

20-0216a Transcript

20-0216a - *God's Gifts, Our Gratitude, and Redemption, Steve Cain*

Bible Readers: Not recorded and Devon Lewis

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God's Gifts, Our Gratitude, and Redemption

Transcript (0:04 - 28:24)

Scripture Readings

1st Reader:

Not recorded.

2nd Reader: Devon Lewis

James 1:16-18

(0:02) Good morning. Our second scripture reading is from James chapter 1 verses 16 to 18. (0:12) Again, that's James chapter 1 verses 16 to 18. (0:18) Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren, every good thing given and every perfect gift is from (0:25) above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. (0:32) In the exercise of his will, he brought us forth by the word of truth (0:36) so that we would be a kind of firstfruits among his creatures.(0:41)

Transcript

Preacher: Steve Cain

(0:51) Good morning. It's good to see so many brothers and sisters out to worship God and to lift him (1:02) up and praise psalms and hymns. Glad to see that Wally and Carol were able to be here today. (1:09) Some loving couple came and picked him up and brought him.

(1:14) Their car gave out on them yesterday so they needed some help thanks to their daughter and son-in-law. (1:25) It's good to see other people out here too. We're going to anticipate a baptism right after (1:30) services this morning so hopefully that God will be blessed in that also.

God will be happy. The (1:39) angels in heaven rejoice when that happens and they know that they got a new citizen in the (1:45) kingdom of God. There was one thing about the announcements this morning and that is that (1:54) March the 1st will not just be a trustee meeting but it'll be a congregational meeting (2:03) and meaning that we're going to have to replace three outgoing trustees and a fourth one which (2:11) will be me.

If you read your bulletin this morning you'll recognize the fact that I gave notice (2:20) that I'm going to be retiring and my last day will be March the 1st. Actually it's the 2nd (2:28) because I said the 2nd but then shortly after that then we'll have a (2:36) potluck and it will be following the congregational meeting. We'll have a potluck here too.

(2:45) Let's go to our heavenly father in prayer. Most gracious heavenly father we thank you so much for (2:52) this day especially for the beautiful sunshine and the day that you've given to us to be able to (2:58) get out and come to worship you but it also is a day that we can recognize the fact that you are (3:04) blessing us and that we need to be grateful for all the many blessings that you bestow upon us (3:10) and sunshine is one of those that we enjoy greatly but there are other things that we enjoy that you (3:16) bountifully provide for us too and we pray that we're not negligent in reflecting those things to (3:22) you. We thank you for this congregation and for the spirit that it presides here.

We pray that (3:29) you continue to be with us and help us to grow and help us to mature and become complete not (3:36) lacking anything. We thank you for the spirit that provides here and that it works so wondrously in (3:45) our lives. This time we ask your blessings on our worship and we pray that the things that we do and (3:51) say will be in complete harmony with your will and we pray these things in Jesus Christ's name.

Amen. (4:01) If you read the bible very closely you'll see that there is one attribute about God that (4:06) that we often just take for granted and I'd like for you for us to focus in on what that one (4:16) thing that God feels that we take for granted and that is that all things that we have and all (4:24) things that we survive are from him. You remember the passage that was just read in your hearing (4:31) and James where James is pointing out to us that all good gifts come from above and we he wants us (4:41) to recognize that fact as we look at that particular passage and let's take a look at it my dear (4:55) verse 18 of chapter 1 or 16.

Get my eyes focused here. Do not be deceived my dear brothers every (5:03) good and perfect gift is from above coming down from the father of the heavenly lights who does (5:08) not change like shifting saddles. He chose us to give us birth through the word of the truth (5:16) that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

All things all things that we benefit (5:25) from are coming from God. There is no other God before him. There is no other being that is (5:33) providing the things that he provides for us.

You stop and think about the creation of the world (5:39) and oftentimes I've tried to reflect upon this creation did just a little bit in Bible class (5:45) this morning but when you look at the creation of Genesis account of how God created the world (5:51) and the steps in which he created the world the culmination of that creation was it provided (6:02) sustenance and the ability for man to live on this earth. But notice there is nothing (6:12) nothing that was created that man had a hand in. There was nothing nothing that God said you (6:21) create it man you do it you make it you provide the air or you provide the seed for the tomatoes (6:28) you provide the seed for the oak you provide the fish for the ocean you do those things (6:35) and there's not one thing that God relied on somebody else to provide.

What we have is (6:44) there isn't anything that you and I have that God did not make. So what do you suppose (6:55) God would like for us to do? Be thankful. Thank you God.

Thank you for the air. Thank you for (7:05) the blessings. Thank you for the food I have.

Thank you for life. Thank you for and then you (7:10) just go right on down the line. I'll oftentimes reflect upon it when I was teaching my children (7:16) to pray and you say thank you for the mailman.

Thank you for the the various other things that (7:23) you know around. Thank you for and then they'd sit there at the table and I'd say (7:27) with their eyes open thank you for the mashed potatoes. Thank you for the peas.

Thank you for (7:32) and they would go through the whole list wouldn't they. (7:36) God wants that. God wants us to reflect upon the fact that there isn't anything that (7:43) we have.

Our existence depends upon him and that's one of the reasons why I really love (7:53) Acts the 17th chapter which was read in your hearing also. Take a look at it one more time. (8:01) Acts the 17th chapter where Paul is talking to the Athenians there and he's pointing out to them (8:10) that this God that they ignorantly are worshiping is the one who made the world.

(8:17) Look at that. Here he is. He's walking through the the assembly and he's seeing all these idols (8:27) made to various gods.

Small g if you will. He's looking at all of these various idols (8:34) and they're all dedicated to gods that were created out of the mind of man. (8:40) That were the imagination of man.

The god of the heavens or the gods of the flowers. The gods of (8:45) this and the gods of that and we run across that particular attribute or thought in American (8:52) Indians too don't we. American Indians apart from the Athenians had their imagination going from (9:01) the god of the hunt.

The god of the rain. The god of the harvest and so on. Paul says (9:13) they didn't create this.

They had no hand in it. God wants the credit. (9:23) Look at it.

Paul stands there in the Areopagus and he says men of Athens I perceive in every way (9:32) you are very religious. Some translation says superstitious. I like that because they are (9:39) superstitious.

Anything that other than God the creator of heaven and earth God of Abraham Isaac (9:46) and Jacob is the product of superstition. And so he says I perceive that you are very religious (9:56) for as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship I even found an altar (10:01) with this inscription to an unknown God. But what you worship is something unknown.

(10:10) I'm going to proclaim to you. And then he proceeds to tell us about this God who created the heavens (10:16) and earth that they seemingly have rejected. Notice Romans will point out to us that anything (10:24) that could be known about God is known about God and man is.

The reason why these these idols are (10:29) there in Athens is because they reject the knowledge of God. They don't want to know about (10:37) the God of creation. So they make gods after their own imagination and in ways in which and worship (10:47) it in ways in which they think that they are being blessed.

And so as it goes on he says the God who (10:55) made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples (11:00) built by hands and he is not served by human hands as if he needed anything because he himself (11:07) gives all men life and breath and everything else. He's reflecting back on the creation of the world. (11:18) God provided all these things before he made man.

And so when he provided everything that was going (11:24) to sustain the life of man he created man. There wasn't anything that man needed. There (11:31) wasn't anything that man was lacking.

Everything that man needed was there. What does God want (11:41) from us? God wants recognition of the fact that he's blessing us in every way and he is the provider (11:49) of all these things. Isn't that what Jesus points out in the Sermon on the Mount? Matthew the fifth (11:56) sixth and seventh chapter consider you know the fields and how they toil now and yet (12:05) God blesses us.

God knows what we need before we even ask of it. (12:12) And so as we reflect upon those things Jesus is trying to point out to us that God wants (12:18) our admonition or not admonition but our glory. He wants us to lift him up and appraise him for (12:28) every day for everything we have in our lives.

But you know the way the days are structured (12:40) the way life is structured start every day out thinking oh I got to go to work today. (12:50) Every day is structured in such a way that makes you think that you are the lord of your life (12:57) and that without going to work and without going to you would not be sustained and that everything (13:05) that you have is dependent entirely upon your efforts and your desires and your needs. (13:15) And yet God has said I provided everything you needed before you were even born.

(13:22) Paul even goes on and talks about a little bit further. He says and he is not served by human (13:28) hands as if he needed anything because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. (13:35) Verse 26 from one man he made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth (13:42) and he determined the time set for them and the exact places where they should live.

(13:50) You ever stop to think about that? You're destined to live here. Cleveland, West wherever (13:58) you're living today, West Side, West Side, whatever. You're determined and destined to be here.

(14:07) He determined that for you. You're sitting there saying no I moved because I was looking for a job. (14:15) No, you were looking for a job because God determined that you were going to be moving here (14:23) and he took your job away from you.

You ever stop to think about that? (14:29) He providentially worked in your life in such a way that you had no alternative but to live here. (14:36) Right? You're here. Tell me why you're here.

God determined that you were going to be here. (14:51) Now what he has in mind for you later on I have no idea. Neither do you.

It's only in the mind of (14:57) God that he knows what you're going to be doing. It's only in the mind of God and so he says in (15:05) verse 26 from one man he made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth and he (15:11) determined the time set for them and the exact

places where they should live. God did this so (15:17) that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him though he is not far from each (15:26) one of us.

What is he telling us? He's telling us our circumstances determine what we're doing (15:44) and he's the one who determined the circumstances. He divinely intervenes in our lives, (15:50) providentially works in our lives, and he providentially preserves our lives. He has (15:57) every purpose and what was the purpose of this? So that you might seek him.

So that when you're (16:07) groping about trying to figure out what is my life all about? Where am I going and what am I going to (16:12) do? He wants you to take that moment and start searching and asking God what is it you have in (16:19) mind for me to do today? He wants you to start searching for him because he wants you to realize (16:28) that he is the one who works in your life and provides in your life and helps you with your life. (16:42) And so we think about those things constantly don't we? (16:48) Take a look at Romans. We're going to look at Romans the chapter, second chapter in particular.

(16:59) But Romans tells us that God divinely intervenes in our lives in so many different ways. (17:07) That not only does he determine where we're going to live, but he also has a hand and influence in (17:16) what our life is going to be and how it's going to be lived. Notice how he talks about how the (17:23) individuals desire not to know anything about him? So he gives them over to the perversions of the mind.

(17:29) We don't need to read all the perversions there, but he tells them that he's not going to interfere (17:37) and intervene in your pre-moral agency. He's not going to intervene. If you don't want to know (17:44) anything about what God, if you want to be ignorant about God and you don't want to know what is (17:49) available about God, everything is available.

All you got to do is just start searching for it. It's there. (17:54) But if you don't want to know anything about God, and if you want to live your life in such a way, (18:02) he's going to have a hand in that too.

He'll allow you to be an alcoholic. He'll allow you (18:12) to be a drug addict. He'll allow you to be a pervert, a prostitute.

He'll allow you. (18:22) He won't deny you the fact that you can do those things, but he wants a hand in your life. (18:32) And the minute that you turn your hand to him, then he will bring you out of those things.

(18:41) He'll bring you to the life that he really intended for you to have. (18:48) He'll bring you to the life that you really do want to live. (18:53) He'll bring you to the life.

But notice what Paul writes in 2nd chapter of Romans. (19:12) You therefore have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point (19:18) you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. (19:25) Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.

(19:34) So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, (19:39) do you think you will escape God's judgment? Notice what Paul is saying. (19:49) Do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness? (19:57) Tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's

kindness leads you to toward repentance. (20:06) But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath (20:12) against yourself.

For the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed, (20:19) God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing (20:28) good seek glory, honor, and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are (20:35) self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

There will (20:41) be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil, first for the Jew and then for the (20:48) Gentile. But glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does good, first for the Jew and then for the (20:57) Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.

What is Paul telling us? God starts out each one of our (21:09) lives with goodness. He starts out each one of our lives with patience, kindness, tolerance, (21:24) riches. Each one of us start out with God's patience, kindness, and tolerance.

Each one of us (21:31) start out life with God's love and care. But for some reason, I can't put my finger on it, (21:45) and there's no way that I'm going to study psychology to tell you why they do it. (21:54) But there are some people who just absolutely refuse to believe there is a God.

(22:00) There are some people who just absolutely refuse to believe the Bible and its accounts. (22:08) There are some people who just reject it altogether and don't want to know anything (22:13) about God. But God is working in those people's lives and he's working there and he's giving them (22:24) all these blessings and everything, but they're ignoring from whom it's from because he didn't (22:31) put a present on their self from God.

They're taking it for granted. This is life. This is (22:44) the way it is.

And so they reject God and they desire to go off in their own ways. (22:53) That God is working with them and he's being very patient, he's being very kind, he's being very (23:00) tolerant of this lifestyle until you reach a certain point. And when you reach that point, (23:11) you've reached the end of his patience.

You ever hear that phrase? I've reached the end of my (23:18) father's patience many times. You've reached the end of his patience and he's going to give you (23:27) over to what you want to do. He's going to let you do what you want to do.

(23:38) And that's the reason why he says here, (23:43) to those who want to stay with me, verse 7, to those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, (23:52) honor, and immortality, he will give eternal life. That's you. But for those who are (24:00) self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

(24:09) There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil first for the Jew and then for (24:16) the Gentile. Now I would imagine the reason why he's saying to the Jew and then the Gentile is (24:20) because the Jew knew this firsthand too and the Gentiles know it too. What is he saying to us? (24:30) If you want to reap the judgment of what it is to be an alcoholic or (24:40) an adulteress or whatever life you want to do, (24:45) have a God will let you do.

He's working in your life in such a way that he puts roadblocks there (24:59) to keep you from going. If you want to ignore those roadblocks, he'll take them down and let (25:07) you run off the

cliff. But he's pointing out to us that those of us who persevere (25:19) and want to continue on, there remains for us a reward to be with God eternally in heaven.

(25:31) And so it gives to us the opportunity to respond to that. But notice now, (25:39) Paul's saying the same thing that Peter says. He says God does not desire that any should perish, (25:48) but that all should come to repentance.

And so there is no end until there is an end. (25:58) It's too late for under certain circumstances and it's too late if you die first. (26:06) It's too late if Jesus comes back.

(26:10) But until those two things happen, it's never too late for you to repent. It's never too (26:15) late for you to turn back. It's never too late for you to receive the blessings that God wants (26:20) to bestow upon you.

And he's giving you the opportunity to respond. He's giving you the (26:27) opportunity to repent. And he's giving you the opportunity to do that through his son who came (26:33) and died on the cross for us to be the propitiation for our sins and for us to be able (26:40) to have our sins forgiven and to be able to repent and to turn away from that life that we (26:46) so thought we wanted and find out that we really didn't want it.

(26:54) But he's giving us the opportunity to repent. And he's saying to us, except my son, (27:03) believe that he is my son. Believe that he is the Christ, the son of the living God.

(27:10) And Jesus tells us what we need to do in order to respond to that invitation. (27:15) Jesus tells us in Matthew the 28th chapter and also in Matthew 16. (27:21) He tells his disciples to go into all the world to make disciples of me, Jesus, (27:30) baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(27:33) He that believeth in him that I shall be saved. We have the forgiveness of our sins available to us. (27:40) All we have to do is respond to God's invitation.

He holds it out to us. (27:46) There's no father, no parent who isn't willing to receive their children back into the fold. (27:55) Just like the prodigal son, that father stood out there every day looking to see (28:03) if he could be saved.

God is too. (28:11) That keeps you from responding if you need to repent. We'd like to extend to you the opportunity (28:17) to do so because we're going to sing the psalm of encouragement.

There's power in the blood. (28:21) Watch it come. But together we stand and sing the psalm of encouragement.