

Title: God blesses on purpose
Text: Psalm 67
Theme: God's eternal mission
Occasion: Missions Conference 2025
Prop Stmtnt: God blesses his people so that he will be enjoyed by all the nations.

If your life was a movie, what would the soundtrack be like? What is the music of your life? The book of the Psalms is actually the soundtrack for God's people. God has given us the music for us to sing when we celebrate, cry, pray, lament, forgive, bless, rest and even when we die. The Psalms give us songs to sing and prayers to pray when we cannot find the words on our own. God is so kind to give us a language to express what is in our hearts or what should be in our hearts or aspire to have in our hearts. I want us to look at Psalm 67. It has rightly been called "the missionary psalm." But this one short Psalm actually summarizes the entire story line of the Bible. Psalm 67 is a prayerful song that reminds us of the reasons for God's goodness to us and of the mission that God has always given to his people. God blesses his people so that he will be known and enjoyed by all the nations.

Read Text:

This earth can be dangerously unpredictable and if you were part of the majority of the people who grew your own food, or tended your own herds, there were no guarantees of this year's harvest or yield. Disease, blight, famine, flood, thieves, war, are some of the ongoing threats that can push a family or nation to prolonged suffering or extinction. If a harvest was bountiful, it would be cause for celebration. At Thanksgiving, we often sing the hymn, "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come," in which there is the line, "*all is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin.*"

This Psalm was sung at the time of harvest in Israel as part of the celebration and thanksgiving for the crops that had been gathered in. But this psalm was also recited at the conclusion of the Sabbath on a weekly basis. When the Sabbath was over, it was time to get back to work. Work is the means by which income is earned and prosperity is experienced. To what end? Why do we labor? And why does God bless our labor?

1. **Our blessing is for God's glory.** (1-2, 6-7)

Many of the psalms were written in a style that helped the reader know exactly what the big idea was. (Slide) You can see how verses 1-2 reflect verses 6-7. Verses 3 and 5 are exactly the same. This leaves v.4 as the centerpiece and big idea. Verses 1-2 and 6-7 are like the outer ring of the target. Verses 3 and 5 are like the smaller ring and verse 4 is the bullseye. The outline of the sermon reflects the way we are to understand this psalm.

A. **The goodness of God is seen in blessing his people.** (1, 6)

"*May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us.*" This is beautiful. The psalmist is praying in keeping with God's character. Before God made this world as a

demonstration of his greatness, he was and still is great. Before God made us in order to be good to us, he was good. Before God made us to bless us and enjoy us, he was a God who loves to bless, loves to relate, loves to enjoy and loves to delight in.

Do you remember the prophet Jonah who was sent to Nineveh to warn the city of God's judgment against their sins? Jonah did not want to go because he knew that if he told them about God that there was a chance that the people would repent and if they repented God would forgive them. So, Jonah tried not to go. Well, that didn't work because God loves for people to know about him so that people will respond rightly to him so he can forgive. That happened at Nineveh and Jonah was ticked off. "God, I knew you would forgive them!" Jonah was so confident that God would forgive his enemies, Jonah didn't want them to know about this holy, righteous and good God. Here the Psalmist is also convinced about the goodness of God but he prays in keeping with it. Your prayers reflect what you believe about God. If you do not pray, do not kid yourself; it is because you really do not believe God. If you do pray, what do they reveal about your view of God? The goodness of God is like a nice flowing, refreshing stream on a hot summer day and the Psalmist comes to the edge of the stream with his inner tube and jumps in and goes with this flow. This is the kind of prayer that God loves to hear because it banks on that which is true about him.

Look at the end of v.1. "*and make his face to shine upon us.*" In the ANE, it was assumed that the Kings and the gods were angry. In the days of Esther, anyone who approached the king without an invitation would be executed, unless, the king held out his scepter. The kings ruled through threatening intimidation. It was assumed he would not hold out his scepter. Esther, famously took her own life into her hands when she approached the king, uninvited to plead for her people. Esther 5.2 says that when the king saw her standing in his court, that "*she won favor in his sight.*" What an incredible relief. God is NOT like that. God loves to look upon us with favor. This phrase (make his face to shine upon us) comes from Numbers 6.24-26. The LORD spoke directly to Moses and told him to tell Aaron and his sons they were to bless the people of Israel and this is how to do it. Say this to the people: *The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.*" God tells Aaron and his sons to say this because God wants his people to hear because this is what he loves to do. This Psalm is taking God's desire to heart.

What do your prayers sound like? When we pray like this, we are praying according to his will because this is exactly what our heavenly Father loves to do. He delights in his children. He created you! You are in his image. His Son died to redeem you. He loves you. To know that his face shines upon us is all that we need. To have this, we live! To not have this, we shrivel. Now go to v.6 where you see the same idea. But here we have the answer to the request. In v.1 we are asking God to bless us and in v.6 "*The earth has yielded its increase; God, OUR God, shall bless us.*" He did it! He has blessed us. He has prospered us and he will do it again. This is a wonderful attitude of trust in the goodness of God. But why? Why does God bless his people?

B. God's people are to display His glory to the nations. (2, 7)

The prayer for God to bless is now linked for the purpose of the blessing. Why do we pray for God to bless us? So God's glory may be displayed to the nations. What is God's way? The psalmist links God's blessing of his people to the knowledge of God being spread to all nations. What is it that the psalmist wants the nations to know about God? He wants them to know that God saves and that God saves among all nations. This means that while God rescued Israel from Egypt, God will rescue any person who trusts in him. God rescued Israel through the Red Sea. The knowledge of that terrified the citizens of Jericho, except for Rahab who said, I want to follow this God. That's the point. If he can rescue us, he can rescue anyone. Also, note the connection between blessing (v.1) and rescue (v.2). The ultimate blessing of God is not crops, herds, money and stuff, but our rescue. God shows off his power to save so that others will know that he can save them too.

W.A.Criswell pastored the 1st Baptist Church of Dallas, TX for close to 50 years. It was a prestigious pulpit and he had earned a significant reputation. He was invited to speak at a local rescue mission in Dallas one evening and as he approached the door, the greeter asked him, like he asked everyone else if he had trusted in Jesus to save him? The esteemed pastor smiled and said, "Young man, I am W.A. Criswell, the pastor of the FBC in Dallas." To which the greeter said, "That's okay, if Jesus can save me, he can save anyone, come on in."

Here is a NT theme introduced in the OT. God saves us in order to show others how he can save anyone. God blesses us, provides for us, and cares for us so that others can see he will do the same for them. Our God is a generous God who loves to bless. Blessing others, saving others makes much of God. Therefore, if we want to make much of God, we need to engage in his plan to make God known to the nations. What is "the way" of God (v.2)? Our God is a God who saves. God is so big and glorious; he is not limited to one territory or people. He is the God of all! The goodness of God is seen in how he blesses his people SO THAT his people can display God's glory to the nations. God blesses us to be a blessing. God blesses us so that we can display God's glory in our lives and take God's message to the nations. Why has God blessed you? So that you can be part of his mission to get the gospel to every tribe, language and nation. This is the soundtrack for the believer's life.

2. A Prayer for the nations to praise God. (3, 5)

Verses 3 and 5 are exactly the same and get us closer to the center. It is like what I do when helping grandkids look for easter eggs or something else that is hidden. "you're getting warmer, warmer..." Verses 3 and 5 are getting really warm. The psalmist is anticipating the day when all of the nations will praise God. In fact, this prayer has a sense of command or demand to it. The psalmist can respectfully demand something from God that God has already promised to do.

God, do it! Make the peoples praise you, O God; let ALL the peoples praise you! Oh God, I can't wait for you to be known, praised and worshiped! Who prays like this? Who longs for the day when all the peoples praise God? Think about that. In order to pray like this there are several things that you have to know and believe:

A. God is so glorious that he is worthy of the praise of all peoples.

What a radically different way to look at our world! Take this truth, make it into a pair of glasses and put them on. What happens? Instead of seeing people who look and sound different than you as being distant, confusing, inferior or intimidating now you see how God has created all kinds of ethnicities in order to display all kinds of glory. God is not limited to one people. He is the Father of the entire human race. He is the God and Father of people from every tribe, language and nation. Every human being is made in his image. Every human being is lost until they are found by God. Every one is undone and incomplete until they find their identity in God.

B. God is so gracious that he has the capacity to save all the peoples.

God's glory means for God's works and attributes to be set on display. When God gave Moses a seminar on his character on Mt. Sinai God told Moses that he is merciful. God loves to display his mercy. Have you ever wondered why God created this world knowing we would rebel? Why did God go through with it? He knows everything, right? Why did he go through with it? In fact, why did he plan it? Beloved, everything that God does, he does in order that his glory might be displayed. Our sin was the means for God to show that he is wonderful, merciful, redeemer, rescuer, restorer, Savior, and forgiver. I read that Lake Superior is so big that it could cover all of North and South America with a foot of water. That's nothing! The storehouse of God's mercy is so vast that every sinner who repents is washed clean and made new. God loves to put his mercy on display.

C. God is so loving that he is willing to save all the peoples.

The Psalmist is praying for God to be the God of all the peoples. He prays this because he knows God loves to save and loves to save people from all the peoples. This makes much of God.

D. God is so powerful that he will save people who will praise him.

This prayer is a plea and a command. O God, make it happen! Come and rescue the nations so the peoples will praise you. Do you pray about something if you are convinced that God will never answer your request? No. We don't ask God for something when we know for certain that he won't answer that because we don't want to set ourselves up for disappointment. We pray for the peoples to praise God because we know that God is powerful enough to pull it off.

E. God is glorified in the saving of people from all the nations.

This is what makes much of our big-hearted, all-powerful God. His glory is displayed by the vastness of his creation, yes. There is no end to this universe. And his glory is displayed by the incredible intricacies of his creation. His attention to detail is stunning. His glory is displayed by the coordination of orbits, seasons, tides, life-cycles, and all of the systems of your body. Think about it: Digestion, nervous, lymphatic, skeletal, immune, endocrine, reproductive, integumentary (skin, hair, nails), cardiovascular, excretory, respiratory, urinary, muscular, and

circulatory systems. Right now, these 14 systems are working in harmony to sustain your life and you don't even think about it, unless you are getting a bit hungry. Elsewhere the psalmist marvels at how fearfully and wonderfully we are made, and this displays God's glory. But God's majestic glory will be set on display when people from every tribe, language and nation are gathered around the throne before the Lamb clothed in white robes and are crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Why will they say this? They say this because our glorious God shared his salvation with them. Salvation belongs to God. It is his, but he does not keep it to himself, he shares it. He shares it with us that we might share it with others. Verses 3 and 5 are arrows that point to v.4. V 4 is an amplification of verses 3 and 5.

3. A prayer for the nations to give glad worship to God. (4)

The heart of this psalm (v.4) is the story line of the Bible in a verse. We pray for, long for, and cry out to God for the day when the nations are glad, in fact they are so glad that they will sing for joy because they will know and believe and trust in this God who is just and who is sovereign. Every human being longs to know who am I. Why am I here. Where did I come from? What is going to happen to me? Where do we go from here? The greatest thing that we can do is bring gladness and cause for joyful worship to the nations by telling them about God who is just and who is Sovereign. He saved us, he can save them and together we display the many facets of his greatness.

Imagine that you are a member of the International Olympic Committee and you are tasked with going to a people group who have never had regular contact with the outside world. Your mission is to convince them to send their fastest men and women to compete in the summer Olympics. In order to do that, you have to learn their language, learn their culture, earn their trust, translate all the materials for them and teach them about this event. Along the way, you show them the splendor, pageantry, and glory of the Olympic games. You tell them that the Olympics are not complete without them. You bring videos of opening ceremonies where the athletes representing the nations of the world gather in one massive stadium. You explain how the eyes of the world are on this event. You are not sure if they are going to believe you or if they are going to come. One day, you go to the stadium where the opening ceremony of the games will be held. You see the torch being constructed and you put a sign on a row of seats, reserved for this people, who until now, have never come, because they never heard. Then you go back onto the track and then the field where you imagine the night, when the ceremony takes place, when the nations of the world, hear for the first time, about this new people they have never met before. You anticipate the moment when their name is announced and the athletes are displayed on the jumbotron screens, and they enter the stadium behind their flag and the nations of the world welcome a new people for the very first time to the games. You can only imagine how deafening and celebratory that moment will be. Now, convinced more than ever of the worthiness of your mission, you go back again and again and again until these people believe you and they come. That night when it happens and the world erupts with excitement, you are with your parents who, along with friends and others, wondered if you

were a bit crazy to spend so much of your life on this cause. But that moment, they all looked at you and knew, it was worth it. It was so worth it.

Come with me to the stadium of Revelation 7. Look at the sections and see the names of the nations that God has planned to come. This is our mission. Our God is so glorious, and his kingdom is so amazing and life with him and his people is so satisfying that it is worth whatever sacrifices we make in order to get the news of our God's salvation to them. Think of this day. Think of this moment when you look across the way and see thousands of people thunderously shouting their praise to our God who saves and who has saved them. What will that moment be worth? That is our mission. Let that grab your heart and pray that God will never let you go. When this is the soundtrack for our church and our lives, then we will pray for God to send us, and our children and grandchildren to the nations.