship to be away.

If you've ever been a foreigner living overseas or if you've ever known foreigners living overseas people always kind of have a heart for their home where they grew up, their place, their people, their familiar birth surroundings. So it's a hardship there's a sacrifice but God says in the same way because you have made this sacrifice for me I will bless you. I will bless you beyond what you could have had if you had hung on to the thing and not sacrificed it.

It's contrary to expectation as so many things in the Word of God are. What is the application of this? The time that we spend, the effort that we spend, the dedication that we exhibit on a daily basis to the things of God will multiply blessing. You say well I've got a choice here I'm kind of wavering on a knife edge I could spend 15 minutes and stop and do a little bit of quiet time, a little

bit of meditation, a little bit of devotional prayer, a little bit of recollection of things that I've learned recently in Bible class and try to see how it fits, how it intrudes into my thinking and my circumstances.

But you know what I've really got a thousand things to do in that you know this is trash day and I need to get that stuff out and if I don't hurry up you know somebody's gonna leave and it won't be done. Our mind starts running on tasks and we make a choice. We can go ahead and spend the time on tasks, we can try to get our stuff done, but it is going to lack that divine enablement and energizing and blessing that multiplies and propagates blessing.

It's just going to be another human effort. It's a contra indication. It is a contradiction in our minds.

It's against all expectation. Take the time and give the best to God and what's left over is going to be blessed beyond. This is why, by the way, when you look at the end of verse 2, we have greetings all over the ancient Greek world.

We've got greetings in the letters of the New Testament that say grace to you and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ. What does Peter say here that's different? Can you spot it? What's different in this last line of verse 2? What's the unusual word? In fact this occurs in no other New Testament epistle greeting. Amazingly, of all the letters, you can name them, you can tick down the list of epistles, none of them have this word.

Grace to you and peace be multiplied. Be multiplied. This is pleithunthein.

Multiplication of peace. Multiplication of grace. Why? They're in that sacrificial mode.

They are part of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. They have given something up. They're not in the land, but they're faithful.

They're interested. They're assembled to hear this letter from Peter. And Peter says, God is going to multiply grace.

He's going to multiply peace to you. It's a principle of the Word of God. Either make a note or at least make a mental note.

You never lose by investing appropriate time in the plan of God, in the responsibilities we have as believers to be priests, to be ministers, and to be ambassadors. You will never come up short. And many of us can give living testimony to this.

In very time-pressured situations, you just make the priority. You carve out the time. You ensure that you don't miss that time that belongs to God, whether it's prayer, meditation, Bible class, whatever it may be.

It's a priority. I will do it. And if something's going to suffer, it's going to be something else.

I am not going to let this slide. And don't mistake what I'm saying. I'm not saying kill yourself to get to Bible class.

The more important time is what you do with what you learn in Bible class. A little Bible class goes a long way. That's why we only meet twice a week.

It's more than enough. We get four classes a week. That's more than enough.

The time that we slack, the time that we miss, the time that we fail to invest is not Bible class time. It's meditation, application, devotion, and prayer time. That's what we slight the Lord.

You look at Romans 12, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, those multiplied mercies that Peter is talking about, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice. He doesn't say I beseech you by the mercies of God that you make it down to synagogue every time somebody opens a scroll. I beseech you by the mercies of God that you be sure you get together and speak the truth in love.

He says present yourself. This is the day-by-day dedication of life. We need to live each day as children of God.

You present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. That's your reasonable service. Bible class attendance, drop in the bucket.

It's what we do with all of the rest of the time that matters. So when someone does this, and these people are blessed, and Peter tells them you're blessed because they are God's sprinkling of the blood of Christ out amongst the nations. They themselves have been sprinkled and they're going to pass it on to others.

It's the principle of blessing. We can't be a blessing until we first have been blessed by God. We can't be channels of God's love unless God's love is shed abroad in our hearts first.

We can't be a minister to others unless God has first ministered to us. I love the simple picture of the cross and you think about that vertical post as the relationship between God and us. That's what holds up the horizontal post that represents our horizontal relationships with each other.

You can have the vertical post without the horizontal, but you can't do anything with that horizontal unless the vertical is there first. There are times when we are by the brook Cherith and there isn't anybody for fellowship, there isn't anybody for ministry, there isn't anybody to exchange blessing and encouragement with, but there's always that vertical relationship with God. Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

You would think, well, peace would be if I was back in the land, peace would be if I was living in Jerusalem, peace would be if I could go to the temple and hear the great scrolls read aloud. Peace would be if I could be near that liturgical ritualistic system of worship that I grew up with

and that my parents and my forefathers to the dawn of mosaic law history have perpetuated. That would be peace.

Peter says, wherever you are, peace multiplied to you. Now we pick up in verse 3 tonight. It says, 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 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

Verse 3 and verse 4 is one great long sentence. All one sentence. English majors like me love this sort of independent, dependent, multiple clause variations.

Diagramming this thing is just pleasure. It's a beautiful, beautiful sentence. And when we break the structure down we're going to see that it's really also telling us something that doesn't necessarily lie on the surface here.

But we'll take it in sections to begin. First of all it says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now this is interesting to me and I suggested this I think last week.

How do you bless God? Well God I know that having me on the team is a great blessing to you. Obviously it doesn't work that way. Why would Peter say blessed be God? How does this work? It's easy to see it the other way.

God will richly bless you. Blessed be Abraham. If somebody is blessed by God we say well of course that means if God is blessing someone what does that mean? God blesses us.

What does it mean? There is some sort of benefit being dispensed. We are better off because God has acted on our behalf, right? That's a blessing. Something is better.

Something is improved. We have gained a benefit. We are blessed.

Well how do I improve things or give a benefit to God? Well the answer is I don't. We don't. Blessed means two different things depending on the direction.

When God blesses something beneficial happens for us. When we bless God it's a whole different thing. I was kind of wrestling with this because I thought in my military mind I like things to lay down and be orderly and words ought to mean the same thing or they shouldn't change meaning just because I need them to because I can't figure out why they don't make sense the original way.

So I thought well as usual let's look at scripture and see if scripture will tell us what blessing God means. What does it mean to say blessed be God, blessed be the Lord? What does it mean? Well we can look at this in Hebrew and in Greek. The Greek word is Barak, Baruch and then variations on that theme.

It means bless. The valley of Barak is the valley of blessing. So that's your Old Testament word but I'm just going to stick for the sake of time with the New Testament.

The term we have is Ulogeo. Ulogeo. You know what Logeo means right? We get logos from this.

Logeo means to speak or to say and eu means good, good speech, speak well. Ulogeo. Somebody dies, everybody assembles, somebody stands up front and delivers what? Eulogy.

I was actually thinking about the food afterward. But no, the first thing you get is the eulogy. Speak well.

Well, I actually had several thoughts that ran through my mind. I had an email this past week. Somebody was saying, I'm writing a paper at the doctoral level, mind you, on the impact and lasting legacy of Dr. W. A. Criswell.

Can you help me out? I would like to get a transcript of his funeral. And I'm thinking, here's the thing. If you want to write at that level, or at any other academically valid level, you are not going to just give forth with peons of praise for someone.

You want an objective evaluation to be balanced. A good biography gives you a picture of the person, warts and all. Here's what they did right.

Here's what they did wrong. I much more appreciate a biography of Theodore Roosevelt that gives me not only all the things that he is admired for, but also some of the things that he had trouble with, mistakes that he made, things he didn't do well, possible character flaws or undesirable personality traits or whatever it might be. If you want an accurate picture, you need both sides.

Well, what's the problem at a funeral? You've got the grieving family, you've got relatives and sobs and Kleenex and everything. Is somebody going to stand up and say, you know, we're gathered here to pay our respects to Sam Hall who passed away here. You know, he did some things pretty well, but let me tell you, he could be a real pain in this and that and the other, and we start going through some of the not so great things.

Well, you don't typically do that at the eulogy. It's not a malogy. It's a eulogy, right? So eulogeo in its root meaning has the idea of saying something good.

If you haven't got a eulogy, don't give out with a malogy. So this is our Greek word, eulogeo, and we find that it has a number of different objects. Hebrews chapter 7 verse 1, Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, eulogized him and he wasn't even dead.

Eulogeo-ed him. This of course goes back to Genesis 14, 19 and following. And what does this mean? Was there an exchange of benefit? Did somebody walk away from the meeting? Here's

Melchizedek, here's Abraham, they meet.

Who walked away with more loot than when he arrived? Oh, come on now, think about the story. Abraham goes, remember Sodom lot and everybody's all carried away. Abraham goes, gets his men to get his servants together, they go in the fight, they rescue them all, bring them back.

This is before the destruction, of course. And so then what happens? After he's returning and he's laden down with all the booty, he meets Melchizedek and he shares bread and wine and Melchizedek blesses him and then what happens? Abraham gives him a tithe of all. A tenth of the spoils is given to Melchizedek.

So did Abraham give Abraham bless Melchizedek or did Melchizedek bless Abraham? Well, when you read either account, you find that Melchizedek said, blessed be God who's given Abraham this victory and blessed be Abraham and so on. So the blessing in that case wasn't Melchizedek giving a material benefit to Abraham, the material benefit went the other way. But the blessing was the speaking of good things on Abraham by Melchizedek.

And of course, the author of Hebrews goes on to say that the principle there is that the greater blesses the lesser. That's when a blessing really counts. When there's going to be this benefit take place, he makes the argument that the Levitical priesthood is inferior to the Melchizedekian priesthood because Melchizedek blessed Abraham, it wasn't the other way around and incipient or nascent within Abraham are the Levites and so Melchizedek is greater because he blessed them.

Isaac blessed Jacob, we have this in Genesis 27-28. This is the father blessing the son, that makes sense. So what are we looking for here? What is the subject and what is the object in this action of blessing? Because we want to get back to Peter and find out why Peter says blessed be God.

So we say, well we know that people when they dispense with blessing, a greater person blesses a lesser person, speaks something well on their behalf, makes a beneficial prophetic prediction which is what Melchizedek does, makes a beneficial prophetic inheritance declaration like Isaac does for Jacob and when Esau comes in and says, well bless me too, bless me too, Isaac says, sorry I already pronounced the benefit as the father upon the son and all I can tell you is you're going to be a wild guy and sleep under the stars and good luck. That's about as much blessing as you can get because the power to bless that the father had was exercised on Jacob's behalf. Jacob goes on to bless the sons of Joseph in Genesis 48, he blessed Joseph and he said, God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day, bless you, bless your sons, bless Ephraim and Manasseh and so on.

So that's understandable, we get that. Somebody big, God being the ultimate example can bless someone who is lesser. But you also have this other direction blessing.

For example, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, remember he's in there and the whole, Gabriel comes and Zacharias has doubts and Gabriel says, shut up and of course that's binding so he can't speak and when his tongue is finally loosed in Luke 1.64 and he does begin to speak, the first thing he did was praise God and the verb there in Luke 1.64 in Greek is eulogeo, he blessed God, he blessed God. It's translated praise in your English but it's eulogeo, he blessed God. First thing out of his mouth.

Simeon, when he sees the young child down at the temple after they've done the dedication ceremony and so on, Simeon sees him in Luke 2.28, takes the child up in his arms and eulogeo God and said, Lord now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word. Simeon blessed God, Zacharias blessed God and so on and God. And by the way, Simeon also blessed the parents because he's an old guy, he's an elder in Israel, he's probably one of the most ancient guys walking around and they're relatively young.

So Simeon blessed them in verse 34 and said to Mary's mother, behold this child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel and for a sign which will be spoken against and so on. But he pronounced blessing on them. You remember of course that no Catholic can forget Hail Mary full of grace, what? Blessed art thou among women.

Yeah, I probably skipped some part of it, didn't I? What does it say? Hail Mary full of grace. Blessed, somewhere in there, blessed art thou among women, right? That's Elizabeth, the older woman, so old she's not of childbearing age and yet she has John, right? The babe leaps in her womb, she's like a latter day Sarah and so you have Mary being blessed by the older woman. Blessed art thou among women.

And blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus and so forth. But how does Elizabeth pronounce blessing on the as yet unborn Savior? How does that work? It's one thing for the older lady to bless the younger lady, something else for a human woman to bless the Christ child. How does that work? Well, we've kind of deduced the key here and it is in what we see in terms of what is said.

Bread can be blessed. Jesus almost any time you see him pictured near food is blessing it, right? In Mark 14.22 as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it. Gave it to them and said, take eat this is my body.

So what would that mean? Did Jesus dispense a benefit on the bread? And we begin to see that why would you bless food? Why would you ask God to bless food? What would that do for it? Is that dispensing a material benefit to it or is it speaking well of it and saying, well, okay, food be really, really good. What does it mean to bless? It's really, really important to figure this out so that when we say, you know, blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ or when we see somebody say it in scripture, we know exactly what it means. Because it's an encouragement to do something.

It's sort of a justive. It's a cohortative. It's not quite an imperative, but it's an encouragement to do a thing.

Bless the Lord, oh my soul. Okay, what am I supposed to do? Well, we get the answer to this from scripture, as I said. In Hebrews chapter 6 verse 7, it says the earth, you remember Hebrews 6, not laying again the foundation for, you know, having received and if they fall away, impossible to renew them again to repentance and that whole dismal picture.

For the earth, which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God. The ground that receives the rain and yields the crops that it's supposed to yield receives blessing from God. We're going to see later on in this letter in chapter 3, Peter's going to say not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

And Peter is going to take this eulogeo word and play with its various meanings. But look at the contrast. In fact, just flip a page over to 1 Peter chapter 3. This is really the heart of the answer.

Look at verses 8 and 9. All of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another, love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous. You get the idea that Peter had a copy of Philippians in his hand. Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, blessing.

Many times in scripture we learn what a thing is or what it means because the context gives us its opposite. What's the opposite of blessing in 1 Peter 3.9? Reviling and evil. When we are given evil, we return a blessing.

What was Jesus' injunction when he says, you've heard it said, love your friends and hate your enemies. But I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who spitefully use you, return good for evil. So how does this end up working? By the way, a reference for this is Luke 6.28. Bless those who curse you and pray for those who spitefully use you.

So what does it mean? It doesn't mean send them a fruitcake in the mail so you hear somebody is reviling you so you mail them a Starbucks gift card or something. Bless those who curse you. Cursing is verbal, right? So what's blessing? Now I'm about to trample my toes and probably everybody else's toes that are in here.

When someone does a bad turn, when someone wrongs us in some way, what is our natural inclination, instinct and habitual practice? As soon as that topic comes up, you know what, let me tell you what so and so did to me. And we curse. We describe in detail the badness that this person perpetrated.

What does this say when it says bless those who curse you? It's easy to say, oh God, I hope that you'll help them in some way in the future. No. Bless those who curse you.

You know what it means? You find something good to say about the person that just ran over, poisoned your dog, broke your window, dented your car and left without a note. You bless them. Bless those who curse you mean you say something good.

This is the definition of bless that is the same as blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. What does that mean? Celebrate and praise. Say good things about.

Rehearse something good. Remember that thing in Philippians, whatsoever things to the extent that you can find good, noble, honest, pure, lovely, good report. Think on these things.

This is the flip side of that coin. Speak those things. Somebody cheats.

Somebody really does a disgustingly annoying, abrasive, unkind thing. Bless those who curse you says, if that topic comes up, if that person, and this is what typically happens. It doesn't mean you have to go around and find somebody and say, hey, you know, that person over here has a really nice smile.

This person that just put a dead squirrel in your trash can instead of their own. What it means is, if the occasion arises, I mean in practical terms what happens? You have a bad experience with somebody. You feel like they really did a mean thing and you don't say anything about it.

You just kind of quietly fret and stew and ultimately you kind of confess that to the Lord and you try to just bite your tongue. Well, now this person comes up in conversation. The topic arises.

Someone comes up and says, oh, she's so sweet. And what do you want to say? Sweet? Let me tell you about sweet. Here's what happened yesterday with Miss Sweetness over there or Mr. Kind and Loving.

Let me tell you. No. You say something innocuous, something that is a blessing and not a curse.

How many different scriptures tell us don't bear a grudge, don't let the sun go down on your wrath, don't carry tails, don't let backbiting and contention, don't let a spirit of bitterness rise up and divide. What it means is drop the hate, drop the grudge, drop the bad-mouthing, drop the gossip, drop the denigration of character. You may know all kinds of dirt.

You may know all kinds of unkind things, but unless it is necessary to keep someone from hurting themselves, there are times when you have to say, look, I had to do this one time because there was a sort of a group of loosely affiliated people involving one Marine officer and two or three Army officers. I was the Marine and there were some girls and there was some dating involved. I wasn't dating anybody, but other people were.

Well, this guy did a really, really cruel thing to this girl that he was seeing. She was crushed. She left.

She moved out of town. Well, now in this circle, he was preparing to do the same thing to this other girl and said the same things and was going down the very same path. And in the course of conversation, this girl said, oh, isn't Bob just the nicest guy? You know, I'm thinking about doing this.

And I felt it necessary to let her know that she needed to be careful because he had a history of loving him and leaving him, shall we say. There are times when you have to warn somebody against a known danger and you can't just keep silent. But we need to be really careful about that, generally speaking.

And by the way, he hadn't done anything bad to me. I wasn't trying to get even with him or tear him down. I just didn't want to see somebody else have their life ruined.

But bless those who curse you. Our challenge is if we are wronged, we're not going to use that as justification to wrong somebody or to spread and make an issue out of their wrongness and let it metastasize and infect a lot of other things and a lot of other people. It's not our place.

Bless those who curse you means if you're going to say anything, find something good. If you can't find something good, be quiet. Bless those who curse you.

This is a verbal blessing. This is what you say specifically. That's Luke 6.28. And for emphasis, we also have it in Matthew 5.44. Jesus says, I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

Romans 12.14. Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse. Does it get any clearer? Does it get any stronger? Does it get any more black and white? Bless and do not curse.

1 Corinthians 4.12. Paul says we labor as apostles, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless. Being persecuted, we endure.

In Revelation 5.12. Worthy is the lamb who was slain. One of our memory verses. Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and what? Eulogia.

Blessing. The lamb is worthy to receive blessing. And what this ends up meaning, biblically speaking, and back to our primary point, which is what does it mean to bless God? Every time you find, at least every time I checked in Scripture, you might be able to find an exception, but almost every time you find God being blessed in Scripture, He has done something.

For example, in 1 Kings 10.9. Blessed be the Lord your God who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel. He says blessed be God because He delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel. Because the Lord has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king to do

justice and righteousness.

And so when He says blessed be God, then He proceeds to do it. He says God is great because this is what He has done. Job 1.21. One of the most famous blessing passages of God in the whole Bible.

Naked came I from my mother's womb and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave and the name of the Lord. The Lord has acted and Job did not find any injustice in the Lord's action.

In Luke 1.68. Blessed is the Lord God of Israel because He has visited and redeemed His people. Blessed be God because this is what He has done. Romans 1.25. The creator whose deity and Godhead is visible throughout the universe is blessed forever.

There is a little bit of intermediate stuff there, but in Romans 1.25 Paul basically says God who has been so great and has done so many wonderful things and when that truth is suppressed in unrighteousness, these men exchange that truth of God for a lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever. Look at how great He is in creation. Romans 9.5. My heart is grieved for Israel because to them belong all of these things of whom are the fathers from whom according to the flesh Christ came who is over all the eternally blessed God.

Amen. Christ came. As soon as that thought hits Paul's heart, bless God.

It's a celebration of what God has done. 2 Corinthians 1.3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort who comforts us in all of our discouragements, all of our trials. God comforts us.

Blessed be God. Look at what He does. 2 Corinthians 11.31. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who is blessed forever knows the truth that I am preaching.

He is the source of it. He knows I'm not lying. He is blessed forever.

Ephesians 1.3. 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. You get both turns of eulogio there. I speak great things of God because He has distributed benefit to us.

And of course our passage 1 Peter 1.3. 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. Every time you see, see this is the problem in some praise music. Not all, but some.

Praise and worship music. We praise you O God. We praise you O God.

O God we praise you. We lift up our voice in praise. We thank you O God.

You're a wonderful God. On and on and on. If you're going to bless God, if you're going to praise

God, say why.

Give the content. Why is God great? If you're going to bless God, if you're going to praise God, give the content. Your saying hey you're a great God basically says you're great because I say you're great.

And it's subjective. Well, God ought to be really pleased that I'm saying He's great. Where is the foundation for the declaration that God is great? Is it in your credibility? Well, He's got to be great if Sam says He's great.

That's ridiculous. God is great because of His own actions, because of His own character, because of His own manifest activities among men and in heaven and in creation. That's what makes God great.

The flaw in a lot of praise and worship music or P&W as we like to call it is that the credibility for the statement that God is blessed and God is great rests with the singer, with the declaimer. And that's not right. We don't have any grounds to say whether God is great or not, except as we recognize what He has done and who He is.

It rests with Him, not with us. That's the difference between subjectivity and objectivity. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And this is the transition. This is the additional layer for these Jewish dispersed pilgrim Christians. He has always been God for Israel.

But now in this generation, He is not only God, He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source and the enabler and the planner and the sender. He is the Father of Messiah.

Well, this is a good place for us to pause and take our break. When we come back, we're going to see a three-fold declaration that Peter is going to make here. But it's done in a very elegant way.

It's not done as a preachment. It's done as a praise. Why does He do that? Why is it presented the way that it is? Why does He start out with a blessing instead of just saying, let me tell you where you stand.

This is what God has done. Instead, it's presented in this particular format. Why is that? Well, there is an answer and that's what we'll look at when we come back.