



Service: 17 May 2020

Rev. Jannet Mudavanhu

"Count Your Blessings and Praise the Lord"



YouTube

Watch the recorded service on our [YouTube channel](#)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Let us give praise for the wonderful blessings of God.

Sing with great joy and celebration

For he has blessed each of us.

Let us count our blessings and praise the Lord! **Amen.**

HYMN

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS – by Johnson Oatman Jr

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtV2wmdZoqo>

When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,

When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,

Count your many blessings, name them one by one,

And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Count your blessings, name them one by one,

Count your blessings, see what God has done!

Count your blessings, name them one by one,

Count your many blessings, see what God has done.

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?

Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?

Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,

And you will keep singing as the days go by.

Refrain

So, amid the conflict whether great or small,

Do not be discouraged, God is over all;

Count your many blessings, angels will attend,

Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.

Refrain

PASTORAL PRAYER

Loving God, we come before you this morning to acknowledge and give thanks for your blessings. You have blessed us in so many ways but at times we have failed to stop even for a moment to express our gratitude – Lord forgive us. May we come to know You better with every passing day. Thank You for Your many precious blessings that You pour out on us day by day. As we go about our daily business and duties - You are there to lead and guide; to help and to support – Lord help us to have that conviction of your presence.

Thank You, that Your love is always waiting for us each time we open our eyes to a new day. Thank You, that at the end of each day Your love continues to support us, to guard and protect us during those dark hours of the night. Great is Your faithfulness O God our Saviour. All we have needed, You have surely provided. Lord, we are grateful.

Thank you for your constant kindness and ceaseless provision. Touch our hearts always, with the nearness of your presence. Deepen our faith, strengthen our commitment, and broaden our vision so that we may grow as your people and play our part in working for your kingdom – by sharing our blessings with others, as we are blessed so that we can be a blessing to others.

We remember before you, O God, our government, all medical and healthcare professionals, religious leaders, those who lost their loved ones through covid19 pandemic, those hit hard by its impact, those who are anxious to resume services, and those members of our church family battling health challenges. We pray for your grace to see your blessings even in these trying times. Help us O Lord, to count our blessings and praise you. We ask this, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

LOOPY CHURCH – WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

(Adapted from Take Time To Appreciate God's Blessings - Helen Rice)

Blessings are all around us
If we look, we can recognise these blessings.
Yes, Blessing are all around us!

Each day, each hour, each minute;
Each family member, each friend, each neighbour
Each community, each city, each nation
Each challenge, each word of encouragement

Each flower, each raindrop
Yes, Blessings are all around us!

Each awesome wonder created by God -
Each star, each sea, each bird, each animal, each tree
Each sorrow, each disappointment
Each faith each prayer.
Yes, Blessings are all around us.
Count your Blessings and praise the Lord!

BIBLE READING – Psalm 66: 1-8

REFLECTION

Our first hymn today was **Count Your Blessings**. A hymn written by Johnson Oatman Jr back in 1897 and it truly reminds us to give thanks to God for all He has done in our lives. The song reminds us that we have received many blessings than we can possibly count and for that, we ought to be grateful to God and praise the Lord for it.

I think even modern psychology points to the benefits of counting our blessings, giving thanks and praise. And thousands of years ago, the Psalm writer knew this power of praise, too. As we heard from our reading, in Psalm 66 the writer encourages us to joyfully exalt the Lord for **His being in our lives** - as this is His character. “Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in His deeds among mortals....Bless the Lord O people, let the sound of His praise be heard.”

Counting one’s blessings is about **making a conscious choice and decision to talk more about the good around us, the positives that we notice**. And I think constantly investing in gratitude have far reaching positive effects – starting from the joyous person – the joyousness swells out to others and in so doing impacts lives in such a positive way. In other words, **dwelling on our blessings have a ripple effect of spreading Christ himself**.

The message is an encouragement for you and me to create ripples in this world through our choice to ‘let the sound of our praises be heard’ as we count our blessings. Let us allow God to use us in a way that ripples the truth of Jesus the Christ across to the lives of others. Count your blessings and praise the Lord.

From our reading today – I thought we could look at two directions in which we can express our thankfulness:

The first is that, just as the Psalmist is reminding the Israelites of God’s awesome deeds in the past, we also ought to **REMEMBER OUR PAST BLESSINGS** and thank God for them. Each of us has our own list of memorable joyful times in the past. Some might be remembering a special trip you took, or a especially memorable get-together with family, or some unusually touching thing that a friend did for you when you were down and hurting. We should thank him also for mercifully bringing us through some of the difficult, trying times – including the journey we have been so far with covid 19 challenges.

Recognition and acknowledgement of our past blessing give us some encouragement in our present situations. Just as He blessed in the past, he continues to do so even today. John Newton put it in his hymn:

His love in times past forbids me to think
He’ll leave me at last in trouble to sink.

So, take time to remember those past blessings, keep them in mind always as they are reminders that the God who delivered us then, will not desert us now. It is sufficient to look to God with confidence!

Still on remembering our past -We should **thank God for people who have meant much to us in the past--including those no longer with us**. Job, upon learning of the tragic death of his sons and daughters, said, in Job 1:21, “...the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Job was saying, in effect: “In spite of the loss I feel, I’m thankful that God gave me

those loved ones for the years that I did have them.” Who are your past blessings? It will enhance us spiritually, emotionally, and in every worthy way if we will pause from time to time, to thank God for our past cherished relationships. Count your blessings one by one!

We should also **THANK GOD FOR THE PRESENT BLESSINGS**. Each of us could make a long list of present blessings for which we should thank the Lord. Could be the people in your life, your family, a hot bath you had this morning, perhaps you have witnessed a glorious sunrise this morning; a good night sleep, the singing birds, a nice cuppa tea/coffee – the least goes on.... But the fact is: every one of us has so much to be thankful for, even in the midst of life’s storms. When we are hurting, we can be encouraged by words from hymn such as the one we have just sung from Johnson Oatman Jr –

When upon life’s billows you are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Counting one’s blessings does not mean to deny that one is having problems, not at all, but rather it is to admit even when burdened - despite our trials, **we have blessings to count too** and we are choosing to do just that because **“God is above it all.”** In other words, we bring ourselves and our circumstances to Christ – still hearting but choosing to **highlight the “Christ with us”!** I think praise and thanksgiving to God, goes with openly unburdening ourselves before the listening ears of the “Father of compassion” and “God of all comfort,” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). As the hymn teaches, we don’t just look to God’s physical blessings, but also his spiritual blessings, which are eternal.

This morning I encourage us all to take a moment – you can grab a pen and paper if you like – take a moment to pose and prayerfully consider your circumstances,

prayerfully consider your blessings and write them down one by one; or share with your family – you can start with your past blessings and then your present blessings, you can even share what you consider to be your future blessings. You can then take some time to pray for what you have noted as your blessings.

May each of us open our hearts to the countless blessings bestowed upon us by our merciful God. God truly gives us so many blessings each and every day. Some may even be so small that we might overlook them but if all counted the ripple effect reach distant shores! Let us count our blessings and praise the Lord because like Matt Redmann say in his song we are going to sing next, there “**10 000 REASONS**” for our hearts to find. **Amen.**

SONG

BLESS THE LORD MY SOUL – Matt Redmann

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXDGE_IRI0E

*Bless the Lord O my soul
O my soul
Worship His Holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your Holy name*

The sun comes up
It's a new day dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass
And whatever lies before me
Let me be singing
When the evening comes
Refrain

You're rich in love
And You're slow to anger
Your name is great
And Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness
I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons

For my heart to find

Refrain

And on that day

When my strength is failing

The end draws near

And my time has come

Still my soul will

Sing Your praise unending

Ten thousand years

And then forevermore

Bless the Lord O my soul

O my soul

Worship His Holy name

Sing like never before

O my soul

I'll worship Your Holy name x2

Sing like never before

O my soul

I'll worship Your Holy name x3

BENEDICTION

May God's love surround you; His Spirit guide you.

May God's whisper cheer you; His peace calm you.

Count your blessings and praise the Lord always. **Amen.**