

Deserving or Grateful(Every Good Gift Comes From Above)

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Preacher: Jon Hochstetler

- [0 : 00] I bless you all this morning in Jesus' name. I'm glad to be here. I'm very thankful for what was shared this morning already out of God's Word and also in testimony and song and all that.
- It's been a blessing. I've been uplifted and encouraged. And I know some aren't feeling so well. I'm not feeling overly physically strong either today, but that's okay.
- If you pray for me that I can still share what God has laid on my heart. I want to do that for His glory. And hopefully we can hear what God has for us.
- Jesus said many times that if you have ears, hear, hear ye, or hear what the Lord has. He that hath ear, let him hear.
- And for a long time I used to wonder about that. Well, of course, if you have ears, you can hear. But what was He really saying? He was saying if you have these ears, hear the words and hear with your heart.
- [1 : 24] Don't just hear it with these, but hear with your heart. And I hope that we can do that. It's good to be here. It's good to have my brother with me or with us this weekend.
- And good to see Luke's here as well again. So what I want to share today is something that's been on my heart for the last couple of weeks actually.
- And it has to do with our attitude or our perspective of this thing of being deserving or selfish.
- The question is, are you selfish or are we undeserving? And in James 1, you don't have to turn there unless you want to mark the verse.
- But there's a verse in James 1, verse 17 that says, 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.
- [2 : 39] Saying God never changes. He doesn't vary from one day to the next. But the focus is, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.
- So all the good things that we experience in this life, the things that we receive, the blessings, are from above. From our Father.
- Here it says, from the Father of lights. I have a question. What is that referring to? You know, we know God is light.
- The Bible says, in Him is no darkness at all. But He is the light. But here it's plural. It says, the Father of lights.
- Does anybody want to venture out and say what that's referring to? What was James saying? I believe it's talking of the stars.
- [3 : 44] That's what I've read. That would make sense. But He is lifting up God as the creator of all lights. But I'll let you look into that more.

That's not my message, but just an interesting side note there. But, you know, since I've been thinking about this, my wife and I talk about this quite a bit, about our blessings and the things that we are blessed with, and that to turn our mind toward the attitude of gratefulness, rather than, I have this coming to myself.

I deserve this. This is me time. You know, we hear these terms. She needs a she shed and he needs a man's cave, or what did they call that?

You know. And all the things that society around us teaches us, we deserve. We deserve this time or this thing or this item or whatever.

rather than recognizing that the Bible teaches us that all good things come from above. They come from God.

[5 : 07] They're a gift. Have we, as God's people, have we considered this truth? You know, this week I received a huge blessing.

Some of you know that my wife was planning a surprise for me and you didn't tell me about it. But it was a huge blessing. And as I, the first thought that I had, because this is something we've been talking about a lot, is I don't deserve this.

With my family showing up from all over the place, you know, to surprise me, and we spend a few days together. It was a real blessing. Eternal salvation.

We know that is a gift from God. Yes. A selfish view will greatly hinder the church from fulfilling what we heard last Sunday.

Last Sunday's message was on a burden for souls and the fields are ripe unto harvest. But if we have this selfish view and this selfish attitude that I'm talking about, that will greatly hinder that from happening.

[6 : 23] The other thought I have is how many problems in the church or in our homes would quickly be resolved if we would understand and receive this principle.

We'll look at some of those things later on. Let's turn our Bibles to Matthew chapter 15. I want to look at a couple different scriptures where we read about different people coming to Jesus or when Jesus was here on earth, they either met up with Jesus or they came to Him.

In Matthew chapter 15 verse 22, we have this woman coming to Christ.

And let's look at her heart and her attitude, her approach. In verse 22, And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coast and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David.

My daughter is grievously vexed with the devil, but he answered not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us.

[7 : 54] But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.

Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

I want to look at this. If this woman had a selfish heart, don't you think that she would have been most offended that Jesus answered to her?

How would you have responded? Now, he didn't just call her a dog to be rude or because Jesus had a bad attitude.

[9 : 05] We know that. He is God and he's perfect. But, and by the way, we had this for devotions the other morning at the cabin we were at and it really stood out to me so I thought I'd bring this in.

But, Jesus was simply referring to what the woman already knew. And that is that in that day, the Gentiles were considered dogs or outcasts.

They weren't of God's people like the Jews were. And so here's Jesus, a Jew, and his disciples, Jews, and this woman from one of those comes to him.

So I believe Jesus was testing her. He was testing her faith. He wasn't being rude. But yet, he acknowledged what she already knew that in her culture she was just considered a dog.

That's why he said what he did. And then she acknowledged it. She said, yes, that's right, Lord. But don't even the dogs get something from their master?

[10 : 20] They get the crumbs off the table or under the table. And so what she was saying, what she was expressing to Christ is, you have something that I desperately need.

I need your help. And she was also acknowledging him as Lord. And she's saying, could I have just a little bit of what you have? So she just took that thing that Jesus said about the dogs and rather than being offended and just walking away and going into town and back to her coast and beginning to slander this man, think with me.

Isn't this what happens a lot? When people hear truth, they get offended. And they begin to tell others about it. And she could have had a whole bunch of people to come against Jesus and what he's doing and all her people, her family, being hurt.

He didn't help me. In fact, he called me a dog. Can you believe that? But she didn't. Her faith didn't waver.

She just took what Jesus said and said, yeah, but I still need a little bit. Do you have just a little bit? And what did Jesus say?

[11 : 46] He said, oh woman, great is thy faith. And he didn't even come and cast the demon out. He just said, be it whatever you are asking for, be that unto you.

Just that simple. She got exactly what she was asking for. Can you imagine with me how desperate she must have been knowing that this man was casting out devils?

This man was healing people. People were being set free. and here she had a daughter that she dearly loved but she was out of control.

She had a demon. She was not offended. She just had a heart that said, whatever I get is going to be a blessing.

I don't deserve it. It's just going to be a blessing. How do we think? Do we demand him to heal us?

[12 : 56] Demand him to bless us? Or do we see some crumbs that we desperately need? that maybe he would allow us to have that.

What is our approach? What is our attitude? You know, this thing about being offended, there's a verse that says, great peace have they that love thy law.

And what? Nothing shall offend them. Nothing shall offend them. If you're offended this morning easily, maybe we need to look at that.

Maybe we need to love his law a little bit more. Maybe we need to love God's ways. Okay, let's look at another scripture.

Let's go to Matthew chapter 9. Also a woman. Matthew 9, verse 20.

[14 : 04] And behold, a woman which was deceased with an issue of blood twelve years came behind him and touched the hem of his garment.

For she said within herself, if I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole or healed. But Jesus turned about and saw and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort.

Thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. You know, this woman also, Jesus was actually on his way to heal somebody else or actually to raise somebody from the dead, I believe.

And while the crowd was moving along to go there, this woman, she didn't want to interfere with what Jesus was doing. We see the humility that she had.

She didn't even want anybody to know. She didn't want to make a ruckus or a scene. Even if she would have got healed, she just wanted to get healed and go home, I believe.

[15 : 18] So what does she do? She's like, in herself, she said, if I could just touch his clothing a little bit, I'd be healed. That's how big her faith was.

And I'm sure she would have rejoiced and been just fine with that. But Jesus stopped because he felt virtue going out of him. He stopped to acknowledge again this faith, this faith that this woman had, this unselfish faith.

He just told her, daughter, be of good comfort. Thy faith hath made thee whole. I'm sure she was shocked when he turned around and looked at her.

And she thought maybe she did something she shouldn't have. But she just wanted to touch his clothing. What a powerful testimony of true humility.

Not wanting to be seen or heard. What does our faith express to the Lord? Do we deserve it?

[16 : 27] We're a Christian after all. So, he owes us this. I'm his child, he owes me good things. You know, we have a lot of promises throughout the word of God.

But our attitude should be that it's a gift from above. And maybe we would be a little more thankful if we would look at it that way. you know, sometimes we go through a whole season of good health and we're not sick much.

We're healthy, we're blessed, we have food, we have raiment. Jesus said to be content with those things. But sometimes we're maybe not very thankful.

And I wish God's people, including myself, would become a thankful people. a people that worships God because of how good he is.

Let's turn our Bibles now back to Matthew 19. I'm sorry, Matthew 19. And look at another situation. Another person that met Jesus.

[17 : 33] And it's a little bit of a different story. This one did not get what he was asking for. And why is that? This young man, we know him as the rich young man.

Matthew 19, starting in verse 16, And behold, one came to him, I'm sorry, one came and said unto him, Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?

And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. Jesus was pointing to his deity. He was looking to see or telling this young man, I believe that he, Jesus, if he's calling him good, he must be God.

But anyway, let's keep reading here. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. Verse 18, He said unto him, Which?

Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness. Verse 19 says, Honor thy father and thy mother, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

[18 : 54] The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth, what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me.

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. I think we'll stop there for a moment.

You know, we have a completely different attitude here. First of all, he comes to him and he says, he addresses him as a good master, and he says, What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?

You didn't ask him humbly for his blessing, his virtue, knowing that there's no good in him. Instead, he comes and he says, What can I do to get what I need?

He wanted to add something to his wealth, really, and that was eternal life. He knew he needed it, but his attitude was completely different.

[20 : 11] How can I work this thing out? How can I get what I need? And that's, I believe, why Jesus addressed him right straight up. He said, Why do you call me good? Jesus knew the attitude in his heart.

Why do you call me good? Only God is good. He was trying to get him to see. And then as we keep looking here, he told him the law.

He gave him the law, the commandments to honor his father and mother and all that. And by the way, he said, Oh, I've done all this from my youth. Do you really believe that?

Do you really believe that? He had all this wealth. And the reason I don't believe it is because one of the things Jesus said, Love thy neighbor as thyself.

But when Jesus offered him salvation, he walked away sorrowful. Why? Because he had great wealth. He wouldn't part with, he didn't love his neighbor as himself, or he wouldn't have been quite as wealthy and his neighbor's poor.

[21 : 22] I believe that. He had great wealth. Let's read on in verse 23. It says, Then Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

They might have been looking at each other saying, Well, you're rich. You know. But Jesus beheld them and said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee. What shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that you which have followed me in the generation when the son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And everyone that hath forsaken house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

[22 : 50] But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first. Having forsaken all.

You know, Jesus' call today is still to forsake all, to lay all on the altar, not just part. This man may have done some good things.

I'm sure he did. He may have honored his father and mother. He probably did. But he was not willing to forsake all. He was not willing.

Peter reminded Jesus, he was probably a little nervous about this rich thing. He said, Jesus, we've forsaken everything. We're following you. What did Jesus do?

He turned around and he blessed the twelve. He blessed them. He said, you will be with me. Yes, and then he gave that verse 29. Forsaking houses?

[23 : 54] Is our house available to God? Our lands? Our brothers, sisters, father, mother, wife, children?

Those are big questions. Are they all given to God? Are we surrendered with everything we have? That's what Jesus asked for.

You know, this idea, or this young man, I just want to point out a few more things about this young man, how different his ending was than the two women we read earlier.

They got exactly what they needed, what they asked for from Jesus. what did this young man get? Nothing. Sorrow. He went away sorrowful.

He was less happy than when he met Jesus. Started out with good master. Probably very cheerful like, but he was very sorrowful when Jesus pointed out his need.

[25 : 05] But we don't have to be like that. We don't have to have that selfish heart. you know, this thing of self, it hinders relationships. Another thing I've been thinking of is that when it comes to relationships, and this is a big one in our day, do we love truth more than a relationship?

Think about that for a little bit. Jesus is the truth. But if we love relationships with other people more than we love truth, we're on a wrong path.

Because what did Jesus say? I came not to bring peace but a sword. What I bring is a cutting down the middle. Sometimes it's very painful. Sometimes it cuts right through relationships.

Sometimes we lose old friends. but bless God, we gain new ones. Some of our old quote buddies we just can't hang out with anymore because we found the truth, right?

We found the truth. God God God and that's what Jesus is talking about. If we hold up those relationships above Jesus and His truth, then we can't be His disciples, He says in one place.

[26 : 39] God God God God God God We see that happen a lot. We see people all over compromising truth because they want to stay friends with somebody.

It doesn't work. It'll just bring you the wrong kind of friends anyway. So, young people, get a hold of truth and stand on it.

Don't be afraid. Christ will see you through. His promises are for us. He that has ears, let him hear. Sometimes we need our thinking adjusted a little bit.

Sometimes a lot actually. But our thinking, the way we think, the Bible says, as a man thinketh, so is he. So the way we think about these things, of being selfish or being deserving, the way we view that can be adjusted.

God can change that. I believe he's doing that in me lately. Some of the things that this I deserve attitude brings, it brings oftentimes jealousy or self pity versus counting our blessings we didn't get enough blessings.

[28 : 05] Right? We're sad because we didn't get enough rather than being thankful for what we have. Paul says in Romans that we are to present our bodies a living sacrifice as only our reasonable service.

You know, on that sacrifice, I heard someone recently say or read it that it's burning everything off that is not of God and being free from the filthiness of the flesh, burning everything off of our lives, that living sacrifice, burning everything off that is not of God, being free from the filthiness of the flesh.

life. Anytime a person continually believes that he or she is deserving of things, you can be assured that sin will be offered by Satan.

Sin will not be far away when we think that we deserve things. Sin will always lay at the door of a selfish person.

Why? Because selfishness is the root of sin. It will cause you to sin. This deadly attitude of deserving brings spiritual laziness.

[29 : 38] It brings indifference. It brings indifference toward godliness and true holiness. It always wants to argue with the truth.

what's wrong with it? Does it really matter? God doesn't mind, does he? This thing started in the garden, didn't it?

Sound familiar? Has God really said? It argues with the truth. Eve knew the truth, but she reasoned it out.

she thought perhaps that she deserved a bite of that. Or at least the devil made her believe so. Another thing it does is it tries to bring God down to a human level.

We heard about this Wednesday night from Brother Joe. to a human level rather than worshiping him as the father of lights like we read earlier.

[30 : 43] The almighty creator of this great universe, great creation, the creator God. But this attitude that God is just like us, men, and that's who we worship and we deserve things.

It's a completely wrong mindset of who God is. It makes truth irrelevant and focuses only on carnal relationships. It destroys the true spiritual relationships.

It divides instead of unify. You know, that adds attitude of deserving is a deadly poison. It makes excuse.

It makes room for sin. Because I deserve just a little bit of it. Maybe I had a really hard day's work and maybe I just deserve something that God forbids.

You know what I'm talking about. Just that whole attitude. Rather than a deep commitment and a reverence and a fear of God, to offend God.

[32 : 03] But oh, if we have that attitude that every good gift comes from above. I just don't deserve this.

I don't deserve my wife, my children, my church friends, brothers that love me.

I have so much that I don't deserve. You don't deserve either. But they're blessings from above. Are we thankful in them, for them?

The list goes on and on. We need to count our blessings and say, thank you, Lord. that's from you. That's a gift. I don't deserve. It'll cause us to walk in humility before God and each other.

And you know, when we have this attitude, we'll become very uncomfortable when flesh is exalted. It'll make us uneasy when truth is shamed or ignored.

[33 : 12] the Spirit, the Holy Spirit within us will be grieved when man is lifted up in pride and truth is trampled by those that feel deserving and are selfish.

We sense, we feel what God feels. But it treasures the things of God. It rejoices in godly relationships.

and in holiness. It loves the things that God loves. And it simply hates the things God hates.

in Luke chapter 18. I want to end with this, or at least as we get close to closing here.

I want to look at the parable of the two men. that went to pray.

[34 : 26] You know, I usually, we look at this as a person, a sinner coming to God, and that's what this is about perhaps. But what about us?

What is our attitude towards God? Let's just read this. Luke 18, starting in verse 9. And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that were righteous, and they despised others.

Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess. He's very happy with himself. Verse 13.

The publican standing afar off would not lift up so much as his eyes into heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

[35 : 40] Jesus said, I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

In these verses, the word mercy stands out to me. Do we understand how much we need mercy? We need his mercy.

The Bible says that his mercy is new every day for a reason because we need it every day, don't we? We need the mercy of God, but this sinner, this man that looked at everything more as a gift from God, I need from God rather than how great I am.

God will God will do you? Jesus said he's the one that got justified that day, not the other. We need his mercy. Do we see here that there's two paths, there's two ways of thinking about life?

There's a grateful attitude and there's the selfish one. and they lead to our own, this path, this one with selfishness leads to our own destruction and the other one leads to the cross.

[37 : 04] Paul understood the cross. Let's have faith, even for just a few crumbs. When we have a need, let's have faith. Let's believe like those women did.

let's not let our hearts be troubled. God is faithful and we are blessed. We are so blessed.

Let's not take it for granted. In Romans we read about the old man being crucified a lot. We read a lot about that.

But what I said there about the one leading us to the cross, crucifying that old flesh, the old man, putting it to death.

I'm going to read a song that Brother Joel picked this morning. Dan, you alluded to it as well. I'm just going to read those words again and maybe we'll sing it.

[38 : 08] But I had no idea that it would fit like this with what I'm sharing. but that song 387, Oh for a heart to praise my God.

I'm just going to read that in closing here. And maybe we should pray that in our hearts. Oh for a heart to praise my God, a heart from sin set free, a heart that sprinkled with the blood, so freely shed for me.

a heart resigned, submissive, meek, my dear Redeemer's throne. Is our heart His throne? Thus shall we best proclaim abroad the honor, I'm sorry, I got off track, my heart, my dear Redeemer's throne, where only Christ is heard to speak, yes, where Jesus reigns alone.

Verse 3, a heart in every thought renewed, and full of love divine, perfect and right, and pure and good, a copy, Lord of thine.

Heard about the copy. Verse 4, and humble, lowly, contrite heart, believing, true and clean, which neither life nor death can part, from Him that dwells within.

[39 : 38] Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart, come quickly from above, write thy new name upon my heart, thy new best name of love.

What a fitting song and powerful that Charles Wesley wrote. But is that our heart? Is that the heart we want?

Is it the heart we have? God? Maybe we have it sometimes, maybe we have it some of you all the time, but I know for me I need to be reminded. I need to, from time to time, just take inventory of, am I a thankful person?

Do I see things as God's blessings or do I just think I deserve everything I got? there's a big difference and the end of it, the two paths lead in very different places.

So I'm just going to pray it and then maybe when we close, maybe Joel could lead that song, we could close with that song then.

[40 : 52] So let's pray. Father, we just come to you. Lord, I just thank you, dear God, for your mercy. Lord, we acknowledge this morning that sometimes we have been very ungrateful.

Sometimes we have been selfish. And we, even in relationships, maybe in our marriages, we think that we deserve everything.

Lord, forgive us for that. Lord, would you have mercy on us for that, Lord? And would your spirit speak to us about those things and change us, God?

You promise in your word that for your children that you will change us from glory to glory. And this morning, some of us might need to be changed in that area of selfishness, thinking we deserve it, and not giving you the praise and the honor and the glory that you deserve.

So, Father, help us to walk humbly with you, to walk humbly with each other and with our families, and to be broken before you, a living sacrifice.

[42 : 07] Lord, strip us of all those things that are displeasing to you, all the selfishness, and make us clean, Lord, so that you can work through us, so that the church can be a picture of Jesus to the world.

help us to walk right, Lord, in Jesus' name, amen.