



DEXTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Elements of the Blessing “HOW TO BLESS”

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Mark 10:13 - 16

(We have a “memorial wall of blessing” that has the names of people who have shared the blessing with our church folks, who submitted the name of the person who blessed them.)

“The Lord’s blessing is our greatest wealth; all our work adds nothing to it” Prov. 10:22.

One problem today: Our culture is raising great kids. The problem is, God’s best has called us to raise great adults. How sad today to see our kids through to age 18 or 21 or 25 and end up with a great *kid*. Why bless?

- God tells Aaron, “So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.” Numbers 6:27. Whose name do you want on your child? Nike? Reebok? Disney? The Tigers? MSU or U of M? Why all those names, when God’s name is eternal...
- Because that’s what *God* does, and we worship God. The first thing after creating people is, God blesses them. So we “do like He done.” Jesus broke the curse we live in, and He blessed people. God’s greatest blessing is turning us from evil (Acts 3:25-26) and forgiving our sins. (Rom. 4:7-8).

How do you bless? In the world today, your kids need to sense the blessing. It’s love, but it’s more than just that. With everything available today, we sometimes think we’re blessing our kids with more activity and experience, but what they really need more of *us*.

The best blessing you could give your kids who are on their way to becoming adults is to understand a few things...

- To learn to say “no” to themselves. (Kids...)
- To know how treasured they are, by you and by God.
- Do you kids know that God is crazy about you? That God has an awesome design for their life? (Do you know the problem is the reality of sin separates us from that great design and even separates us from God?)
- Do you know that God specializes in destroying sin, thanks to Jesus, and God wants you to believe in Him and trust Him? He’ll live in your heart and you can follow him and he’ll always be there for you, even when your mom and dad and friends can’t?
- Adults, do the kids in your life know how thankful you are, that out of all the people in the world, God made *you* their mom or dad or aunt or uncle or teacher or neighbor?

And, do you know of all the things Jesus did, one of the most important was, he liked to hang out with kids. And Jesus loved to bless them. And Jesus wants us to bless you, and to bless other

people. Look at this: Mark 10:13 *People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.*

Look what Jesus did. First He broke down the barriers that inhibited him from blessing them: (Our feelings, our having missed the blessing of our parents, our schedules, our energy levels). Then, he did 3 things:

- TOUCH—He took them in His arms. He hugged them!
- WORDS—He spoke words of caring and God’s love, not in general, but to them.
- FUTURE—He named a special future, God’s future for these kids: “The Kingdom of God belongs to people like these. Anyone who won’t receive it like a little child will never enter it.”

The importance/power of the blessing cannot be overstated. Genuine acceptance is a need that goes unmet in 1000s of homes today. We have the opportunity to bless today. CHURCH, YOU MUST FIND WAYS TO BLESS. The world under the curse of sin is in desperate need of blessing. And right here Jesus shows us: it involves **touch**. People can’t go through life ‘untouched by human hands.’

- A hug can’t wipe away all our pain, but it can help. Meaningful touch can’t chase away all our fears, but it can cure most of them.
- Even in caring homes, most parents (especially fathers) will stop touching their children once they reach the grade-school years. (Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1991). When they stop touching them, an important part of giving their children the blessing stops as well. (And don’t expect them to appreciate it! ☺) Research shows that the father’s touch is even more important than the mother’s.
- Holding their hand is another important way to give your children the blessing.
- Isaac asked his son Jacob to “*come close*” so he could touch them. And Jacob as a grandfather made sure to lay his hands on each child and grandchild as he gave them his blessing.
- 1/3rd of our 5 million touch receptors are centered in our hands! Our hands are so sensitive that some blind people are being taught to read without Braille. And the professor of nursing at NYU, through numerous studies, has found that both the toucher and the one being touched receive psychological benefit. It lowers blood pressure, and even reduces the likelihood of promiscuous encounters for youth as they grow.
- We’re designed that way. I like hugging people on Sunday, because for some of them, (older people or single folks), it may be the only time of their week when someone touches them in a meaningful way!

Jesus was the master of blessing. His touch healed people. And his **words** were medicine to people. And look what he tells these children about the blessing of their **future**: “*the Kingdom of God belongs to you.*” I can only imagine as those children grew up, learning more about Jesus, that they were the ones who began house churches, and helped the poor people, rescued infants from abandonment, and risked their lives to show others the amazing love of God... The world needs *more* Kingdom-builders. *More* centers for hope, *more* people carrying the message of new life, *more* people healed and whole, in order to bring God’s Kingdom to people.

John Trent tells a story about Dorothy, a student of a university speech teacher at a large, secular university, who was an outstanding Christian. For nearly 25 years, this man was the source of encouragement and blessing to students. During the first day of class, this teacher was going around the room, having students introduce themselves. Each student was to respond to the questions “What do I like about myself?” and “What don’t I like about myself?” Hiding at the back of the room was Dorothy. Her long red hair hung down around her face, so she could hide behind it. When it was her turn to introduce herself, there was only silence. Thinking maybe she didn’t hear the question, the teacher moved his chair over near hers and gently repeated the question. Again, there was only silence. Finally, with a deep sigh, Dorothy sat up, and pulled her hair back, and revealed her face. Covering nearly all of one side of her face was a large, red birthmark, nearly as red as her hair. “That” she said, “should show you what I don’t like about myself.” Moved with compassion, this prof did something he’d never done before in a classroom. Prompted by God’s Spirit, he leaned over and gave her a hug. Then he kissed her on her cheek where the birthmark was and said, “That’s okay, honey, God and I still think you’re beautiful.”

Dorothy cried uncontrollably for almost 20 minutes. Soon other students gathered around her and offered their comfort as well. When she finally could talk, she said to the professor, “I’ve wanted so much for someone to hug me and say what you said. Why couldn’t my parents do that? My mother won’t even touch my face.”

Dorothy, like the lepers in Christ’s time, had a layer of inner pain trapped beneath the outward scars. This one act of meaningful touch began to heal years of heartache and loneliness for Dorothy, and opened the door that drew her to the Savior.

The professor touched her. He spoke God’s blessing, and he named a future for her: “God and I think you’re beautiful.”

You may not come from a warm, affectionate background. But you need to realize that avoiding blessing others sacrifices physical and emotional health in our lives and those around us. May you be a living memorial. May you leave a legacy of God’s blessing to all you meet!

And when it comes to memorials, think about the next generations. For those with children, did you ever think that your great-grandchildren may not remember your name? And their kids will surely never remember you name, let alone your likes, dislikes, what you did, or who you knew. But if you get what we’re talking about today, you can give a Godly, life-changing legacy to those far away generations that will truly impact them, through how you handle these elements of the blessing. There are people God has entrusted to you, as a family member or as a friend. Imagine our homes, imagine our world if we followed through beginning this week. May you touch their lives... give them words of God’s good news... and claim God’s future for their lives every day.

“He comes to make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found...” The ground we could gain over the curse, when we allow ourselves to be the hands of blessing... the words of blessing... and the eyes of blessing. AMEN.