

Audio Teaching Sermon

Message #32

God’s Gift is an Offering

[A Intro – Pastor Jefferson 0:00 thru 1:20]

Hey faithful listeners and hearers of the word of the LORD. This is Pastor Jefferson here and I’d like to welcome you to **Message #32** of this audio teaching series. Today we are going to finish up with our ongoing discussion as to how Jesus delivered the words of the **New Testament** over to us. In the last message I was highlighting the differences between modern **Christians** and **Gnostics**. If I had to make any statement regarding each camp’s beliefs, I would have to say about both of them, “*Close, but no cigar.*” Modern day Christians largely believe salvation can come without having an intimate relationship with Jesus. They believe that the relationship can and will develop *after* the moment of salvation. And the Gnostics believe only those who have been empowered with special dispensation of the Word of God can achieve salvation, again without having an intimate relationship with Jesus. In each case, both are bypassing the critical role of God’s Holy Spirit. This is precisely how Satan operates. He gets us close but winds up denying Jesus in some manner.

[B Grace is What Saves Us 1:20 thru 2:48]

Instead of focusing on the true meaning of God’s word, they instead emphasize behaviors which are generally either irrelevant to Biblical living or even directly contradict what Scripture says. That’s why most sermons coming out of the pulpits of today sound more like *motivational speeches* rather than Biblical teaching. As I have said, I attended services for 30 years and didn’t really learn very much of what I needed to hear. Ask yourself—are you attending church every week because you just can’t wait to hear the message being delivered from the pulpit? Or are you present each week because you have a job somewhere within the church? You might be an usher, maybe you are the piano or organ player, you could be someone who sings in the choir or you’re there providing security for the parishioners. I am not saying that volunteering for such tasks isn’t important—as clearly it does help the cause of Christ. But these actions have zero impact on a person’s salvation. As **Paul** said, in **Ephesians 2:8**, ¹ “*For by grace are we saved*” ² *through faith,* ³ *and not of yourselves;* ⁴ *it is the gift of God.*”

[**C** Our Merit is Not the Answer 2:48 thru 4:30]

A lot of folks can easily quote this verse, but few understand what it is really saying. Grace is what saves us—sure. We are indeed saved by grace. But what gets us to the point of receiving that grace? The *Greek* word we see for **grace** is *KHAR-ih-tee* and means **‘favor, blessing or gratitude.’** And furthermore, we know it brings with it the idea of *unmerited or unearned* favor. When we look up the word **merit**, we find it is defined as **‘spiritual credit held to be earned by the performance of righteous acts as a way to ensure future benefits.’** So, salvation cannot be earned by us. The book of **Psalms** in **14:3** says, ¹ “There is none who does good, ² not even one.” Paul was quoting this **OT** verse when he said the same thing in **Romans 3:10**. So, clearly our personal merit isn’t the answer here. But we also know that God doesn’t just hand out salvation to everyone. This idea makes having a Bible superfluous. If it were true, then there would be no need to preach the Gospel or to make disciples. And, neither does God pass out salvation to anyone just for the mere asking. There must be some additional criteria which have to be considered.

[**D** Favor, Gratitude & Blessing 4:30 thru 5:56]

We discussed this word *KHAR-ih-tee* back in **message 14**. Back then we were discussing how the definition of the word in **Luke 2:52** told us the boy Jesus continued to advance in wisdom, maturity and in favor with God. Notice the word **favor** in the definition of the *Greek* word for **grace**. It is defined as **‘friendly regard shown toward another especially by a superior.’** Since we aren’t the ones who are showing favor, we know that it is God, our superior, who is doing the showing. Okay, so, if not everyone gets to go to heaven, then why would God show favor to just some people and to not everyone? Once again, there must be some benchmarks which need to be considered. We also see the word **gratitude** in the definition for **grace**. It is defined to mean **‘the state of being grateful.’** The definition here is talking about the One giving out the grace and not the person receiving it. Okay, I get it. Anyone who receives grace should be expected to express gratitude. But why are **Jesus** and His **Father** grateful?

[**E** Appreciative of Well-Being 5:56 thru 7:19]

Can you think of any possible reason? Jesus was the One who died a horrible death on the cross. And it was His heavenly Father who had to witness it all happening. What did

we humans ever do to deserve such favor? Nothing is the one-word answer. So why then are they grateful? Once more, there must be some other conditions for God to feel this way. I hope you can see where this discussion is heading. When we look up the word **grateful**, we see the dictionary says, **'appreciative of benefits received.'** What benefits did Jesus receive for dying on the cross? Well, He did get all or full authority over the heavens and the earth. Okay. But how is that of any benefit to Him with regard to us? The word **benefit** is defined as **'something that produces good or helpful effects or that promotes well-being.'** Do you think Jesus had any level of well-being while He hung on the cross? I sure don't think so. Remember, He sweated drops of blood just thinking about what was coming while praying in the Garden the night before.

[**F** Jesus is Our Example 7:19 thru 9:17]

And now to the last part of the definition of grace, it is **blessing**. It is defined as **'a thing conducive to happiness or welfare.'** God's award of grace to those whom He awards it to is characterized by 3 things. 1st—**favor**—that being friendly regard shown by our superior. 2nd —**blessing**—something conducive to creating happiness and gratitude. And 3rd—a state of mind which promotes well-being. Okay—now we are getting somewhere. Recall that in **Luke 2:52** told us *"the sinless boy Jesus continued to advance in wisdom, maturity and in favor with God."* Let me read it again. The answer to the perplexing question of how people can receive favor from God appears right there within this sentence. **Jesus** was **sinless**. We know that is true. That very fact is central to our faith. So, was His heavenly Father impressed and showed His Son favor simply because He was growing up as a normal boy? No, that's not the reason. Remember, details regarding the life of Jesus were provided to us as a template for how we are to live. The advancement of Jesus in wisdom reflected His growing knowledge of the Word of God. His growth in wisdom had the direct effect of increasing His spiritual maturity. And as a result, Jesus then grew in favor with His Heavenly Father, God Almighty.

[**G** Well-Being is a State of Mind 9:17 thru 10:50]

What else would Jesus be doing which would produce good effects and promote well-being within His heavenly Dad? By the way, the word **well-being** is defined as **'the state of being happy, healthy, or prosperous.'** Now, when we consider God Almighty, the healthy and prosperous parts in the definition are not applicable to Him. But clearly God

and Jesus can be made to feel *happy*. And, as we just read from Scripture, there are things we can do which make God and Jesus happy. Note: the physical things we do are not of any consequence to our salvation. These come under the false notion that we can somehow merit God’s favor by our actions, hence **thought 3** in Ephesians, stating ³ *and not of yourselves;* When Jesus died on the cross, He paid our sin debt. His spilled blood was the vehicle by which our sin was removed and taken away, never to be seen again, as Scripture says. So, when God Almighty looks upon us, He looks upon an innocent or blameless version of us and no longer sees our sin. Now there is nothing we can do to pay or somehow merit the absolution of our debt. **Thought 4** in Ephesians tells us, ⁴ *it is the gift of God.”*

[**H** The Perfect Gift is an Offering 10:50 thru 12:18]

The Greek word we see for **gift** is *DOH-ron* and it means ‘*a gift, in the sense of being an offering.*’ The word denotes something given freely and without the expectation of return. So, guess what—the gift or *DOH-ron* itself, the sacrifice of Jesus dying on the cross—is not what saves us. Make no mistake here, it was His sacrifice that opened the door to our salvation. Of that there is no doubt. Apart from the shed blood of Jesus, we have a zero chance at redemption. But, if His death alone is what saves us, then we’d have no need for church, the Bible, the Gospel—nothing. So, once again, we must read between the lines to see what is really required in order for a person to gain or achieve salvation. We find the premise for the answer to that question on the inside of the original Hebrew Temple, where folks would bring the very best of their flock and produce, as offerings to sacrifice before the LORD. This was a physical picture of a coming Messiah—who would be sacrificed as an offering, to become the Savior of the world. We know His name, it is **Jesus**.

[**I** Sacrifice Means Destruction 12:18 thru 14:17]

The central theme behind the Temple sacrifice was that the very best of a person’s efforts were to be offered to God by laying the sacrifice on the altar to be consumed, and within the smoke of their burning offering, it was hoped to be a soothing aroma, found pleasing to the nostrils of the LORD, and that He would accept their offering. I want to point out that the **offering** being presented was sacrificially destroyed, not to be of any further use by the giver. This was true whether God accepted the offering or not.

Therefore, the sacrifice was designed to be freely given as a sign of love and respect for our Sovereign God Almighty. Remember, the Greek word for **gift**, *DOH-ron*, is the gift which was presented in the sense of being an offering, granted to humanity, from God, as mentioned in **Ephesians 2:8**, which denotes something which has been freely given, and then destroyed, without any expectation of a return. That’s what the death of Jesus—God’s sacrificial lamb—was. It was an offering made to the whole of humanity. God gave us the death of His Son—without the expectation for any kind of return. Stay with me, this is a critical point. God Almighty surrendered His best on the cruel cross at Calvary. The life of His Son was offered as a sacrifice, and then destroyed, and God did it without the expectation of any return or benefit coming back to Him from us. Please keep that thought in the forefront of your mind. It’s critical to grasping the value of the offering.

[**J** **Nothing is Expected in Return** **14:17 thru 15:40**]

By the way, the word **expectation** is a noun, and describes the **state of expecting** something, which is defined to mean, ***‘to consider something reasonable, to be due, or to be necessary.’*** I grew up in the church always believing that somehow God expects a positive reaction from those persons upon hearing the message of the Gospel. That the news of His Son’s death made on their behalf, was something to be viewed as reasonable and for salvation even necessary. And for those who never accepted the sacrifice of His Son, they would be sent to Hell and the Lake of Fire. This almost knee-jerk quick reaction is deemed within the modern church to be sufficient for salvation. Hence the belief in the 30 second **sinner’s prayer**. Starting with the next message, I am going to prove beyond the shadow of any doubt that this is indeed a false statement. This idea stops short of the real truth being presented. The Hebrew sacrifices performed in the Temple were designed to demonstrate that any offering we make before God—is to be a gift, freely presented, with no expectation of any return.

[**K** **An Offering was a Step of Faith** **15:40 thru 17:10**]

At that point, it is God’s choice whether to accept our sacrificial gift or to reject it. And it is God alone who makes that decision. Nothing we can do at that point will affect His choice. This daily ritual played out in the Temple was performed repeatedly before the Hebrew people to drive home the point of how the presenting of a sacrifice really worked. But the offering of a sacrifice wasn’t merely a gift to the LORD, it was also a step of faith

on the part of the giver. Back in those days, farmers and ranchers relied on retaining the very best of their crops and livestock in order to replenish the field with the strongest plants and to restock the herd using those animals having the most robust health. Preserving the most pristine of the flock and the best seeds of the harvest gave the farmer and rancher the best chance of surviving the next year. These choices often made the difference between success and failure with next year's harvest. And even today, science continually seeks to isolate the best characteristics of both plants and animals and cross breed them to create the choicest product. It is all about gaining an edge so that we can continue feeding humanity.

[**L** **Placing Our Faith in God** **17:10 thru 18:14**]

This explains why the Temple sacrifice, as specified by God was an act of faith. By sacrificing the best of the harvest before the LORD, the presenter was placing next year's yield in jeopardy. They were placing their faith in God that He would then not allow their next year's harvest to fail. Now, there were many kinds of sacrifices made in the Hebrew Temple and for many differing reasons. Some of the sacrifices were burned in total, some only partially and some left on the altar untouched—depending on the type of sacrifice. The priests were free to eat the remnants of sacrifices which were not entirely destroyed. But the main point of the sacrifice remains the same for all. Man brings his best before God for a specific purpose. He presents his gift freely, without any expectation of a return.

[**Z** **Some Final Thoughts** **18:14 thru 19:16**]

Well, when God gave us His best offering—the sacrifice of His only Son—He did it without any expectation of return. If that alone were enough, there would be no need to present the Gospel to people and to make disciples out of them. The discipleship is the key component, which is precisely what we do here at DWJD Ministries. And, since I've shown repeatedly that being a disciple by definition is equivalent to attending college, how can listening to a single lecture earn you a diploma? The answer is—it cannot. Hey friends, we will continue with the topic of the sacrifice in the next message. Please keep your ear tuned to hearing God's word. **So, until next time my beloved, this has been Pastor Jefferson, speaking in God's Holy name and for His glory alone. Amen!**