

I'm a little nervous today. It is, of course, our first service in this new structure. Each person's seat may or may not provide the properly conditioned air. We've got lots of new tech, even live streaming. So, that among other things, has brought some nerves about it all working out. Then, of course, I've had some nerves related to – what should I preach the first Sunday in here! You know, looking at how nice everything is, maybe I should preach on Giving! We gotta pay for this stuff! We aren't going to do that!

I would like to say though, that when the plans first came together for this building, the budget was beyond reach. What it would have taken to fund this, renovate the old, support the local guy, and the outside guys was out of our reach. But our elders made a decision – we will pray, encourage folks to come, and trust God... and NOT preach on giving! In 22 months I've not preached a single giving sermon.

It says something about you, that now, just a year and a half later, we have this taken care of, can begin renovations immediately, continue to support the Emerson family, cut support to no one outside, and have sent funds to needy saints and preacher along the way – just based on your un compelled generosity.

Now then, before we get too excited – I am going to preach on giving in two months! But it won't be “dig deeper, we gotta pay for this stuff.” It will be: “we have this, us, taken care of, so here are the new names of a few preachers and their wives and kids that we can help if we find a way to contribute regularly to that cause.”

But not today. No sermon on giving. In fact, I want to talk a few minutes about the opposite. Let's talk about RECEIVING! People tend to like that more. Haha. We understand the need to give, but getting thing: yes please!

More specifically, I want to invite you to Receive Gifts from God. He made you for the purpose of blessing you. I went through a New Testament search last week and looked for every place where people were to RECEIVE things from the Giving God. There were a couple of dozen passages, but it comes down to 5 Things.

- 1) **Eternal Life** – *1 Corinthians 9:25; Hebrews 10:34-29* – He created you to save you. He wants to place an imperishable prize, an eternal wreath on your hand. He wants to preserve you with Him forever.
- 2) **His Great Grace** – *Hebrews 4:16; Romans 5:17* – He wants to shower you with mercy, tenderness that you do not deserve. He wants to bless you beyond expectation and give you the gift of being righteous.
- 3) **Forgiveness of Sins** – *Acts 26:18; Acts 2:38* – He extends that mercy and opens the doorway to eternity by first taking ours sins away. He wants to give you purity, peace and a future without your sins.
- 4) **A Spiritual Family** – *Galatians 4:4-7; Mark 10:29-30* – We enter into His family. God becomes our benefactor Father, and we His children. And then, a family. Bound together as His children.
- 5) **Answered Prayers** – *Matthew 21:20-22; James 1:5-8* – God wants to give gifts specific to people's lives. He wants to answer prayers (according to His will) and help you through daily challenges!

What if God came to you, this very day, and said, “We both know you don't deserve any of these gifts. But because I made you and want to bless you, I will allow you to choose ONE of them. Choose wisely.” Which one would you choose? It would be hard right? Maybe we'd say “Eternal Life.” But what good is that without God's grace, we might end up with an eternity somewhere else. If we choose forgiveness, our load of grief would be lighter, but to what end, if eternity with God wasn't secured. If we choose grace but had no Christian family, what good would that peace be all alone? God did not do that. He didn't give you one or two. He did not make you choose. God offered you every single one of these things, and the hundreds of beautiful little daily gifts that grow out of each of them. He put them all together and gave you ONE GREAT, GIFT.

I trust you desire the Greater Gifts of God. You know, when it comes to Receiving Gifts, you always have to ask three questions. And I think we've covered the first two thoroughly:

- 1) **What Gifts are being Offered?**
- 2) **Do I desire to Possess Them?**

But there is one more question that must be asked. Without it, we have empty dreams.

- 3) **How do I Receive These Gifts?**

Ahh, you didn't think they would just appear in your life because you wanted them. Receiving from God is much like receiving among others. They may be some action, some conditions, some expending of energy to go get, or take in, or qualify for even the most amazing of gifts.

So, among the more important questions to consider: what exactly does God want me to do to live my life, every single day, carrying with me this set of Blessings?!?! We've actually already seen the answer to this. We have read from 10 passages today. In each one we aren't just told what God wants to give us, we are told what God requires of us to receive it.

1. Eternal Life – (*1 Cor. 9:25* – **Self-Control**) (*Hebrews 10:36* – **Endurance**)
2. Grace – (*Heb. 4:16* – **Confidence**) (*Romans 5:1* – **Faith**)
3. Forgiveness – (*Acts 26:28* – **Repent**) (*Acts 2:38* – **Baptism**)
4. Family – (*Galatians 3:27-29* – **Faith/Baptism**) (*Mark 10:29-30* – **Sacrifice**)
5. Answered Prayers – (*Matt. 21:20-22* – **Faith**) (*James 1:5-8* – **Faith**)

Okay, let me ask a similar question with this list. If God came down and said, "Pick one of these" which would you choose. Well, the religious world, and even some of our own, would jump on that: I Choose Faith! And there are people who live with little more than belief in God. Others might say, "Baptism" – a one time event.

But how can that work? How can we choose one or two of the requests of God, and then expect to receive all of the gifts? Firstly, one of these exists to stimulate and support the other. Faith without confidence would be hollow. Sacrifice without baptism would be disconnected to Christ's sacrifice.

What I want you to see is that WE ALL WANT THE WHOLE LIST OF GIFTS! One or two won't do. What God wants is for you to give Him all of a very simple list of things to receive them. One or two won't do.

Let's keep in mind, the GIFTS are infinitely greater and more amazing than the REQUIREMENTS. We all know that. Or do we? If we all knew that we would easily, willingly, and right now do all that He asks and more.

**Hebrews 12:28-29** – Attitude towards these lists is everything. Receive the Kingdom. The unshakeable kingdom. By becoming a servant, a reverent servant of God. How?

Have Faith in His Majesty  
Repent of the Sin in your Life  
Be Baptized to Unite with Jesus  
Live with Sacrifice and Self-Control  
Live with Confidence and Endurance.

And, live with, Answered Prayers, A Christian Family, Forgiveness of Sins, Daily Gracious Favor, and Heaven. Who wants that? What will you do to get it?