

The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: (Quality: Very good)

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Preacher: Farley, Vernon (1912-1984)

[0 : 00] If the Lord will graciously help me, I would venture to read to you again the text in the book of Numbers, chapter 6, verses 24 to 26.

Numbers, chapter 6, verses 24 to 26. Give thee peace.

This was a very beautiful benediction dictated to Aaron by the Lord, having his authority unsealed, for him to pronounce with uplifted hands over the assemblies of Israel, upon their varied services of the sanctuary, and being composed by the Lord, it must needs be glorious and excellent in its nature, more than a mere formality.

And a very noble piece it is. And as we contemplate Aaron, the saint of the Lord, the anointed one, standing up betimes to pronounce this holy benediction, blessing and prayer, whatever the result upon the hearts of the people, we leave for the moment.

But knowing Aaron to be a man of God, taught by the Spirit, deeply impressed with the glories of the Most High, the value of precious souls, the need for the divine blessing, knowing him, knowing him, I say, to feel this deeply in his heart.

[3 : 13] It was the most natural thing for it to spontaneously flow out toward the people.

Doubtless like Moses, yea, he loved the people. Beside then being an ordinance of the Lord, and a proper and holy method of dismissing the company, it provided a medium for the outlet of holy feelings toward the people.

A very right, God-honoring, and a sweet method, wherein, in a short compass, he might express his vast desires for the people.

I hope that obtains today. that coming before you on this New Year's services, we find some desires welling up in our breast, desiring that it may be well with the dear, esteemed, beloved pastor, and his wife, and the church that is planted here, and on those members who have just lately put on Christ by an open profession, by all the godly who assemble here, yea, we would not exclude any, but seek to express their affection for you and desires for you through this text that is now to be spoken upon.

And you remember, too, that Paul was wont to do this. Oh, you have only to search a little way. Among his epistles, you shall find his heart is in the matter.

[5 : 31] Dearly beloved, and long for my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. You shall find him opening up with his salutations, with vast desires.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine, making a request for you all with joy.

And God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And he could scarcely leave off an epistle, but what?

He must crown it with some holy and capacious benediction. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and so on. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit, and so on.

- [6 : 43] Well, that is the vein which we are in today. And beside expressing my desire before the church and people and their pastor, the thing attains much excellent instruction.
- Because it teaches us how to pray. It raises up to an expectation of what God not may do, but will do.
- the words were not put into Aaron's lips for a mere formality, but to stir up the pure minds by way of remembrance and prayer and godliness.
- So I trust it might have that happy effect in us today. It should be my desire for you and my prayer for you and may your heart echo as you hear the parts of it.
- Amen. Amen. The Lord do so. The Lord fulfill it to us, yes, to me.
- [8 : 04] Oh, remember me. Oh, Lord, with a favor thou bearest unto thy people and visit me with thy salvation.
- The theme of the text was blessing and the blessing of God is desired and blessing is that which alone can raise us up from a miserable state by sin to a condition of happiness by grace and happiness in glory presently.
- The Lord God is a sun and shield. He will give both grace and glory. No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
- The desire is then broadly and at once the Lord bless thee and then that it breaks up into several most attractive and comfortable particulars.
- The Lord bless thee and keep thee in a way of maintenance, in a way of preservation, in a way of recovery, as a shepherd doth his flock, as a man cares for his jewels, as the Lord kept Jacob all his way unto the end.
- [9 : 51] We pass on to the next verse, the Lord make his face shine upon thee. thee, less I could not wish, more I could not seek, nor you, the Lord make his face shine upon thee.
- I say that each of these clauses goes to anticipate some particular necessity apparent in our fallen condition.
- What then does this suggest the Lord make his face to shine, except that some of you may be and well might be in a measure of darkness.
- All to come together there is in the word of God how it anticipates, meets, provides for answers, the woeful incapacities and deprivations that have come upon us through the fall.
- The Lord make his face to shine upon thee then if thou art in the darkness of nature. O woeful darkness having their heart darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart.
- [11 : 43] Sad state, sorrowful condition, far off from God, depart from us they say, we desire not a knowledge of thy ways.
- O the Lord make his face to shine upon thee if thou art in that state. And the very prayer at once teaches that no minister can do it.
- Aaron might pronounce the blessing. That's all he could do. God alone must convey the power and open the truth in hearts of the hearers.
- But still for us this evening it is our fervent prayer for any who may be in darkness hardened far off froward disobedient no matter whether they are outrageous sinners or whether they are polite and respectable sinners if they are not born again they are in darkness they know not the Lord they are wandering upon the mountains they are groping for the wall they might call themselves happy they are not they promise themselves many things it is a vapour and life too fast speeding away oh but they must be born again they must be made new creatures then indeed will they have light we pray for this because no man can quicken nor preserve nor save his own soul marvel not said the

Lord Jesus that I said unto you ye must ye must be born again the Lord make his face to shine upon such and I add that he might so do it after the manner and the power manifest to the apostle when on the road to Damascus he saw a light above the brightness of the sun which held him to the earth which brought a crisis in his life and he began to think upon his ways and turn his feet toward the testimonies of God the Lord make his face to shine after that manner upon thee those who are in this sad darkness of sin or error or profligacy or pharisaism or false profession it is all works of darkness the light above the brightness of the sun to him no doubt of brilliance and refulgence does say this the shining forth of light from

[15 : 31] God would be above the light of the sun for value above the light of reason for value if it is this light of the knowledge of the glory of God that shines forth from and in the face of Jesus Christ I pass to consider some few aspects of the godly and the living I said this word meets cases and so there might be some walking in darkness who is among you that feareth the lord and obeys the voice of his servant that walketh in darkness and hath no light let him trust in the name of the lord and stay himself upon his god the lord make his face shine upon thee poor soul who has grace enough to cleave unto him and to fear him and to obey him according to the precept according to the voice of his servant and yet for all this walking in darkness desertion distance you are perplexed bewildered and say wherefore contendest thou with me

I cry and shout and all my prayer he shutteth out who walketh in darkness and hath no light no bright shinings no days of the son of man no breaking forth of his precious word well we look up in this text in the spirit of grace and supplication and pray the Lord make his face shine upon thee we are warranted to pray this not upon a peradventure for I said earlier the Lord saith I said not unto the seed of Jacob seek ye me in vain we do not lead you in prayer upon a vain pursuit we do not urge you to seek the

Lord in your darkness at a peradventure or a maybe the Lord saith he that followeth me shall not abide shall not abide in darkness no shall have the light of life unto the upright there riseth a light in the darkness and a light is sown for the upright gladness too in due time hence it is right for me to remind you right for us to pray together the Lord make his face shine upon thee art thou poor soul under the assaults of the adversary art thou in darkness because of his mighty accusations he is called and truly the accuser of the brethren a fierce accuser he is a liar too the father of it sometimes alas he speaks the truth yes reminds you of the sins of your youth things you know are right and he can magnify them and he can powerfully terrify you he can almost make you believe that the matter is hopeless and also he may at times come with that fearful thought you are guilty of the unpardonable sin he gains access there oh what a fall what a blow it is through the armour for a soul sinks down for the time forgets prosperity tends to cast away his confidence then it meditates terror then it begins to write bitter things against his self then one thing after another builds up till the poor soul begins to think no there is no hope there is no hope it is all a delusion

I shall make shipwreck all be lost I shall be exposed presently and all the people will know I am just one of those people who are called in the word hypocrites deceivers ah Satan the terrible foe we should never underrate his power you must see what lengths he may go in the book of Job never underrate him never think you can master him alone what they said about Goliath does well apply here they said to David thou art but a stripling and he a man of war from his youth well it's true of us we are but striplings but Satan a man of war well versed in human nature he knows what weapons what temptations to wield he knows our weak places he doesn't know everything he's limited but he has some vast scope some mighty power and mysteriously he's allowed to use it although with a limitation yes the

Lord said to him you know he is in thy hand Job is in thy hand only touch not his life thus far you see a curb upon his mighty power his awful malice but supposing there is one soul walking here then the prayer ascends to God the Lord make his face shine upon thee then thou wilt see that God is greater than all things knows your heart and that he's able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think when he shines upon thee there will be like Christian when he got through that awful valley of humiliation and the valley of the shadow of death when he thought he should be well nigh consumed by the elements that assaulted him but all the day arose he looked back he saw somewhat of the way and the narrowness of it and the awful precariousness of his case but oh he got through it out into a wealthy place and then of course he must need break forth into song and bless the

[24 : 24] Lord for his shining the Lord then make his face shine upon thee poor troubled harassed soul and remember this though not the first there will not be the last to be tempted like this my beloved saviour he was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin he understands it all may he graciously arise then and set thy soul free and see that even for this there was a mysterious needs be the Lord make his face shine upon thee

I must bring in one or two precious illustrations is it not remarkable how the Lord the Holy Spirit is pleased to employ these very human expressions such as are common to us and that we immediately grasp the Lord make his face shine upon thee take this then for an example when dear Joseph saw Benjamin after that long long separation you know he was overcome wasn't he with tender emotion but expressed himself beside weeping in these words God be gracious to thee my son so beautiful so humane so tender but look the

Lord make his face shine upon thee after that manner in a way of condescension in a way of recognition in a way of owning and acknowledging a sweet relationship again I speak of Joseph in another light the brethren had been down to Egypt once or twice had looked upon the face of Joseph with a great deal of apprehension unhappiness true as they had their corn true as they had their money back which greatly perplexed them then came the second journey and he wanted more he made other demands see bring your brother down binding

Simeon so distressing the whole company and then the cop found in the sack and all returned to Egypt again they looked upon Joseph's face a good many times and it did not look like the sun in his strength it looked like the moon as it were for blackness filling them with fear then came the revelation Genesis 45 when Joseph could stand it no longer and he says come near I pray I am Joseph your brother come near recognition reconciliation peace pardon blessing all bound up in it he wept upon them they wept upon him then the unfolding of the mystery t'was not you that sent me here but

God don't write bitter things against yourselves there's a higher hand in it than this true you've sinned you're guilty that I readily forgive come near I pray you first a little mystified first the brethren were troubled but by degrees the shining of his countenance melted away their trouble their fear their guilt until at last they were persuaded he meant what he said go tell my father tell him to come tell him of all my glory tell him how I have everything here that's needful tell him to come down regard not your stuff the good the fat of the land of

[30 : 23] Egypt is yours the Lord make his face shine upon thee whatever be the cause of thy darkness whether thou art a newly convinced sinner under the deep feeling of guilt whether thou art a base back slider who hath turned his face from those former vows and the days of his spousals whether lying vanities have beguiled thy spirit whether thou art sorely assaulted by the great prince of darkness the Lord make his face shine upon thee and then all will be well and you will gain by the experience and be able I trust to speak a word in season to another who is weary and be gracious unto thee it's so beautiful to mark the extensions of the blessing the streams which make glad the city of God the most attractive details as God's word breaks into its various portions shows us new facets and be gracious unto thee you might remember that in the vast company hearing hearing this benediction the many thousands of

Israel that were not all Israelites indeed some of them in hearing about blessings might confine themselves to bread to worldly prosperity to conquests to that which is related to the flesh now if such should be the case they are taught differently here the Lord be gracious unto thee what does he mean he means this man shall not live by bread alone seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you one thing is needful Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her in other words their attention is riveted here to the fact that blessing in its highest view is everlasting spiritual

Paul in his salutation to Ephesians says blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings the accent is on that which is lasting glorious spiritual blessings not temporal for the moment in heavenly places or things not earthly in through by Christ Jesus so here the attention is drawn to the keynote the blessings which extend beyond time eternal relating to the soul salvation eternal life so we include that in our petition today the

Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee you might think of the fountain first the source namely this God is the God of all grace that is it dwells in him you might think too of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom it is written in him there dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily you might think of the spirit of grace the Holy Ghost now in these three glorious persons is contained grace at its source it will not do you good merely and only to hear that there is grace in

God in Christ in the spirit but it will do you good if you contemplate that he is gracious God is gracious and there we have the turn of the word indicating grace flowing grace in action grace proceeding so there is light in the sun and heat but it shines and it warms there's water in a spring but it bubbles and flows then it is doing good our prayer is then and the Lord be gracious unto thee and how this meets the vast needs of the soul in a word why is there anything left out of this if God fulfill it if the

[37 : 16] Lord is gracious unto thee well I was going to say can leave thee safely in his hands if he's gracious to thee in the least particular what a shame it is to use that word least what call we small things sin whole cancelled song is greater than all things except those to come but if he has begun to be gracious unto thee is there anything wanting is it not the earnest pledge of glory it is indeed so I could not wish you and desire for you a more spacious desire nor could I put it in a briefer form be gracious unto thee what will that mean well it would mean this that election grace in the father should flow and bubble up in your hearts yea

I have loved thee with an everlasting love therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee it will mean this ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor that ye through his poverty might be rich the Lord be gracious unto thee in this way and of his fullness have we received and grace for grace the Lord the Holy Spirit be gracious unto thee in all his incomparable and indispensable operations he shall reprove the world of sin and righteousness and judgment he shall take of mine said

Jesus and show it unto you he shall testify of me he shall glorify me grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by whom you are sealed sealed unto the day of redemption and the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God the Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace one illustration and I leave it may he accomplish in thy soul what he did for the woman of

Canaan you remember how the matter went on how she approached him and the silence and the rebuff of disciples and then he spoke at length he breaks silence with a reproof and she looked upon that holy countenance and it seemed dark like the sun be clouded but she waited a little pressed her suit at last there was the lifting up of the light of his countenance there was that holy answer to her supplication oh woman great is thy faith be it unto thee even as thou wilt and her daughter was made whole from that very hour but you may depend that in the lifting up of his countenance upon her she had peace the peace of God it's part of all understanding to keep your hearts and minds through

Christ Jesus such then is our prayer and desire and affection for you today and the Lord himself say Amen Amen Amen