# New Year 2024 Pt. 1

Pastor James Foley - Shared Sunday, January 14, 2024

#### **COMMUNION**

**NOTE 1** – We have just come through a season of holiday celebrations. Key aspects associated with celebrations?

- 1) We often celebrate with a group (i.e., family and friends). Celebrating alone does not have the same feeling.
- 2) We often need a reason to celebrate (e.g., birth of an individual; marital anniversary; new year; graduation).
- **3)** Celebrations tend to look to the past. Consider that holidays tend to commemorate past activities or events.
- **4)** Celebrations tend to highlight a person or past event (e.g., Christmas, Memorial Day, birthday; anniversary).
- **5)** Celebrations are often joyous occasions. How often we celebrate special moments with merriment and joy.
- 6) Celebrations are often associated with food and drink. We often connect special moments with special food.

**NOTE 2** – Let us consider that the Lord's Supper functions quite similarly. Consider the following elements, etc.

- 1) We observe this Supper as a group. It may be but two or three, but there is a communal nature to Communion.
- 2) We celebrate for a reason: the gift of eternal life provided through the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus the Christ.
- 3) This celebration/commemoration looks to the past: that moment when Jesus suffered and died in our place.
- 4) This celebration commemorates both a person and an event: Christ Jesus and His Crucifixion on our behalf.
- 5) This moment, solemn as it may be, is to be received with joy. Consider the joy we have in and through Jesus.
- 6) The commemoration of the suffering and death of Christ is associated with food and drink: wafer and juice.

The WAFER Symbolizes the BODY of Christ – Broken for Us The JUICE Symbolizes the BLOOD of Christ – Shed for Us All

#### 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NIV)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

#### ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

**KEY** – Allow me to note the following elements before we dismiss the Children's Church, Nursery and volunteers:

The 2023 ABM will take place on Sunday, January 21, 2024, after service (January 28 in case of poor weather). The 2023 Annual Report will be distributed TODAY to the voting membership of the assembly. I would ask that you review said report and bring it with you to the ABM.

# New Year 2024 Pt. 1

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, January 14, 2024

#### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us. Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you desire. We have much to cover in a short space of time.

#### **SETTING THE STAGE: 2024**

**NOTE 1** – Allow me to be among the first to wish you a Happy New Year. May 2024 be a truly blessed season! I have felt led to open 2024 in a rather unique manner: by addressing the openings of the Letters of Saint Paul. I canthink of no better way to begin 2024 than by considering the manner in which Paul began his inspired Epistles.

**NOTE 2** – There is much we can glean from the following texts, laying the foundation for a New Year and beyond. I would ask that you give ear to the following passages (i.e., listening for the repetition of words, phrases, etc.):

### Q. Do we have men and women who would be willing to read (see handout)?

# Romans 1:1, 7 (NIV)

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God . . . 7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

### 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, 2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: 3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### 2 Corinthians 1:1-2

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia: 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Galatians 1:1-3

1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—2 and all the brothers and sisters with me, To the churches in Galatia: 3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ . . .

## Ephesians 1:1-2

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Philippians 1:1-2

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Colossians 1:1-2

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

#### 1 Thessalonians 1:1

1 Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you.

#### 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2

- 1 Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
- 2 Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### 1 Timothy 1:1-2

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope. 2 To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

# 2 Timothy 1:1-2

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### Titus 1:1, 4

1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness . . . 4 To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

#### Philemon 1-3

- 1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker—
- 2 also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and to the church that meets in your home:
- 3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Q1. What do we see herein?
- Q2. What can we glean from these openings?
- Q3. What can we discern via evident repetition and beyond?
- **A.** We will spend the next few weeks providing in-depth responses to such queries and more. This AM consider:

#### **MATTERS OF IDENTITY PT. 1**

**NOTE 1** – The openings of the assorted Letters of Paul make it clear that Paul knew his IDENTITY in Christ. That is, he understood both who and what he was before God and among men. How did Paul perceive himself?

**A1.** He viewed himself as a servant of the Lord. Please take note of his usage of the following word and/or term:

### Romans 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, a **servant** of Christ Jesus . . .

### Philippians 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus . . .

### Titus 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, a **servant** of God . . .

### Q. What is the meaning of this word?

**A.** The underlying Greek term is *doúlos* (lit. someone who belongs to another; a bond-slave, without any ownership rights of their own. Ironically . . . doúlos is used with the highest dignity in the New Testament; namely, of believers who willingly live under the authority of Christ as His devoted followers).

**A2.** He viewed himself as an apostle of the Lord. Please take note his usage of the following word and/or term:

### Romans 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle . . .

### 1 Corinthians 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, called to be an **apostle** of Christ Jesus . . .

#### 2 Corinthians 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus . . .

#### Galatians 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father . . .

#### Ephesians 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus . . .

# Colossians 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus . . .

#### 1 Timothy 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus . . .

### 2 Timothy 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus

#### Titus 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ . . .

### Q. What is the meaning of this word?

**A.** The underlying Greek term is *apóstolos* (lit. a messenger, one sent on a mission; an envoy and/or delegate; one commissioned by another to represent him in some way; especially a man sent out by Jesus Christ Himself to preach the Gospel).

**NOTE 2** – Paul continually claimed that his call to represent Christ as an apostle was divine v. earthly in nature:

### Romans 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God

## 1 Corinthians 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God . . .

# 2 Corinthians 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God . . .

### Galatians 1:1 (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father . . .

### **Ephesians 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)**

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God . . .

### Colossians 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God . . .

#### 1 Timothy 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus . . .

#### 2 Timothy 1:1a

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God . . .

**A3.** He understood himself to be a member of the people of God (i.e., the greater community of faith in Christ):

#### Romans 1:1, 7a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God . . . 7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his **holy people** . .

#### 1 Corinthians 1:1–2 (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, 2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his **holy people**, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours . . .

#### 2 Corinthians 1:1 (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his **holy people** throughout Achaia . . .

#### **Ephesians 1:a (Emphasis Mine)**

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ . . .

### Philippians 1:1a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi . . .

# Colossians 1:1–2a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To God's **holy people** in Colossae . . .

A4. He understood himself to be a member of a spiritual family. As a child of God, he had many brethren! Note:

# Galatians 1:1–2a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—2 and all the **brothers and sisters** with me, To the churches in Galatia . . .

#### Colossians 1:1–2a (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful **brothers** and **sisters in Christ** . . .

**NOTE 3** – Paul often extolled God's creation called the Church (i.e., a sp. people/family). To him it was glorious!

#### Ephesians 2:11a, 12b-20

11 . . . remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" . . . 12 . . . were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups [i.e., Jew and Gentile] one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

**NOTE 4** – Paul reveled in his connection to the people of God and spiritual family in a way that we often fail to!

**A5.** Paul viewed himself as a fellow laborer among the people of God AND a fellow soldier in the broader army:

### Philemon 1–3 (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and **fellow worker**—2 also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our **fellow soldier**—and to the church that meets in your home . . .

# 1 Corinthians 3:5-9a (Emphasis Mine) (Laborer)

5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own **labor**. 9 For we are **co-workers** in God's service; you are God's field . . .

### 2 Timothy 2:3–4 (Emphasis Mine) (Soldier)

3 Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.

**A6.** Paul viewed himself as the spiritual father of select members—and assemblies—in the community of faith:

### 1 Timothy 1:1–2 (Individual) (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope. 2 To Timothy my true son in the faith . . .

# 2 Timothy 1:1–2a (Individual) (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, **my dear son** . . .

#### Titus 1:1, 4a (Individual) (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness . . . 4 To Titus, **my true son** in our common faith . . .

### 1 Corinthians 4:14–16 (Church) (Emphasis Mine)

14 I am writing this not to shame you but to warn you as **my dear children**. 15 Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many **fathers**, for in Christ Jesus I **became your father** through the gospel. 16 Therefore I urge you to **imitate** me.

A7. Finally, Paul viewed himself as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. Consider the following selection articulating such:

#### Philemon 1a, c (Emphasis Mine)

1 Paul, a **prisoner of Christ Jesus** . . . To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker . . .

#### Q. Why would Paul deem himself a prisoner of Christ herein?

A. He was quite literally imprisoned for his faith at this point in ministry!

Clearly the idea herein is that Paul often suffered imprisonment for his faith. Yet was he also a captive of love?

#### **MATTERS OF IDENTITY PT. 2**

**NOTE 1** – Thus said, I find it interesting that Paul did not wallow in who or what he was prior to coming to faith! After all, Paul had been a treacherous man in relation to Christ, the Church of Christ, and the Gospel of Christ:

### 1) He Had Been Present at the First Martyrdom of a Christian

#### Acts 7:54-60, 8:1a (Emphasis Mine)

54 When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 55 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 58 dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats **at the feet of a young man named Saul**. 59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep [died].... 1 And Saul **approved** of their killing him.

### 2) He Had Been an Ardent Persecutor of the Church

### Acts 8:1b-3 (Emphasis Mine)

1 . . . On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 2 Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. 3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

#### Q. How could such a one dare to address the various churches of Jesus Christ?

**A.** He was no longer the same man: he had a new sp. identity and believed his own words:

#### 2 Corinthians 5:17b (NKJV) (Emphasis Mine)

17 . . . if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; old things have passed away; . . . all things have become new.

**NOTE 2** — Paul did not languish in his past, allowing it to define him or lead him to a place of disqualification. Rather, his past became a key component of his story and witness, being a tool to lead others to faith in Christ (cf. Acts ch. 22). You see, his primary identity was not who he had been, but who he had become in Christ: a) Servant of God; b) Apostle of Christ; c) Member of the People of God; d) Member of the Household of God; e) Worker for and Soldier of the Lord; f) Spiritual Father; and g) Prisoner of Christ.

**NOTE 3** – I posit that this sense of identity in Christ drove and/or compelled Paul in his life ministry and work. You see, what Paul did in life or ministry was merely the overflow of who and what he was in relation to Jesus. Nothing else could fuel such a life, characterized in the following way per the words of the apostle Paul himself:

#### Colossians 1:28-29

28 He [i.e., Christ] is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29 To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

#### **APPLICATIONS**

- Q. "Pastor, why are you spending so much time on Paul and his identity in Christ?"
- A. Because as we enter the New Year I desire for you to know your identify in the Lord!

**NOTE 1** – It is one thing to know what Paul knew to be true about himself in relation to Christ and His Church. It is quite another thing for you to know what is true about yourself re: spiritual identity in 2024 and beyond! Those who would flourish in this New Year and have the impact Christ desires do well to contend with this Q:

- Q. Do you know who you are in Christ?
- Q1. Do you rightly see yourself as His servant?
- Q2. Do you see yourself as one "called and sent"?
- Q3. Do you see yourself as a member of His people?
- Q4. Do you see yourself as a member of His sp. family?
- Q5. Do you know yourself to be a worker and soldier?
- Q6. Do you have sp. children who "look up to you"?
- Q7. Are you one willing to suffer as a prisoner?

**NOTE 2** – I know a great many of you, and many define themselves by your lives before or outside of J. Christ. How many languish in the brokenness of their past and wallow in the misery of the ministry of disqualification! O that you would rise up in the newness of life that you have been called to, realizing that past brokenness can be a key component of your present testimony (i.e., impacting the spiritual future and destiny of a great many)!

**NOTE 3** – If ministry is the overflow of your identity, may 2024 be the year you come to discover who you are!

**KEY** – Thus said, consider the provided handout an investment into the discovery and cultivation of your identity.

#### Q. Do you wish to know who and what you are?

**A.** Prayerfully consider, reflect upon the following (handout):

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I am a child of God (John 1:12)
I am a friend of Christ (John 15:15)
I have been adopted as a son or daughter (Rom. 8:15; Eph. 1:5)
I am an heir of God – a joint heir with Christ, sharing his inheritance with him (Gal. 4:6–7; Rom. 8:17)
I am united with the Lord and am one in spirit with him (1 Cor. 6:17)
I am reconciled to God through Christ (2 Cor. 5:18–19)
I am loved by Jesus and freed from my sins by his blood (Col. 2:13; Rev. 1:5)
I have been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of Jesus by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:1; 1 Cor. 6:11)
I am a servant of God and a slave to righteousness (Rom. 6:18–19, 22)
I am a fellow citizen with the rest of God's family (Eph. 2:19)
I am a partaker of Christ; I share in his life (Heb. 3:14)
I am one of God's living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5)
I have been bought with a price and I belong to God (1 Cor. 6:20)
I am dead to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6:11)
I am a new creation – the old is gone, the new has come (2 Cor. 5:17)
I am a saint (1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2)
I am made to be righteous and holy (Eph. 4:24)
I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18)
I am complete in Christ and have all I need (Col. 2:10)
I am free from condemnation (Rom. 8:1–2)
I am never left alone or forsaken (Heb. 13:5)
I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God (2 Cor. 1:21–22)
I have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of Jesus (Col. 1:13)
The divine power of God has given me everything I need for a godly life (2 Pet. 1:3)
I am strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might (Eph. 6:10)
I can stand firm against every scheme of the devil (Eph. 6:11)
I have victory through Christ (1 Cor. 15:57)
I am more than a conqueror – overwhelming victory is mine in Jesus (Rom. 8:37)
I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and self-discipline (2 Tim. 1:7)
I am assured that all things work together for my good (Rom. 8:28)
I cannot be separated from the love of God that is in Jesus (Rom. 8:35–39)
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)
I am confident that the good work God has started in me he will see through to completion (Phil. 1:6)
I am a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Cor. 5:17-21)
I am the salt of the earth in Christ (Matt. 5:13)
I am the light of the world in Christ (Matt. 5:14)
I am chosen by God, holy and dearly loved (Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4)
I am a member of Christ's Body and have a unique role to play in the Church (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30)
I am seated in the heavenly places with Jesus (Eph. 2:6)
I am a temple – a dwelling place of God. His Spirit and His life dwells in me (1 Cor. 6:19)
I am God's co-worker (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1)
I am a child of light, not of darkness (1 1 Thess. 5:5)
I am a member of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession (1 Pet. 2:9–10)
I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit, fruit that will last (John 15:16)
I have received all of God's promises in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1:20)
I am God's workmanship, created to do good works (Eph. 2:10)
I am a partaker of God's divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4)
I was chosen by God before the creation of the world (Eph. 1:4)
I am an expression of the life of Christ because He is my life (Col. 3:4)
I am a holy partaker in a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1)
I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life to others (John 15:1, 5)
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### **CONCLUSION**

- **NOTE 1** Feel free to give either in person or online at <a href="www.NewLifeBarre.org">www.NewLifeBarre.org</a>.
- NOTE 2 Check out our website for any of our beyond Sunday ministries (MM, WM & CYC).
- **NOTE 3** As we begin a New Year, please allow me to speak this blessing upon you and yours in 2024:

#### Numbers 6:24-26

24 The Lord bless you and keep you;25 the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;26 the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.