



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH
SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS



Have I Got Something for You!

Tim Badal | April 27, 2014 | Matthew 7:7-11

The Upside-down Kingdom Series, Lessons Learned from the Sermon on the Mount, Part 26

Please turn in your Bible to [Matthew 7](#). I want you to follow along and see what God's Word has to say, not just taking my word for it but seeing it right before your eyes.

If you don't have a church home, I want to just stop and say we're here every Sunday and would welcome you to join our Village Bible Church family and get to know us a little bit as we get to know you. Let's explore how we can serve you and how together we can serve Christ. This is what we do each and every Sunday: we sing praises to Lord, fellowship with one another, spend time in prayer and then we open God's Word and hear what God's Word has to say to each one of us. We need to hear from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Just as my family is blessed by this place, I know your family will be blessed as well. So hopefully you can be part of this each and every Sunday if you don't have a church that you call your own.

As a young pastor, I used to think people were coming to church on Easter for the story. We would once again go back to one of the narratives that talk about that glorious morning. I used to think that was what pastors were supposed to do—go right back to the Easter story and address those gospel accounts. As I've grown as a pastor, I've come to understand the wholeness of the Word of God—that every verse from Genesis to Revelation proclaims the glory of our risen Savior from what the prophets told us He was going to do when He came, to what the apostles said of Jesus' own words, to what the apostles would share after Jesus had died, was buried, was resurrected and ascended into heaven. Every book—every jot and tittle of these Scriptures—reminds us that Jesus Christ is the risen Savior and Lord. We praise Him as a result of what He has done, not only in His victory over the grave but His victory for you and me as His followers.

What I want to do today is continue looking at what we as a church have been focusing in on from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount—the most quoted, the most famous, the most remembered of all sermons in human history. Jesus has been reminding us that what Jesus calls us to as His followers is to turn our world upside-down. **We need to change our attitudes** about the way we look at people, the attitudes we have about ourselves and others and our attitudes toward God. Our actions: from the way we treat others, the way we treat those closest to us in our marriages and in our families, to those people we come into contact with on a daily basis—our actions have to be Christ-centered.

Jesus goes on and reminds us that **our affections**—how we interact with Him—have to be different than our interactions with every other person in this world. We need to look at our God Who is in Heaven and hallow His name as we learned in the Lord's Prayer. And then in the last part of this series, Jesus has taught us that **our aspirations have to change**—that which we pursue, that which we endeavor to have as people on this earth cannot be selfish. We cannot be pursuing the things we desire but our aspirations must be focused on the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

In our text today, Jesus reminds us that, while it may seem that there are a lot of dos and don'ts in Christianity, He has an offer that would be regrettable for us not to accept. It is the opportunity to be engaged in a relationship with Him. In this passage, Jesus is going to tell us: "Have I got something for you!" Jesus has a word for each of us—if this is our thousandth time in the church or this is our very first time in the church—Jesus has a word that will revolutionize and change our lives if we will allow Him to do so.

So we want to turn our attention to Matthew 7:7-11. Here at Village Bible Church, we like to give allegiance and credibility to God's Word by separating it from all other things that we read. I'll ask for God's blessing on our time and we'll jump right into God's Word together. Here's what Jesus has to say in this text:

⁷"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"

Father God, on this glorious day when we remember Your Son's death, burial, and resurrection, we pause and we say thank You. Thank You for what You have done in and through us. Lord, I pray that as we turn our attention to Your words that by Your Spirit we would hear what You have to say to us. Lord, You have offered salvation as a free gift by Your hand. I pray that those who have never trusted You will bow the knee to Jesus Christ after hearing Your Word. Lord, for those who have followed You for some time, I pray that they would remember that the follower of Jesus Christ is one who perseveres to the end. I pray for those who are followers who are struggling in their walk with You, that they would be encouraged by what is shared and that they would truly strive with all their hearts to actively pursue You in all Your ways. Now Lord, I pray You'd speak through me and that we would all be changed as a result of what You have to say. In Christ's name we pray. Amen and amen.

If you have a TV then you have heard the phrase, "Have I got something for you!" It's followed by a sales pitch for a product by a salesman who has told you about an invention that will revolutionize the way you live life. You know what I'm talking about. That cleaner that you can buy that will allow your kids to make mud pies in the middle of the living room with no concern for the mess that they're making because the cleaner will pick it up. How about those sauna shorts you can buy that allow you to eat all sorts of fast food for every meal the rest of your life, all the while keeping that swimsuit figure and physique? You know about those headphones that will allow you to have marital bliss while all issues and struggles will be put away because you'll be able to listen to the television while your spouse is sleeping silently next to you. How about that magic blender that allows you to be the life of the party even though your jokes are awful?

What is it about us that makes us so gullible for such things that promise to change the way we live life? You see, the answer is that the inventors seek to alleviate some of the frustrations we have in life. I won't by any stretch of the imagination try to have you embarrass yourself but I'm going to believe that a good majority of us have bought these products. The problem is when we buy them they usually don't turn out the way we anticipated. They didn't live up to their billing.

Well, there was a woman in our church—a gullible woman who will remain nameless (her name's Amanda, by the way)—who bought one of these TV products. It was pretty early in our marriage but long enough that she had come to love me, all of who I am in spite of my idiosyncrasies and issues. One day when I wasn't home and because of her weak will and because of money that was burning in her pocket, she came upon a product that she thought was not for her but for her husband. You see, after you've been married a little while, the issues that you thought you could live with become a struggle.

Some of you know that I am of a Middle Eastern background and let's just say we are hairy people. Let's just leave it at that. My wife thought that removing some of my hair might be a blessing and that her husband might just like it. Well, after I got over the issue that my wife didn't love all of me, she said, "Don't worry about it. Just try it and we'll see what happens."

When the product came in (I won't name the product because we're worried about getting sued), we tried it on just a little spot on my shoulders. Then the strangest thing began to happen. There was an odd smell in the room and what sounded like frying eggs. Then we realized my shoulders were smoking. That product lived up to its advertising that it would remove hair; it just didn't tell me it would absolutely be the most excruciating pain I had ever experienced. I even had blisters after that. Well, God bless my wife and her attempt to off me for life insurance reasons. [Some of you don't know this but I used to have a beautiful mane of hair before that experiment.]

Seriously, we buy these products because we have a need, or because there's a desire within us to improve who we are or maybe what we have, or maybe to alleviate some of our frustrations.

I'm going to single out some of you who maybe are critical of church. Maybe someone dragged you here. Maybe your mom said, "You're not going to get any food unless you come to church with me. You better come and put a smile on so the pastor thinks you want to be here." Well, I'm going to believe that some of you are pretty critical of this whole Christianity thing. Maybe you're critical of the whole religion thing. Maybe you think this is all a sham and the preacher is just God's middleman, just trying to sell a product.

Well, I want to remind you that the One Who has something for you is not a TV spokesman or a washed up actor from Hollywood. He is Jesus Christ, the greatest man Who ever lived. The One Who revolutionized this world, Whose teaching still today is being proclaimed in millions of places throughout this earth as the truth to eternal life. Billions of people have bowed the knee to this Jesus. This Jesus Who has changed the world, Whose life determines our calendar, Who did such amazing things that are recorded both by secular and Christian historians, this Jesus has a word of invitation for you today. You can look at it from a critical perspective or you can believe what He says—that He is truly the Son of God Who came from heaven to earth to live a life of perfection so that you and I might be saved from our sins. The Bible says

that when we trust Him we can be called children of God and that we can enjoy blessing and wholeness of life now and in the future, we can enjoy supreme intimacy with God in the life to come.

Jesus shares how we get there and I want to look under three headings so that you can follow along and so you will know the sermon at some point will come to an end. So here's what I want to focus on today as we look at this text:

1. The problems we must address.
2. The place we go to find the answer.
3. The only path that allows this access.

The Problems We Must Address

There are some problems that we have and in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reminds us of these problems.

You see, the advertisers are right in those infomercials. We do have problems; we do have needs. We have areas in our lives that need real help. But Jesus says these issues are more involved than just our fitness needs or what we want to fix on our body. They're grander than the stubborn stains in your carpets or the wrinkled laundry that you're worried about. You see, the Bible has two main themes:

1. You and I have a problem called sin. Each one of us is a sinner.
2. And because we're sinners we have a need for a Savior.

Throughout Scripture, the Bible tells us that our sin has caused a rift between us and God and that sin has consequences. Notice in verse seven that Jesus shares some of the consequences that come as a result of sin. They are in the three words that Jesus shares: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." I want you to see that there is something important in each of these words.

Lacking

First of all, when you see the word ask, I want you to remember that as human beings, we are lacking something. Notice that inherent within that word is the acknowledgement that we are lacking something. When you ask another individual for something, you are acknowledging, "I have a need and you are the one who can provide it for me." Or, "You might be able to help me accomplish or alleviate that need that I have." When we ask, we are declaring to the world around us, "We are a needy people."

Now it's easy for us to see this with our children. We recognize that they are dependent, that they are needy and that's why they're asking over and over again, "Mom can I have...? Dad can I have...? Dad I need... Mom I need..." We hear this on a daily basis because children are dependent. But one thing we forget about in our own lives is that as adults, even though we have our own bank accounts, our own homes, our own cars, our own jobs, we too are dependent people. We lack and we have needs.

You say, "But Tim, you don't understand. I'm a well-put-together person. I've got everything in order. All contingencies are covered and taken care of. I don't worry about that stuff." Then let me ask you: are there

times of anxiety in your life when you worry about finances, when you worry about that job deadline, when you worry about that relationship? The very essence of your worries and anxieties shows us that you are not in control. When you worry or are anxious, you are worried about something you have no control over and if you have no control over that then you are lacking the ability to know how to interact with today's issues and even tomorrow's events. So we find ourselves lacking.

The Bible says that we lack in the here and now regarding our lives, our breath, our minds and the strength that God has given us, as well as our provision and our protection. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that we lack the ability to right relationships that have been marred by sin. Next week in our text, we'll see that there are two ways: one that is broad leading to destruction and one that is narrow leading to eternal bliss with God. The problem is because of our sin; we can't choose the right path on our own. God is the One Who has to do that for us. So we find ourselves lacking today—lacking for the present and lacking for the future.

Looking

Now notice the next thing that Jesus says. He says that we are seeking—we are looking for something. Instead of allowing our lack to throw us to the feet of Jesus and pursuing Him, we pursue the things of this world as the mechanism that will fill our empty lives. So we begin to look at things in our lives and say, "Well, if I get this or I do that, I will be fulfilled. That will bring me contentment." Some of you are looking for that job promotion or that new position at a new company and you say, "People will take a look at me there; they will take notice of me and I'll be respected as Mr. Big Shot in the office." Maybe it's a role outside of work where people will recognize you as an important somebody. Maybe it's not the issue of a position maybe it's possessions. Some of us have this issue where—and I know I struggle with it—"If I only had this kind of house or that type of car, or that possession, that new electronic device..." When we're in the store we look at items as if they are going to change the way we live and how we look at life. We think they will bring a new level of happiness. "If I could only have that dress or that piece of clothing—whatever it is—then I'll be fulfilled. It'll bring me contentment."

How about pleasures? Some of us are trying to fill our lives and are looking for that certain something but we're doing so at the bottom of a pill bottle or a bottle of alcohol, or maybe some illegal drug. Maybe it's the appetites of this life that we have, pursuing the fleshly, sensual desires that our bodies seem to desire more and more. Whatever it is, we need to stop and ask the question, "Can I truly find happiness? Can I truly find contentment in this life through the things of this world?"

Jesus tells us that these temporal things that advertise such joy, peace and happiness often become idols in our lives. Jesus says in Matthew 6:19-21 that three things will happen to those temporal things. Moths will come in and destroy, rust will devour them or thieves will come and take them away. That's the problem with tangible things.

Jesus says over and over again, "I know you're looking for something but stop trying to lay up for yourselves treasures here on earth and lay up treasures in heaven where no moth can destroy it, where no thief can take it away and no rust can devour it because it is in the hands of God." The problem with

searching for things of substance in this world instead of choosing Christ is that when we get them they only give us a hunger for more.

C.S. Lewis, the great thinker of a generation ago, said that when we pursue the things of this world and make them our focus it is as if we are drinking salt water from the great oceans. As we drink we think we are filling ourselves but the problem with salt water is that it only makes you more thirsty. So that car, or that house, or that thing—that item, those pills—they only give you a hunger and thirst for more. They never satisfy the things that you're yearning for in this life.

The book of Ecclesiastes describes the grand experiment of seeking temporal things. In the last part of his life, King Solomon, one of the greatest kings to have ever lived, wrote this book and said, "You know what? I did an experiment, thinking I could find contentment in the position I held. That didn't work because what am I leaving this grand kingdom to? Someone's going to take it and they're going to ruin it. Then I thought that I'd just fill my life with possessions and make the most glorious temple and the most glorious kingdom that I could ever make. Then I realized I'm still going to die and what's going to happen? It's just going to fall apart. Time and age is going to see it come to its end."

Then he said, "Okay, maybe what I'll do is pursue pleasure." With 700 wives and 300 concubines, this man had all that we could imagine from a human perspective. Every need that a man has would be satisfied with that many women around him and he says, "That didn't do it either."

You see what Solomon learned after each of these experiments was that when we try to fill our lives, when we go looking in this world to fulfill the eternal thing that God has put within each and every one of us, we will only hunger and look for more. What Solomon said after each of those experiments was that they are "meaningless, meaningless, utterly meaningless." They're literally chasing after the wind (Ecclesiastes 2:26, 4:4, 4:6, 4:16, 5:16, 6:9).

Some of us are just chasing after the wind. We're never going to grab it. Jesus has a word for us: instead of seeking the things of this world to fulfill us, we should seek Him and His Kingdom. He articulates that when we seek Him and His Kingdom all the things that we're worried about, all the things that we desire, will be added to us. Now I want to be careful that I don't paint a picture that God is this genie in a bottle, if you will. We can't rub the bottle and expect Him to come out saying, "Whatever you want." No brothers and sisters. What God says is, "I will fulfill your needs. I will take care of you but not in the way that you think."

You see, as children our kids think they know how they should be treated; they know what all of their needs are. But as parents we know better, don't we? We know what their real needs are and our Father in heaven knows our desires; He knows our needs and He knows what's best for us. He says He wants us to look to Him and not the things of this world.

Longing

Notice one other thing in Matthew 7:7. Notice in the text it says we are to knock. In using this word "knock," Jesus is saying, "When there's a door before you, you are to knock." You're communicating. You're longing for relationship with someone behind that door.

A knock does nothing if there's no one behind the door. Jesus is articulating that we're not just longing for a building or a place but we're longing for a person because a knock communicates to another person, another individual. God is saying that as we knock, we need to know who we are knocking for. What good is it to knock at a door if there's no one to answer? Inherent within us is a longing for significance and meaning in life. For all of us, whether young or old, rich or poor, wherever we come from, whatever backgrounds we have, every human being has a desire to see our lives matter. At the end of the day, each one of us desires to know we had a purpose in this life.

One of the great thinkers of all of human history was a man named Blaise Pascal who articulated this: "There's a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every person and it can never be filled by any created thing. It can only be filled by God, made known through Jesus Christ our Lord." That yearning you have, that thing that you're trying to fill up, is what God your Creator built inside of you to bring you back to Himself. That longing that you have is to put you in a place to strive after Him and not the things of this world.

When Jesus preached this message, the people of His day had come to think that they could fill their lives with significance by doing good works and that by pursuing religion they would find significance and peace. But here's the problem: the Bible says because of our sin that even our grandest attempts at righteousness are but filthy rags before Him. We've got a real problem. You see, the Bible makes it abundantly clear that we are blind in our sin, dead and held captive by the evil one. We are in trouble. We are in so much trouble that we can't get out of it no matter what we try to do.

2. The Place We Go to Find the Answer

Where do we go when we're asking? Where do we go when we're seeking? Where do we go when we're knocking at the door? In His grace and mercy, Jesus helps us find the answer in Matthew 7:8-11:

⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"

Jesus says, "Okay, the place you need to go is to My Father in heaven. That is where you're to go. So if you want to know how to fill your life with good things stop trying to do it on your own and turn to your God Who is in heaven, Who promises to give good things to those whom He loves."

Who is this God in heaven? Notice the text tells us He is our *"...Father who is in heaven."* This is the second time Jesus has used this phrase in the Sermon on the Mount. The first time was a chapter ago where Jesus said, *"Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name'"* (Matthew 6:9). So Jesus assures us again that if we want to find contentment, joy and peace in this present world, we need to go outside of this world to find that the answer is our God and Father Who is in heaven.

Now notice a couple of things about this phrase, *"...your Father in heaven."*

Number one: the word Father reminds us of a familiarity that we desire. We are reminded that He is the God Who created us. He is the One upon Whom our whole existence depends. If we want to understand

our humanity, identity, idiosyncrasies, struggles and pains, we must go to the One Who knit us together in our mother's womb. Did you know your Father in heaven knows you better than you know yourself?

I was reminded of this truth just a couple weeks ago when my five-year-old son, Luke, had a question. We were talking about our upcoming spring break to San Antonio. The older two boys were talking about how much they enjoyed getting on an airplane to which little Luke says, "Well, I've never been on an airplane."

Noah, our oldest son, said, "Yes you have, Luke. You remember? We got on the plane and went to this place to visit this family and these friends. Don't you remember?"

Luke was perplexed and said, "I don't remember any of it."

And Noah said, "Hey Luke, you've been on a plane—trust me."

To which Luke was totally perplexed. He was trying to figure out, "How can I not remember every aspect of my life?"

As parents we know when our kids are struggling with something but we want them to work through it on their own. So we could tell Luke was pondering these questions inside: "Wait a minute. There's a part of my life that I don't know about?"

Then a couple days later he came to me after an evening meal and he said, "Dad, can I ask you a question?"

"Yeah, son. What's your question?"

"It's really been bothering me, Dad. Do you remember when I was born?"

"Yeah, son, I remember. It was a glorious day. It was a beautiful day. I remember you being born. I remember how happy your mother and I were. I remember holding you in my arms for the first time. I remember the joy that you brought your brothers."

"Dad, do you remember when I was crawling?"

"Yeah, son, I remember those days."

"Do you remember when I walked?"

"Yeah, yeah, I remember all of that."

"Are you sure you remember it?"

To which I said, "Yes, son I am positive. I remember all of your days."

To which—I kid you not—he went, "Whew. I'm glad someone does because I don't!"

This is a wonderful illustration of what Jesus is trying to tell you. I know you may feel like you're just one in a sea of billions of people on this earth, that you are a nobody, that your existence really doesn't make a difference. Maybe because of the human beings around you, you are ignored. Maybe because of your fast-paced life you have fallen between the cracks but I want to remind you that none of you have fallen through the cracks with your Father Who is in heaven. God loves you. He knows you. He even knows the hairs that are on your head (or what you used to have before your wife burned them all off).

He knows your comings and your goings. He knows when you rise and when you lay down. He knows your issues and your struggles. God says He knows you. He knows all of your sins, all of your failures and here's what we've come to know: God loves you. He loves you and He has a grand plan for your life. He has a desire to be involved in a relationship with you. This Father in heaven is a God Who loves you so incredibly. So maybe you think you're not loved by anybody today. Maybe you find yourself in total isolation. But you can know without a shadow of a doubt there is One Who loves you and trust me, it would be far better to be loved by God than to be loved by the rest of the world because God deeply cares for those whom He loves.

But notice before we get carried away and think, "Well, God is just love so therefore there is nothing I have to worry about. There's no judgment. I can do whatever I want and God's just going to love me." Notice it says, "*Our Father in heaven...*" Any time the Bible uses the phrase "in heaven" it always speaks of authority. So this Father Who loves you is also the One Who's in charge. He's the One Who sets the rules.

We must turn to God

In our home with our three boys, I tend to say, "Hey, as long as you're under my roof it's going to be my way or the highway." Let me tell you something, you're under God's roof today. You know this little ball that we call earth, God is the One Who reigns over it. You have a choice today: are you going to live in obedience to the house rules that Father in heaven has laid forth? Or are you going to live in rebellion to those rules? God makes it clear that you must turn to Him. You've got to give your life to Him.

Notice what He does when you turn your life to Him. As a holy God Who loves and a God Who is the supreme authority, when He looks at our sin He says, "I can't have a relationship with that." The only thing a holy God can do is pour out His righteous indignation and wrath on us. The Apostle Paul says that we are children of God's wrath. Why? Because we are sinners. We are disobedient. We're following the ways of the devil and the ways of this world instead of following Christ and His Kingdom.

Who gives good gifts

But here's the thing: this is the story of Easter. God has every right to leave us in our sin and send us to an eternal place called hell where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Because of His justice He could leave us in our sin but thanks be to God that on that glorious first Christmas He sent His Son Jesus. You see, God gives good gifts. This God doesn't leave us in our sin but He gives us the opportunity to turn away from sin and turn back to Him, to rejoice in the risen Savior Who took away our sins. He gives good gifts.

Notice in verses nine and ten, Jesus articulates that, "*For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*" Jesus says a father who is evil doesn't give his children bad things [Hopefully your father isn't an evil father; he may be marred by sin and selfishness.] But even evil fathers, when they are asked for bread, don't hand out rocks. When their children ask for fish, they're not handed venomous snakes. No, even fathers who struggle with sin desire to give good things to their children. Even with the right intentions, our greatest desires as fathers and as mothers to give good things doesn't always work out.

A couple of weeks ago my son, Joshua, came to me and said, "Dad I've enrolled in a talent show. I'm not going to sing and I'm not going to do a dance, but they've opened up the competition to include opportunities to do non-performing arts." Now Joshua is our builder. He loves Legos and we love to see his eyes open wide when a new set of Legos arrives. His mind just comes alive with all these things he can build.

I said, "Son, what are you going to build?"

He said, "I have this design. I want to build a working airport. I've done some research." Now this guy's only eight years old. He's already smarter than his dad. And he said, "I want fuel trucks and baggage carts. I want airplanes of different sizes because that's what I saw when I was at the airport." But then he said, "Dad, there's one thing I'm missing. I want one special plane that's going to sit on the runway for everybody to see. Dad could you buy me an airplane?"

To which I said, "Son, those are expensive but let's see what we can do." So we go on Amazon and we find this airplane, this beautiful airplane. I'm a cheapskate by the way—that's my confession to you. But I find it for a price that I couldn't pass up. I said, "Son, look what your father has found! An airplane. You've got a good dad."

To which my son says, "Dad, whatever you think is right and whatever you say, I'm happy with it. If you think it's okay let's get that plane."

I said, "Son, we're going to get you this plane."

And you guys know what happens. Your son walks away, "Dad is great! He's great, great, great!" To which your wife rolls her eyes like, "Are you kidding me? You just bought praise from your kid." Hey, I'll take it any way I can get it.

So we wait but the plane doesn't come. We're going to head off on vacation in a few days but the plane hasn't arrived. We're going to be gone a week and every day we're on vacation Joshua asks, "Dad, do you think the package is there? Do you think the plane's made it? I'm not going to have much time to build the plane."

I said, "Son, your dad said he bought it and when he bought it it's as good as gold. You're going to get it."

But we get back home and there's no plane. Now I'm starting to wonder. Two days after we get back a package comes. Finally! So I tell my son, "Hey, there's a package at the post office. Let's go get it." You know, the package is supposed to be about this size, right? No, it's really small...and really narrow. Something's wrong. Something's terribly wrong. We opened the package and it's not the plane. The great deal that dad got was only the stickers on the plane.

Pray for us, we're in our fourth week of counseling and things are progressing well. He's starting to talk again in public.

But here's what I want to tell you: even as fathers we can mess up. But Jesus says, "Even those fathers who are evil give their kids good gifts," I want you to know something: when God says He's going to give good gifts, He never makes a mistake. Tim makes mistakes and your father can make mistakes but our God Who is in heaven gives good gifts.

The book of James talks about this God Who gives good gifts. He says this: *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change"* (James 1:17). He doesn't make any mistakes. He doesn't have variables that He has to worry about. He doesn't have to read the fine print. God is the Author of the fine print. He knows what good gifts to give.

I want to share with you two gifts that He gives.

Number one: the gifts of daily use. We have much to be thankful for because God has given us a multitude of gifts this morning. The sun rose this morning. Do you know scientists say that if the sun was a few inches farther away from this little ball we call earth we would freeze to death? Do you know if it was a couple inches closer, we would all burn up? Did you know that God has created just the perfect atmosphere for us? That seven billion people woke up this morning and had enough oxygen to take in? That God has provided enough food and water for all of us?

You came from wonderful homes—God's the provider of them. You're driving in cars to get you from point A to point B—God provided them. Your ability to work, your ability to have life and breath and everything else, God has given you all of it.

Now here's the thing: in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says He doesn't just give that to His family, to His children, but the Bible says that He gives sun and rain to every one; to His friends and to His enemies. The same sun that we are rejoicing in on this glorious resurrection Sunday when we praise the name of Jesus is shining on us the faithful and is given to the worst enemy of God. That's how good God is. Even though we don't deserve it, God gives it. Those are the gifts of daily use.

Number two: notice there's a gift of deliverance. The Bible tells us that the way we find the anecdote for sin is through the gift of Jesus Christ. After speaking about the generosity that a group of people had given in helping another group, Paul tells the church at Corinth, "Let us not forget to be thankful for God's indescribable gift of His Son Jesus." That word indescribable in 2 Corinthians 9:15 is only used that one time in Scripture. Literally it means that we cannot fathom, we cannot trace out, we cannot put to thought the greatness of what God gave us in Jesus Christ.

Let me help you try to describe this indescribable gift. The Sovereign of the universe, enthroned in heaven with a myriad of angels worshipping Him, at a time prior to our existence here on earth made a decision. He knew we would fall in our sin but He made a decision within the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—and the Son said, "Father, for Your glory and for their rescue I will go and become one of them. I will leave all that heaven has to offer, all of its worship and all of its acclaim. I will leave heaven and I will become one of them. I will put on flesh. I will make My dwelling among them in order to rescue them."

Then for 33 years Jesus came and put restrictions on His life. Instead of doing everything and anything He wanted to do as was the prerogative of the King of kings and Lord of lords, He put Himself into time. He put Himself into space. He put Himself into flesh. He would live a life, with all of those limitations around Him, and He would do so with utter perfection.

All the while from His birth to His eventual death, people would want to kill Him. People hated Him. They mocked Him; they scorned Him. And what did He do? He healed people. He took care of their diseases. He released them from demons. He gave them teachings that would bring joy and peace in a world of sin and frustration. Then they hung Him on a cross for that. Jesus went to that cross and He endured all kinds of pain and sorrow, being viewed as a guilty man even though He had done no sin. He went to the cross and died for you and me. That is the indescribable gift.

But here's the rest of the story. He went to the grave, tasting death for us, so that death would no longer be our enemy; no longer would sin be our problem because Jesus Christ once and for all paid for it in full. If you look all of those sins and all of those issues, the story of the resurrected Lord is that they're paid in full. "It is finished!" Jesus said. Our issue with sin is done. And Easter is all about thanking God for His indescribable gift.

Because of His grace

Now here's the thing: some of us will say, "Well, what do I need to do? I've got my checkbook ready. Just like those infomercials, I'll pay three installments of \$29.95." No, God says this indescribable gift that delivers us from our sins is free because of His grace. These gifts that God gives, you can't earn them. You don't deserve them. You can't buy them. God gives them freely. He gives them freely to us in His Son because He wants to be glorified.

Now here's the thing: our infomercial friends do have one thing right. This offer that doesn't cost you a penny—you can't put it on an installment payment—but you do need to understand that just like that like infomercial, the clock is ticking. This offer Jesus gives is for a limited time. See, the Bible says that at the point of death judgment will come. You're not guaranteed tomorrow. You don't know what each day might bring. God forbid that you would leave this place today and be in a car accident. God forbid that your body would be ravaged by some terrible disease. We have no idea what tomorrow is going to bring, let alone today.

Paul says, "Today is the day of salvation." You need to know that today God is calling you by His grace, by His mercy, to turn and bow the knee to Jesus. It won't cost you a penny. It won't be something that you can buy through your good works. So how do we get it?

3. The Only Path that Allows Us Access

Notice my final point is the only path that allows us access. Do you want this gift? Some will say, "Yes absolutely." Well, it begins with faith and whole-hearted trust that Jesus is Who He says He is, that He has done what He says He has done, and that He has accomplished exactly what He said He would accomplish. Faith involves putting your entire trust and life into His hands. That's going to require some things of us.

Approaching God humbly

Notice the first thing it requires is that we approach God humbly. This means we need to respond in

agreement with Him. “Yes God, I am longing for something. Yes God, I am looking for something I will never find on my own. Yes God, I am lacking the ability to get my relationship right with You.”

The first step is to agree with Him. It begins by humbly approaching Him and agreeing with Him. The confession that we make is to say, “Lord, because of my sin I find myself in a hole that I can’t get myself out of.” Listen! You cannot approach the truth of the Easter story while holding onto your preferences and prerogatives. You can’t do it. You’ve got to release that and say, “God, I am in trouble. I am dead and held captive by the evil one. I can’t get out of this mess on my own and I’m in agreement with You in regards to that.”

Accepting God’s invitation

Step number two involves accepting God’s invitation. Notice Matthew 7:8—one of the most glorious things that Jesus could say—“*For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*” I want you to know something about this invitation: it is offered to every person.

Some of you are wondering, “What does it take? What do I have to do?” You don’t have to clean yourself up and fix yourself up to get there. It takes bowing the knee to Jesus, agreeing with Him and putting your trust in Him. Jesus says: “It’s for you. Young or old; whether you’ve got money or don’t; whatever background you have, I’m offering you the deal of a lifetime. It is by My grace that you can have eternal life.”

But you say, “Me? I’m ragged. I have a lot of issues and a lot of struggles. I’m fighting through some difficult things.”

Jesus says, “No matter your struggles, no matter your issues, no matter how far you feel you are away from Me, I love you and I care about you. I am offering you something that will change your life.”

But you say, “You don’t know what I’ve done. You don’t know the sins that are in my life. You don’t know how I’ve cursed the name of God so often.”

God says this invitation is for you. God says He knows you; He loves you and that He sent His Son to pay the price of your sin. Not just your sin but for the rest of us, all of our sin. We’re all guilty. So Jesus’ invitation isn’t just for the righteous. The Bible says there’s none righteous, not even one. He says, “Will you agree with Me that you’re a sinner in need of grace?” When you ask with that spirit, when you seek with that spirit, when you knock with that spirit, Jesus says, “Ask, it will be given. Seek, you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you.”

God says, “There is a guarantee that when you agree with Me that you’re a sinner in need of grace, then I will come in. I will enter your life and I will change your life. I will lead you in the way of everlasting life.”

Actively pursuing His ways

But notice it involves actively pursuing His ways. You see, we get this idea that all we need to do is make a decision and in some very quick moment on an Easter Sunday we’re saved. The pastor is saying, “I just need to raise my hand. I need to walk the aisle. I need to just make a decision.”

I want to make something abundantly clear: if you think this is a one-day decision, you're wrong. You see the Bible speaks over and over and over again that believing isn't just agreeing with Jesus but it also involves being changed by the Spirit's work in your life. He will change your pursuit of fleshly desires and make Christ the centerpiece of your life. Jesus asks, "Do you want to follow Me? You need to deny yourself. You need to take up the cross and follow Me."

While salvation is free, the Bible makes it abundantly clear it will cost us all that we have. It will change the way we look at life. It will change the way we live for ourselves so that we begin to live for Christ. Now notice, why does it have to be active? In the original Greek language of the Bible, the word "ask" the word "seek" and the word "knock" are in the present tense. So a better translation would be: "Ask and keep asking; seek and keep seeking; knock and keep knocking." It is an ongoing, perpetual action. To receive God's good gifts means that you and I bow the knee to Jesus, not just today but every day for the rest of our lives. We keep knocking. We keep seeking and we keep asking this God Who says He will never leave us nor forsake us; this God Who says, "I want to give you good things by My grace." When you do these things God says, "I am there with you and I will give you everything you need." Scripture tells us, "...he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). He's with you.

So then there's a two-point application. There's one of surrender. For those who are followers of Jesus Christ, who received this free gift of salvation some time ago, this passage reminds us that we need to keep fighting the good fight. We need to keep the faith. We need to run the race. Don't grow weary. I know it's hard. I know it's not easy, I know we battle with sin. And for you, the child of God, God reminds us that He is with us and He will give us all that we need to get across the finish line. Rejoice in the story of Easter, that the greatest enemy we had was death and sin but Jesus said, "*Oh death where is your victory? Oh death where is your sting?*" (1 Corinthians 15:55). Sin has been swallowed up by the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. So take heart, Christian. Take heart that "*He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world*" (1 John 4:4).

Luke reminds us in his Gospel that when we ask, when we seek and when we knock for the first time, that God gives good gifts and He gives His Spirit. So maybe today you've heard this story of Jesus Christ and His good news for the first time. Maybe you weren't planning on hearing it but something now is working in your heart and the Lord is speaking to you. Maybe this is the hundredth time you've heard it and it's finally starting to click. God is offering you salvation and He says, "I've laid down My life so that you might be able to lay your life down for Me."

You see, Jesus isn't asking that you lay down your life to take care of your own sin. He's calling you to lay down your life for His service. "*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast*" (Ephesians 2:8-9). God says when you come to Him you are "*...his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them*" (Ephesians 2:10).

So good works don't save us but the saving faith produces good works in us. Have you bowed the knee to Jesus today? Have you given your life to Him? God says when we ask, seek and knock that Jesus will open that door and He will allow us to come in.

If you have questions about the gospel, if you want to learn more about what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ, please contact us. We want to give you that opportunity today. Don't resume your day without knowing that you've accepted the greatest offer ever given mankind: the gift of Jesus Christ for our salvation and an opportunity to relate and be in a relationship with Him.

Let's pray.

Father God, we thank You for the cross. We thank You for what was paid on that cross. But Lord, as followers of Jesus Christ, we are thankful for the empty tomb which reminds us that You are no longer dead but You're alive and because You're alive, we can have fellowship with You. So Lord, I pray first of all for the followers of Jesus Christ. Let us never grow tired; let us never grow weary of the remembrance of what Your Son has done for us. Lord, I pray that this passage would inspire and motivate us to continue to fight the good fight, to keep the faith and to be running the race, as difficult as it may be at times.

Lord, I also pray for anyone reading this who's never bowed the knee to Jesus, never given their lives to Him. Help them recognize that right now they're on a road that leads to destruction. Lord, that they would pause and take an inventory of their lives and see that their sin is an affront to a holy God. I pray that they would stop and say, "Lord, I surrender all. Lord, I give You my life." Lord, I pray that they would talk to someone about that decision. That in this quiet moment they would recognize that they're sinners in need of Your salvation and that You freely give to all who ask. You freely give to all who seek. You freely give to all who knock. You say that You will allow them to come in and You will dine with them. You will give them new life and new hearts and a new direction; the old will be gone and new life will come. Lord, I pray today that they would experience joy that is found only in Jesus Christ.

So Lord, thank You for the cross. Thank You for the resurrection which makes it possible for us to have new life in You. That's why we rejoice, Lord, because You have taken that which is dead and You made it alive. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift of Jesus! And it's in His name that we pray. Amen and amen.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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