

# Eternal Life - the gift an Giver (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Delves, Stanley (1897-1978)

[ 0 : 00 ] Chapter of the Gospel by John, the 10th verse. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that theft to thee give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ was exercised amongst men in two ways.

There was his public discourses, sermons we should call them perhaps, to the multitudes that from time to time gathered to hear his word.

And then, as well, there were those personal and private conversations that the Lord Jesus Christ had with individuals.

And it is noticeable that when the Lord spake to a multitude, he set truth before them in the general principles of it.

[ 1 : 33 ] But when he spoke to individuals, his teaching was more direct, and more applicable to the case of the particular he was in conversation with.

And in this first part of the Gospel by John, we have two remarkable accounts of private and personal then conversation.

The first, of course, in the third chapter of John, is the Lord's word to Nicodemus. In the fourth chapter of John, there's the Lord's word to the Samaritan woman.

And before I come more particularly to my text, there are considerations arising on these two records records of personal conversations.

I think it's well to mention. And first, it is observable what different characters these two people were.

[ 2 : 46 ] I suppose it would be impossible to conceive of two more different characters in their outlook, their principles, their manner of life and the like, than Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee, and this woman of Samaria, who was anything but that.

And, it is surprising, we might feel, how the Lord spoke to these two such totally different characters. We might have thought that he would have instructed the woman of Samaria about the necessity of the new birth, seeing the kind of life she had been living, and that he might have instructed Nicodemus more in the nature of spiritual worship, seeing he was a professing man.

But the Lord knew exactly the cases that he was dealing with. and he put those truth before them that he saw most necessary for them to understand and to believe and to feel.

The way in which these conversations came about is strikingly contrasting. Nicodemus came to Jesus Christ, the woman of no thought of coming to him at all.

when she came to Jacob's well that morning, she had no idea whatever who she would meet with there, and it may very well have been if she had known she wouldn't have gone at all.

[ 4 : 32 ] She would have avoided him, especially if she knew that he knew all things that ever she had done, she would have gone out of her way not to be at Jacob's well that day.

And so it is still my friend, there are some that come to Jesus Christ, there are some that he comes to.

I know that in every case of course, wherever there is a true speaking spirit, he is first in that, but I mean with regard to the way in which different cases appear.

appear. There are some seek the knowledge of Jesus Christ like Nicodemus did, or at least they want to know the truth. There are some that the Lord must be where they are, must come to them without their ever coming to him.

And yet although there is such difference between these two conversations and the two characters of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman there are similar features.

[ 5 : 47 ] They were both ignorant. Nicodemus was ignorant of the new birth, the Samaritan was ignorant of that living water and of Jesus Christ who had it to give.

Well, we all start with being ignorant. and there is this similarity that at first they were more confused than enlightened by the Lord's teaching.

He put things before them in such a way as rather staggered them. How can these things be, said Nicodemus? Whence has there this living water, said the woman, not realising at that time even what Jesus meant by the living water.

For she could conceive of nothing as no water but that which came out of Jacob's well. The well is deep, she said, and there was nothing to draw with.

How then can you give me living water? They were both at first confused. Now, there is nothing confusing in the truth, nor in the teaching of Jesus Christ, but it is sometimes the case, perhaps very often the case, that whether the speaking after the knowledge of the truth, the mind meets with much confusing, but it cannot understand.

[ 7 : 25 ] It may feel to be more bewildered than instructed. What does it mean, they say? Cannot understand it, cannot get to the bottom of it. I cannot grasp the meaning of these things.

They puzzle my mind. I want to know the truth, but I feel instead of being instructed, what I hear seems to make me still more confused.

I hardly seem to know what the man means in what he says. This is not surprising my friends, not at all, because it means that truth is coming into contact with much in our own minds that is contrary to it.

As I said, there is no confusion in the truth, but there is a great deal of confusion in ourselves. and it's confusion when our minds not clearly enlightened and still thinking about spiritual things along earthly lines, come into contact with that which is divine.

Very often the first effect is confusion. confusion. But now in these matters, we must have patience, seeking souls must have patience, and we who desire to encourage and instruct and guide souls into the knowledge of the truth must have patience too, and not expect necessarily that as soon as they hear the truth they will understand it and receive it and respond to it, there is often very much confusion.

[ 9 : 16 ] There was with Nicodemus, there was with the Samaritan woman. But then again my friends, where the Lord undertakes to guide and instruct anyone, he will not fail in due time to clear their misty understanding with regard to divine things.

And sometimes it is rather quick. Light seems to enter the mind after a period of confusion in a remarkable way, and then it all seems so clear, you couldn't see it before.

And while you were in the confusion and perhaps the depression of mind that you were in, once light penetrates into the mind and into the heart, I mean spiritual light, then spiritual things are seen to be perfectly clear, without any confusion, and very precious, and very wonderful.

And so it was in these two cases. things. But I hadn't thought to be quite so long as this. The point that really had engaged my mind when I considered these two records of Nicodemus and the woman was this.

Now in both cases the Lord Jesus Christ was speaking of spiritual life. And help men come to possess spiritual life.

[ 11 : 00 ] If you read the teaching of Jesus Christ again, with that in mind, it may surprise you how often the Lord was speaking about eternal life to the people.

he did in that memorable discourse to the multitude, though it offended them. He was speaking about eternal life and the bread of life.

The teaching of Jesus Christ was very much to this point to set before the people the nature, the necessity, and the blessedness of eternal life.

and he was speaking of that both to Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria.

But now, how do men come to possess eternal life? This priceless gift of God, eternal life. Well, now they come to possess it in two ways.

[ 12 : 11 ] First, by the new birth. death, by being born again. He must first Jesus to Nicodemus, be born again, to possess eternal life.

It comes through regeneration into the soul. No unregenerate man can ever possess eternal life. There is nothing in him spiritually viewed, but just utter death.

death. But then it might be said, but then what can we do in this matter? We cannot give ourselves a new birth.

It is the sovereign effectual operation of God upon the soul. We can do nothing in the matter. Well, there is one thing of course any earnest and sincere inquirer could do, and that is to pray that the Lord would work that spiritual miracle in the soul.

But now look at the case of this woman. The Lord said eternal life before her. He said it before her metaphorically.

[ 13 : 28 ] By the water that he had to give, he meant eternal life. How could she possess eternal life? she could possess it this way.

If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

That is, he would have given thee eternal life. And these two principles, although they may not perhaps to her understanding exactly meet, but they are perfectly in agreement.

The new birth, and this, this asking, and this receiving. And with regard to the new birth, in due time, if the Lord gives you this living water, you will find that it springs up in you, into everlasting life, and that's the new birth, that's the new birth, in just another form and way of expressing it, it is the water of life springing up in us, into everlasting life.

life. Well, these matters are instructive, important, and interesting, from a spiritual point of view, and I felt as an introduction to the word this morning, I would set them before you.

[ 15 : 13 ] Now let us, as the Lord may help us, engage our minds more especially to this word. If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that set unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

The circumstances of this text, and the way in which the Lord dealt with this woman, I've mentioned before, and commented on, so I will not this morning bear upon that.

Let us take then first the knowledge, if thou knewest the gift of God, and then the asking, if thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldest have asked of him, and then there's the receiving, he would have given thee, living water.

I'll just make this observation, it is very sadly clear that not many people seek after the things of God.

very few have any mind for divine truth, very few have any thirst for divine blessing, and no one has in and of themselves, and why is it that if the things of God are what they are, and many of us have been brought to believe that they are essentially, spiritually, and eternally blessed, that they can bring a peace into the heart, a hope into the soul, a comfort into the mind, a satisfaction into the desire, and a prospect of eternal heaven, how is it that so few people care about them at all?

[ 17 : 47 ] Why are things so precious, so disesteemed? Well, there are three reasons, there are in fact many reasons, but they all seem to me to concentrate into three, and that is ignorance, unbelief, and enmity.

And the sad truth is that these conditions, in one form or another, prevail in every unregenerate heart, and they are very sad conditions, they are ruinous, they are damning conditions, unbelief, ignorance, and enmity.

and it is very clear, isn't it, that where there is no knowledge, there will be no asking.

Men do not seek after that, of which they know nothing, and with regard to unbelief, men will not seek after that they don't believe in.

one of Satan's most powerful ways of holding men under his control is through unbelief.

[ 19 : 16 ] Men will not seek after what they do not believe in. As long as Satan can keep anyone's mind in a state of unbelief, not believing there is anything in these spiritual things, only men's fancy, and imagination and the life, he's got that soul in his firm, sure grasp.

And thirdly, enmity. The carnal mind, in its simple state, is at enmity with God. And enmity with God causes aversion to the things of God.

Men will not seek after that they feel an aversion to. They don't want to even to hear about it. To hear about it offends them and annoys them.

Ignorance, unbelief, and enmity, free awful conditions in the soul. things of things of evil.

But in individual cases, sometimes one condition seems more prevailing, and sometimes another.

[ 20 : 39 ] With some it's ignorant. They don't show a spirit of enmity. It isn't so much that they refuse to believe. they're ignorant.

They have no understanding. They're in the dark. Remove that ignorance, and their heart will respond to what they know. That was the case with this woman.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in other cases, came up against those other conditions terribly. They would not believe him. How long will it be ere they believe me?

And didn't they hate him? Didn't they hate him? But in this case, he was dealing with ignorance. If thou knewest the gift of God, if only that stumbling block, that hindrance, that barrier, that blinding condition, was removed, then you would ask.

But of course, it wasn't that this woman was entirely ignorant. In fact, she was quite knowledgeable in many matters with regard to religion.

[ 21 : 57 ] She knew all about Jacob, and no doubt was well acquainted with the biblical history of Jacob, and that well, and God's dealings and leanings with Jacob.

She knew all about the controversy between the Jews and Samaritan, over the place of their worship. She knew all about the Messiah coming, and that when he came, he would teach them all, she knew all about that.

And yet, for all that she knew, she was spiritually ignorant. children, my friends, there are some in that case today, there's not much you can tell them about religion, they've heard about it, they may have quite good knowledge of theological problems and questions and the like, but for all that they're ignorant.

and what proves their ignorance? What proves anyone's ignorance? This, they do not ask, if they knew it, they would have asked.

It's a sure sign of ignorance of the things of God when there's no speaking after them. You must understand that there is knowledge and knowledge with regard to matters of religion.

[ 23 : 34 ] There's a knowledge people may acquire by hearing and reading and the life and still that leaves them ignorant of the real vital principle of knowledge.

All spiritual knowledge comes of the enlightening of the understanding and of the heart by the Holy Spirit. I know I'm always hammering at that, but I feel there's a need to be that I sure.

All spiritual knowledge comes to us through the Holy Spirit teaching and enlightening of our understanding. And there's all the difference in the world between knowing spiritual things spiritually and knowing them naturally.

how be it even natural knowledge the Holy Spirit may use to guide the mind into the spiritual knowledge of the truth.

I'm not decrying mind you, I'm not decrying even natural knowledge of the truth and teachings of the word of God. The Holy Spirit can guide the mind through that through that through that porch into the inner knowledge of the truth in the soul.

[ 25 : 07 ] We hope he will. But the great difference is this in spiritual knowledge the things of God are so discerned as that they are seen to be desirable precious blessed heavenly and once the soul knows that then this will invariably follow there will be an asking brethren no one could possibly know the things of God spiritually the nature richness and blessedness of the gospel the preciousness of the person love grace and blood of Jesus Christ and be content to live and die without him believe me they couldn't and they wouldn't it doesn't stand even in human nature to be content to be deprived of what is seen to be desirable and especially if it is not only seen to be desirable but felt to be essential so you see knowledge lies at the root of this matter if thou knewest the gift of God there are two things with regard to this knowledge that the

Lord mentions in this word two things to be known in this spiritual discerning way thou first the gift of God and secondly the giver of the gift if thou knewest the gift of God first and who it is that set unto me give me to drink thou wouldest have asked of him and he would have given the living water there is the knowledge of the gift and the knowledge of the giver now what is the gift the gift is sometimes I believe being thought to be the Lord Jesus Christ himself because he is said to be the unspeakable gift thanks be unto

God for his unspeakable gift there seems to me an evident distinction in this word between the gift and the giver so I don't interpret the gift as being the Lord Jesus Christ in this connection that he is the gift of God God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son is unquestionable the gift is eternal life that is clear from another scripture the wages of sin is death not merely the death of the body although that comes upon us thy sin but the death of the soul but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord eternal life then is the gift of

God now if thou knewest this gift for one thing if thou didst but know the necessity of this gift to thy present and thine eternal salvation oh if thou didst but understand how poor how lifeless how wretched thou art really notwithstanding all that may seem to obscure this but if thou knowest thy real state and condition as God knows it if thou knewest that without the gift of eternal life it would have been better that thou has never been born than to be born to die everlastingly in the ruin and guilt of sin oh if thou knewest what this gift would mean to thee if thou didst that possess it thou wouldst have asked if thou knewest its necessity to thy poor soul and this is one thing that the Holy

Spirit does always teach those that he does teach to understand that they are in a poor sinful lifeless wretched condition spiritually whatever in other ways they may possess and enjoy that they are in a poor undone sin blighted sin ruined state and that their present state is only the prelude to a worse state to come then when we know that to purpose and then the Holy Spirit teaches us what will meet our case even the priceless gift of eternal life then we shall ask for it if thou knowest how necessary to thy poor soul this gift is if thou knowest the gift of God that it is the one most precious the one most essential gift of

[ 31 : 26 ] God they would have asked every word as it fell from the Saviour's lips bears its meaning and carries its weight there are many gifts of God many our natural life is the gift of God our daily bread by whatever means we obtain it it's originally the gift of God no man could make the earth bring forth food if God had not given food to us by the fertility of the earth our measure of health and strength is the gift of God many providential blessings that we enjoy are the gifts of gifts of God gifts of God but now Jesus speaks here not of a gift of God one amongst others but the gift of

God the one greatest most essential most spiritual gift of God if thou knewest this if thou knewest what a precious gift it is that though it is given it is priceless that could thou possess the whole world and lose this gift they were undone and ruin as Jesus said what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul and be cast eternally away if thou knewest how priceless thy soul the gift of God is that is eternal life and another thing if thou knewest the gift of God if thou knewest what this gift will mean to thee in the life to come in the eternity that is before thee if thou knewest what it would mean to thee to possess the gift of God in thy soul that it would end in eternal an eternal heaven of life and love and joy and peace and rest oh if thou knewest what the gift of

God would mean to thee in the life to come but we come back to the same sad consideration men do not realise this it is not so much in this country of ours at least it is not so much for want of information men can learn if they want to learn it is because there is ignorance in their minds and they don't want to know but now for the last few minutes this morning I will ask you to think of the other point in the Saviour's word the giver if thou knewest the gift of God then thou dost need it and what a blessing it would be to thee to possess it and what an eternity of happiness and joy and peace it would bring thee into if thou knewest that this gift of God would spring up in thy soul unto an everlasting life in heaven there would haste then there is secondly the giver and just a few words and then I must close this morning so it is that sat unto thee so it is that it is the son of God that he is the giver of this gift if thou didst that know that there is one now beside thee who can give thee this gift that would devour thee there must be a knowledge of Jesus

Christ before we can ask for this living water our hearts must be turned from other sources systems that can hold no water to this fountain of living water there is only one Jesus Christ and he only can give eternal life to our souls others my helpers in our seeking after the knowledge of the truth was very much helped in my early days when I was seeking after these things by a good friend of mine who instructed me and helped me with my difficulties of mind for I ran into them like everyone else does more or less but he couldn't give me eternal life you my friends listen to me patiently but I cannot give you eternal life if I had more ability to preach the gospel than I have if I could set the truth before you with the tongues the eloquent tongues of men and of angels

I couldn't give you eternal life it's no use to think well if we would go to this minister or to that man perhaps we could get what we want you must cease from man in this particular only Jesus Christ can give the priceless gift of eternal life to our poor sin perishing soul you must go to that deep well that deeper well than Jacob's deep well to draw by faith the eternal life that he so freely gives but there's something in this word I want to say before I close this morning if thou knewest who it is that is saying to thee now in the word of the gospel that is being saying in this conversation with that poor woman down to this day the poor sinners who have an ear to hear it if they are nearest to it is that said to thee that it is

[ 38 : 38 ] Jesus speaking in his word and gospel there would it devour but we might say perhaps well we know who it is we know that it is Jesus Christ speaking yes and then perhaps you don't realise it let me put it to you like this if thou knewest who it is if thou knewest how full of compassion he is to poor thirsty needy sinful souls this woman had a black history and the Lord Jesus Christ brought it up to her and she was convinced of sin by his teaching he told her all things that ever she did and I take it that includes a very great deal more than is mentioned in this record you know the

Holy Spirit in the scriptures has not unnecessarily recorded the sins of those who by repentance have been forgiven and whose names are in the Lamb's book of life the Holy Spirit has never unnecessarily recorded them for the most part they've been left hidden and all that is said of this woman is that she had five husbands and there was no indication that any of them were dead and she was living with a man who wasn't her husband then well now she might have thought oh he would never give me living water but he would have given her living water oh my friend if poor souls who feel their sinfulness and their worthlessness if they did but know this that sinful as they are and unworthy as they are the Lord

Jesus Christ would give them living water for all that he would indeed he would never spurn them he would never reject them he will give God blessed gifts to the most unworthy of men then let not conscience make you linger nor a fitness fondly dream for all the fitness he requires is to feel your need of him and this he gives you his spirit rising beam and that's a beautiful word for the first rising beam of the spirit upon our heart is to show us how much we need Jesus Christ if thou knowest how compassion it he is thou would not hesitate to ask him they would not be ashamed to come to him for this living water they would not say oh

I must make myself better than I am before I can come to him for he is full of compassion and of great mercy if thou knewest how full of grace he is grace is what we need and grace is in this living water that he gives if thou knewest that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is so rich it is so abundant it is so effective it is so sweet it is so suitable oh if thou didst know what a gracious person Jesus Christ is thou would surely never be content to be without the gift of eternal life if thou knewest who it is that set unto thee give me to drink if thou knewest how full of love he is how full of love

Jacob's well was deep but here's a deeper well than Jacob's well oh Christ thou art the fountain the deep sweet well of love oh if thou knewest what a well what the never failing spring of love there is in that great heart of his they would ask you couldn't help to dance if thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that set to thee that set to thee now even now even this Lord's Day morning that set to thee in the word of the truth of the gospel the never failing never changing gospel if thou knewest who it is set to thee give me to drink there will have said

[ 44 : 18 ] I come oh Lord and thirst to thee some living water give to me or I must faint and die all other streams my soul has tried all other streams are dry beside that flows from Calvary how I wish I could get your heart this morning to these things and so set them before you that you would feel yes Lord I'm that poor thirsty that poor desolate that poor sin part that poor dead soul but I do come to thee for I believe thou hast life to give even me and I believe that thou art so compassionate so gracious so tender and so full of love that

I cast myself upon thee Lord I do indeed I know not quite how to finish the Lord do the rest  
oh may the Lord do the rest tomorrow Rick will ôle Thank you.