

“Recounting God’s Blessings”

December 25th, 2016

INTRODUCTION

As we close out 2016 and prepare for a New Year, let’s take time to recall all that God has done with us and for us this year. Last summer marked the passing of our beloved Pastor Ron. But we know, if he were here, he would encourage us to have “Faith not Fear” and so let’s not allow grief or anything else to rob us of our joy in the blessings that God has brought us this year. In this study we will recall God’s faithfulness and His blessings in 2016.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

What was the most exciting thing that happened in your life this year?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

God’s Faithfulness

Q1. Read 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Lamentations 3:22-23; 1 John 1:9; Isaiah 25:1

God’s faithfulness is described and confirmed throughout the Old and New Testaments. In 2 Thessalonians 3:3 and 1 Corinthians 10:13 what are the ways God’s faithfulness is expressed? Just imagine the number of times God has guarded you that you weren’t even aware of! What are some of the ways you are aware of that God has protected you from the evil one this year? How is God’s faithfulness expressed toward us in Lamentations 3:22-23 and 1 John 1:9? How did Isaiah respond to God’s faithfulness to do wonderful things (Isaiah 25:1)?

God’s Love

Q2. Read 1 John 4:8-11, 18-19; Psalm 36:5; Deuteronomy 7:9; Lamentations 3:22-24

The extent of God’s love is far beyond our ability to grasp. What does John tell us about the relationship between God and love? (1 John 4:8-10) What should be our response to God’s love (1 John 4:11)? 1 John 4:18 and 19 show us the relationship between love and fear. What were some things this past year that might have caused you to be fearful? Read aloud Psalm 36:5, Deuteronomy 7:9 and Lamentations 3:22-24. How does the assurance of God’s love toward you change your perspective on the situations that cause you to fear?

God’s Blessings

Q3. Read Ephesians 1:3-10; Matthew 6:28-33; Malachi 3:10

There are many different ways that God blesses us. What kind of blessings does Ephesians 1:3 refer to? What does Paul include in his list of spiritual blessings in Ephesians 1:4-10? What would you consider to be the greatest spiritual blessing that God has bestowed upon you in 2016? God also blesses us by providing for our material needs. In Matthew 6 we challenge the anxiety caused when we worry over the basic necessities of food and clothes. Why is it important to seek God’s kingdom before seeking our own needs (Mat 6:33)? How has God provided for your material needs in 2016?

God’s Promises

Q4 Read Philippians 4:19; Romans 8:28; Jeremiah 29:11; Lamentations 3:25; Isaiah 40:31; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

God has given us many promises about His blessings, including Philippians 4:19, Romans 8:28, and Jeremiah 29:11. What specific circumstances in your life would you like to see these promises applied to? What specific encouragement do Lam 3:25 Is 40:31 and 1 Th 5:16-18 offer to those who are waiting for God’s promises in their lives?

Wrap-Up

Each year brings a mixture of joy and sorrow, but we can choose to be thankful in all circumstances, and joyfully always as we trust God with our difficulties because we know our God is faithful and loving. He blesses us both spiritually and materially. Even when we haven’t see His blessings in a particularly difficult area of our lives, we know from His promises that His intentions for us are good, and He will sustain us as we await the blessings He has promised.

Memory Verse

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places
Ephesians 1:3 ESV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more notes) _____

Challenge: *Read Psalm 136 aloud as your own prayer of thanks to God.*

Q1

2 Thessalonians 3:3 ESV - 3 But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV - 13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Lamentations 3:22-23 ESV - 22 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

1 John 1:9 ESV - 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Isaiah 25:1 ESV - 1 O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

Q2

1 John 4:8-11 ESV - 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:18-19 ESV - 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 19 We love because he first loved us.

Psalms 36:5 ESV - 5 Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

Deuteronomy 7:9 ESV - 9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,

Lamentations 3:22-24 ESV - 22 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

Q3

Read Ephesians 1:3- 10 in your Bible

Matthew 6:28-33 ESV - 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Malachi 3:10 ESV - 10 Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.

Q4

Philippians 4:19 ESV - 19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:28 ESV - 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Jeremiah 29:11 ESV - 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Lamentations 3:25 ESV - 25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.

Isaiah 40:31 ESV - 31 but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 ESV - 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Prayer Notes cont.
