

1 PETER 3:8-9

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

⁸ Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

The summary of God's covenant with Israel through Abram is that Israel would be blessed to be a blessing to all nations (Genesis 12:2-3). As the people of God, they were to announce and demonstrate the ways of God to the world. God blessed them by revealing himself to them, and they, in turn, were to reveal God's nature to the world through their manner of life.

The church, as the people of God, inherits the same covenant that God made with Abram. We also inherit the same responsibility. While God called Israel to reveal his nature to pagan kingdoms by living as a nation with God as king, we are called to be witnesses to God's nature through the indwelling of his Spirit.

The proper response to a blessing is to be a blessing. God has poured out his grace upon us through his love. That blessing is like our hand – it is a powerful instrument for action, but only functions effectively through the fingers. Peter names the 5 fingers of our hand of blessing as harmony, sympathy, brotherly love, compassion and humility. These are the fingers of blessing with which we are to reach the world. Our *harmony* is centered on the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the agreement that we are blessed without merit, by grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are to be in *sympathy* with others in that we rejoice with them in their joy and sorrow with them in their suffering. The *love* within the Body seeks the good of the other and is expressed as a willingness to participate in his needs and concerns. We have been unbelievably loved by our Father, therefore, we must love our fellow believers. All our interactions should be characterized by *compassion*. It is through our compassion that we express forgiveness to others. Finally, we are to be humble. *Humility* is the basis of submission, and removes the barriers that we erect to limit our service to others. As disciples of Jesus, we must exhibit the humility of our Master. Like the fingers of our physical hands, our blessing fingers cannot function without the hand. All these actions are based on the love that Jesus modeled us.

O Holy Spirit, pry open my hands so that the blessings you have poured upon me aren't strangled in my grip, but allowed to stream out through my fingers. Give me the faith to know that there is an eternal source and supply of blessing and that the more I allow them to flow through my fingers and into the world, the more you will pour upon me. Amen.