

The Greatest Gift

Today, we're discussing the greatest gift to the greatest number at the greatest _____ for the greatest benefit. We're looking at the _____ of Jesus Christ. We want to focus on the one thing on which we can _____, the written Word of God. The Scriptures have stood the _____ of time as God's holy and true message. It contains God's truth, God's love, God's commandments, God's promises, and God's warnings. We can get what God desires and what He's doing by _____ into His Word. This is why we continually go to the Scriptures. We want to _____ what God has to say.

We may receive many gifts, but we have no gift as _____ as the gift of Jesus Christ Himself. Everything He is and did profoundly affects us all. Because of Him, our _____ are more blessed, richer, purer, and kinder. From Him we have faith, hope, and love. Jesus was indeed unique and _____ to us what no one else could give. He opened the _____ to forgiveness, to the church, and to hope beyond the grave. The Lord gave us God's Word, paid for our sins with His blood, rose from the dead, and built His church kingdom.

Second Corinthians 8:9 says, "For you know the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." Because of His _____, we're spiritually rich indeed. Every spiritual gift in the heavenly places can be found in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3). Where would be without Jesus? We'd be immeasurably _____ spiritually and any other way. No one has impacted this _____ with greater morals and values than the Son of God, Christ Jesus. This world cannot do without Him, and you cannot do without Him either.

Our reading today comes from the Gospel According to John 3:16-21.

I love beautiful hymns sung with hearts filled with love and praise. I'm grateful to the church at Edmond for decades of singing lovely hymns that encourage our souls.

Jesus Christ challenges us to _____ ourselves, to take up our crosses daily and follow Him. We realize this is a great, and life-changing commitment. Christ wants you to _____ your heart and change your life. The blessings He offers to those who _____ Him, however, is greater than we can ask or imagine. Yes, we must count the cost of following Christ; but we must also look to the _____ of our high calling. Why should we follow Jesus? Let's examine these reasons.

First, we should follow Him because of His great _____. Though you and I have been loved by family and friends, we can't find a greater love than the love shown to us by the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our _____ on the cruel cross. No one else has died for our sins, and no one else could. He showed us the love of God and _____ we should love God. First Peter 3:18 says, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might _____ us to God." Our sins separated us from God, but the love of Christ opened the door for us to be _____ with God, so that we could live with Him forever.

Though we were once in sin, He lovingly and sacrificially made it possible for us to be at _____ with God through the blood of the cross. Colossians 1:21-22 describes what He did: "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his

Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.

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_____, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.” Through love and sacrifice, He brought us to God holy and blameless.

Second, we should follow Him because He brought us the _____. John 1:17 says that “grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.” Jesus described the blessing of the truth in John 8:32, “and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you _____.” The truth gives us the standard by which we can _____ what is right and wrong, what is moral and immoral, what is good and evil. We need this standard to _____ what we should be and what we should do rather than to fall for lies and wickedness. The Lord Jesus told Pilate, “You say correctly that I am a _____. For this I have been born, and for this I’ve come into the world, to testify to the truth. And everyone who is of the _____ hears My voice” (John 18:37). Are you listening to the voice of Jesus?

Peter explains how the truth purifies us and causes us to be born again, “Having purified your _____ by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you’ve been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding _____ of God; for ‘All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains _____.’ And this word is the good news that was _____ to you” (1 Peter 1:23-25). If we want to know the truth, then we must _____ to the words of Jesus found in Scripture.

Third, He is the One who can give us the _____ of sins. Few things in life are as troublesome as a _____ conscience. A guilty conscience punishes us and pierces our _____. It shames us to know that we’ve done something _____. We regret what we’ve done, we feel dirty inside, and we long for a _____ conscience. First Peter 2:24 says, “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might _____ to sin and _____ to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” The wounds of Christ _____ our souls and spirits through forgiveness. Forgiveness means God no longer counts our sins against us; that we’re _____ from the guilt and consequences of our sins.

When God through Christ forgives us, God no longer sees us as we _____ were. Before our forgiveness we couldn’t inherit the _____ of God or live in heaven with God. In forgiveness, however, “you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the _____ of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). Through Christ God washed us and made us clean; God sanctified us and made us _____; God justified us and declared us righteous. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, “For our sake he [that is, God] made him [that is, Christ] to be sin who knew no sin [Christ knew no sin], so that in him [in Christ] we might _____ the righteousness of God.” What a blessing it is to be forgiven! What a blessing to be free from sin!

Fourth, He opened the door to the _____, the family of God. Jesus built the church (Matthew 16:18); He purchased it with His own _____ (Acts 20:28). Paul described the church as “the household of God” and “the pillar and support of the _____” (1 Timothy 3:15). While the church is made up of fallible humans, it is perfectly and infallibly designed by the _____ of God. It is God’s household or family. As God’s family, it’s filled with people who _____ God and want to live holy and loving lives. I’ve seen lives changed, hearts softened, and great sacrifices from those who call themselves Christians. They love, because Christ loved them. They give, because Christ gave to them. They serve, because Christ served them. There’s no greater privilege than to _____ in the family of God.

Sadly, not everyone who calls himself a Christian lives the _____ a Christian should live. Some never _____ to love, or to forgive, or to serve as Christ did. Some fall victim to every kind of _____. Yes, some lust after the flesh, lust after the eye, and fall to the pride of life. If we see _____

the weaknesses in the church however, we'll miss the good, the service, and the love found in so many others. If you call yourself a Christian and then act like you never knew Christ, you need to examine yourself and _____.

Fifth, Christ has given us a righteous way of life that is filled with _____. First Peter 2:21-23 says, "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an _____, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no _____, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he didn't revile in return; when he suffered, he didn't threaten, but he continued entrusting himself to him who judges righteously." As Christians, we are called to _____ in the steps of Jesus Christ. Jesus never sinned and never deceived others.

While we can't be perfectly sinless as He was, we should _____ to live godly lives and to speak the truth. We must keep our eyes focused on Jesus and doing the _____ of God. Hebrews 12:1-2 says, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which _____ so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the _____ that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Jesus led the way in doing the will of God, and we must not allow circumstances and sin to keep us from _____ with endurance in our journey to do the will of God.

Sixth, we should follow Him because He is the Way to _____ life. The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. And no one _____ to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). The Lord Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well of the great _____ of eternal life. He said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will _____ be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a _____ of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:13-14). If we wish to have eternal life, then we must not only believe in but also _____ the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:36 clearly says, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; and whoever does not _____ the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." John 5:12 says, "Whoever has the Son has life; and whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

What does it mean to have eternal life? It means that there will be _____ beyond that will last forever and ever. The words of Jesus are the words of eternal life, and this is why we must _____ in Him and in what He says. Jesus said, "And this is eternal life, that they _____ you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). Eternal life means we have a relationship with the only true God and His Son Jesus. He is our Father in heaven, and we become His children.

Seventh, He promised us a place in the heavenly Father's _____. The Lord Jesus encouraged the apostles on the night before His death, "Let not your _____ be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's _____ are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come _____ and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I'm going" (John 14:1-3).

The Lord Jesus is now in heaven preparing a _____ for those who believe in Him, who love Him, and who follow Him. That place is in the Father's _____. We've been kept in His heart, and now we can live in His house _____. He prepared a place for each one who _____ in Him. Peter described that place, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he's caused us to be born again to a _____ hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by

God's _____ are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5). Just think of it, a place prepared for us and kept in heaven that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading! What a blessing!

This great gift is yours, if you'll take _____ of Jesus Christ. This gift is free, but it isn't _____. It's not a gift to be taken lightly, to be forgotten, or to be forsaken. God won't bargain with you; He offers life according to His own _____. He's God, and we aren't. He gives His gift as He wills, and we can't expect to receive it by following our _____ will and ignoring His teaching and commandments. We can't substitute our way of salvation for His way. We must be wise to hear Him and act according to His words.

God is the greatest giver; Jesus Christ is the greatest gift; that gift is offered to all, the greatest number; and eternal life is the greatest blessing for the greatest amount of time. No gift can _____. Amazingly, God offers this gift for _____. Romans 6:23 says "the wages of sin is _____, but the free gift of God is eternal _____ in Christ Jesus our Lord." Revelation 22:17 calls us to take hold: "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires to take the water of life without price." Jesus Christ paid the great _____ of salvation from sin, so He could offer it to you freely.

Will you accept it? Why wouldn't you choose eternal life? I've known some who thought sinful _____ was a great gift, but the flesh doesn't last. I've known some who thought _____ were the greatest prize, but you can't take your money with you when you die. I've known some who were so _____ of the life they had, they wouldn't think of following Jesus. They won't deny themselves, take up their crosses daily, or follow Him.

If you wish to follow Him, then trust in Him and believe what He teaches. Stop trusting in your own ways and turn to the truth. Turn from your sins and from selfishness. Out of love confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be baptized into Christ. When you are baptized, God cleanses you and sets you free. He makes you His child and adds you to His church. When you meet God's conditions, trusting what God instructs, God blesses you with salvation. Won't you put your trust in Him and let Him bless you? God is looking to bless you and give you eternal life.

So focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everyone needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one.