

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

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Association Minister Message

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ENTITLEMENT. "God doesn't prize the strength of a horse; God doesn't treasure the legs of a runner. No. The Lord treasures the people who honor him, the people who wait for his faithful love." Psalm 147:10-11. When President Kennedy spoke at his inauguration on January 20, 1961, he said, *"Ask not what your country can do for you -- but what you can do for your country."* I.O.U. or You Owe Me: both have a sense of *ENTITLEMENT*, indebtedness and obligation under pressure. Resentment can happen when the pressure is either to pay off a debt or waiting for payment.

President Kennedy's words change *ENTITLEMENT* to a sense of generosity and care. Scripture reminds us of being blessed to be blessings to others. If we focus on *"getting"* more and more of what is owed us, we soon miss opportunities for service and helping those who need relief from suffering and pain. The pressures of owing can lead to despair and helplessness. In our spiritual discernment and prayer life, what words are we using? What are our requests to God? Yes, we do pray for healing of our minds, bodies and spirits but do we also include praying for peace, strength and comfort with the conditions we have? Do our prayers include having our gifts and graces help others to live abundantly with grace and love as a gift from God?

This Sunday is Super Bowl with all its hype of elite athletes, coaches and programs that have excelled in their preparation for *"the game,"* achieving much to get to the Super Bowl. Some players have expressed that they *"deserve"* to be in *"the game"* not just because of winning but because of who they are. *"They"* did it all to get to the Super Bowl. *ENTITLEMENT.* They really have not done it by themselves and it takes the entire team together to arrive at where they are.

The verses from the 147th Psalm do turn things upside down. Looking carefully at those words the Psalmist certainly knows the ability of the horse and runner. It is more than the *"strength"* in the horse or the *"treasure"* of the legs of the runner. Gifts and graces abound from God, the Creator and Source of who we are. God *"treasures the people"* who, as we often sing, *"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."* We are blessed beyond our imaginations and God hears our prayers of distress, pain, suffering and dealing with evil around us. Our prayers to God should include thanksgiving and need for guidance on how we are to live. More than *ENTITLEMENT*, we are able to *"wait for God's faithful love"* and that love was in the beginning, is now and shall be forevermore—always. Paraphrasing President Kennedy, *"Ask not just for what God can do for you -- but what you can do for God and others."* BLESSINGS ALWAYS.