

Celebrating God's Gifts: An Eternal Life with God

Romans 6:16-23

INTRODUCTION:

All Stand and Read Scripture

Romans 6:16-23 (NASB)

¹⁶ Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. ²² But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Prayer

We are completing a series entitled "Celebrating God's Gifts". We have looked at several gifts from God. The difference between God's gifts and worldly gifts is the extreme value of His gifts and their eternal value.

Let's review the gifts that we have covered in this series.

1) The Gift of Life.

Your life is a gift from God to YOU! Without God, we would not exist!

Too often we look at ourselves and feel inadequate to serve God.

- 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 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.

- 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**.

CONSIDER THIS! You are exactly as God created you and prepared you to be for your good works! Let Him use YOU to accomplish His work. **JUST AS YOU ARE!** He can use your weakness to accomplish His work.

2) The Gift of Sparing Mankind.

Man fell in sin in the Garden of Eden and was spiritually separated from God. Many years later, evil had so corrupted the earth that God was considering destroying his own creation. But one righteous man and his family stood between destruction and preservation. That righteous man was Noah. Because of the righteousness of Noah and his obedience to build an ark, mankind was spared from the flood that destroyed all life on earth.

3) The Gift of Peace.

“Peace with God” in essence means to be reconciled back to God. It means the barriers that separated us from God, like our sin, our worldly life, and God’s perfect holiness have all been removed by the person and work of Jesus Christ. When you open up this **gift** from God you can rest assured that His judgment will not fall on you.

With God's peace we are no longer afraid of death. When our loved ones die in Christ, we do not sorrow as the world sorrows because we know that their **real** life is just beginning. You can go to bed at night with peace in your heart that if you should die in the night everything will be alright when you face the Lord on the Judgment Day.

4) The Gift of God's Son.

John 3:16-17 (NASB)

16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

God sent His son to live a sinless life as man and to die on the cross for our sins. It is only because of this **great gift** to those who accept His son that we can ever be reconciled back to God. This gift is given to us by the grace of God's son. There is no amount of good works that we can do free ourselves from the bondage of sin. Although we are sinners, Christ took on our sins so we can stand blameless before God on Judgment Day!

5) The Gift of Inherited Benefits.

With God there is no black or white. Either we are a slave to sin which leads to eternal destruction or we are obedient to God which leads to righteousness and eternal life with God. We are either with God or against God. There is no in between, no gray area.

When we accept Christ in our life, we are promised some incredible gifts.

- a) The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives to help us make the correct decisions in our life and intercede for us with God.
- b) We are promised that we will be adopted as a true child of God.

- c) If we are a child of God, then we are also heirs to His Kingdom. We continue to live in this world of sin, but we are no longer slaves to the bondage of sin. We are now a slave for Christ.

Now we will look at our final gift, **eternal life in heaven** in the presence of God.

We have just entered into 2016. Many people have made New Year's resolutions. I suspect that some have already broken that resolution.

One article has listed the top five New Year's Resolutions in reverse order as:

#5: stop smoking.

#4: make more money.

#3: improve relationships.

#2: exercise more.

#1 and the most popular New Year's resolution...losing weight.

All these resolutions are saying one thing: I want to be different than I am. I want to gain control of an area of my life. And, if I could just get control of this one part of my life... I could be truly happy. I could be a new person.

The problem, of course with New Year's resolutions are that they are rarely effective. Somewhere along the line, our resolve to keep those resolutions gets buried under the pressure of time and our own lack of will power.

This morning, I would like to suggest a resolution **that not only should be, but MUST BE** number one on all of our lists.

That resolution would be **to get right with God!** Because, unless Jesus comes back first, you will die. **The mortality rate for humans is 100%** and if your name is NOT WRITTEN IN THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE when you face God on Judgment Day, you have failed to fulfill the very purpose of your life. My intention today is to help you understand God's Gift of Eternal Life with Him and how to be ready for that day!

Let's look again at the final verse in today's scripture reading.

Romans 6:23 (NASB)

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Folks, "This is Judgment day!" All of us will appear before the judgment seat of Christ and give account of ourselves.

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Hebrews 9:27-28 (NASB)

²⁷ And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment, ²⁸ so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.

Our text tells us...one day everyone....great and small will stand before the throne. The dead will be judged according to what they have done.

As I mentioned earlier, the mortality rate for all humans is 100%. If Christ does not come first, we will all die. **But know this! Physical death in this life is not the end!** It is just the beginning. There is an eternity for every single person, after this life. When Christ returns again each and every person will appear before the judgment seat of Christ. What we do in this life determines our destiny for eternity.

BODY:

I. Our Purpose in Life.

As I mentioned earlier, our number one goal in our life is **to get right with God!** The scriptures tell us that if your name is NOT WRITTEN IN THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE when you face God on Judgment Day, you have failed to fulfill the very purpose of your life. You have failed to become a child of God.

Matthew 24:37-42 (NASB)

³⁷ For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women *will be* grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.

⁴² "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

Matthew tells us that just like in the days of Noah, men will be doing the same old things. They will be eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.

While none of these things are bad in themselves, the problem was that mankind in Noah's time was living life without giving any thought to God.

We can look around us today we see the same thing. Life is going on as usual. The world appears to be in chaos. **I think to myself, how could be people in Noah's day be any worse than we are now!** The world is rampant in corruption and immorality. The condition of our world today could very well be like the days of Noah. This is a sign of the second coming of Christ.

When we look at the world today, it may appear to us that the world is **falling apart**. No doubt God sees it as a fulfillment of prophecy **coming together!**

So what does Matthew tell us to do to be ready for Christ's second coming?

Matthew 24:42 (NASB)

⁴² “Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

Be on the alert! We must accept Christ into our life and live for Him. Do not be confused. We are not saved by our works, we are saved by the grace of God. We work for God, not because it is the means for our salvation, but because we are so grateful for His act of love on the cross to take on our sins. If you do not serve Christ, then you do not love Christ.

If we are a child of God, we will do His work.

John 10:27-28 (NASB)

²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

Do you hear God's voice and follow Him? That is what it means to be READY!

II. The Second Coming.

Matthew 24:36-41 (NASB)

³⁶ “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. ³⁷ For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women *will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.*

Christ is coming again! We must be ready!

A quick side note.

According to the Rapturists, who is left behind? The GOOD are taken, the BAD are left behind.

Who were the ones eating and drinking? THE EVIL! They are referred to by the plural word "they". Noah is singular. So who are the "they" who were eating and drinking? THE EVIL!

So WHO were taken away by the flood? THE EVIL!

If the coming of the Son of Man is like Noah's flood, when two men are in the field and two women are at the mill and one is taken and one is left, who would be the one taken? THE EVIL!

Jesus gave a parable about the tares among the wheat in **Matthew 13:29-43**. It also indicates that the tares (the unrighteous) are gathered up and burned **then** the angels will gather the wheat (the righteous).

III. The Gift of Heaven.

Revelation 21:10-11,22-27 (NASB)

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.

²² I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵ In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; ²⁶ and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; ²⁷ and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, **but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

The beauty must have been overwhelming! Did you notice **WHO** would be able to be in heaven in the presence of God? **Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life!**

- For those of us who are still working hard and sweating in the sun for a paycheck;
- For those of us who have to provide food and drink for our families;
- For those of us who have to deal with family problems, unruly children, or ailing parents;
- the next description of heaven gives us hope!

Revelation 7:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.”

- For all of us who are seeing many of our loved ones in our generation passing away;
- For those of us who are noticing that we are getting older;
- For those of us who find it harder to physically get out of bed in the morning;
- For those of us who are struggling to get all the things done during the day;
- the next description of heaven gets even more exciting everyday!

Revelation 21:3-4 (NASB)

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, **or pain**; the first things have passed away.”

Can you IMAGINE! **No hunger, thirst, pain, sorrow, or death! AND**, we will be in the presence of **GOD!!!** In a place prepared for His **Faithful**. A place that is so beautiful that words cannot describe it!

This is the GIFT that God will give to all who accept His son and remain faithful!

How GREAT are the gifts of God! How could we NOT RESOLVE to receive them!

CONCLUSION:

Is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life?

One day we will all appear before the judgment throne of Christ. He and He alone will determine the eternal destination of every person.

We have all sinned. There is no amount of good that we can do to erase that sin. The scriptures tell us that we must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God, and obey His commandments for salvation. We are saved by the grace of God. We do not deserve to be made blameless before God, but Christ died on the cross, so that we could be found blameless before Him on Judgment Day. Our sins are covered by His blood and wiped away.

- No one will go to Hell because they've lied, because we've all lied.
- No one will go to Hell because they've cheated, because we've all cheated.
- If we've not physically murdered someone, we've killed people in our hearts with hate.
- If we've not committed adultery, we have lusted in our hearts.

There is a Savior who died for all these sins!

The LOST will be eternally separated from God NOT because they sinned, but because they rejected their Savior!

Today, you can make the most important **resolution** of your life!. You can accept Him as your Savior, turn to Him in faith, be buried with Him in baptism into death and rise to walk in new life through His indwelling Spirit. This allows you to start your eternal life with God right now! Through your obedience to Christ's commands and your new walk with Him, your name will be recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

I encourage you to allow Christ to make you righteous before God by stepping forward this morning during our invitation hymn.

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.