

"Only One God Who Blesses"

Which day of the year do you look forward to? I would imagine almost everyone's answer would be a birthday, holiday, or anniversary. But tell me, what's the biggest reason you wait for that day?

Of course, it may be because you receive messages of love and congratulations from your husband or wife, or from your children or friends. I'd imagine that you can rejoice in being celebrated, receive attention without judgment, and receive a nice gift. Some of you may find the day an excuse to pamper yourself at a spa or spend the day on the golf course.

Let's ask one more thing. You may have someone who only gives you a gift on your birthday and usually doesn't show much love or respect for you. On the other hand, you will have someone who doesn't give you a gift on that day but often expresses love and respect for you on a regular basis. Which of the two do you appreciate more?

Of course, I know the answer: everyone likes someone who gives a gift AND is good at expressing love and respect. But I'm sure many of you have grasped the truth that the person who gives you a good gift also has genuine love and respect for you.

So, during your life, who can give you the most and greatest gifts for the longest periods of time? Your parents? Your spouse or children? How do you reward the person who cares about you the most? Did you give him or her the same gifts of love and respect? I'm sure many of you know what I'm getting at. God is the one who has given you the greatest gifts throughout your life. Can you say that you've reciprocated?

Let's summarize the scriptures today here.

In Deuteronomy, Moses told the people of God's promise of sending Jesus to the world in human form. When Jesus was here, God placed His words in Jesus' mouth. Jesus was God's mouthpiece,

and therefore the words of Jesus are the same as the words of God. Whoever believes in them will live. Those who choose not to believe will die.

In the scripture from the gospel of Mark, we can see the ministry of Jesus, who came to the world just as Moses foretold in the book of Deuteronomy. And the name and power of Jesus broke down the power of evil and enabled His believers to be restored as the children of God so that they could live in His blessing.

The apostle Paul emphasized in 1 Corinthians that there is only one God for us. And that Jesus Christ, who came down to earth as a human being, is the same as God, from whom all things were created. Therefore, Jesus is the same as the God for whom we live.

God is the almighty creator. He is the master of our blessings. Therefore, the key to our lives lies in His word. Those who accept God as their absolute authority are the protagonists of victory and blessing. Let's compare some of the differences between the perspectives of humans and God.

I. Although humans depend on the power of numbers, God tells us to rely on the power of the word. We tend to always prefer big and large numbers. However, God wants us to hold onto just one thing. And that is the power of His word.

The number we prefer might change according to various conditions or situations. We want more money, more friends, and more power. However, the word of God that protects us never changes. Therefore, properly recalibrating our goal of faith is much more important than achieving a certain number.

In modern society, we often play it safe and prefer reasonable methods and numbers because reasonableness doesn't disturb anything in our hearts. But in modern churches, some people are torn between reasonableness and faithfulness. And oftentimes, reasonableness interferes with our decision-making from a faith standpoint.

Faithfulness guides us to ask the Spirit and then make our decision because the thoughts or methods of doing things between the Spirit and our own minds are oftentimes quite different.

II. Humans find satisfaction in their possessions, but God tells us to be satisfied with His promise.

I once heard the lecture of a successful businessman. He said that the purpose of making money is to be free and independent of money. He teaches his philosophy and business methodology to the public, and he hopes to produce 100 millionaires through his teachings. He has already produced 40 millionaires.

I bet you all are so curious about his name. Unfortunately, there is an age limit of 50. But he spoke these particular words: "I want to give more practical influence to the world than the clergy does." I respect such a person.

However, I pondered what he said. I recognized the reality of a world more interested in the message of a tycoon than that of a pastor. There is no denying that everyone needs money to live on this earth, but money cannot buy everything—even the Beatles knew it. They sang, "Money can't buy me love, love." But it's heartbreaking to see humans work so hard for more money but forget God's absolute effectiveness and power.

Can we really be free from money the more money we make? We may have such goals; however, human history proves the faultiness of that theory. King Solomon is generally considered to be one of the wealthiest men who ever lived. By some estimates, he may have been worth as much as 2 trillion dollars. If anyone was familiar with wealth and money, it was King Solomon.

But even Solomon in Ecclesiastes said, "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money." He goes on to say in Proverbs that "the blessing of the Lord makes one rich, and he adds no sorrow with it." Therefore, seeking God rather than money is the key to a blessed life. Jesus said, "If we continue in [God's] word, we will know the truth, and the truth will make us free" (John 8:31–32).

III. Humans focus on current reality; God asks us to prepare for everlasting life.

Here, let us consider 1 Corinthians 8:6 more deeply.

This verse describes our relationship with God: We have only one Father God; from Him are all things; and we are for Him. Our God demonstrated this principle of relationship to us in a practical way through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Therefore, God's sacrificial love saved us. Consequently, our sacrificial faith and devotion to Him once again bring God's blessings to us.

Jesus said, "Your heart will always be where your riches are. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:21). As such, we consecrate and gladly share our possessions in order to prepare for our everlasting life.

Certainly, it is hard to voluntarily dedicate your possessions to God because we humans are greedy and have an endless desire to possess during our lives here on earth. However, it is possible to surrender our possessions voluntarily and happily when we do so with faith.

To be honest, we can only dedicate the number of blessings I have received from God to Him. What does this mean? If you have a treasure that you can't give to God and want to keep just for you, it means that it can never be a blessing from God.

So, when the gifts, love, and respect God has given me are confirmed, we can finally make a consecration full of joy and gratitude to Him. If so, who among us can deny the fact that the life and salvation I have received are a gift from God in total?

Now, when we offer ourselves to God, we are not paying back what God has blessed us with. Through Jesus' obedience, our loyalty to the ministry of heaven has changed from a payment system to a sharing system. Sharing doesn't matter whether we can take charge of that portion more or not. This is because the operating system of gospel preaching proceeds through mutual cooperation.

Through His Son, Jesus Christ, the Creator God shared His love, sacrifice, and restoration with us, His creatures. Through that sharing, we, who have become His children, now share our love and sacrifice with the Almighty Creator of the universe and our neighbors through our consecration. Although our dedication is insignificant, the Almighty sees our hearts and rejoices.

The consecration we dedicate to God through the church is a sacrifice that confirms our belief that God is the owner of everything in our lives. Also, this is an act of gratitude that we exist in a realm of His blessings as the children of the Almighty Creator God. Furthermore, this is to share our hearts, strength, and materials so that the church of the Lord can fulfill the role of the ark that saves life on this earth.

There is a problem with the drain system inside the house that Euni and I are renting. The part where the sewage pipe connects to the septic tank is damaged and clogged regularly. Each time, the sewage rises to the ground through another pipe. We have to call a technician every time and clear the blockage. The owner has not yet come up with a fundamental solution to the problem because the work is not simple.

Are you preparing a spiritual path to heaven? We must live in a prosperous relationship with the one and only God, who controls our blessed lives on this earth and in the eternal kingdom. Through an open relationship with Him, we can always lean on Him and live in comfort. Amen.

Reflections and Applications for Today's Sermon:

1) How much value do you place on the salvation and blessings God has given you? Look at how you share that value with God, his church, and your neighbors.

2) In the text of the Gospel of Mark, people shouted to Jesus, "This man has authority!" When have you experienced that Jesus' words truly have authority? How does that experience make you approach the Bible?

3) In the text of 1 Corinthians, what is your emotional, rational, and religious reaction to Paul's claim that "we exist for God and Jesus"? Also, meditate on the fact that God wants to exist for you.