

God's Gifts #1 – Life **Jn 5:11-12**

Series Intro:

Christmas is all about the gifts, after all!

When I was a child, and probably when you were a child too, Christmas was all about the gifts. We made long lists to guide our parents and other relatives in the right direction so that we would end up with exactly what we wanted. We would come out of our beds on Christmas morning and see all those presents beautifully wrapped under the tree and be so excited to open them. As a child that was Christmas, that feeling of anticipation and delight about having a whole day dedicated to the giving and receiving of gifts (with heavy emphasis on the receiving part).

Then I became a Christian, and as the bible says, I put away childish things. I understood that Christmas was not all about the gifts, that it was our best effort to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our savior. Then I became a more knowledgeable and theologically astute Christian and realized that Christmas was more precisely about the incarnation of the Son of God. That Christmas was a celebration that the eternally existent second person of the trinity took on flesh and became a man that He might die for me. And really that is what Christmas is all about.

But in a way, the pendulum swung too far and I realized that in putting away childish things I had put too much away. You see, I was right all along. Christmas really is all about the gifts. Yes, it is the celebration of the incarnation and the virgin birth of Jesus our Lord, but beyond those theological and historical realities that mean so much to us, it is about the gifts. God's gifts, to be specific, the gifts, in fact, that the incarnation make possible.

So this Christmas season, we will spend our Sundays thinking and learning about some of God's gifts to us. Christmas is all about God's gifts!

The gift of life: Intro

Today we begin with God's gift of life. Turn to Jn 5:11-12.

We take it for granted, but it's a gift

Life is that thing that so many of us take for granted. Everyone of us woke up again this morning and so few of us gave the due credit for such a profound miracle to God. We forgot to be amazed that even while we slept, we somehow kept breathing and our blood kept bringing oxygen to our bodies and we did not stop and die for lack of conscious attention on keeping our bodies alive. Life is a gift.

Death is not of God

Death, on the other hand is a curse. Death is not from God. Death was never intended by God. Death is a thing most of us never think about and some of us fixate on too much, yet it is not our design. So whereas the world and the curse bring death, we know a God who brings life.

1 Jn 5:11-12

That life is a gift and that is what we are going to focus on as we study 1 JN 5:11-12

1 Jn 5:11-12 - And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Preview: Three facts

Let's walk through this passage section by section and observe together three facts about life as put to us by the Bible.

I. Fact #1 – All life comes from God as a gift

1 Jn 5:11a- And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life...

The testimony

The first statement John makes in 1 Jn 5:11 is that God has given a testimony. This is to say that God has made a definitive statement to the world. He wanted us to know something, so he held a sort of press conference (the Bible, the voice from heaven at the baptism, the resurrection) and made an announcement. John summarizes that announcement here in v.11

This is the testimony – that God gave us eternal life.

God gave = a gift

What did God do? God gave. Therefore whatever he gave is a gift. What is the gift? Eternal life! Life is a gift! Life is a gift from God! Christmas is all about the gifts!

A. Biological Life

John tells us that the gift is eternal life. We will get to that very shortly, but God has not only given eternal life, he has given all biological life.

Seen in Scripture

We see this testimony given throughout the Bible.

Hannah / Samuel

There was a woman named Hannah in the Old Testament, her story is in the beginning of the book of 1 Samuel. She wanted a baby and was not biologically able to have one of her own. So she prayed to God, and God gave her the ability to conceive and she had a baby whom she named Samuel. Later she felt compelled by God that Samuel was to given over to the service of God full time, so she turned him over to Eli the priest. On that day she, with heavy heart, prayed many words of dedication to the Lord. One of the things she acknowledged in her prayer was this:

1 Sam 2:6 - The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

Simple words, until you really think about them. The Lord brings life. Biological life, babies in wombs, are a gift from God.

Adam

Is this not the testimony of the book of Genesis which gives us the truth about how all things began? Where did the first man come from? Was he the meat of the primordial soup? Did he go from goo to you by way of the zoo?

Gen 2:7 - then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

No, the first man was formed personally by God who breathed breath of life into him. A gift from God.

Paul

The apostle Paul made it abundantly clear as well when he spoke to a cohort of philosophy buffs at the Areopagus in Athens in the winter of 51-51.

Acts 17:25 - nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

Every person alive, male, female, Christian, Buddhist, Agnostic, or Muslim has their life because God gave it to them. It's a gift.

B. Eternal Life

To some, God has given, as we turn our attention back to 1 Jn 5:11, eternal life. This is not merely biological life, it is life as God really intended it to be!

Difference between eternal and biological life

Briefly make clear the difference between eternal and biological life. If death is separation, then life is connection. Everyone is going to live forever, so what is death? Biological death is the separation of the soul from the body. Therefore biological life is the connection of the soul and body. God gives everyone this kind of life for a predetermined amount of time.

Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God. Therefore, spiritual life, or as the Bible calls it "eternal life" is the connection of the soul to God. Not everyone has eternal life, but as John says, it is nevertheless a gift from God.

Rom 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Eternal life, the real kind of life that God wants to give people, is a gift too. But it is not for everyone.

Trans: What does John have to say about this?

II. Eternal life is only given through Jesus

1 Jn 5:11 - And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Precise location given

I love when really important information is clear. If I am going to go a find something, then I much appreciate good directions to its precise location. Your wife calls you and says “hey meet me at wendy’s for lunch and bring the coupon”. Your mind is going, “what coupon? Where is it? I don’t even know what she is talking about? You start to look around and out of total inability to find the coupon you begin to shut down and go into man-mode “can’t find coupon, must pay full price”. Then she saves the day and says, “calm down, it’s in a pile of clippings next to the basket with the scissors in it on the kitchen counter next to the coffee maker”. Then click click click you move through the precise directions and locate said coupon. Boom you saved 45 cents on a cheeseburger!

That is what is going on in this passage. The location of something important is being revealed. *God has given us eternal life* (ok, great! Awesome! Sweet! Where is, it?). *and this life is in His Son!* John answers the “Where do I find it?” question for us.

Not in all the counterfeit spaces, but in Jesus.

This life that is a gift to you that you desperately need, is not on TV, is not in romantic relationships, is not in finances, is not in a healthy body, is not in a robust career, is not in recreation, is not in travel, is not in entertainment, is not in sex, is not food, is not in respect, is not in love. This life is in His son.

And it is only given in Jesus.

Seen in Jesus’ testimony about himself

We see this all over the new testament in how Jesus talks about himself. Interestingly, Acts 3:15 calls Jesus him the “Author of life” Why? Because of how much Jesus himself gave testimony that eternal life was a gift found in him alone.

John 5:21 - For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.

John 5:40 - yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

John 6:35 - Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger...

John 6:40 - For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

John 10:10 - The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

He is calling out to the world, saying eternal life is in me!!

(Review:

All life comes from God as a gift

Eternal life is only given in Jesus)

III. Eternal life is to individual people who respond to Jesus

The final fact we will observe today is found in 1 Jn 5:12

1 Jn 5:11-12 - And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Individual: e.g. circles

The first point I want to make is regarding the individual. Eternal life is found in Jesus and given by Jesus to individuals. To whoever had the son. This is a very personal thing.

The death of Jesus for us can be thought of as being applied in three concentric circles. The largest circle represents the entire world for whom the savior died as the adequate provision for their sin. The middle circle delineates all believers together to whom the saving work was actually applied. And the innermost circle represents the individual believer for whom Christ died.

Gal 2:2 – for me

Christ dies for you and me individually. This is what Paul makes clear in

Gal 2:20 - ... And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Paul uses the first person singular pronoun 28 times in this chapter as he talks about the gospel. Eternal life is for me. As eternal life is for you. Jesus died for you. Christ took your place on the cross. Christ appeased the wrath of God that was directed at you. Christ delivered you from Satan and Hell. Christ forgave your individual sins. Christ has reconciled you to your Father who waits for you in Heaven. Or he certainly wants to. He loved you, he gave himself for you.

Whoever

Read 1 Jn 5:12 again.

12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Whoever is an offer to individual to find eternal life in Jesus. I love to look at whoever in the NT. Here are some of the places it shows up:

John 3:14-15 - And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

John 3:36 - Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

John 4:14-15 - but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John 5:24 - Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

John 8:12 - Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Conc:

If Christmas is all about Jesus, then it is all about the gift of eternal life.

I love what David calls God in Ps 42:8

Ps 42:8 - By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.

Let's go from here with that same conviction. That God is the God of my life.