



# REFLECTIONS

December 31, 2017

**Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the Lord his God,  
the Maker of heaven and earth,**

*Psalms 146:5-6*

## Blessing of Hope

Put a bow on another year. For some it has been one of joy, prosperity, and success. For others though, the year felt pain, loss, and heartache. But like the days, there are good years and those not so good. Whether remembered as good or bad, blessings come from both. As James wrote, “*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.*” (James 1:2-3) So, whether the end of the year gives reason to rejoice, or cause to welcome new beginnings, stop to consider the blessings.

Begin with life itself—your life, the lives who brought you into the world, those who nurtured you in the early years. Those who offered training, guidance, and support in the formative years. Remember the blessings of basic things that sustain life, air, water, food, and shelter. Think of the blessings of family, children, grandchildren, and others who combine warmth, welcome, and caring into something we call love.

Remember the blessing of our homeland, a place of opportunity unlike any other in the world. And always recall the blessings received from millions you never met who fought for the freedoms enjoyed, those who dedicate their daily lives to protect us from harm, and those whose prayers for our wellbeing that we never hear, but God does.

And then there is the blessing of hope. *Our hope is in the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.* He came into the world as a man so we might feel his love; that where there is war, or pain, or loneliness, or failure, or bitterness, He is there.

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.* (Romans 5:1-5)

So as we enter the realm of a new year, *thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Cor 15:57) In him is the blessing of hope—hope that, amid pain to be suffered and despair to be felt, our tomorrows will be joy filled.

In hope, we are blessed.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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