

The Greatest Gift (Romans 6:23)

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Sermon Synopsis: This message is aimed at identifying the gift of eternal life, provided by God, purchased by Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and available to all who are willing to receive it. This message is very simple and straightforward and utilizes the imagery and common experience of receiving a gift.

Text: Romans 6:23, *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Introduction: I introduce this sermon with questions to engage the congregation in the message:

- How many of you love to receive gifts? (please raise your hand)
- How many people love to give gifts? (again, I ask for a show of hands). I usually tell the story here of the well-known "Five Love Languages" and share that my wife has all the love languages, including receiving gifts but that she also loves to give gifts. I compare her very thorough approach to searching for an appropriate gift with my last-minute approach to gift giving.

Alternative: Since this is an evangelistic message and I may be preaching to a different congregation each time I share this sermon, I may go further in the introduction and engage the congregation and ask them to identify their favorite and least favorite gifts. This is always fun and interesting.

Transition: I then transition to God being a gift giver and say this message is about *"the greatest gift."*
Three simple but certain truths:

Point #1: The Need for God's Gift: (Read Verse 23)

Illustration: I may mention some gifts that no one really needs:

- A Snuggie (as advertised on television)
- A Chia Pet
- My personal favorite was a ceramic frog given to me by an aunt when I was just a child.

Explanation: Look at the need for God's gift:

1. Because of our sin: What is sin? Give examples, consider involving the congregation.
2. Because of our sentence: "The wages of sin is death."
3. Because of our standing: John 3:17-18, under condemnation apart from Christ.

Application: Have you recognized your need for God's gift? Consider telling a story of someone who came under conviction for personal sin.

Point #2: The Nature of God's Gift: (Read Verse 23 again)

Illustration: I tell the story of asking Connie to marry me on Christmas Day, 1992. I tell how I awkwardly proposed to her in front of many people and gave her an engagement ring. I then tell how this was a life-changing gift (some good changes and some more challenging).

Explanation: Look at the nature of God's gift:

1. It is a gift: “The *gift* of God”
2. It is a gift from God: “The gift of *God*”
3. It is eternal life: “The gift of God is *eternal life*”

Application: Who can receive this gift? I may mention someone who has recently received the Lord.

Alternate Application: How is eternal life a life changing gift? I will then mention multiple ways that receiving Jesus changes everything.

Point #3: The Response to God’s Gift: (Read Verse 23 once more)

Illustration: I tell an adoption story that I witnessed where a little boy was rescued from a troubled family and brought into a home where he received great love and care. At the adoption, the judge asked the little boy if he wanted to be part of this family and then invited the little boy to bang the gavel on the block completing the adoption process. The little boy said yes to this gift offer and there was not a dry eye in the court room.

Explanation: Look at the response to God’s gift:

1. The response is personal: John 1:12
2. The response is public: Matthew 10:32
3. The response is prompted: Revelation 3:20

Conclusion: I conclude this message by giving away a \$20 bill to someone in the congregation and then talking through the differences between my gift, a twenty-dollar bill, and God’s gift of eternal life.

Invitation: I then extend an invitation asking people to receive Jesus and making that decision public.