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Blessed are They Who Do His Commandments

*Blessed are they who do His commandments,
They shall claim the tree of life;
Into the city they shall enter,
They are victors in the strife.*

*Blessed are they who do His commandments,
They shall wear the robes of white;
Under the portals God shall lead them,
They shall serve Him day and night.*

*Blessed are they who do His commandments,
They shall stand before the throne;
Into the life of joy eternal,
God shall claim them for His own.*

Chorus:

*Blessed, blessed, blessed are they,
Into the city they shall enter,
Blessed, blessed, blessed are they.*

WORDS: H. R. Trickett

MUSIC: J. H. Fillmore



Henry Robert Trickett (sometimes called Harry Robert Trickett), born December 1839, Nottinghamshire, England; died April 1909, Keokuk, Iowa. A hymn writer, minister, and pastor/preacher/teacher from the American Restoration Movement. He spent the bulk of his time in ministry serving churches in the Disciples of Christ, one of the three branches of a movement founded by Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, and Walter Scott. The other branches include Churches of Christ and Independent Christian Churches. Most of his compositions, largely as a lyric and text writer, are found in the mid-20th century hymnals of Churches of Christ. His partnership in composing with Fred Fillmore and others through the Fillmore Brothers Publishing Company.

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God's Commandments

Matthew 22:38, says it all. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments."

Jesus says in John 14:15, "If you love me, you will obey what I command." When we obey these commandments, all others fall into the place they need to be. If God is my number one priority, I can love my neighbor as I love and care for myself. I can love my enemies, Matthew 5:43-48. If God is not number one, it becomes almost impossible to love my enemies.



If He is number one, I will add the virtues to my life that Peter talks about in 2 Peter 1:5-11 – faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. My "life life" will be in line with my prayer life. I heard the above phrase many years ago at a prayer retreat I attended. If I have open and often communication with my heavenly Father, my life will be transformed. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed (changed) by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing, and perfect will." 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "And we all, who with unveiled faces, contemplate the Lord's glory are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

My life must be transformed, changed into the image of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Transformation is a

command, not a suggestion. God does not make suggestions, which is a mistaken idea the world has. They believe God's commands can be "taken or left, obeyed or not obeyed. It's a choice." True, we have a choice, but if we choose to disobey, we will reap the consequences, no matter who we are. Commandments are orders given by God for our eternal benefit.

Even though I have very limited first-hand experience with our military, I know when commanders give orders to their troops, they expect immediate obedience. The consequences of disobedience can be very severe, resulting in possible court martial, imprisonment and/or dishonorable discharge. The penalties are severe because these soldiers have taken an oath to obey orders. Every branch of the military is trained and exists for the protection of the country we live in. In most cases, military officers do not make suggestions.

In my years of sharing the gospel with others, I've heard statements that make me cringe – "I'll take my chances with God. If I try to live by the ten commandments (Exodus 20) and the "golden rule" (Matthew 7:12), I'll be fine." In other words, "If I live a good life, I'll go to heaven." They understand neither the character of God nor their own sinful state. Most have no desire to know.

Unfortunately, some Christians have the same idea about God. They seem to have one foot in the church and one foot in the world. Their attendance to worship is sporadic. They don't have an open line of communication with the Father. When prayer and Bible study are weak, their faith begins to weaken. Even sporadic attendance to worship stops. Satan has pulled that "one foot in the church" completely out, and now both feet are firmly planted in the world. They don't realize their precarious position. 2 Peter 2:20 says, "If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and are again entangled in them and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: 'A dog returns to its vomit, and a sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud.'" This is not a pretty picture!

Our Christian lives are continually growing, 2 Peter 3:18. We continue to grow because we will never reach perfection in this life. We are all sinners saved by the precious blood of Jesus. Sometimes we struggle all our lives with one thing or another, so it seems our road is

always uphill. We can and do become discouraged. Intellectually, we may know that Jesus says our burdens are light and momentary – but emotionally, for the moment, they feel very heavy. Discouragement is a tool of Satan to pull us away from God. If we take our eyes off Jesus, it's easy to stumble. Therefore, we must continually outfit ourselves with God's armor (Ephesians 6:10-18). God provided armor for our spiritual safety. I must put on the helmet of salvation. The shield of faith and the belt of truth guide me to salvation and then provide for my protection. The helmet is worn on the head, which is the most vulnerable part of our body. If our head (brain) is injured, we go down immediately. Satan always aims high with his fiery darts with intent to destroy. I must begin quickly to put on the breastplate of righteousness and fit my feet with readiness to go with the gospel of peace. My shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, protect me as I go. Each piece of armor has a very important place in our protection. I cannot leave one piece off, lest Satan finds that one chink in my armor and tries to wriggle in.

That does not mean I won't slip and sin in my walk. The key word in 2 Peter 2:20 is "overcome." I must never be overcome in my sin. When I do slip, I have the choice to repent and come back to God. He's always there with open and waiting arms. May we all always wear our protective armor in Jesus Christ.

Mary Anna Melton, Rolla, Missouri



Blessed Are They That Do His Commandments

It amazes me to look around and see so many people struggle with obeying God's commandments. Don't get me wrong; I struggle as well. I want to do exactly what the scriptures tell us. Alas, I, too, am human and fail on too many occasions. Does that mean I will be lost? Do I have to be absolutely perfect in all aspects for me to be able to enter those pearly gates?

I do not believe that is what the Bible teaches. I do believe it teaches that I must try to be perfect, and repent when I fail. Repentance means I try my best to

never repeat that same mistake. Do I always succeed? Not at all, but I must keep trying. God's grace will cover the rest.

If I do keep trying and do my very best and God's grace covers my failures, what are the blessings I can expect? Sometimes we lose sight of all that is promised. Of course, heaven is described as a beautiful place with pearly gates, a city four-square, with streets of transparent gold. We will be in the presence of God and will serve him and sing His praises. There will be no tears! How many times have we cried from both physical and emotional pain while here on earth? I can barely imagine a place without that sort of pain.

But do we have to wait until we die to receive all of God's blessings offered to those who obey? I don't think so. Let me explain. We are told to obey the laws of the land. When we do that, we need not fear the authorities coming after us for tax fraud, or even for speeding. We do not have to fear prosecution for criminal acts. In our society if we obey God, jail will not be on our terror list. That is not so in all countries, thus we should be very thankful for that blessing when we enjoy it.

As scripture teaches, if I am not promiscuous I do not have to fear unwanted pregnancy, nor do I fear any of the social diseases. If I love my fellow man, I will more readily live a peaceful existence with my neighbors and friends. We are taught we should work and provide for our families. When we do that, we certainly enjoy the benefits. If we do not do that, we and our families suffer.

As we examine each of the commandments given, we find either spiritual blessings or physical blessings. In many cases there are both. We are told to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's. In other words, pay your taxes. When we do, we enjoy schools for our children, paved streets, law enforcement departments to keep the peace, etc. We enjoy those benefits of obeying the law.

People sometimes complain about how hard it is to keep the commandments; yet, when we don't, life usually becomes much more difficult. The blessings of obedience affect our daily lives as well as our eternal lives. We need to recognize that and appreciate it. Heaven is surely worth it all, but so is life here on earth when we obey.

Wilburta Arrowood, Napoleonville, Louisiana

THE LORD'S ARMY

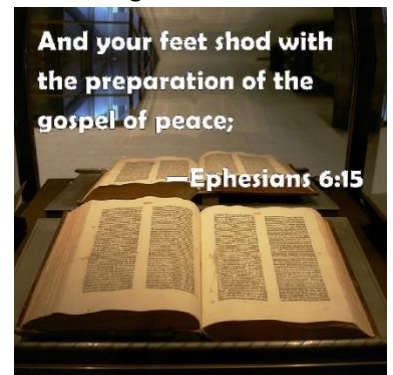
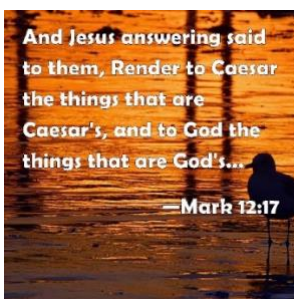
I may never march in the infantry,
Ride in the cavalry, shoot the artillery.
I may never fly o'er the enemy,
But I'm in the lord's army, yes, sir!

The words above are a song we teach to our children early in their lives. They love marching with their feet, imaginatively riding a horse, clapping their hands when "shooting" the enemy, and spreading their arms in flight. At the end, they smartly salute!

In Leviticus 22:31, God commanded Israel through Moses, *"So you shall keep my commandments and do them: I am the LORD."* The purpose of the US military is for the defense of our nation and our allies so that peace prevails in our country. All branches of our military (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard) have mission statements. Their mission statements are tailored to their separate branches, but ALL their mission statements are focused upon defending our nation and winning our wars. Individual branches are to be ready to fight anytime, anywhere, in uniform or out of uniform. They take their missions very seriously.

Likewise, Christians have a mission statement given by Jesus shortly before He was crucified. ¹⁵*And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. ¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."* (Mark 16:15-16). Are we as serious about our mission as our American military is about their mission? Are we ready at all times to teach the soul-saving gospel?

Unlike our military men and women who fight with physical weapons of war, Christians "march into battle" to save souls from eternal punishment. The military requires [uniform](#) clothing and behavior. Our Commander also requires circumspect clothing and behavior. Our Christian clothing is detailed in Ephesians 6:14-15, ¹⁴*Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.* Our [behavior](#) is to include the qualities listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7: ⁵*virtue*, ⁶*knowledge*, *self-control*, *steadfastness*, *godliness*,



⁷brotherly affection, and love. ⁸*For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We want to be fruitful in His service.*

Our **weapons** are very different from weapons used by the military. Our weapons are *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, (Ephesians 6:17), and the soul-saving gospel of Christ, which Paul described in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, ¹*Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.* Obedience to this gospel is by dying to our sins, being buried (immersed) in water, and being raised to new life in Christ which frees us from the bondage of sin and death.

America's President is referred to as the Commander in Chief. He has enormous power, both in this country and on the world stage. His power, however, is limited. As Christians, our commander is Jesus, who said in John 14:15: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." He went on to say in John 14:21a, ²¹*Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.* Our spiritual **commander** in chief has **all** power and authority in *Ephesians 1:20-22* ²⁰*...which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and made Him head over all things to the church.*

American men and women in military service have fought for peace in far-flung parts of the globe. Our **battlefields** are in our neighborhoods, cities, and nation as we teach the lost a better way to live in this world and how to have eternal life at the day of judgment.

Paul said the gospel had been taught to the then-known world, ... ²²*yet He has now reconciled you in His body of flesh through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.* (Colossians 1:22-23) Thousands of Christians have

worked/are working in many mission fields all over the world and in this country as well.

1 John 5:2-3, ²*By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and follow His commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.* Members of our armed forces are sometimes awarded medals for courage and bravery in battle. Our Lord leads His army to victory in our battle with sin and death. Our reward will be eternal rejoicing in heaven at the throne of God.

The Commander we serve is Supreme. The battle we fight is a spiritual battle for the souls around us. We are armed with the gospel of peace, and our mission is to seek and save the lost. Let us all come to attention and go into battle behind our Lord, the Commander!

Evelyn Waite, Rolla, Missouri

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⁵*For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:5-8*

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Fred Willmon

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