

Why His Gift Is Unspeakable To His Saints

By Shawn Reynolds

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Grace Particular Baptist Church
5725 Imperial Lakes Blvd
Mulberry, FL 33860

Website: www.onefoldoneshepherd.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/graceparticular

Our text this morning will be found in 2 Corinthians 9:15.

15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, how glorious thou art. I thank thee, Lord, for thy healing that thou hast done across this people and we pray for Carol this morning, Lord, that you would be a present help to her, that you would calm her, and thy presence would be known and felt. Lord, I pray for those who are away that thou would be with them and that you would unite thy people today in thy Spirit. O Lord, may you bring us to thy feet to be instructed. May your name be glorified today. O Lord, I ask for liberty, liberty to speak how deep thy word is. Lord, may it be deep to our souls today. May you examine us by thy word. May you reveal thy work in our souls and, Lord, may you truly show us the unspeakableness of this gift. Bless this day for thy glory. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

It seems to be this time of year, this gift seems to be much more speakable than it is unspeakable. Have you ever stopped to think about what Paul meant when he said that this gift that God gave his people is an unspeakable gift?

I sat yesterday, I spent a lot of time shopping yesterday and sometimes I sat in the vehicle while Stephanie ran in to get some things and I heard a lot of people sing songs, a lot of the stars that are in the mainstream and they could all sing about Jesus. You turn the radio to a couple of stations, people would talk about Jesus. You drive throughout the city today and people would be assembling to speak about Jesus but yet Paul said, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." How can you have the two together?

This morning I want to look at why Paul said that this gift was unspeakable, why the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ to Paul's soul was unspeakable, and I hope and I pray that we find kinship, that we find a unity in the spirit of why this gift is so hard to speak about for the child of God. As I said, the religious world today doesn't seem to have much problem speaking about a Jesus, a child being born in a manger, one that came in time, but what about you and I today? It seems like this gift that's so precious to us, it seems like was something so great and the magnitude of it so wonderful that the child of God would be

able to sing praises all of his life. But Paul says something here about this gift and if you think about it, there could have been a lot of words put in that sentence. Thanks be unto God for his amazing gift, for his great gift, for his wonderful gift, but the word that the Holy Spirit put in place was "unspeakable." I want you with me this morning if the Lord is pleased, I want to look at a few of the saints in the word of God and I want to speak about what makes the gift of Christ unspeakable to his children.

So, if you will, turn with me first to the book of Isaiah 6 and we will read in Isaiah's life what made this gift unspeakable. As I said today, as the Lord puts me in this place to speak to you Sunday after Sunday, my desire, of course, is that the Holy Spirit would search our hearts and that he would reveal his Son in us and he would testify to us if these things that are said in the word of his saints have been spoken to us, if we find kinship because that's the one thing the word of God, it speaks of Christ, it speaks of the work that he has done in the souls of his people throughout the ages and we'll see that in two or three of them, four of them actually, this morning in his word.

So, if you will, Isaiah 6 beginning in verse 1. "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." Isaiah was revealed the Lord Jesus Christ reigning, sitting upon his throne, and that's quite a statement because then you have,

"Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts." So what we see and what we hear is the holiness of the Lord. What's revealed to Isaiah as the heavens are open to him is the holiness of the Lord.

"Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him," he heard the voice, he saw the power in the voice, "that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I," here is the result of the Lord revealing himself to Isaiah, here's the result of the Lord's revelation in the soul of Isaiah, "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone." Unworthiness. He sees himself as unworthy even to be in that place. The Lord revealed to him the holiness of himself. He revealed to him the power and the voice of himself.

Then he says, "I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Can you say the same today? What was revealed to Isaiah is that he couldn't say anything. Everything that he could say about the holiness of the Lord was inadequate. When he is revealed the glory of God, the Lord, the gift of God becomes unspeakable to him. As I said to you today, I pray that we find kinship, not with one another, with the saints, in the Holy Spirit today to say has the Lord ever revealed himself to you this way; that he has been so holy above anything you've ever imagined and when he opens up the heavens, he's left you with unspeakableness. As you examine yourself and you see how you're left there, you see that your lips are unclean even to speak of the glory of the Lord and you look around and you see that everyone around you has unclean lips. That's a realization of where we live today, how we live today, in everyone that's

around us for none is worthy but the Lord. None is worthy to be praised but the Lord. Sometimes we spend a lot of time praising man, praising people. Isaiah couldn't. The heavens were opened to him and he saw the Lord, he saw his holiness, and it became unspeakable to him.

"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." So there's our first person as he's revealed the King, the holiness of the King sitting on his throne reigning. Are you in awe? Are you brought to see the King and your unworthiness? In this day of easy-believism, it is so easy, I hear it almost every day of my life about how easy it is to exalt Christ, how easy it is to speak of him, how easy it is to believe in him but that's not the testimony you're going to get from the saints because I put forth to you today in the power of these Scriptures that unless you see the Lord as unspeakable first, you will never be able to speak of truly who he is.

He must be unspeakable to you. What is unspeakable? His holiness. He is reigning. Do you ever feel or are ever brought to that place where you just sit and say, "Lord, there are no words to describe you reigning on your throne." I have seen myself and the ministers of God struggle at times with the words to exalt the Lord and to have those around to say, "Yes, I want to exalt him the same way! I want to see him that way! I want him to show..." It's hard. The Lord must take over your soul and as he did with Isaiah, must empty you of yourself where you're sitting there going, "Lord, I'm unclean. I'm inadequate. I'm unable even to speak of thy goodness. I am unable to speak of your Lordship, your Kingship, your Holiness." Do you want to know what makes this gift unspeakable? That's what it was for Isaiah, it was a powerful vision, revelation, of the holiness of the Lord.

Now let's go to our next saint which is found in Job 40. In Job 38 and 39, the Lord has answered Job out of a whirlwind. This is at the end of the book. After all the false religion he got from man and after at times starting to justify himself, the Lord and I call them chapters but, of course, there were no chapters, he spent some time to speak of the sovereignty of himself, how high he is over creation in 38 and 39, what he has created, what it's for, the glory of himself. And in chapter 40, "Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him?" How great is your knowledge today of the Lord? How great do you think you are in the knowledge and what you've accumulated? How great do you think that is that you can instruct the Lord? I've heard at times people say that, "Oh, I told the Lord this. Or I spoke this to the Lord. I said this to the Lord."

I get a little uncomfortable when I hear those things because the Lord instructs his people and that's what the Lord says here, he said, "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. Then Job answered the LORD, and said," this is Job's answer, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." Do you know what that is, dear ones? That's the fear of God. That's the fear of God put in the soul of his child to look at the Lord reigning, having life and death, the keys of heaven and hell, in his hands. And he is brought to say to the Lord,

"I can't speak. I'm vile. There is nothing in me that can make me reason to the depth of the sovereignty of God." So as the sovereignty is revealed to the child of God, here Job, what is revealed is the depth of the fear of the Lord in Job's soul.

What makes this gift unspeakable? Why is the gift unspeakable? Because the Lord has put a fear in the hearts of his people and as we open our mouths to speak of someone or the Lord himself, how glorious he is, how hard that is to such vile creatures. I know the others who come and fill this pulpit with me feel that very same thing. To get up and say, "Thus saith the Lord," and we be sinful men, to have those sins brought to us by the Holy Spirit over the past week of our unbelief and all the things that are felt, how hard it is to stand and say, "Thus saith the Lord."

It must be all of him. For you and I today to be revealed the fear of the Lord in our soul is truly a gift of the Lord to humble the child of God that way. And as I said, if I had time today, we would read through all that the Lord says that he is, who he is in these chapters, what he's done, how glorious is his work, how much does man not know about the intricacy of life that God has done. We don't know and that's why Job is brought to see the vileness of himself who all this time seemed to be justifying first the Lord and what the Lord was doing, and then himself. But when you're brought to the end of yourself, you're emptied of justifying yourself and you see that the knowledge that you have is inadequate to describe the glory of the Lord.

In chapter 41, he then goes on to describe the depths of what the Lord has created for himself, pictures of evil, pictures of how deep the Lord has done the things that he has, and he brings Job now to chapter 42 and Job answered the Lord and said, "I know that thou canst do every thing." He's brought to the end again after saying, "I'm vile and I can't speak," he sees the Lord high and lifted up and says, "Lord, I know that you can do everything." There is no justifying of self here. There is no looking to self for anything.

There is, "Lord, I know that you can do all things and that no thought can be withholden from thee." Do you ever think that your thoughts could be withholden from the Lord? Do you ever think that those awful and wicked thoughts that you have, the Lord doesn't know them or see them?

"Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not." What is it that he's brought to say? And remember the Lord is unspeakable. That's what Paul said. It's an unspeakable gift. The fear of the Lord is put in our hearts and then we say, "Listen, everything that we've said, we're full of...we don't have the knowledge." That's what he says, "I understood not. I've had a lot of things to say and throughout this book and through these three friends, but do you know what? Do I really know the depth of grace? Do I really know the depth of the Lord in the soul? Do I really know to stand with a surety?"

And Job puts it and he says, "things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me." He is

now being revealed this is the confession of his sin. "What am I going to say to you, Lord? I have nothing to say but I am vile. I am unworthy. I am a sinner."

Then we find the beauty of it in 5 and 6, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear." Haven't we heard the Lord our whole lives? Haven't we heard him preached from this pulpit? Haven't we heard him in our homes? Haven't we heard him in Bible studies? And we have but what makes the Lord in the depth of who he is unspeakable in a holy reverential fear in the child of God's life?

"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." Now I see that you are the divine teacher; that you instruct me in all things. I've sat and I've listened to the wisdom of men, I've sat and I've listened to their instruction and the religious instruction but, Lord, you have brought me to show me that you are knowledge, that your knowledge is pure, your knowledge is true knowledge.

And what is the answer to that again for us? "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." This gift is unspeakable. I said at the beginning we hear a lot of people speak this time of year, we hear about a little baby being born to save the whole world. How much do you hear about the child of God or those out in the world saying, "I abhor myself"? When I get a true glimpse of this gift and what he came for, it makes me abhor myself for sinning against this Lord.

"I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Two saints so far, two of them with similar testimonies of what the revelation of the Lord is in their soul, what it brings them to, an unspeakableness of self or mixture or religion and brought to the end to receive the instruction, to hear what the gift is and the depth of it.

We're not done. Let's go, what about Peter? Let's go over to Luke 5. One thing I used to laugh at when I used to teach the children out at the school when we were going through the Gospels, we always talked about Peter being the one that always had an answer and he did. He was the spokesman. He always had an answer for the Lord, just always seemed to say something, always seemed to be there, always being the one, "O Lord, I won't deny you. Lord, I won't do this. Lord, I'll do this. Lord, I'll do that." Not this time.

Luke 5, we'll begin in verse 4. This is after the Lord had pushed the ships out and sat and taught the people, after instructing the people, "Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." Do you see that kind of a mixture of thought there like, "Lord, listen, I know what you're saying, I know what you've commanded me to do but it's useless, but you are the Master, so I'll do what you say."

"And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw," the power of God, when he saw the power of Christ,

when Peter was revealed by the Holy Spirit the depth of the sin of unbelief, the depth of what just took place and the power of the Lord, Peter saw it, "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me." What words do we have to say? "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." I'm not worthy, Lord, because of my unbelief. When this gift is shown in the power of it, the power in the soul of the child of God, what the Holy Spirit reveals to us is how much we don't believe in the power of the Son of God; how much we lack believing is anything too hard for the Lord; how much we lack in believing that with him all things are possible; how much we lack in believing that we can do all things through him who strengthens us. And when that takes place in the soul, it's not a bubbly run out, "Here, God, I'm gonna go do this for you." It's an announcement of the wretchedness that lies within us and how unworthy we are for the Lord's power to be upon us, to be working in us.

"Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken." One of the fewest times in the Scriptures where you'll see that Peter was brought to not have an answer, not to say, "Lord, I know you did this because of this." We always have an answer, "Oh, well, I can explain that. The moon was over here and, you know, you went over here." No, no, no, no. He saw the power of the Lord and the power of the Lord revealed to him and he said, "Lord, I have no power. I have no strength and without you, Lord, I can do nothing. I've toiled all the night. We've spent all the night fishing. We've done everything in our power."

What about you and I today? Have you ever been brought there where you have done everything in your power? That you've been emptied of yourself and you say, "Lord, the power of what you've done"? Because the power of the Lord reveals to us the wickedness of our unbelief. We say it all the time. I hear some of the saints in here say it and I echo it with them just in amazement of the goodness of the Lord, the power to come in a trial and in affliction, in a situation, "Oh, the goodness of God! How great!" But what does that magnify to us? How much we didn't believe. How much we're dependent upon him to believe. How much we need of his power just to believe.

And as I've said many times from this pulpit, I've read it many times, the saints of old, how they said, how they could not, it would take the power to make a world than it would for them to believe. I always looked at that and I was like, "Oh," but that easy-believism creeps up and, "Oh, well, I can believe. I mean, God's been good to me. I believe in him." But then when we're tried on it, then when that faith that he gives is tried, we see that our faith isn't going to stand and the Lord brings us to the end of ourselves. "Lord, I am a sinful man and, Lord, without you, I will sink into the depths of hell for, Lord, I know you save to the uttermost and, Lord, thy faith tells me that your blood covers a multitude of sin."

The last one I want to go to for saints is Paul, of course, and that's in Acts 9, very familiar for us so I'll try to go through it pretty quickly. Acts 9, "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." Have you ever been there? Now, we know that in the actual meaning of this is that Saul was a persecutor of the

church but have you ever felt these words? Have you ever been angry this way? Have you ever been walking around breathing out threatenings to those around you? Maybe they're family members, maybe they're in here in this room. Have you ever felt that way?

"Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished," the Lord's revelation of himself made Saul tremble and was astonished and he, "said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." What is this? The Lord came in the day of his power to his saint and knocked him off the high-minded horse, his high-mindedness put down right there in front of him, right there destroyed in the very revelation of Jesus. "I am Jesus." And here is Paul breathing out threatenings and everything in his high-mindedness and the Lord comes and knocks him right off of there and throws him to the ground because that's what he does, he brings us to the earth, he brings us down that he must increase that we decrease.

And Saul is left here as the Lord is revealed to him as Lord and Saul looks at him and what can he say? "Who are you?" The Lord reveals himself. "What must I do?" It came upon him, a power came upon him and Paul felt helpless. He went from a great position of power with all authority, "I've got the letters. I'm out doing my will. I'm doing this for the religious world." And now what can he do? Verse 11 tells us he is praying. He told Ananias to go to him, "Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth." Three days. Paul left there for three days. We don't hear anything about what he had to say because now the Lord is revealing the unspeakableness, remember Paul wrote these words, it's our text today, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." And when all of our thoughts and our minds and our high-mindedness comes up and the Lord reveals his greatness and his reigning and his authority, he puts the child of God low and he brings them to pray, "O Lord, what is your will? Lord, what thy will be done."

So here we have four saints, four of them shown in the word of God of how this gift was unspeakable to them. Now, there are many more in the word of God, there are many more places where the people of God were brought to the end of themselves and they couldn't speak and that's what I ask you this morning as we look at this passage, those in here I know are with me, they love this passage and we think on it much and we think about that gift but why is he unspeakable to you? And is he unspeakable to you? It reminds me of the intercession that the Lord makes for his people. I'm so thankful when

the Lord comes with power to show me like he did in these saints, "This is what you are. Without me, you are nothing. Without my power, there you go. You go off in your own way. Without my keeping, there you are, a lost sheep just wandering out to another pasture." He's my Intercessor. He comes to me and he speaks on my behalf.

Romans 8:26-27 says, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." And 27 says, "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." That's our Intercessor. That's Christ. That's what the Holy Spirit reveals to us and I don't even know how to explain that. It's unspeakable to me, to talk about the power of the Holy Ghost in me that testifies of Christ and prays on my behalf in groanings that he utters at the throne of God on my behalf and the Lord Jesus Christ presents those prayers as the perfect Intercessor and the perfect Mediator and the Father hears those prayers because of Christ. Is that not unspeakable to you? Does that not give you a holy awe in your soul? That he left nothing, nothing to chance and nothing to the creature to help or procure or to further or to magnify his salvation?

This gift and, by the way, the definition of a gift is "a present; anything given or bestowed voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation." This is a gift that the Lord God gave to his people and that's why I want to spend a few moments now speaking about this perfect gift. How do I know it's perfect? James tells us in James 1:17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." You know, what's beautiful about that is there is no variableness in him. The same gift of Christ he gave to the Old Testament saints is the same gift of Christ he gives to the New Testament saints which is the same gift of Christ that he gives to us today. The same salvation. There is salvation in no other name given under heaven whereby man must be saved.

Praise be to God for this unspeakable perfect gift. I think about this gift, the humility and the humbling of himself to become made in the likeness of sinful flesh. That's why I say this time of year, this is the time that's set apart but this is life in the children of God year round, to think of the Lord and how unspeakable, to come, who thought it not robbery. I mean, he's in heaven but we don't understand that. We don't understand a place of no sin. We don't understand a place of no persecution. We don't understand a place of no tears. We don't understand of always communing with the Father. He thought it not robbery who was equal with God to come down here and look how, he didn't come as a powerful King-man, he came as a little baby and from the cradle all the way to the grave, he experienced everything for the child of God. For the child of God. For his church. He went first. He came here to save his people from their sins. That's the magnitude of this gift and why it's so unspeakable. We will give gifts this time of year, we will even say words and we'll try to give gifts out of the same love but think about how selfless this gift was, to come down to save his people from their sins and to go through the persecution, to go through the ridicule, and to sit and from the day that he was born to the day that he died, to work out a perfect salvation for his people.

We're told in every way he suffered so that when you and I suffer, he could succor us. We can't look at our Lord and go, "Lord, you never went through this," because he did and he did that for his people. Then when he said, "It is finished," on the cross, he made sure and put it on record that his people knew that in his perfect obedience and in his laying down of his life, that he had wrought, that he had come, that he had shown a perfect salvation for his people. Perfect. Nothing to be added to, nothing to be taken away. Nothing for you and I to do today. It is finished in him. He put an end to the bondage of sin. He put an end to the bondage of the law. He put an end to the bondage of Satan in this world and all the effects that we feel because of our frailty.

How unspeakable is this gift to you today? How unsearchable is his love? How great is his love? And he triumphed over the grave that all of his sheep will experience the power of his resurrection. You know, you and I, we have to experience the power of his resurrection. That's where life is. Yes, he came to live, he came to die that he may live again, that he may defeat death, you know, that thing that Hebrews tells us: all our life we're subject to the fear of death. It is, it's a great specter. It haunts every one of us. But in the resurrection life of Christ we don't have that. In reality we don't. He has put it down. He has put it under his feet. How unspeakable is that? And of course, in his great ascension, to present to the Father the perfect sacrifice, the blood that covers the multitude. And let me just say that three letter word: all. All the sins of his people past, present and future. How great is that gift?

We could go on and on to how unspeakable it is. I think of the words that the Lord said to the woman at the well, John 4:10, "If thou knewest the gift of God." Oh, dear ones, if we only knew the depth of the grace of the gift of God every day of our life. That's the remedy. That is life. If you only knew the gift of God, "and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." That's the fountain that's open for the child of God if only we knew it. O Lord, come with power and show us every day how unspeakable this gift is. Now listen, will it always be unspeakable for you and I? Absolutely not because we praise the Lord for great things he has done and when he shows us the depth of how unspeakable it is, he then looses the lips of the saint to sing praises, to pray praises, to give alms, to do all things in the soul to praise his wonderful name of how the depth and greatness of his grace is, how amazing it truly is.

"For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Isn't that what we saw today? Oh, the wages of sin, it's horrible. Yes, it's death but there is life in Christ for his people. How unspeakable is that gift. "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." May the Lord be pleased this hour and the hours leading up to the day that we celebrate and that all the days after to reveal to us how unspeakable this gift is and give us thanks and praise in our soul for it.

Our text one more time, 2 Corinthians 9:15, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

Dear heavenly Father, may you add thy power and thy clarity and may you search our souls to reveal the depth of thee. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.