

## Meditation December 29th

I hope that you have been able to enjoy Christmas this year. We were very fortunate to have been able to see family, but I know that will not have been the case for many.

However despite Covid, the truth of Christmas remains the same, that the Light came into the world.

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined”. Isaiah 9:2

And now we have passed the longest night, the days are getting longer both physically, and metaphorically too, as we have the vaccine coming to give us freedom from Covid restrictions.

At Church on Sunday we were reminded of the the well known blessing from Numbers 6:22-27

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

“Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying,  
Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
The Lord lift up countenance upon you and give you peace.

So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

One thing to note is that God uses Aaron to bless the people. This is despite his behaviour earlier when he encouraged the people to make a golden calf. I find this greatly encouraging, that our failure does not preclude God from using us.

This is a threefold blessing, the name of Yaweh being repeated three times.

The first blessing is general, asking for God’s involvement and blessing on every area of our lives. And also the he would ‘keep’ us

in all circumstances, whether or not we are aware of his sustaining hand on us.

The second blessing speaks of God's face shining upon us. God face shines on us with mercy, peace, joy and delight. He is gracious toward us, he offers us grace and forgiveness.

The third blessing is that God would lift up his countenance towards us. This is immensely comforting , that God watches over us at all times (cf psalm 121), he is 'keeping an eye' on us.

'And give you peace'. The word here is Shalom, which as I expect you know encompasses so much more than our English word. It includes good health, security, inner harmony, wellness, material prosperity, and a long life. The broad and rich meaning of "peace" in the priestly blessing reinforces the role of holiness in the life of Israel. It brings about both social and physical health.

We can use this blessing for ourselves and we pray it for others.

May God bless you as we await the New Year and 2021