



The Good News

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Counting Our Blessings...(Instead of Sheep)

By Michael McCleary

This afternoon is our monthly singing, and conveniently it falls on Thanksgiving week. This being the case, in our short lesson this afternoon we will examine hymn #392, "Count Your Blessings". The Scripture given as part of the inspiration for this hymn is **Psalms 40:5**, "*Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works Which You have done; And Your thoughts toward us Cannot be recounted to You in order; If I would declare and speak of them, They are more than can be numbered.*" **Ps. 68:19** reads, "*Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, the God of our salvation!*" **Prov. 28:20** reads "*A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.*" Sometimes in life, we get discouraged or depressed. But God blesses us with so much every day. Sometimes we, as families and as individuals, can take them for granted.

The hymn "Count Your Blessings" reminds us that, if we actually take the time to count all of the ways that God blesses us, we can truly find God's hand in everything. God is deserving of praise for the food He provides (**I Tim. 4:4**), for giving us "*richly all things to enjoy*" (**I Tim. 6:17**), for giving us the opportunity to living a pleasing life to Him (**I Tim. 1:12**), for the church that He has designed to help us get to Heaven (**II Cor. 9:15**), and most importantly for the avenue of salvation itself through His Son (**Col. 1:12**). In every aspect of our lives, both physically and spiritually, God has provided a reason to praise and thank Him.

One of my favorite movies of all time is "White Christmas" starring Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye. In this movie is a scene in which Bing

Crosby sings a song dealing with blessings called "Count your blessings instead of sheep". This is the first stanza of that song:

"When I'm worried and I can't sleep
I count my blessings instead of sheep
And I fall asleep counting my blessings
When my bankroll is getting small
I think of when I had none at all
And I fall asleep counting my blessings"

Following this advice is good, whether you have trouble going to sleep or not. It gets us in the habit of counting all our blessings, and the list will not be small. And yet, for all the physical blessings that we can think of, the most important of all the blessings God gives us are spiritual. In **Eph. 1:3**, Paul says "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...*" He gives us hope and peace through His Son. As long as we are faithful, there should never be a reason to have sorrow in our spirit...there are too many reasons to have joy!

So the next time you have trouble sleeping, or are having a bad day, or find yourself complaining or discouraged about bad things in life, go find a songbook and sing #392 "Count Your Blessings" After you do that, read the aforementioned passages and remember what Peter said in **I Peter 5:7**, that we should cast "*...all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.*" As we count our blessings today, later this week on Thanksgiving, and every other day, let's realize how wonderful it is to know that our Lord is taking care of us.