

#Blessed

## **Will young men and women from middle and lower class backgrounds be pushed down with medical and educational debt? Will they see the military as the only option for education, health, and opportunity?**

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February 27, 2017



We can spot the hashtag scrolling along social media feeds and popping up in in Bruno Mars lyrics: #Blessed. Often the declaration comes as a caption for a photograph that seizes the overwhelming gratitude of new parents, their eyes brimming with joy as they look down at the baby in their arms. Other times, we see the word accompanying a particularly difficult athletic move. Still other times, it's a declaration of wealth or success. It is an uprising of thanks, for what we have, who we are, and what we have achieved. #Blessed can be interpreted to mean that God

has rained down wealth and success upon us.

And that's a good thing, right? I mean, thanking God for what we have and marveling at our abundance is incredibly important.

But it also might be time for Christians to rethink the idea of being #Blessed. I reconsider it every time I see those [pictures of Melania Trump](#), in the seat of power, with all her beauty and elegance, looking like the most miserable woman in the world. Of course, I typically read the *New York Times*, and they are telling a story with those pictures, framing her in a particular light. But still. I can't help but think that with all the money and glamour, our First Lady doesn't look blessed.

In addition, we are a nation teetering on... well... we don't know what. We know that promises have been made. Tax cuts for the wealthy will certainly occur. Some of us may be losing our health care. Money may be funneled from our public schools into private schools. The National Endowment for the Arts may be gutted. Public television and public broadcasting may be slashed. Then, there may be an increase in military spending. My skeptical mind puts all these pieces together and imagines a greater plan in all of this, as funding for education, arts, journalism, and medical care goes away and military spending goes up.

Will young men and women from middle and lower class backgrounds be pushed down with medical and educational debt? Will they see the military as the only option for education, health, and opportunity? Are our structures sending our young into the military as a primary means of survival? It's already the case for many people, but will it be more so in our Republican-controlled future?

Or can we envision another way? I've been thinking about this a lot [in my writing](#). We often think of God's blessing in terms of the [prosperity gospel](#). But what if we thought of our blessing in terms of the [social gospel](#) instead?

Maybe being #Blessed won't mean health and wealth in the same ways that it has in our country's history. Maybe being blessed won't mean economic autonomy. If the government slashes our security net and turns its back on its responsibility to promote the general welfare of its citizens, then we will have to rethink what it means to be blessed.

Perhaps it will mean that we have a community that we can rely upon for support when we need it. We can begin to talk about our debt and our medical needs, without the surrounding shame. We can begin to imagine a beloved community that

cares for one another when our individual autonomy doesn't work out. We can imagine communities of peace, justice, mercy, and love. If we can realize that, perhaps we will be truly blessed.