

2 Corinthians. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. (Quality: good)

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Preacher: Garnham, Sydney (1899-1980)

- [0 : 00] As the Lord may graciously lead, I would ask you to turn with me to the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians in the ninth chapter and at the last verse.
- The second epistle to the Corinthians at chapter 9 and verse 15. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.
- Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. Amen. Coming directly to the words before us, I would seek to inquire first of all, what is it or who is it that is in the mind of the apostle as he writes these words?
- You may respond, this is surely the Christ of God. Well, maybe.
- But are there not other unspeakable gifts? Not that I would put any other, even upon the level, in any sense of the word, with that glorious gift of the Christ of God in Bethlehem.
- [1 : 40] But I repeat, dear friends, are there not other gifts that are unspeakable, at least to you and I? I believe there are many.
- Let me give you just three and you will see the trend of the mind. Doubtless all of you at some time or another, possibly on more than one occasion, as you've walked down the street, you've seen a blind person.
- I'm thinking of those who have been blind from birth. Perhaps you've helped them across the road.
- That person has never seen the beauties of colour. Never seen the handiwork of God.
- Can never tell the difference between the shining of the glorious sun, though they can feel its warmth. Nor the darkness of the night.
- [2 : 52] Have you ever stopped? Perhaps, as I have said, you've led one across the road in the busy scenes of traffic. Have you ever stopped when you've led them and got to the other side?
- And lifted your heart to God in a silent prayer of thankfulness for the unspeakable gift of sight?
- Do you and I have a stop to think about? And again, perhaps in your travels, doubtless, with most of all of you, possibly, you've known what it is to visit hospitals, mingling with the sick and the suffering.
- I'm not thinking so much now, though I'm not detracting from it, but I'm not thinking so much of those who have entered hospital for a brief stay, be it even a few days or a few weeks.
- But I'm thinking of those who have laid for years and years and years in the state and condition which is incurable.
- [4 : 12] And mine goes back to my older father. Thirteen years, he lay bedridden in hospital. Unable to move hand or foot or anything.

Completely incapacitated. Dependent upon the attendance to feed him. To do everything for it. Thirteen years.

I visited him hundreds of times, it must have been. Do we ever stop to give thanks to God silently?

For the unspeakable gift of health and strength? To all our faculties. Are these not unspeakable to you and I?

For can you define them? Can you adequately express them? Can you adequately give thanks for them? Do not these words have their measure of meaning if they're not primarily set before us here?

[5 : 23] Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. And I look again. Perhaps it's not been quite in the same measure.

But have you, in the course of your experience, have you had occasion to visit asylums, one or more? To mingle with those who have lost their reason?

I've had more than one occasion in my visitations to visit such places. And I go back to one occasion where I visited a lad, quite a lad, in his team.

The door must have broken my heart as I was led in by the attendant for every door he came to. He had to unlock it and let me in, lock it behind me.

We went to the next door and he unlocked it and locked it again and began to wonder where I was. Eventually I reached the friend I'd come to meet, to visit.

[6 : 39] And there he sat and stared. I talked to him and it was quite obvious that it didn't register. He never by sign or movement gave any inclination that he even knew I was there, though he must have done that, though he had his sight of this.

But when I spoke he never responded, he never said a word. While I was there they brought along his meal and put it on the table of his bed.

He sat there and stared at that. In a state of complete melancholy. And I remember saying to the attendant as I left, what is the hope of that lad?

And he said, well you can see what he's like. He sits there for hours and hours and hours and just stares. That meal I brought to him, he said, he'll sit and stare at that frowniness until we come and feed him with you.

Thank God, my dear friend, for your reasoning faculty. I've never, it's never been my occasion, though I don't know that they even allow it, but it's never been my occasion to visit a padded cell.

[8 : 05] I know there are such. I say, do you ever stop, do I ever stop to give thanks to God for the unspeakable gift?

And surely it's unspeakable. I'm not putting it on the same plane of the glory of the gift that I should try to get to a little, the precious gift of the Christ of God.

I'm not putting it on the same plane, but isn't it unspeakable? Do you ever stop to think about it? Not given to be in a state where you've lost your sight and can see nothing.

Not brought into a condition where you're wrapped in body, pain and suffering night and day, year in and year out. And not brought into a state of melancholy, insanity.

These are but three things that I said before you. You and I gathered here in the house of God are blessed with all our faculties, with health and strength, with all our reasonings, our vision, and so on and so forth.

[9 : 36] How often do we give thanks for it? Thanks be to God. His unspeakable gift.

And if these things are not unspeakable to you, my dear friends, even these three that I have known, were they out of me, I can't begin to add it with blessed God.

for even these three, apart from many, many others that might be added and to them. What is in the mind of the apostles?

Well, I wonder, as the Spirit of God shall graciously enable me a little to say a few things with regard to him who is the sender of all, the glory of all.

But I'm not going to confine it to that. I'm not going to suggest that that is the primary thought in the mind of the apostle, that that will come to in due season.

[10 : 41] And I shall seek to support that thought. But let us gather around the unspeakable gift of Christ Jesus.

What a gift. I'm not going to dwell upon the fact that it is a gift and no need I trust to dwell upon that for surely none of our minds and hearts would begin to infiltrate any suggestion of merit on our behalf or on account of any other in the human realm.

Now, I want to look a little if the Spirit of the Lord may graciously help at something of this aspect of being unspeakable.

Let me just say here that this word doesn't mean that we should never or we can never speak about it. The word here really means in the original the inexhaustible, the unfathomable.

Doesn't mean that like the three aspects of the human realm that I have referred to. Doesn't mean to say because you can't define them, you can't begin to get to the depths of them that you're just to discard them and never think about.

[12 : 22] This glorious gift of God in the gift of his dear son is unspeakable in the sense that it's inexhaustible. All down the ages men divinely appointed and commissioned of God have sought to try and unfold something of the treasures and how far have we got.

With due respect to all of the great men that God has raised up in the path we look back upon them and we refer to them as the old divines and they were.

Some of us feel to be so insignificant against them as to be beyond even recognition that they were godly men.

They were wonderfully used in their writings as well as in their preaching. But I say with them all and with us all and all who will yet come how far have we got in the sense of expounding or in the sense of understanding this greatest gift of all.

I'm not concerned about season. In fact it's my humble belief that Christ never came at this time of the year at all.

[14 : 02] In fact I'm confident of that. But still while not seeking to conform to men merely in the recognition of a season let's gather around the theme and gather around it all the year round for what other theme is there if you take away this.

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift in this respect it's singular. So let us try and look a little at this aspect of this gift that is so wonderfully and so divinely expressed as being unspeakable.

don't would first of all direct your minds a little to the fact that this gift is unspeakable because of its greatness because of its greatness there there never was a gift such as this there never has been since there never could be another for this is a gift from heaven apart from all else that might be said and I should seek to break this up a little as we go along but there never could be another gift like this is a gift from God not that I am confining it to this God gave many many other gifts even those three that I mentioned God gave this glorious morning the wonder of it and

I suppose every one of us have said what a lovely morning God's gift of the sunlight and all that signifies in the natural realm in the creative sphere we might go on and on but this gift is unspeakable for its greatness its greatness is to be seen nevertheless if I use the word and forgive me I can't think of another but I use it in its right sense in its insignificance for here viled in the frail human frame of abide is God God manifest in the frame this glorious gift is unspeakable in its greatness because it abides that cannot be said of any other gift however long it may abide it seems to me that many of the gifts that will be changing hands in the next day or two if they haven't already changed hands before the end of the week they will be cast aside the toy will be broken or the child has become tired of it and the week's duration and it's finished perhaps some of the older friends have received gifts and they will abide for a number of years sooner or later perish but this gift can never perish in fact the longer the span of time dwells in connection with it the greater will unfold its beauty it's so great that it embraces eternity as past and future and therefore it must even in this sense become unspeakable for who can enter into eternity and begin to fathom eternal things thanks be to

God for his unspeakable gift and then passing on hurriedly I want to notice that this gift is unspeakable because of its preciousness its preciousness bathed as as I've said already I know it's couched in a little tiny bay no different to any other bay millions of babes have been born I'm not going to put any halos round its head do do any halos this little bay was exactly the same as any other bay and yet this little bay was different to every other bay here is the preciousness that through this medium

[19 : 44] God saw fit so to provide but oh what a preciousness this season of the year or this theme let's keep to the theme rather than the season if this theme my dear friend means anything to you and to me in the real essence and in the real sense of it it must be couched in this that it's precious precious how precious of course you get to the unspeakable sense of it who can begin to measure who can begin to estimate who can begin to declare the degrees the limits or the limitless aspect of the preciousness of this great gift that God has in infinite mercy be pleased to be stout sons people there never was a gift children today are receiving the gifts of such a value that some of us at least never knew days of old you have to wait until

Christmas morning you know what I'm going to say that you woke up in the fever of excitement and you reached out for your stockings that had hung there all night and what was inside the total contents wouldn't have come to more existence we thought we were millionaires the excitement the joy was simply one who's going to measure the preciousness the value never yet cease to be unfolded for as I've said in the connection with the previous thought no end to this the longer it goes on the preciousness becomes more and more enhanced in itself in its power in its application with the longer time goes on poor sinners are being brought to enjoy it its preciousness is extended in that respect but we should do that under other heads thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift but the unspeakable aspect of this gift surely is to be seen in its rarity as I've said already in other connections there never was another gift like this but what is this gift for gift for gifts under the general heading are only to express something between the giver and the recipient and no more here is a gift that was so rare gift for that it came to provide what could never be provided by any other through any other means oh friend if you and I could only stop and really be led of the spirit of God into the essence and into the fullness of the unspeakable aspect of this sense of its rarity never was there a gift like this

God gave just simply in those words God gave his son one has to keep dragging this down to earth I'm not for doing it by way of comparison but only as trying to provide a few steps whereby we might get up somewhere at least in the approach to the glories of this that a giver will give a gift it may be the greatest gift that they've ever given or has ever been known to be given but they've never given their all they cannot give their all for if they give all that they possess they still haven't given all until they have given themselves so that's impossible but God gave all that he had all that he had loved and loved so dearly and so perfect again of course you come to the unutterable and the unspeakable who can begin to understand or measure the love wherewith the father loved his dear son reality singularity but the unspeakable aspect of this surely is to be seen in the fact of its suitability its suitability ah friend need I say it again there never was another gift so suitable again we come down for want of better we come down to the same avenue many will be receiving gifts and as the gathered people and children are gathered together in the little gathering in the home or elsewhere and one will receive this gift and another will receive that gift and this one will receive that one will be looking at the other one and saying I wish I had that but here is a gift that suits that one and this one and all the others you know it would be a strange home it would be a strange family circle if the parents tomorrow morning and I hope you've left it to them if tomorrow morning the parents gather the children and put a big family shall we 15 children in the family and father comes in and he says there's a gift for you there's a gift for you and he went round the whole 15 they'd all got the same thing they'd all got the same thing has it ever been known of course it hasn't because this is incomparable it's suitability my dear friend when God glorious

Jehovah gave his dear son long long ago he gave it for you he gave it for me it was suited to you it was suited to me nobody ever complained thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift but I look again surely the unspeakable aspect of this gift is to be seen in its freeness in its freeness we do due respect to you all my dear friend and myself as well in the giving of our gifts and let's receive we do it out of custom we mustn't omit that person because well it'll look funny you know leave them out

I don't know why you know I wouldn't give them a gift at all I don't think they deserve it but still we can't leave them out you know the thoughts that arise and bringing it right down again getting down into the depths let's scale into the heights oh the glory of the freeness with which God gave and when he looked down upon the universe what did he say there wasn't an atom of merit anywhere north south east west past present future he wasn't an atom of merit what is it that the dear word says itself what is it that God himself says in his word and it embraces this just the same freely ye have received freely ye have received you pondered over this my dear

[30 : 02] I've had to come to this in contemplation and believe me I've had some sweet moments on this as my poor heart has tried or been enabled of the spirit of God mercifully and graciously to grasp a little of this God looked down through the span of time and saw me ruined in the fall that freely gave and freely gave all that he had then isn't this unspeakable it'll certainly need a battle than I to try to begin to speak about it let alone adequately speak of it I say it's unspeakable glory is to be seen in the freeness there was no obligation there was no power there was no person there was no collective assembly that could begin to command

God he wasn't actuated as men are by custom neither is he governed by the measure of his possession I've referred to the days of old with some of us and we received a few little things in a straw an orange a new penny and perhaps a little few spears it had to be thus because our parents had to say now how much can we afford for these dear children and it had to be governed by the wherewithal my God isn't governed my God isn't governed if I was hungry you said I wouldn't tell you who are you to provide me when I'm hungry if I was thirsty

I wouldn't tell you for what resources have you got to assuage my thirst even if I was thirsty and I remind you that all the cattle that ever was they were mine all the gold and silver that ever was they were all mine freeness he gave under no obligation under no stress he gave simply and solely because he would what a gift but there is an aspect of this gift in which the unspeakable aspect of this gift is to be seen in its necessity in its necessity here perhaps we come to the very essence and the center and the core of the glory of this gift its necessity so I've said many times my poor heart can consider through the medium of the negative sometimes so much better than

I can ever begin to get round to the positive and my heart has been trying through the hours of the night to ponder over this thanks be to God it's only a possibility it's only a supposition but what if he had never given what if he had never given many countless thousands will be indulging reveling in this season they passed through Abingdon only on Friday what I saw then made my heart sick my heart sick they were observing they were reveling at least outwardly they didn't know what they were doing they were so overcome with liquor that the three of them had to hold one another up necessity friend and if

God had never given think of it the whole world lie in wickedness that is the declaration here was the necessity not the necessity not that that not that the not that the necessity governed his giving there was a necessity but God didn't if I put it into such language God didn't say well look something's got to be done for these people and there's nobody else who can do it I better do it no God so loved love that caused him to kill it was love that bound him or he bound himself in covenant to him but here was the necessity of the gift drag this down again you'll have to forgive me

[35 : 55] I can only get a medium this way many will be receiving gifts from near and dear and otherwise through this season and many will be saying as they open the parcel and reveal what they've got well that's just what I want I want to say this my dear and I say it with all kindness in the world every gift that we received in the human realm we could do without we could do without everyone God has given to us in the human realm all that we really need I'm not underestimating friends you won't misunderstand me surely but whatever the gifts are and the millions and millions and millions of gifts all over the world that will be changing hands and I say in the essence and in the fullness you could do away with them all because there isn't one that is a necessity here is the only necessity and one wonders as they behold the morning light of this very day how many will be given in mercy to see the necessity of this gift and not only to see it but to feel it if I leave nothing else with you yea

God grant nothing of mine but his but if there's nothing that I may say through the day about this theme what little I may be enabled to say may God give you and I this thought well with us and in our souls through this season you have a lot of store so do I you think a great deal you value a great deal you estimate a great deal you respond a great deal to gifts that come from your dear friend you anticipate for some time what you're going to receive you know anticipation is a very wonderful thing

I remember saying in the Sunday school in my late church one occasion I forget now whether it was Christmas time it doesn't matter but I remember saying to the children you know anticipation is always great and sweeter than realisation I know I think for years after that I was reminded by so many people of what I said it's true it's true I go back to my days when I was away at boarding school having left home at a very early age about a month before Christmas when the parcels began to come from friends and relatives and so on for us boys we were never allowed to see them they were stored in the cellar of the chaplain's house the Church of England was the order there and we were just had at each meal time just a list read out of those for whom parcels had reached the school that day and then as the days progressed the last thermometer was put up on the notice board and the red went up and up and up and up and as you heard your name read out perhaps today and perhaps tomorrow and perhaps the next day and you counted the number and all the way the mind began to go

I wonder what there is in that it's a lovely fortune a lovely fortune and then of course on the Christmas morning they were all brought out and we were up and sent up into the drill hall to open 240 boards those who had no parents and no relatives were provided by the school with parcels so that everybody had one at least if not you can imagine without me going into it and my mind goes back to it now yes and after the passes were all over all over the contents taken out the paper and the string and so on and so forth it littered the floor two or three feet from the ground and then volunteers called gather it all up and take it out and book but the anticipation

I love it it was sweet anticipation of him does it mean anything I don't mean in the sense of his ultimate coming the second time without sin and salvation but have you anticipated his coming this morning as you wended your way to the sanctuary lovely anticipation there's a necessity in this gift that makes it unspeakable a necessity even in relation to every gathering in which we gather together here in the house of God for if he's not here friend it'll be empty it'll be vile meaningless worthless thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift it's a necessity necessity and all glory of the coming of Christ fills the necessity yes but I suddenly look at that clock and it's necessary for me to close in the moment

[42 : 57] I must the Lord bless his truth thus far and lead us perhaps in the interval into a little of the contemplation of anticipation even so come Lord Jesus Amen He from He He He