

Celebrating God's Gifts: The Gift of Life

Ephesians 2:8-10

INTRODUCTION:

All Stand and Read Scripture

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NASB)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, **it is the gift of God**; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Prayer

ILLUSTRATION:

Bob Hope was one of the great comedians of the last century. As he was getting along in years, he once commented that he'd been reading and was astonished to discover:

- “Today my heart beat over 103,000 times,
- my blood traveled 168 million miles,
- I breathed 23,400 times,
- I inhaled 438 cubic feet of air,
- I ate 3 pounds of food,
- I drank 2.9 pounds of liquid,
- I perspired 1.43 pints of sweat.
- gave off 85.3 degrees of heat.
- generated 450 tons of energy,
- I spoke 4,800 words
- I moved 750 major muscles,
- and I exercised 7 million brain cells.

(Pause)

It's no wonder I'm tired all the time!”

(Pause)

Most of don't realize how intricate and wondrous our bodies really are.

BODY:

I. Our Intricate Bodies.

ILLUSTRATION:

For example: In a **square inch of skin**, you would find:

- 20 blood vessels;
- 65 muscles;
- 78 nerves;
- 78 sensors for heat, 13 for cold, 160 for pressure;
- 650 sweat glands;
- 1300 nerve endings;
- and 19,500,000 cells.
- Then, there's your brain which weighs about three pounds, but stores 100 trillion bits of information over the course of 70 years. It is serviced by about 45 miles of nerves that send impulses through your body as rapidly as 325 miles per hour.
- Your nervous system is so sensitive you are able to feel on your face a pressure that depresses your skin a mere 400,000's of an inch. That is roughly the weight of a bee's wing falling on your cheek.
- Then, there's your ears: A piano has 88 keys, but each of your ears has a keyboard with 1500 keys. They are so finely tuned that you can hear the blood running through your vessels.
- Your eyes are capable of seeing a small candle flame from 30 miles away on a clear, dark night. And can distinguish among more than 300,000 different color variations.
- Your nose can smell one drop of perfume diffused through a 3 room apartment.
- Six billion steps of DNA are contained in a single cell. This DNA can be stretched six feet, but it is coiled up in the cell's nucleus. If all the DNA in the cells in your body were uncoiled, they would stretch 10 billion miles, from here to Pluto and back.

David wrote:

Psalm 139:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ For You formed my inward parts; You **wove** me in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.

Now... I'm sure David didn't realize all of the facts I've just related about our bodies when he penned this psalm. Maybe he was out watching the sheep and happened to glance down at his hands and notice how intriguing they were. I'm not sure... but I do know that something about his body caused him, not only to remark on how fearfully and wondrously made it was, but also to say in the next verse:

Psalm 139:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;

David was so impressed with the wonder of **God's gift of life** that he spoke of it as being "woven together" and here he was using the imagery of a craftsman who skillfully weaves a beautiful and colorful tapestry.

What David is basically saying is this: **“I didn’t just happen... I am not an accident... I have value... I have worth!**

II. We are God's Valued Creation.

Now, David arrives at this conclusion... because he first focused on God.

Look again at the first few verses of Psalm 139.

Psalm 139:1-4 (NASB)

139 O LORD, You have searched me and known *me*.

² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar.

³ You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all.

Now, remember...

David arrived at his conclusion (that he was a valuable individual) because he recognized that he was created by God. It was God that gave his life value. It was God who gave him worth.

And, without God his life had NO VALUE!

ILLUSTRATION:

(Pull a \$20 out my wallet).

This is a \$20 bill. If I would offer it to you today... who would take it? Let me see a show of hands.

(Tear it in Two)... who would take it now?

(Crumpled it) who would take it now?

(Throw it to the ground and stomp on it) – who would take it now?

(Each time most people raised their hands)

(Smile and say): “Too bad, I’m not giving it to you... but why do you want it? This torn, crumpled, dirty piece of paper? (ANSWER: because it still is valuable!)

BUT why is it valuable?

Is the paper of this \$20 bill worth twenty dollars?

Is the ink on this bill worth that much money?

Noooo!...Then why is this piece of paper worth \$20?

BECAUSE, the government of the United States (which created it) says it’s worth \$20. And that is the **ONLY** reason this bill has any kind of value.

Now, I've been told that if I had a powerful enough computer and an efficient enough printer, I could print off an almost identical \$20 bill. So, if I were to get a hold of paper like that which the government uses, and ran off my own \$20 bills and then tried to use them in some of the local businesses...what would happen?

They would arrest me and haul me off to jail! Why? Because I tried to pass it off as if it had value... but it had none.

I could use the same kind of paper and ink as the US government, but, my paper would have no value, because the government didn't create it.

Now... here is where the application sets in.

III. We are a Creation of God.

If God didn't create us (**Point to Them**) (YOU and (**Point to Me**) ME) ,or if you believe God did not create us... then you would have a problem.

Because if God didn't create us (or we didn't believe He did) we have no reason to believe that we had any greater value than anything other living creature. Whether it were the smallest insect or the most disgusting rat in the sewer, we could not claim that we had any value greater than theirs.

ILLUSTRATION:

In America, our society has progressively removed God from its laws and morals. God and His standards have been continuously challenged by humanistic standards and evolutionary teaching. As a result, it is now against the law to kill a baby Eagle or damage its egg... BUT the aborting of a human child is federally endorsed and funded.

An unborn eagle has more value than an unborn child. Why? Because if God hasn't created us, we have no rational foundation to believe there is any difference between the two. Since the eagle is on the endangered list and human baby is not, it would seem that that reasoning is perfectly logical.

When we don't believe that God created us, people begin to believe that people are only **as valuable as they were useful**. If people cease to be useful...they cease to be valuable.

Now, God condemns that type of thinking... because to God - all mankind has value. **Why? (Pause)**. That's right! Because all of mankind has been made in His image.

Genesis 1:27 (NASB)

²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

For that reason, God values all people... especially people that the world would overlook.

James 1:27 (NASB)

²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.

You see: to God all human life has value. And that's especially true of you and I who belong to Jesus Christ.

LISTEN CAREFULLY! Your life is a gift from God to YOU!

- And only **you** have **your** kind of abilities.
- Only **you** have **your** kind of skills.
- Only **you** have the potential that God has built into **you**.

IV. You Are a Gift From God to YOU!

Now, there are those who would say...

(Use blasé voice) “Yeah... I understand this idea that I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. My body is a biological wonder and that God created me... but, you know... I don't feel so valuable. I don't know if – in this gift exchange of life – I got such a great gift. I mean – look at me:

- I'm too old.
- I'm too poor.
- I'm not smart enough.
- I'm not good looking enough.
- I'm not talented enough.
- I'm not... **(well... you fill in the blank).**

I understand that kind of thinking. I mean... some of us are old, weak, and intellectually challenged. But that thinking fails to take into account that our value **doesn't depend upon our strengths**. Our value depends upon our creator. Our worth is increased in direct relation to how much we allow God use us.

Throughout Scripture, when God wanted something done, He used the weak to accomplish His will.

1 Corinthians 1:27-28 (NASB)

²⁷ but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,

ILLUSTRATION:

Have you ever bought a gift for a child on Christmas and watched as they unwrapped it? They open up the box... and there's this great toy. It has all kinds of buttons and switches. It's a wonder of electronic wizardry... and then the child turns it on... and nothing happens!

Why? Because you forgot to put in the batteries. In fact, you don't have any batteries in the house. Now, your child sits there with this marvelous, wonderful toy with all kinds of potential and it can't do anything, all because you lack the power to turn it on. It was so simple to put in the batteries... but you overlooked it because it was so obvious.

The power for us as Christians... (that which gives us value and real worth) is attained upon the simple act of putting His power inside our lives. We put that power inside of us by:

- Spending time in prayer.
- Spending the time to seek out His will in Bible study.
- Deliberately deciding to put God at the center of our lives.
- AND... believing that **WHEN** God is ready, He will use **US** to make a difference!

You see... God isn't **finished** with you yet.

- He has created you to do something very special.
- He has designed you with a unique purpose in mind.
- BUT, it is only when you lay hold of His power and wait patiently for His guidance that you realize your full potential.

You have got to remember that some of the greatest heroes of Scripture were **flawed...until God finished His work in their lives!**

- Moses stuttered.
- King David had an affair.
- Abraham was too old.
- Noah was a deserter.
- David was too young.
- Paul had a "thorn in the flesh".
- Thomas was a doubter.
- Peter was a denier.
- And Lazarus (**Pause for Effect**) well...HE was dead!

If God could do great things with men and women like these, what do you think He could do with you?

Remember our opening scripture?

Ephesians 2:10 (NASB)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

CONCLUSION:

God has given you a **great gift** in the life that you live, and He intends to give you even **greater gifts** in the potential that your life can have!

God Be with You till We Meet Again

God be with you till we meet again, By His counsels guide uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you, God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet...Till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet...Till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.