

Four Gifts

#0150

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 19, 1976

God loved me and gave Himself for me. It is as true for each one as though you were the only one in the world. And a million years won't be long enough to exhaust the riches of the love in Christ Jesus.

Our text this evening is James 1:17. This is the season when many people are thinking about what they're going to give somebody. And, of course, I suspect that some people are thinking about what they're going to get. It happens that way, doesn't it? Yes. Our text has something wonderful to tell us:

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” James 1:17.

Every good gift is from where? Above. Apparently, there are some other gifts that aren't so good. They come from another place. John tells us about it. He says:

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” 1 John 2:16.

But every good gift is from where? Above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning. Wouldn't it be nice to get in on those gifts? Wouldn't it be wonderful?

Now, let's turn to Matthew 7:11. Jesus is talking to parents here. He reminds them in the ninth verse that when their children ask for good things, they don't give them bad things. Now He brings the lesson in the 11th verse:

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?”
Matthew 7:11.

Who's going to give us these good gifts from above? Our Heavenly Father. He delights in giving. I've got four presents that I want to talk to you about tonight; four wonderful precious gifts. I'll put them out here where you can see them. However, to be real honest, the gifts aren't in these packages; they're just for you to look at, so that you'll be thinking about these gifts—the real gifts, these good and perfect gifts that are from above.

We'll take a look first at Acts 5:31, where we'll find the first one of these gifts. In fact, we'll find 2 of them all in one verse; I think we'll read verses 30 and 31 together so that we'll know who we are talking about:

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins”
Acts 5:30–31.

Is He in the forgiving business? Where is He? He’s at the right hand of God. He’s at the center of the universe. And we read in our first verse this evening that every good gift is from above and comes from the Father. We see He delights to give like parents give to their children. Now here we see two wonderful gifts that He’s dispensing. The first is what? Repentance, and the second? Forgiveness. We’re going to call those—penitence and pardon. They’re synonyms for repentance and forgiveness.

In the book, *Messages to Young People*, I read:

“Penitence at the foot of the cross is the first lesson of peace we have to learn” *Messages to Young People*, page 115.

What’s the first lesson? Penitence. What do those words penitence and repentance mean? What does each one of them suggest? Feeling happy right? What does penitence suggest? Feeling how? Sorrowful and sad. Oh, that wouldn’t be a gift, would it? Yes, it’s a gift, we just read it here.

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to *give* repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” Acts 5:31.

Now some times we’re more interested in the second gift than we are the ^{first} gift. But, you know in school, we learn that the ^{first} grade comes before the second grade, is that right? And whenever you count, no matter what language you count in, you always start with what? One. One, two, and three; uno, dos, tres—it doesn’t make any difference what language it is, one always comes where? First, and then two, all right.

So the first gift is the gift of what? Repentance, or penitence. And that means to be sorry. Sorry for what? Sorry for sin, of course. You know that’s the thing to be sorry about. Interestingly enough, the world finds most of its fun in sin. They think its fun to break the law. But the Bible says he that keeps the law happy is he; quite a different viewpoint isn’t it?

How do you feel about it? Which makes you feel the best, to keep the law, or break the law? Well, if you’ve been converted, if you’ve been born again, you love the law of God. If you haven’t, there’re some things about it that you wish were different. God wishes *you* were different, and He’s willing to make you different. He’s in the business of giving what? Repentance, and that’s one of the good gifts. In fact, that’s one of the first.

You know, it's a wonderful thing, dear friends, that we can be changed. If we can't, there's no hope for us is there? But thank God, we can be changed. Our appetites can be changed. Our desires can be changed. Our actions can be changed. Our words can be changed. Our countenances can be changed. Our very thoughts can be changed.

How? God is in the giving business. Can you make yourself different in these lines? Not very much. A man can, by careful attention, make some changes in his outward behavior, but he cannot change his inner heart. If he loves sin, he loves sin. And repentance is to be what? Sorry for sin.

Why would anyone want a gift like that? Well, my friends, when I find that sin is killing me by inches and will kill me entirely if I stick with it, I may desire to get a change of attitude about it. What do you say?

“Penitence at the foot of the cross is the first lesson of peace we have to learn” *Ibid.*

“Those whom the Lord pardons, He first makes penitent”
Selected Messages, Book 2, page 83.

Penitent means what? Sorry. How sorry, by the way? Sorry enough to give it up, that's the thing. Suppose I find that there's something in my life that is hurting me, damaging me; perhaps my body, perhaps my mind, and my soul. If I get sorry enough about it, I'll do what? Give it up. If I don't give it up, what do I need? More penitence, a deeper sorrow.

My dear friends, I'll tell you a secret, it's no problem to give up *anything* if it hurts you badly enough. That's right. There's nothing in this world, but what you can give up if it hurts you bad enough. And all I have to do to prove that, is to put in your hand something that's red hot. You'll let go of it fast. Won't you? Sure you will. You'll drop it quicker than it gets in there.

The reason people sin is that they're not aware of how much it's hurting them, and how much it's hurting God, and when the soul awakens to that fact, when that becomes a reality, then it's no problem to give it up. What we need then is what? Repentance, penitence at the foot of the cross, is the first lesson of peace we have to learn.

“Those whom the Lord pardons, He first makes penitent”
Selected Messages, Book 2, page 83.

Now, will you read me Acts 5:31 again? Let's notice what else He's giving besides penitence.

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” Acts 5:31.

Which comes first? Repentance or penitence. But that's only the first. What's the second? Forgiveness or pardon. Oh, what a wonderful promise this is, will you repeat with me 1John 1:9?

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"
1 John 1:9.

He loves to forgive; it makes Him happy to pardon us. Do you know what God's pardon means? The governor can pardon a condemned criminal and turn him loose, but all the governor can do is to issue a judicial pardon—that is, he's pardoned in a legal sense. But oh, the blessed Christ when He pardons a soul, He arranges to make him as if he had not sinned. That's the soul's standing before God. Oh, I thank God He's in the business of not only taking away the penalty but taking away the experience of sin from our lives. Aren't you thankful for that? The wonderful promise of pardon.

Well, there are 2 of those presents. The first present is what? Penitence or repentance, and the second is forgiveness, or pardon—all right.

Now the third one comes after the second, just like the second gift comes after the first gift. So you see these four presents tonight aren't to pass out one to one person and one to another. God wants everybody to leave here with all 4 of them under your arm. Better than that, inside where you can't lose them.

Romans the 5:1, and as pardon is the purpose of penitence, as pardon follows penitence, so thank God, there's a great blessing, a wonderful gift that follows pardon:

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" Romans 5:1.

We have what? Peace. Now notice that this peace is conditional. It comes from being what? Justified. What is being justified? It's being accounted righteous. It's being pardoned, in other words. So first we get the blessing, the gift of what? Penitence, and second—Pardon, and third—Peace. Do you like that one? That's not hard to take, is it?

You know, the Devil's favorite trick is to tell people how to get peace without penitence and pardon. But it's a trick. It isn't real. It's fictitious. It's false. It isn't so. It's the kind of peace that comes through chemicals introduced into the bloodstream, or lies introduced into the brain stream. Either way, it's a deception.

This peace that we're reading about here is reality. Instead of giving people something to swallow and leave the thorn in the finger so they don't feel because of what they swallowed. God's plan is to take the thorn out and apply His healing balm. Thank God there's a healing for every wound. Being justified, we have peace.

Why friends, just think of it, suppose you had gotten in debt, and your debts mount up to hundreds and thousands of dollars. Would it worry you? I hope so. But

oh, what a blessed relief if someone would come and say, Friend, I'm going to pay all your debts. That's what the pardon of Jesus is.

Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

Another beautiful one, John 14:27. We're still on this third present. What is it? Peace:

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" John 14:27.

What's the blessing here? Peace. And so He says, let not your heart be troubled. Another translation puts it, "Set your troubled hearts at rest." Is that peace in your heart tonight? Well, it is if you have the two first presents. Of course, if you have a guilty conscience, you don't have peace, and all the tranquilizers in this world can't give you tranquility. All they can give you is putting the conscience to sleep, but that's not peace. There are mental and spiritual tranquilizers that are equally sedative but not curable. Thank God when Jesus takes the sin away through His precious blood, He gives the guilty conscience peace. Being justified by faith, we have peace.

Now, one more present—that's power. The first gift was what? Penitence; the second, pardon; the third, peace, and the fourth, power. And it's a gift—all these are gifts. The only way on earth to get them is gifts.

By the way, how hard do you have to work to get a gift? Well, if you work for it, it isn't a gift. It's what? Wages. How much money do you have to put down for a gift? Well, if you put down money for it, it isn't a gift. It's a purchase, isn't it?

Thank God here are four great wonderful gifts. John 1:12. How do I know in this verse that he's talking about a gift? What's the verb? Gave. Will you read this one? All together

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" John 1:12.

Isn't this a wonderful gift? Power. Look at a jet plane as it leaps into the air. What's it got? Power. Look at an automobile speeding along the interstate. What's it got? Power. Look at a bulldozer as it tears up the earth, and moves the soil. What's it got? Power.

Do you have power? As many as receive Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that do what? Believe on His name. Thank God.

Now, there're two kinds of power that He wants to give us. The first, 1 Corinthians 15:57. I say two kinds, two applications, or two uses of power. I'm so glad you all are here tonight. I want you all on the receiving line to get these presents. 1 Corinthians 15:57:

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Corinthians 15:57.

He gives us what? The victory, power over temptation, power over sin. If I used to lose my temper, I don't have to keep that up the rest of my life. Jesus gives me the what? Victory, power for victory. Can He help me? Yes. May I ask you a question? How many of you really believe tonight that somewhere, sometime in your life, Jesus gave you victory over at least one thing? May I see your hand? Well, thank the Lord. Well, I wonder if He can do some more. Sure He can.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will finish it..." Philippians 1:6.

But now, God doesn't want us to be thinking merely of power in our own lives for victory in our own lives. He has another use that He wants this power applied to. Act 1:8. Here is a wonderful promise of a wonderful gift. In fact, this gift that we're going to read about now includes all other gifts. It's the rich gift of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead. And this includes all of heaven's resources. When God pours out His Spirit, all Heaven is poured out in this wonderful gift. Notice what it's for:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" Acts 1:8.

Good. You'll receive power when the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and you'll be what? A witness. What's a witness doing? Well, he's telling what Jesus has done for him to entice, allure, and persuade other people to come and have more of the same. Isn't it nice dear friends that the kind of gifts we're talking about tonight, the more we take, the more we have to give to others, and the more we share these gifts with others, the more we have left.

Jesus taught that with the miracle of feeding the multitude with the five loaves. The disciples started with how many loaves? Five little loaves, and they ended up with how much? Twelve baskets after everybody else had had their fill.

All right, now the next thing I want to notice about these gifts is this: All four of these gifts are in and through Christ. We receive each one by receiving Jesus. In fact, that's the only way we can have these gifts.

Take this gift of penitence. I found a beautiful statement here in *Selected Messages*, Book 1:

“Repentance, as well as forgiveness, is the gift of God through Christ” *Selected Messages*, Book 1, page 353.

Can you get repentance without Jesus? Why no, it's impossible. You can't originate it. This is what baffles many people. They try to quit some habit, but they like it, and so they do what? Go back to it. In fact, the apostle Peter says, it has happened to them like the swine, the pig. You can wash a pig up, but as soon as you turn it loose, what does it do? It goes back to the mud wallow. Why? Because it's a pig. That's its nature. It likes that. But thank God, when we received Jesus into the heart, repentance is the gift of God through Christ. So I receive repentance, penitence-sorrow for sin by receiving Christ.

Now pardon, or forgiveness:

“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”
Ephesians 1:7.

Now, the emphasis is on those first two words—In whom, that is in Christ, we have what? Redemption through His blood, even the what? The forgiveness of our sins. But we have it in Him. Can you get forgiveness then without Christ? No, you can't—impossible. You can't forgive yourself, and there's no man who can forgive you, no matter what his religious or scientific training may be. You can't forgive yourself, and nobody else can forgive you. But if you receive Jesus, in Him you have redemption, even the forgiveness of your sins.

Now Peace, turn to the next chapter, Ephesians 2:14. I want you to read that first line, all together:

“For He is our peace...” Ephesians 2:14.

That's enough. Is He? Well, if you like peace what do you need? You need Jesus. You remember that verse we read in John 14:27:

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.’ This peace is not something that He gives apart from Himself. It is in Christ, and we can receive it only by receiving Him”
Ministry of Healing, page 247.

Without Him—no peace.

Now power. 1 Corinthians 1:24. Witnessing, is that found in Christ? All found in Christ. You mean I get them all if I receive Jesus? That's right.

“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks,
Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God”
1 Corinthians 1:24.

Then all these gifts that we have found tonight are found in Christ. Penitence is found in Christ. Pardon is found in Christ. Peace is found in Christ. And power for victory and witnessing is found in Christ. They are all found in Christ. I get them all if I receive Jesus.

Now how do we do it? I asked you a while ago, what about working for it? If you tried to work for any of this, and you could get it, you can't get it that way, but suppose you could, would it be a gift? No. And these are what? Gifts. Now let's turn to Matthew 7:7. Here's the first step. What's the first word? Ask. What's the first letter? A. That's getting right down to the bottom of things, to the beginning, isn't it? A is for ask—all together:

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth...” Matthew 7:7–8.

“Every one that asketh receiveth.” Do you believe that? You really believe that, that everyone that asketh receiveth? Suppose I were to ask how your finances are, and you'd say, “Well Brother Frazee, I'm poor. Well, do you have any friend that's rich? Yes, but I'm not. Did he ever offer you anything? Yes, he told me anytime I wanted some to come and ask him. And you mean to tell me that you're poor? And you've got a friend that offered you to come any time and ask, and he'd give you? It doesn't fit, does it friends?

Without Him, we are poor, but with Him, we're what? Rich, rich in all these gifts. And tell me, isn't a man who has sorrow for sin and pardon from sin and peace and power in his life, isn't he a rich man? Why yes, he is a rich man. And the first step in it is to what? Ask. Ask who? Why, ask God, because every good gift is from above. It comes down.

Now the second step is in Mark 11:24. What is the second letter of the alphabet? B. Now, what is the first letter? A. And the word to go with it was what? Ask. Now let's see if you can find the word that goes with B here, what is it? Believe. Is it in there? All right, read it all together.

“Therefore I say unto you, What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” Mark 11:24.

Suppose I don't believe it? Well, then I prove my own doubt, don't I? I say I didn't think I'd get much, and sure enough, I didn't. I didn't get anything. Do you mean God has made our receiving the gift conditional on believing? That's what He said.

“... without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” Hebrews 11:6.

Come friend, how much can you have? According to your faith be it unto you.

Oh, somebody says, "I think I'll ask for a million dollars."

You don't believe God's going to give you a million dollars, do you? Well, I don't. God hasn't promised to give me a million dollars. But He has promised to give me penitence, and I need it. He's promised to give me pardon, and I need it. He's promised to give me peace, and I need it. He's promised to give me power over sin and power to win others. I need all those gifts. And if I'll ask for them and believe, I can do what? Oh thank God! Look here:

"He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God's will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal. "For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received" *Education*, page 258.

And that's the C. A, B, C. C is claim. Suppose there was a nice little book inside here, and I was going to give it to you, and I handed it to you. What would you say? Thank you. Would you? Anybody else here says thank you if I gave it to you? How many of you would say thank you? Listen, Jesus wants you and me to say, Thank You. Philippians 4:6 turn and read it:

"Be careful for nothing...

That means be anxious, be worried—don't be worried about anything.

"...but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"
Philippians 4:6.

Then along with your request, you are to mix what? Thanksgiving. What for? What God did for you 10 years ago? Sure. That's all right. And what He did for you yesterday. But we've just read here we're to ask Him for something today, believe He hears us today, and gives it to us today, and thank Him for it, even before we sense the fulfillment of it. Is that right?

Suppose I gave this little package to Brother Cook, and he would insist on opening it before he said thank you. What would that prove? It would prove he had his doubts about me, wouldn't it? Oh, when we ask God for a present and believe that He gives it to us, and then is the time to immediately say what? Thank You, and go our way.

Now, remember this is not to teach us some fanatical presumption. It isn't to do anything like that at all. It isn't to teach us to ask for things selfishly, that we think we might like. It's asking for what God has promised, my friends, and sticking right with it.

You know, my mind goes back over 60 years ago to an experience I hadn't thought about it for a while, but I couldn't help but think about it as I was looking at these packages up here tonight. My brother and I were little fellows, and we were poor little boys, barefoot boys. The newspaper in our town advertised to give away red caps to any boy who would come down. And it just so happened, and how thankful we were, one of the first automobiles that I ever rode in came to our house that day. We had no automobile, never thought that we would be kings and have automobiles. But this was one of those old automobiles, and a friend of my father's came, and he offered to take my brother and me down there to the newspaper office to get a red cap. What do you suppose we did? We got in, and that was a wonderful trip.

And we got down there, and there was a bunch of other boys. What do you suppose they wanted? That cap. Do you know what we did? We stayed there till we got our red cap.

And my dear friend, when you and I come to God and ask for His blessing, let's stick with Him until all He has promised to give us, and all that we long for is fulfilled. What do you say?

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" Matthew 7:7-8

In Luke 11, where Jesus tells this, he tells about the man who came at midnight knocking at his neighbor's door and woke his neighbor up at 12 o'clock at night.

Who is out there? Your neighbor.

Well, what in the world do you want this time of night?

Well listen, I've just had a friend come from a long distance. He's hungry, and I haven't a thing in the house. Won't you lend me three loaves of bread?

Ah, but it's past bedtime, and I'm here in bed, and the children are with me, and I don't feel like getting up.

But what does the man do? He keeps asking—he keeps pleading.

Oh, he says, "Neighbor, I can't disappoint my friend. And you won't disappoint me, will you?"

And he sticks with it until the man gets out of bed and gets the three loaves, and he goes home with them tucked under his arm, and feeds his friend.

And that is not to tell us that God is stingy or that God is weary. But don't miss the lesson. If a selfish neighbor will get up and give you something if you ask

for it long enough, how much more your Heavenly Father will give good gifts to those that ask Him?

Why does He sometimes delay the answer? To test our faith. To test the genuineness of our desire. To see how much we really want it. Or that we may discover sin in our lives that may hinder the blessing—whatever the reason, here is the patience of the saints, here are those that keep crying to God with faith, with confidence, knowing their prayers are heard.

Now dear friends, tonight I want to give an invitation to somebody here that needs one of these gifts. Is there somebody here who needs this gift of penitence? That needs to be sorry for sin? Is there someone who needs the gift of pardon? You are sorry, but your heart feels guilty. You long to know that you're forgiven. Is there somebody here that needs the gift of peace? You're worried, you're anxious about something. Is there somebody here that needs the gift of power? Power over some habit, some sin in your life; power for witnessing to others? Is there my dear friend? Come. Ask Jesus. And need I say, friends, open the way.

Suppose you were to telephone and ask for a gift that had been offered, and the one that offers it comes to your house. You hear a knock at the door. And you look out the window, and sure enough, there is your friend with a present in his hand.

What will you do? Go to the door. What will you do then? Open the door. What will you do then? You'll ask him in and take the present. That's what Jesus says:

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him...”
Revelation 3:20.

Do you read there, He's in the business of supplying the gold, the faith and love? The righteousness, the white raiment, and the eye salve. And so this evening, I invite you dear friends, I invite you to receive these gifts.

[Testimony service follows]

Will the congregation kneel with us, please? Our kind and heavenly Father, we come into Thy presence knowing full well, that Thou art more glad and happy and delighted to give these good gifts, than we are to give good gifts to our children—And especially the gift of the Holy Spirit, the comforter.

We know that we do have sins in our lives, weaknesses, inherited tendencies and cultivated tendencies to sin. But we thank you for the mighty power of the Holy Spirit has been given to help us conquer all of these.

Now dismiss us with Thy blessing Lord, in Jesus' name, amen.

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