

## **“May The Lord Bless You”**

I’m grateful for the opportunity to write this last devotional for 2025, marking not only the end of this year, but also the end of my sojourn in West Virginia. As I thought about the idea of a last devotional, I was drawn to investigating “last words” in the Bible. One specific type of “last words” piqued my interest – “blessing.”

The Hebrew word for blessing is “barak” which carries the connotation of kneeling, which reflects an act of giving thanks and homage to God. Blessing is both a divine gift and a response of gratitude from the blessed. It often indicates a state of happiness and fulfillment that comes from living in accordance with God’s will.

In Genesis, we see that after creating humans God blessed them and said to be fruitful and multiply and rule over other creatures (Gen 1:28) In the time of the Patriarchs we see the practice of a father’s last words conferring a blessing on his sons when he knows he’s about to die. This blessing conferred material prosperity and spiritual authority, typically to the firstborn son. We read how Jacob deceived his father Isaac into receiving the blessing which should have gone to the firstborn Esau (Genesis 27-28). We also read where Jacob blessed his sons, including prophetic elements of the future of their tribes (Genesis 49). In 1 Kings 2:2-4 we read of David’s last words to his son Solomon telling him the importance of walking in obedience to the Lord.

Jesus articulated a series of counterintuitive statements about what constitutes a blessed person in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10). The apostle John captures Jesus “last words” to his disciples at the last Passover meal in John 13-16, which focuses on loving God, loving each other, the coming Holy Spirit and coming persecution. Jesus also delivered “last words” before His ascent into heaven instructing his followers to make disciples across the world. (Matthew 28: 18-20) The New Testament also shifts emphasis to the spiritual blessings that belong to believers through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul outlines some of these blessings in Ephesians 1:3-14 such as, being chosen by God for salvation, adopting us as His children, being accepted in the beloved, redemption through Jesus’ blood, forgiveness of sins, knowing the mystery of His will, inheritance through Christ, & sealing of the Holy Spirit.

I have been blessed by everyone at Redemption Church. So as I leave, I bless you as Moses taught Aaron to bless the people of Israel:

“May the LORD bless you and protect you.  
May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.  
May the LORD show you his favor and give you peace.” (Numbers 6:24-26 NLT)

-Cindy Begley