

How to Get Blessings

Regardless of cultural background, people want to be blessed. The Chinese people long for five blessings in life. These wishes began to emerge in Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD): longevity, wealth, health, love of virtues, and good ending of life. Wishes for longevity, wealth and health are common for all people. The last two wishes set the Chinese apart. The fourth blessing elevates people's moral to a higher ground – love of virtues. The fifth blessing brings people to a religious concern.

The Chinese posted these blessings on the door or had a painting of five bats (same pronunciation as blessings) on the wall but made no real attempts to obtain these blessings. Can blessings be achieved by ourselves? Yes, the Bible tells us that we can actually get eight different blessings ourselves (Matthew 5: 3-10).

The eight blessings, or the beatitudes, are not deals. It is not if x then y. It does not mean that if we are poor in spirit, we will be awarded the Kingdom of God. The goal to be meek is not to inherit the earth but simply to be meek. The beatitudes are virtues. As the Chinese point out, the love of virtue is the blessing not the reward of doing so.

The beatitudes is a set of Christian values. They prepare us to inherit the earth and to enter the Kingdom of God. They are disciplines we have to obey and they are blessings we can actually get.

To be poor in spirit and trust God, to mourn for pain and sin, to be meek in human relations, to desire for righteousness, to be merciful, to be pure in heart, to be peacemakers, and even to be persecuted for the sake of righteousness are Christian virtues. Loving these virtues is the blessing. We can get these blessings by living them.

Let us pray: Dear God, we are thankful for helping us to understand the Beatitudes through the Chinese culture. Help us to love these virtues and live them in our lives. Amen.

自求多福

不分種族文化，世人都愛求福。中國人自宋朝以降 (公元 960 -1279) 便祈望五福臨門。大家都希望能有長壽、富貴、健康、好德，及善終。前三福是四海皆準的共同盼望，後兩福則顯出中國人的特色了。以好德為福是為義，以善終為福是為禮。古代的禮包括祭祀，換言之，善終之渴望是提升到宗教的領域去了。難怪中國被稱為禮義之邦。

中國人喜歡把五福臨門的字樣貼在門楣上，更在家中掛上五隻蝙蝠的圖畫，期望因而蒙福，但卻始終找不出求福的門徑。聖經告訴我們，福氣可以自己尋得並落實在生活中，此福就是耶穌所說的八福 (馬太福音 5: 3-10)。

八福所提的是八種德行。那不是求福的方法，乃是福的本身。虛心並非為求進入天國。溫柔並非圖謀地土，正如中國人以愛德為福。愛那八種德行就是福了。

八福是基督徒的價值觀，是在世的生活標準，是進入天國前的操練。我們必須恭敬實行，自求多福。

虛心便會依靠上帝。我們要為自己的罪及世人的苦難而哀痛，待人要溫柔。對真理的追求要有飢渴慕義的心。對人要心存憐恤。做人要清心。要使人和睦。為義不怕受逼迫。能堂堂正正的做個好基督徒，便可蒙好德之福了。

請祈禱：親愛的上帝，從中國的文化中，我們更清楚了解八福的意義。求祢加添我們的信心和毅力，努力活出美好的見證來。阿們。