

*22 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 23 Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall
bless the Israelites: You shall say to them, 24 The
Lord bless you and keep you;
25
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
26
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.
27
So they shall put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them. (Numbers 6:22-27, New
Revised Standard Version)□*

If you said “Wait! I hear that in church every Sunday! I didn’t know that was IN THE BIBLE!”
You wouldn’t be alone.

There is a lot we hear in culture, in literature, sayings, etc. that has its source in the Bible that
people have no idea it came from there. It is a good reason to stick to that resolution to read
through the whole Bible (and now is the time to do it, since we are about to embark on a “Bible
In 90 Days” reading plan!) but that isn’t what I want to talk about here.

The blessing Yahweh has given to Moses for Aaron to declare over the people is something
we hear at the end of worship each week. In fact, it is used in both Christian and Jewish
worship, and has been for thousands of years! It is one of the most consistently used worship

elements across denominations in both the Christian and Jewish traditions.

As it was originally given to Moses, recorded here in the 6th chapter of Numbers, the people of God were preparing to break camp; getting ready to leave Mt Sinai where they have stayed for nearly a year. They have years of wandering in the wilderness before them before they get to the promised land. And while, in the early years of their wandering they had often thought that God had abandoned them, this blessing is given as proof and reminder that God has not and will not forsake them. That God has and will continue to bless and protect them.

This is a blessing for a journey into unknown lands. Remember that the Israelites did not know where they were going, only that they were moving toward a promise. When we hear this blessing at the end of worship, it is a reminder for us as well, that we are on a journey called life and as we leave the church grounds we are going into unknown territory. It may be our own neighborhood, but tomorrow is always unknown. We make our plans, but getting to carry them out is always a contingency. So as you start into the journey of 2012, take the blessing of God's name being put on you, to protect and guide you. And God's peace, the everlasting *shalom*, will be with you.

Blessings to you from Pastor Karla