

Promised Blessings

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[0 : 00] Last week we saw God declare that despite appearances, the glory of the rebuilt temple will exceed the glory of the previous temple.

! God said that will happen because He will intervene to make that happen. Despite what seem to be good works, the people are doomed by their sinful nature until God acts on their behalf. And that's the main idea of this text. Despite what seem to be good works, the people are doomed by their sinful nature until God acts on their behalf. Let's go ahead and read verses 10-19 of Haggai chapter 2.

On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet. Thus says the Lord of hosts, Ask the priest about the law.

If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment and touches with his fold bread or stew or wine or oil or any kind of food, does it become holy? The priest answered and said, No.

[1 : 21] Then Haggai said, If someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean? The priest answered and said, It does become unclean.

Then Haggai answered and said, So it is with these people. And with this nation before me, declares the Lord, and so with every work of their hands. And what they offer there is unclean. Now then consider from this day onward. Before stone was placed upon stone in the temple of the Lord, how did you fare? When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten. When one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty. I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail, yet you did not turn to me, declares the Lord.

Consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. Since the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider, is the seed yet in the barn?

[2 : 31] Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day on, I will bless you. At first glance, this text only seems to rehash the sins documented in the early verses of chapter 1.

However, the passage goes much deeper than that. It perhaps is the Haggai passage most relatable to the people living in the 21st century. That may seem like a bold statement when the passage talks about clean and unclean things, but as we take time to consider and understand the culture of the day, Haggai's examples will also make sense to us.

So as we dig into the verses, remember that main idea. Despite what seem to be good works, the people are doomed by their sinful nature until God acts on their behalf.

We'll break tonight's passage into three sections, starting with verses 10 through 14. In Haggai chapter 2, verses 10 through 14, we see a defiled people.

So defiled people is your first section. Haggai makes his point by asking two questions and applying the answers to his listeners.

[3 : 50] Verse 10 gives the date on which Haggai asked those questions, and verse 10 says, On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet.

If you look back just a few verses to the last verse of chapter 1, Haggai 1.15 tells us that the people began rebuilding the temple on the twenty-fourth day of the month in the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.

By the Jewish calendar, the prophecy we're studying tonight happened exactly three months after the people had started working on the temple again. The date, according to our calendar, would have been December 18, 520 B.C.

We know the typical weather pattern for that region during that time of the year. The early rains would have begun in the middle of October, and shortly after that, there would be a period of intense agricultural activity.

The seed would be scattered and then plowed in. Then the winter months of December to February were much colder, and little farming could be done then, and that left the people with more time for other things, such as rebuilding the temple.

[5 : 03] December 18 in our time often falls during Hanukkah. Remember, though, that when Haggai made this prophecy, the events that Hanukkah commemorates were still in the future.

The notable thing about December 18, 520 B.C. is that the people were planning to hold a ceremony rededicating themselves to the temple rebuilding effort because they had completed the temple's foundation, and we'll see that when we get to verse 18.

By this time, the people working on the temple rebuild would have been feeling much better about themselves. They had obeyed God's command to work on rebuilding the temple, and they had kept working for three months.

Now they were celebrating a major milestone in that rebuilding effort. They likely would have thought that they must have been earning favor with God. God's questions delivered through Haggai were designed to make people see things from God's perspective.

Look at verses 11 and 12 for the first question and answer. A couple of things are different about this prophecy.

[6 : 35] Haggai's other prophecies we've seen so far have been addressed first to Jehoshadak and Joshua. This prophecy goes straight to all the people, and Haggai tells the people to ask the priest a question.

Although the priest in the Old Testament facilitated sacrifice for the Israelites, they also represented the people before God, and they communicated the law and its interpretation.

The priest was expected to deliver decisions in any matter of the law, especially in cases related to ritual. To be holy in this context means to be set apart, and the primary notion of the word as used of people and things is the setting apart of someone or something for consecration to a sacred task or purpose.

This first question we see here tonight concerns holy meat, and holy meat in the Old Testament context is meat taken from animals used in the sacrifices.

Apart from the offering and the burnt offering where everything was burned, other offerings had portions that were allotted to the priest. In the fellowship or peace offering, much of the animal was returned to the offerer to take away and eat at a festive meal.

[7 : 59] Particularly with the temple precincts being in ruins, the priest often would have to carry away the portions of the sacred meat. Using a fold in their long robes was a common way of carrying things.

The picture here is of a priest wrapping the holy meat in the fold of his garment, and then later touching something else with the same part of that garment.

Haggai is asking whether something subsequently touched by the garment also will be made holy because the garment had touched something holy. And the priests say the answer is no.

In the Old Testament, a holy person or object may cause what comes into direct contact with it to also be holy. That's the case with the priest and his sacred vestments, and with things that have come into contact with the sacred altar, also the sacred utensils or the sacred offering.

But in these examples, a holy person or object conveys holiness to another person or object by virtue of direct contact with that person or object. Haggai's question here is different.

[9 : 10] Haggai's question went one level further down. Haggai's question asked whether something that has touched something holy can make something else holy later on.

Let's try to put that in our context. Think of the most famous person alive that you would like to meet. And let's assume that Diane knows that person.

Because you know Diane, does that mean you know the famous person too? The answer to that question obviously is no. We can never know everyone Diane knows just because we know Diane. Similarly, something never becomes holy just because that object has touched something that has previously touched something holy. Going back to Haggai's question and the text for tonight, we see that the priest answered correctly, just like we would have expected them to do.

Even if a part of the garment that had been in direct contact with the consecrated meat subsequently came in contact with other food, there was no secondary transmission of holiness to the other food.

[10:19] That was the point that Haggai was making. Israel had originally been set apart by the Lord as holy, but that did not mean that all they did was sacred and acceptable to God.

Holy status required holy obedience. Even though God's covenant relationship with them was renewed in their return to the land, that recognition of their holy status was never to be equated with automatic approval of everything they did.

They had now started to rebuild the temple, but that action could never earn blanket approval for all that they did. The temple was never meant to be a good luck charm that automatically transmitted holiness.

Each activity of the Israelites had to be assessed according to the Lord's standards for his people. The priest did really well on that first question, so let's see how they do on Haggai's next question. Look at verse 13. Then Haggai said, If someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?

[11:33] The priest answered and said, It does become unclean. For the priest, this question would have been even easier to answer than the first question because we have direct scripture that addresses this.

Listen to Numbers 19.11. Whoever touches the dead body of any person shall be unclean for seven days. And then 11 verses later, Numbers 19.22 says, And whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean, and anyone who touches it shall be unclean until evening.

The priest knew these scriptures, so the priest quickly answered yes to the second question, and they were obviously correct. We learn from this second question that contamination or unholiness spreads much more easily.

So let's think about that in terms of a modern example. Let's assume that next week, Ted comes in looking like his usual clean and dapper self, but I come in covered with mud, and that mud is dripping everywhere.

What happens to Ted if I decide to give him a big hug whenever I see him? Ted would no longer be so clean and dapper. He never came in contact with the source of the mud, but he still has been contaminated by that mud from a secondary source.

[13:01] So Haggai's question here shows that the transfer of impurity is easier than the transfer of holiness, and that's the point he's trying to make. The words we see next in verse 14 had to hit the people like a gut punch that knocked the wind out of them.

Look at verse 14. Then Haggai answered and said, So it is with this people and with this nation before me, declares the Lord, and so with every work of their hands, and what they offer there is unclean.

These words must have shocked Haggai's audience. After all, they had responded to his earlier pleas to make the temple rebuilding a priority.

They had set aside their selfish task to accomplish the restoration of the temple, and they were involved in the project that the prophet had called them to. They probably thought that they should be viewed as holy rather than impure, So why had Haggai suddenly turned on them like this?

Well, Haggai's illustration introduces an element of conflict. The question now to be answered is this. How can an impure people engage in a holy task?

[14:20] Will their contagious question and condition of impurity render everything impure that they come in contact with? Outwardly, the people were doing the right things, but inwardly, they were spiritually unclean.

Therefore, the supposed right things that they were doing had no value to God. You might have noticed how God distanced himself again from the people. Look at verse 14 one more time.

Haggai said, Then Haggai answered and said, So it is with this people and with this nation before me, declares the Lord, and so with every work of their hands, and what they offer there is unclean. Did you see how God calls the people this people and this nation? That should make us remember verse 2 of Haggai chapter 1. Listen to Haggai 1-2 again.

It says, Thus says the Lord of hosts, These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the temple of the house of the Lord. So here in chapter 2, the people are rebuilding the temple, but their internal attitudes remain sinful.

[15 : 33] Because of their sinful condition, the Lord was unable to address them as my people, although ultimately they were his people. Nor can God call them my nation.

We see how the Lord's words are more distant, signaling divine displeasure that is appropriate for a people insufficiently prepared for the work of God.

The people were in a deplorably sinful condition. Everything they did then was defiled by their impurity. Both their work on the temple and the religious sacrifices they periodically offered were unacceptable to the Lord.

Until the issue of their spiritual condition was resolved, no amount of religious activity they performed would be acceptable to God. Imagine that you were part of the crowd that day.

Put yourself in their sandals, so to speak. You'd been feeling pretty good about yourself, and you'd come that day expecting to celebrate a major milestone in the temple rebuilding project.

[16 : 37] Instead, you've just heard Haggai say that God considers all the works you have done to be worthless because you've done those things with the wrong attitude. That news would present a rather large problem.

You probably would wonder what Haggai would say next. So Haggai has just established that the people were a defiled people. He has more bad news to share in the second section of our lesson. In verses 15 through 17, we see a disciplined people. So a disciplined people is your next section. Listen to verses 15 through 17 again.

Now then, consider from this day onward. Before stone was placed upon stone in the temple of the Lord, how did you fare? When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten.

When one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty. I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail, yet you did not turn to me, declares the Lord.

[17 : 53] These three verses sound very much like the opening verses of chapter 1. Remember how twice in the first eleven verses of chapter 1, Haggai told the people to consider their ways.

Here at the beginning of verse 15 in chapter 2, Haggai wants the people to consider some things again. He wants the people to consider the food shortage, the wine shortage, the weather-related issues, and the people's initial response to all of those things.

We again will consider the urging to consider something when we get to the last section of tonight's lesson. The first consider here in verse 15 is followed by another phrase, that we'll see repeated in the last section of tonight's text, and that phrase is, from this day onward.

Haggai was signaling to the people that they should never forget the things that God is telling them to consider. He wanted them to consider things that day, but they were to consider those things more than just once.

They were to consider those things from that day onward. God and Haggai never wanted the people to forget what things were like before they started the temple rebuilding project.

[19 : 12] When Haggai talks about coming to a heap in verse 16, he's referring to a pile of harvested grain. The yields of the harvest were far below expectation.

Expecting 20 measures of grain, they found only 10. And expecting 50 measures of wine, they found only 20. God was very careful to remind them who caused the poor yields.

Look at verse 17 again. Verse 17 says, I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail, yet you did not turn to me, declares the Lord.

Notice how personal God makes that verse. God is very clear that he struck them and their harvest. God is very clear that he intentionally struck them and their harvest.

And he says that he struck them with blight, mildew, and hail. He's very clear that he spared nothing in those harvests. He says he struck the people and all the products of their toil.

[20 : 25] Haggai's words here in verse 17 were very similar to words that an earlier prophet, Amos, had spoken to their ancestors more than 200 years earlier. Listen to Amos chapter 4, verse 9.

I struck you with blight and mildew, your many gardens and your vineyards, your fig trees and your olive trees the locusts devoured, yet you did not return to me, declares the Lord.

Amos was possibly the first of the writing prophets. He was a shepherd and a farmer called to prophesy during the reigns of Uzziah from 792 to 740 BC in the southern kingdom and Jeroboam II, who reigned from 793 to 753 in the north.

During this time, both kingdoms enjoyed political stability, which brought prosperity. But it also was a time of idolatry, extravagance, and corruption. The rich and powerful were oppressing the poor.

Amos denounced the people of Israel for their apostasy and social injustice, and he warned them that disaster would fall upon them for breaking the covenant with the Lord. Amos urged them to leave the hypocrisy of their solemn assemblies and instead to let justice roll down like waters.

[21 : 46] Nevertheless, said Amos, God would remember his covenant with Israel and would restore a faithful remnant. Here in Haggai 2.17, God through Haggai almost certainly used similar words on purpose.

God was reminding the people that even more than 200 years had passed, but the people were repeating the behavior of their ancestors. Therefore, God was repeating the discipline that he used on their ancestors.

In Amos, God said that he struck with blight and mildew. Here in Haggai, God said that he struck with blight and mildew and hail.

With the severe weather we occasionally have here, we're familiar with hail, so we'll skip explaining that. But let's talk about what God meant when he talked about blight and mildew.

Blight, or as some versions have it blasting, refers to the scorching or burning of the crops due to the hot east wind that occasionally blows over Palestine from the Arabian desert.

[22 : 55] You may have heard this wind sometimes referred to as the Sirocco. In prolonged conditions of harsh dryness, vegetation had little chance of survival.

Mildew is almost directly opposite to that. Mildew refers to a disease of plants that results in their discoloration, a symptom of the unhealthy condition of the plants, and this mildew is caused by conditions of excessive moisture.

And this moisture came from the westerly winds from the Mediterranean. So the contrast between blight and mildew helps illustrate how God thoroughly struck the people and their crops.

Because we have a contrast between east versus west and dry versus damp. Then by including hail, God adds the dimension of height and temperature to those of space and humidity.

So he's saying that he struck the people and their work from nearly every angle and with multiple weather conditions. At the end of verse 17, God summarizes how the people of Haggai's day responded to this discipline.

[24 : 05] God says, yet you did not turn to me. The people of Haggai's day reacted just like their ancestors in Amos' day did when God disciplined those people more than 200 years before that.

Remember, though, what we learned when we summarized Amos' prophecy a few minutes ago. Amos said that God would remember his covenant with Israel and would restore a faithful remnant. The people listening to Haggai had descended from that faithful remnant. The people in Haggai's audience that day who knew their scripture would have heard some hope in the allusion to Amos. Perhaps God again would restore a faithful remnant for them. So far, we've seen Haggai remind the people that they are defiled people and disciplined people.

With that news, the day for which they'd planned the celebration seemed to be turning sour instead. But the final part of this prophecy held good news. And in verses 18 and 19, God told the people that despite their sins, they would be a delivered people.

[25 : 16] And that's your third section, a delivered people. Check out verses 18 and 19. Consider from this day onward, from the 24th day of the ninth month, since the day that the temple foundation was laid, consider, is the seed yet in the barn?

Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing, but from this day on I will bless you. The first thing we see in verse 18 is the repetition of both consider and from this day onward.

God again tells the people to think about something and to keep thinking about it. Maybe this day is going to be a celebration after all. I'm sure that you memorize every lesson that we have, and because you memorize every lesson, you're probably thinking now about our first Haggai lesson three weeks ago.

I mentioned then that the people celebrated laying the temple foundation in 536 B.C. So how can they again be celebrating the same thing 16 years later in 520 B.C.?

Well, here's the answer to that. Remember that the temple rebuilding work 16 years earlier was stopped for various reasons, including the people being scared of the nations around them.

[26 : 45] So what happens if you neglect a building or a building project for 16 years? Well, some of the work you've already done 16 years ago has to be repeated when the effort gets restarted.

And although the verb in Haggai 2.18 can have the sense of laying a foundation, it can also mean to restore or repair. So they were laying the foundation where it needed to be laid and restoring and repairing it in other places.

Verse 18 ends the same way it began. Haggai and God again want the people to consider something. They are to consider the lack of harvest one more time.

Look at the first part of verse 19 for the specific things that the people are to consider. Is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing.

Haggai is reminding the people of the still desolate conditions they're facing. The barns lack the seed they normally stored at this time of the year. And I'm sure the people were probably thinking, yeah, we've heard this already, you keep bringing this up, but it's important for them to realize that.

[28 : 02] And after Haggai talks about the lack of seed, he mentions four specific things. He mentions the vine, which is a synonym for grapes, the figs, the pomegranates, and the olives.

These four crops were essential to Palestine's economy. They got food and drink to the population through grapes, figs, and pomegranates. The olives provided fuel, and the pomegranates also provided dye.

The first three crops were harvested in the early fall, which would have been our August and September. Olive trees bore fruit from September to December. So now they're in the midpoint of December, approximately, with December 18th being the date, and the prophet reminds them that the harvest is over and there is very little to no fruit.

The people are unable to deny that the situation is bleak, but then comes the last words of Haggai's prophecy, words that will remind them of the promise made to their ancestors in Amos' day and the promise made to their ancestors in Moses' day.

Look at the last sentence of Haggai 2.19. God said, but from this day on I will bless you. Think about the impact of that one sentence.

[29 : 28] But from this day on I will bless you. God, through Haggai, has taken the people on an emotional rollercoaster ride in just a few words, but it was a ride that the people needed.

They had come to the building site that day ready to celebrate because they had been doing good work, at least in their own minds, only to learn that the good work could never be good enough to satisfy a sinless and holy God.

Just after realizing that they were still defiled, then they heard these amazing last words, but from this day on I will bless you. Let's think about something.

Why did God choose to bless these people? Well, God chose to bless these people simply because he wanted to bless these people.

They had done nothing and could never do anything significant enough to earn God's blessing, yet God chose to bless them anyway. The people of Haggai's day were just like the people of Amos' day.

[30 : 34] They had disobeyed God, but God would bless them anyway. The people's nature was unchanged. God's nature also was unchanged.

Ultimately, God chose to bless the people because God said he would, and that covenant goes all the way back to Genesis 12. Listen to what God said to Abraham when he was still known as Abram in Genesis chapter 12 verses 1 through 3.

So here are Genesis 12, 1 through 3. Now the Lord said to Abram, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you, and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Remember the main idea for tonight.

Despite what seem to be good works, the people are doomed by their sinful nature until God acts on their behalf. You've probably seen the parallel already.

[31 : 52] We're just like the people of Haggai's day and Amos' day and Moses' day that we saw in Willard's study and also Abram's day. And God is still the same God of Haggai's day and Amos' day and Moses' day and Abram's day.

We can change the main idea into the main point of application simply by changing a few words. Despite what seem to be good works, we are doomed by our sinful nature until God acts on our behalf.

So let that sink in. Despite what seem to be good works, we are doomed by our sinful nature until God acts on our behalf. That's why we can say that Haggai chapter 2 verses 10 through 19 document actual events that give us an Old Testament preview of the gospel.

Nobody past, present, or future can earn salvation from God. Another prophet, Isaiah, also reminded the people of that. He wrote what we now know as Isaiah 64 6.

Isaiah 64 6 says, We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

[33 : 21] Centuries after Isaiah, God through Haggai reminded the people what we have seen tonight. Every work of their hands is unclean, and everything they offer is unclean.

Centuries after Haggai, Paul wrote to the Romans. Listen to Romans 3, 10 through 12. Paul said, As it is written, None is righteous, no, not one.

No one understands, no one seeks for God. All have turned aside, together they have become worthless. No one does good, not even one.

Just a few verses later, Paul wrote these words in Romans 3, 23. He said, For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Human nature is consistent from century to century and from generation to generation. Now, just as in the past, nobody can be good enough to earn salvation.

[34 : 27] Modern day people are without hope unless God intervenes. Fortunately for us, just like God did for Abram, just like God did for the people of Moses' day, and just like God did for the people of Amos' day, just like what we've seen God do for the people of Haggai's day, God did decide to act on behalf of a remnant in our day.

And God is still acting on behalf of that remnant when he saves people every day. Perhaps we all have John 3, 16 memorized, but we should remind ourselves of it often.

Of course, John 3, 16 says, For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

When we were looking at Haggai's first question in verse 11 of chapter 2, we heard a quote about the only way holiness could be transferred in Old Testament times.

And here's that quote again. It said, A holy person or object may cause what comes into direct contact with it to also be holy. This is the case with the priest and his sacred vestments and with the things that have come into contact with the sacred altar, the sacred utensils, or the sacred offering.

[35 : 50] In these examples, a holy person or object conveys holiness to another person or object by virtue of direct contact with that person or object. People today can only be made holy by coming into contact with something holy.

Jesus is that something holy. Faith in Jesus and what he has done for us is the only way that we can stand uncondemned before God.

We quote John 14, 6 often, but it's worth repeating. So here's John 14, 6 again. Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. We often read Romans 3, 23 like I did earlier, but we sometimes forget that Romans 3, 23 stops in the middle of a sentence.

That sentence ends in the first part of Romans 3, 25. So now listen to Romans 3, 23 through the first part of Romans 3, 25. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith.

[37 : 14] Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, willingly chose to act on every believer's behalf. He did that in perfect harmony with God the Father and with God the Holy Spirit.

Remember what Peter said on the day of Pentecost. This is Acts 2, 38. Acts 2, 38 says, And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Even this repentance is a gift from God. Listen to Ephesians 2, verses 4-10. Ephesians 2, 4-10 say, But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved, and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

[38 : 42] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. For those of us who are saved, we must never lose the wonder of these facts.

God chose to save us simply because God chose to save us. Good works acceptable to God only come after salvation. We can never do good works acceptable to God before salvation.

When God truly saves us, we are saved forever. The same God who was faithful to Abram, Moses, Amos, Haggai, Paul, and any other believer you can name will be faithful to us as believers too.

For anyone who is yet to be saved, the good news of Haggai 2.19 still applies today. The good news of John 3.16 still applies today.

God has chosen to act on their behalf because he has chosen to bless them. God has chosen to act on behalf of his people's behalf to make those people holy before God.

[39 : 56] We can never be worth saving on our own merit, but we can humbly accept the salvation provided by Christ's sacrifice on his people's behalf. Through Christ's work, he makes true believers into something entirely new.

Paul summarized that truth well when he wrote 2 Corinthians 5.17-21. And here are 2 Corinthians 5.17-21.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come.

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that we in him might become the righteousness of God.

[41 : 16] Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this reminder that only because you have chosen to bless us can we be considered acceptable in your sight.

When we get tempted to think that we have done things or are doing things to earn our salvation, let us be reminded that nothing good can come from us and ourselves.

but let that also remind us to be thankful that you have chosen to bless us. Help us be more willing to share this truth with others. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.