

# “Gifts From God!”

## Ephesians 3:14-19

**Intro.** – True story is told of a young man in war. As a wounded victim, this boy had his right hand completely shot off during combat. When the chaplain asked if he could write to someone at home to tell them he had lost his arm, the young man replied, “Sir, not to be disrespectful, but, I didn’t lose it, I gave it.”

What a great illus. of one’s devotion/love. By speaking of his right arm as a *gift*, this young man was expressing his love for home/freedom. You see love means far more than the shallow, often smutty meaning the world gives to it. Love means giving, whether that be giving of one’s self, or even discipline when needed.

All of this brings me to this point. We can know without a doubt that God loves man how? By the quality of gifts He has given to you and me. But another timely question to ask at this point is – Do we recognize the greatness of God’s love for us through these gifts?

Illus. – A recent appeal by a famous neurological institute asked medical doctors to bequeath their brains for research. The appeal ended as follows: “Any contributions, however small, will be gratefully appreciated.”

Illus. – Someone to whom I don’t know to be able to credit wrote the following:

God made the sun – it gives.  
God made the moon – it gives.  
God made the stars – they give.  
God made the air – it gives.  
God made the clouds – they give.  
God made the sea – it gives.  
God made the trees – they give.  
God made all the animals – they give.  
God made man – he...

*Purpose: to see through these three gifts just how much God really loves you and me*

## I THE CROSS (TELLS US HE GAVE HIS SON FOR US)

### A. Christ Really Did Die

1. Make no mistake about it – the suffering Jesus experienced, as recorded in Scripture, was real...
2. Jesus wasn’t a phantom, apparition, or figment of one’s imagination...
3. Jesus was/is all God/all man – God in the flesh... Emmanuel!
4. During His life... ministry up to and including the Cross was tempted: Hebrews 4:15 *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.”*
5. The “experience” of the Cross was real – the record makes clear Christ died “suffering”... suffering beyond anything any person (man or woman) has ever experienced.
  - Illus. – Ben Franklin on his death bed requested a picture of Christ on the Cross placed so he could see it. *“I want to look upon the form of the Silent Sufferer.”*

### B. Why Christ Had to Die

1. Not for any sin (wrong/violation) of the Law He had done...
2. He died to pay for the punishment of your sin, my sin – our sin (1 Corinthians 15:3 *“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”*)
3. He died NOT because we were good... but because we needed a Savior – Romans 5:7-9 *“Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinner, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through Him!”*
4. Bottom line? – We are indebted... We owe big time!...
  - a. Illus. – Churchill giving tribute Royal Air Force, “Never in the history of mankind have so many owed so much to so few.”
  - b. think of Christ and the Cross = never in history of mankind has everyone owed so much to One!

The Cross = God's gift to us!

## II THE BOOK (GOD'S PERFECT REVELATION TO US)

- βιβλιος = "book" = God's *holy book* to you and me... why such a precious gift?:

### A. God's Word is TRUTH

1. Live in times where this holds little if any significance to most people
  - a. age of no absolutes... pragmatism rules... do your own thing is the rule...
  - b. illustrations of this abound... especially in politics... remember recent President who said his private life has no bearing on his qualifications to be Chief Executive...
2. Truth is alive and well:
  - a. John 17:17 "*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*" = God's Word is absolute = sure... complete... everything we need to know to accomplish God's will...
  - b. John 8:32 "*Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*" = from confusion, doubt, fear... = from sin...
3. We don't have to grope in the dark – light is available through His perfect, complete, final revelation...

### B. God's Word CANNOT BE BROKEN

1. John 10:35 "*...Scripture cannot be broken...*"
2. Means this marvelous book from God is steadfast and sure – every promise in the book is MINE!
3. Romans 10:17 "*Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*" -- our trust, understanding and commitment to serve stems from God's Word = such faith cannot be broken!

What a marvelous gift from God – His Word, the HOLY BOOK, reveals all we need revealed to us!

## III THE CHURCH (A BODY IN WHICH TO WORSHIP AND SERVE)

- Illus. – got this idea from a good preaching friend of mine. It has to do with over the phone solicitations... I'll give if you give...: "I'm glad you called. Right now I'm helping to keep several colleges open who train preachers, missionaries and workers in local churches. I'm also sending funds to reach students on several secular campuses. I'm helping support a Christian service camp, starting new churches in Europe and the East Coast, translating of the Bible into languages of remote tribes of people, and supporting a Christian college in Africa. I help with any disasters that might hit at home or around the world. I am also involved with the support of three children's homes, the publishing of a monthly Christian magazine, care for girls with unwanted pregnancies, and the support of a home providing for the care of the elderly. The reason I'm glad you called is that I need help with all of this and am trying to get others to help. What kind of donation can I count on from you?"

### A. More Than a Building

1. Acts 2:47 "*...And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*"
2. It's not a club or some social function. Nor is it a community co-op – the Church is the family of God brought and molded together by no One less than God Himself!

### B. The Body of Christ

1. By this is meant, the local church is His flesh and blood doing His will in this world... Rather than selective hearing we can have "selective living"...
2. Divine pattern and purpose... church is God's chosen means of bringing men to Christ...
3. Purchased with the blood of Christ, there is no greater, worthwhile and important institution!
4. What a joy and privilege to reflect such sentiment to the community and world around us!!!

### C. Our Expression of Faith

1. Purchased by blood of Christ and empowered by His Spirit = His Church has one purpose = win those who are lost and build up those who are won already.
2. Are you “on purpose?” – are you tracking with the purpose of His Church? Are you expressing faith?  
- Illus. – little boy wanted \$100... mother told him to pray to God. Prayed but nothing; so, decided he should write letter requesting \$100. When postal authorities received the letter addressed to God, they decided to send it to the President. The President was impressed and amused, instructed his secretary to send the little boy a check for \$5, thinking this would appear to be a lot of money to a little boy. Little boy delighted, sat down and wrote thank you letter to God:  
“Dear God:  
Thank you very much for sending me the money. I noticed you had to send it through Washington. As usual, those bums deducted \$95.”
3. Church is where you, your friends, family and neighbors can visibly see and experience this marvelous gift given by God

Though imperfect because you and I make it up, the church is one of God’s greatest gifts ever given!

**Conclusion:** In review of these gifts: we see them as gifts of meaning, value, concern, importance and gifts that will stand the test of time. After viewing these gifts is there any doubt that God loves you?

The real question is this: do you love Him? Are you willing to accept His gift of grace and have you? What are you doing in response to such gifts? Are you giving Him first place in your life... in your marriage... in your home? Do your kids know who the Lord of your life is? Just how grateful are you when it comes to these three precious gifts from God?

**“I Surrender All”**  
**All to Jesus, I surrender,**  
**All to Him I freely give.**  
**I will ever love and trust Him,**  
**In His presence, daily live.**