

when blessings flow (OS)

I. Preamble

A. The word *blessing*

- I looked up the word *blessing* in the dictionary?
- And here's what I found— **blessing (OS)**
 1. **A special favor, mercy, or benefit**
 2. **A favor or gift bestowed by God, thereby bringing happiness**
- If someone sneezes **(OS)** and you say, “God bless you”
- At the least you are asking God to favor that person, shield them from harm and bring them happiness
- We may not think of all this at the moment we say it perhaps—but maybe that is the point
- The blessings we say over those around us might be considered meaningless social gestures instead of heartfelt prayers
- However, blessings from God are another thing altogether

B. Getting Personal

- Let's get personal, if you don't mind, because God's blessings are simply that—personal
- In clearer terms, God's blessings **(OS)** were created exactly for you—for your needs, your very person, your desires
- You see, a blessing you may have been craving all your life might mean nothing at all to someone else
- And yet, something that is no big deal to you is a cherished longing inside someone else **(OS-Oliver)**
- I am talking about the perfect gift—you know, the one you open and immediately say, “Oh thank you, I've been wanting this so much!”
- A perfect gift—those are the kind of blessings God gives **(OS)**

C. Pastor John's Story – (OS)

- John is a pastor who had traveled all the way from a remote part of Kenya in Africa
- To complete some training in the state of Ohio here in the United States
- While at this training, John received a call from his brother back home in Kenya
- From the look on his face it was clear that he had just received some terrible news
- The leaders at the training center were told by John the terrible news—“Bandits have come in the night and taken my family's milk cow.” **(OS)**
- Now, just as with blessings—so with tragedies—such a thing may not sound like a big deal to you or me
- But in the famine-stricken area where John's from, that one cow was all that stood between John's family

- A family that consisted of 11 orphans he had adopted and almost certain starvation
 - By the time he finished talking—Pam, a leader at the training conference felt she had to do something right away for John
 - She was in her car on the way to the Western Union office to wire John’s family enough money (out of her own pocket) to buy a top-quality milk cow
 - Meanwhile, within 10 minutes of letting some of the other conference attendees know of his need
 - John had more than enough money to buy three cows!
 - I want to speak to you about when blessings flow—
 - And here in John’s situation, although he felt certain God wanted him to come to America, he had been deeply concerned for his family and for his little village ever since he had left
 - John paused and was overwhelmed by the immediate and generous response from people he’d barely met
 - And as he reflected with tears in his eyes, he said—“If I had been home I would have fought those bandits to try and stop them from stealing the cow...and I likely would have been killed. God is so good. I trusted him enough to come here...now he has saved my family and me!”
- D. (OS) “Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise him all creatures here below; Praise him above ye— heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. AMEN!”**

II. Message

A. Pastor John and God’s blessing (OS)

- Well Pastor John didn’t use the extra money God had provided to buy two more cows
- No, he gave away all the rest to teachers in his village school—teachers who had not been paid in over a year!
- John would say, “God has blessed...how could I do any less for them!”
- When blessings flow—
- You see,
 - a. The blessings Pastor John received weren’t just concerned words or thoughts
 - b. The blessings he received were compassionate actions that flowed to him in his hour deepest need
 - c. Then those blessings overflowed to bless many others
- Could this be what James was trying to get at when he wrote— (OS) James 1:17

“Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.”

B. Our Heavenly Father (OS)

- Our heavenly Father is a giver of both “good gifts” and “perfect gifts”

- I'm talking about material things, such as food, money, laptop and desktop computers, HD flat screen TVs, and even cows are good gifts too
- And while they last these gifts offer us blessings, howbeit temporary, for they certainly are not perfect
- They will wear out in time, become lost or stolen or die
- A perfect gift though is—
 - a. one that can't be stolen
 - b. keeps working regardless of circumstances
 - c. never-ever fails
- The only blessing that fits that description is God's *perfect gift of love for you*

C. God wants to pour out His favor

- Consider with me one of the Bible's most comprehensive lists of blessings
- It's found in **Deuteronomy 28:1-14 (OS)**
- According to the words here of Moses—God desires to pour out his *favor* on everything in your life
- TEXT: Deuteronomy 28:1-14 READ THE LIST
- Amazing! Marvelous!
- Did you read the fine print in these verses
- **Verses 1,2,8,9, 13,14 READ (OS)**
- God wants all these blessings to flow through you and me
- The one condition that repeats itself is the word “obedient” and the word “fully” comes just ahead of it in verse one. **“Fully obedient” (OS)**
- So when will blessings flow to us and through us—they will when we are fully obedient
- Question: What are our chances of being fully obedient?
 - a. Occasional
 - b. Infrequently
 - c. Seldom
 - d. Never
- Let me illustrate—when I say “carpool lanes here in Southern California” (OS)
- What words comes to mind? (OS)
 - a. Relief
 - b. I need to go

c. Blessing

d. Fortunate

- Here's the catch—they're for those with *two or more people*
- I have an unofficial survey result I want to share—at least 7 out of 10 are disobeying the rule (OS)
- Just the other day as I was traveling in the lane next to the carpool lane—one person had been pulled over for a carpool violation, lights flashing
- People were braking and signaling to get out of the carpool lane as they saw the person pulled over
- Point—we don't obey well at all on our own
- We want blessings to flow, but we obey, let alone "fully obey" quite *infrequently*
- But I have amazing news for you—you are attending a "But Now" Seventh-day Adventist Church
- Where we believe in Jesus, and believe He has made a way for us to obey and the blessings to flow
- TEXT: Romans 3:21, 22 READ from our Bible
- Did I read that right?

(OS) "But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law...we are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are."

- So, here's *when* blessings flow (OS)
- **When—**
 - a. **We believe in Jesus as our Savior**
 - b. **We believe in Jesus as our risen Lord**
 - c. **We have die to the power of the law**
 - d. **We have died with Christ**
- Let's have the Apostle Paul unpack that for us
- TEXT: **Romans 7:4-6 NLT (OS)** READ from our Bible
- When blessings flow—it's when we have left the
 - a. Old way of obeying the letter of the law
 - b. New way of living in the Spirit
- Let's get a fresh application of what we're saying here
- And study for a moment the life of Saul—Israel's first king

III. Application

A. Saul, son of Kish

- Last week we took a look at Hannah, Samuel’s mother
- Samuel and his sons were Israel’s last judges
- Israel wanted a king like the surrounding nations
- Saul would be Israel’s first king—Samuel was displeased
- So let’s pick up the story as Samuel and the Lord are visiting about this...
- **TEXT: 1 Samuel 8:6, 7 NLT READ – (OS)**

“Samuel...went to the Lord for guidance. “Do everything they say to you,” the Lord replied, “for they are rejecting me, not you. They don’t want me to be their king any longer.”

- **(OS) – Lesson One: If someone other than Jesus is King, or Lord of your life—you’re in the wrong lane for blessings to flow**
- So Samuel meets Saul and when he does the Lord said, “That’s the man I told you about! He will rule my people.”

B. Making Saul King

- So Samuel being obedient to the Lord set about to anoint Saul
- **TEXT: 1 Samuel 10:1 (OS) READ** from our Bible
- Now watch, as Samuel makes Saul aware that the donkeys of his father Kish, that he and his servant were searching for, are found
- Samuel specifically outlines for Saul what will happen as he makes his way home
- Let’s read it—verses 2-5 **READ** from our Bible

C. Spirit of the Lord on Saul

- So these band of prophets will be prophesying there in Gibeah
- What’s going to happen next?
- **TEXT: 1 Samuel 10:6 NLT (OS)**

“At that time the Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them. You will be changed into a different person.”

- **(OS) – Lesson Two: When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be changed, begin being transformed**
- Since our 40 Days experience I have noticed a change is occurring—in my life and the lives of those who have been journeying through each day with the Holy Spirit
- It’s more than getting smart all of a sudden—there’s
 - a. a difference in how you view each day
 - b. a peace as you face life

- c. a noticeable conviction
- d. a lifeline—the Holy Spirit

- I’m reminded of a story from a young mother who was sharing on the radio yesterday—
- She said, “My family and I were on a little hike—about a half-mile hike. We began walking and I realized after a little bit, I did see my littlest one—my 3 ½ year-old.” She continued, “I looked around and there he was sitting back a ways in the middle of the trail. I walked back to him and asked him, “What’s the matter buddy?” He sadly replied, “*I’m all tired out!*”
- Friend, on the Christian highway, are you all tired out, trying to obey on your own?
- Why not try the Holy Spirit—He’s our connection with God, our link to the risen life of Christ that can and will work in us!
- Watch what else Samuel says and writes here...
- TEXT: 1 Samuel 10:7 READ from our Bible (OS)
- **(OS) – Lesson Three: When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you do what must be done, for God is with you (you fully obey)**
- So Samuel sends Saul off to follow through on all Samuel has said would happen
- There’s this small caveat Samuel wrote later to close this chapter
- It’s actually verse 9 of 1 Samuel 10 (READ) (OS)

“As Saul turned and started to leave, God gave him a new heart, and all Samuel’s signs were fulfilled that day.”

IV. Close

A. Different – Micah Tyler

- Listening to the radio this week in the car—spent a little extra time in the car this week, can’t you tell?
- Seriously, heard Micah Tyler singing his song, “Different”
- Let me share some the words of that song— (OS)

<p>(1) I don’t wanna hear anymore, teach me to listen I don’t wanna see anymore, give me a vision That You could move this heart, to be set apart I don’t need to recognize, the man in the mirror And I don’t wanna trade Your plan, for something familiar I can’t waste a day, I can’t stay the same</p>	<p>I wanna be different I wanna be changed ‘Til all of me is gone And all that remains Is a fire so bright The whole world can see</p>
<p>(2) And I don’t wanna spend my life, stuck in a pattern And I don’t wanna gain this world but lose what matters And so I’m giving up, everything because</p>	<p>That there’s something different So come and be different in me</p>

- V. Prayer (OS) – So, Holy Spirit, could you come and be difference in me, linking me to my Savior, my Lord, taking my life, giving me his life—completely changing me with Your power. AMEN