

cross. How much it means to know that Jesus has washed away all our sins—even sins of forgetfulness and thanklessness! We remember and give thanks that God will never again call them to mind. We can begin each new day with a clean slate, energized by our Lord’s love for us and hearts brimming with joy.

The pardon Jesus won for us in his cross would be more than enough “benefit” to create a lifetime of thanksgiving to God and “thanks-living” in love to those around us. But the benefits our Savior earned for us don’t end there. Christ’s pardon brings peace. Life lived by faith in him brings fresh meaning and purpose to the minutes and hours of our days. And, of course, we dare not overlook all his many promises to protect, rescue, and help us in every time of trouble. Nor can we help but bring to mind the hope we have in knowing that in everything—even our worst problems—our Lord is at work for our good (Romans 8:28).

### *Taking It Home*

Do you see it—the bouquet of blessings you and I have been putting together for the past several minutes as we have recalled just a few of the many good things our Lord does for us in Jesus and his cross? Each of ten thousand blessings contributes a delicate petal to a very full bouquet of blessings by which our Savior-God beautifies our lives. I pray that the *Bouquet of Blessings* gift you receive today will expand your realization of all the many, many blessings God has given you and that in remembering them, you will continue to “bless the Lord” ever more eagerly.

The Scripture quotation is from the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible.

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Expanding the Impact of Your  
Gifts of Encouragement

# BOUQUET OF *Blessings*<sup>™</sup>

### *Introduction*

In a story shared on the Internet, a middle-aged gentleman—let’s call him Orville—found himself having more and more trouble with his memory. Orville had moved into a new home and had decided to take on the job of landscaping his lawn as a do-it-yourself project.

The neighbors raved about the trees he planted. Orville had spent an incredible amount of time researching various species and learning all about growth patterns, autumnal coloration, the likelihood of insect infestation and disease susceptibility, and the like. Orville knew the Latin names of all his trees like the back of his hand. But when the neighbors asked, Orville simply couldn’t recall the information.

Then Orville created several berms on which to locate plants native to the area. Again, Orville poured himself into his research. Again, he selected just the right plants—plants that would require minimal care, while providing accents of color for the lawn year-round and multiple floral bouquets for his dinner table throughout the spring and summer. Again, the neighbors raved about the results and asked their inevitable questions about genus and species. And again, Orville found himself tongue-tied, despite the hours he had spent researching and the notes he had taken.

When it came time to add the finishing touches to his masterpiece, Orville went to the nursery and brought home numbers of plants with little blue flowers. This time, Orville decided to take extra precautions against his porous memory. As he filled the flower boxes in the front of his new home, he spoke the name of the plants over and over, again and again. Orville vowed to be ready when the neighbors asked their inevitable question.

Lying in bed that night, nearly dozing, Orville decided to review one last time. But then his eyes popped wide open. He couldn't remember! He sat up in bed, holding his temples between his hands. What *were* those flowers named?! It was no use. Orville got up, put on his slippers, grabbed his flashlight, unlocked the front door, and knelt down beside the flower boxes. Frantically, he pawed through his new plants until he found one of the little plastic tabs the nursery had used to label the flowers. Shining the flashlight on the tab, he read: *Forget-me-nots!*

### *Getting to the Heart*

Are you that hopelessly forgetful? Am I? Perhaps not. But consider King David's words of worship in Psalm 103—written about 1,000 years before Jesus was born: "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (v. 2).

Why does the psalmist so urgently insist, "Forget not"? Surely our Lord's "benefits" surrounded David as they surround us daily. How could he forget? How can we?

- The air we breathe
- The clothes we wear—and the washers and dryers in which we clean them
- The family members and friends we enjoy
- The government officials that keep the street lights on, fire trucks at the ready, and parks open
- The electronic toys and games that bring us so much pleasure—and their counterparts at work that make our jobs so much easier (at least, most of the time!)
- Electricity itself—which lights and controls the climate inside our homes
- Refrigerators and microwave ovens—and the feasts prepared in them
- Peace in the homeland

The list of benefits we receive daily from our Creator's generous hands goes on and on—and on and on and on and on! Surely, we would not forget these benefits, would we? But, of course, we do! We take all this—and much more—for granted, most often raising quite a ruckus of complaint if anything disrupts our plans or our comfort, even momentarily.

"Forget not all his benefits," David writes. And we have not yet begun to name those benefits we cannot see with our eyes or touch with our hands. (That reminds me—I somehow neglected to mention eyes that see and fingers that feel in the list of benefits a moment ago! "Forget not!") Our Lord's "invisible" and "untouchable" blessings add mightily to the mountain of benefits we want to remember.

We start this list of intangibles by naming the cross of our Savior and the forgiveness that flows to us from that

Continued on back . . .