

The Unspeakable Gift
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By C. Benjamin Dill

Good morning, Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Last Sunday was **Heart of Purpose Sunday!** What a blessing to see and hear such a positive response from so many of you.

If you were not here for whatever reason last week, let me encourage you to pick up a **Heart of Purpose card** from the back table, fill out what you intend to do for God in the way of giving from what He blesses you with this coming year, then take it home and place it somewhere you can see it often.

Last week we made a choice; we purposed in our hearts what portion, of what God gives to us, we will give back to God.

This week we will look with gratitude at just some of what God has given and is giving to us.

Last week our text was
2 Corinthians 9:6-8
6 But this / say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so *let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work:

Wow, what a principle!

What a simple, easy part to perform God has required of us!

And what a promise; what an incredible promise to come as a result!

As we read further today, we will see the best of what is produced by our obedience and participation in this promise of God:

2 Corinthians 9:9-15

9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever.

10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for *your* food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

13 While by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed

subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men*;

- 14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.
- 15 Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Material provision creates gratitude in many; and certainly we all ought to be thankful for what God gives us.

This is so important! **It is gratitude that leads men to recognize the goodness of God and thus turn to Him.**

Romans 2:4...the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

It is the lack of gratitude that blinds men to that same goodness of God.

Romans 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, **neither were thankful**; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Yet, as big and as exciting and as much as we all need God's material provision in our lives; it pales in significance to the true gift, that unspeakable gift that all this is but a small part of.

1 Corinthians 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

The gift of God's material provision in our lives is from the "cradle to the grave;" the true gift; the unspeakable, indescribable, bigger than we can even imagine gift is from "before the cradle to way past the grave."

2 Corinthians 9:15 Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Christmas is Jesus' birthday but God sent the gift to us!

Luke 2:1-18

1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 (*And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.*)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because (he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him

in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

God's unspeakable gift was sent to us wrapped in swaddling clothes.

The announcement was made to the lowly - so we could understand that no one need be left out!

This is the greatest of all gifts ever given:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* **eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye **saved** through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

Romans 5:17 For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ...

As you begin to grow and learn as a Christian you begin to realize - although God required nothing of you but that you place your trust in Jesus to save you from your sins - just saying "Thank you" in return is simply not enough.

The scripture says "**Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.**"

When I asked the Lord, "What can I do to truly express my gratitude for what you have done for me?" God reminded me of many things.

Now, I've been studying my Bible pretty regularly since 1977. In my 37 years of study, the same theme of what God asks - what God **requires** of me - just gets clearer and clearer as the years go by.

These requirements are everywhere you look in scripture; you can actually see these requirements of gratitude in the story of the Shepherds to whom the announcement of the Savior's birth was made.

I. We can show our gratitude by being Faithful.

Luke 2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

We learned last week that it is **required** in stewards **that we be faithful**.

A. Be faithful in your work.

1. Like these shepherds were - just think what they would have missed if they weren't being faithful to do their jobs that night.

2. James 1:22-25

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but **a doer of the work**, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

3. When you go to your job tomorrow, according to God, you are going out there to serve Him - not just those you think you work for.

4. You are probably not going to serve here in the Church any better than you serve on your job.

B. Be faithful in your worship.

1. **Hebrews 10:21-25**

21 And *having* a high priest over the house of God;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;)

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*. and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

2. You know, there are five formal acts of worship we are commanded in the New Testament to participate in.

3. They are:

singing;
praying;
preaching;
giving and
The Lord's Supper.

4. Do you think yourself faithful to worship if you only participate in some of these?

C. Be faithful to those around you.

1. Be faithful to your family.

1 Timothy 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

2. Be a faithful friend.

Proverbs 7:17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

3. Be faithful to forgive.

Matthew 6:14-15

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

D. Be faithful with what you are given.

1. I can't be sinless, but I can be faithful.

2. **Luke 16:10**

10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

II. We can show our gratitude by being Fearless.

Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, **Fear not:** for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

A. Would you die for your faith?

1. I would like to think I would, but the truth is that none of us will really know until it comes right down to it.

2. I know I can face death; we all will and as faithful Christians are given something we call "dying grace."

3. But if someone puts a gun to your head and says, "If you believe you die;" will you still say "I believe?"

4. Maybe? I would like to think I could.

*B. But if you cannot **live** for Christ, do you seriously think that you could **die** for Him?*

1. You **could** go all out; you **could** truly live your life for Jesus; but **something is holding you back**.

2. What are you afraid of?

3. I could understand your silence if you lived in Iraq or Syria; but you don't.

4. **God says "Fear not!"**

III. We can show our gratitude by being Fruitful.

Luke 2:17-18

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

A. Let me ask you an extremely serious question; what do you want more than any other thing in life?

1. Money?

2. Success?

3. Power?

4. Love?

5. Friendship?

B. I will share with you a piece of my heart today; I want more than anything else in life to bear fruit for my Father's Kingdom.

1. The fruit of a Christian is another Christian.

2. I want to see sinners saved and then come to be fruitful themselves as well.

3. **John 15:3-8**

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

In Conclusion:

You see, it is not enough for me to simply say "Thank you."

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and **be ye thankful**.

I want my life to be a living “thank you note” to Jesus that tells God and the world every day that I owe every good thing in my life to Jesus!

I am going to heaven because of Jesus!

I sit in heavenly places now because of Jesus!

I have more than enough of everything because of Jesus!

I get to take a bunch of you with me because of Jesus!

Will you go with me, too?