



Glyfada Christian Center



27/04/2025

Preacher Brian van Deventer; Stavros Antoniadis

Series God's gifts

Service Sunday Service

Passages Psalm 27:1-5; James 1:1-18;

Gifted – Every Good Gift Comes from the Father

Pastor Brian – Prayer

1. Good morning, good morning. Just a few of us in the room and to those online. We are going to go on and welcome each other and ourselves in the house of the Lord. So, it's our job to prepare the house this morning.

2. If you have a Bible around you or grab one nearby. We will be reading here from Psalm 27:1-5, "The Lord is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident." And this is my favorite part of this psalm, "One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the

Lord and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.”

3. Amen. So, Lord, we just thank You, that You are here with us, and that You are the stronghold of our life. Lord, we thank You that we can dwell in your presence every day, and that we can gather to be encouraged and lifted up, in the things of Your Spirit. Thank You Lord God, that You are our light and salvation, the strength of our life.

4. It's good to be reminded of the strength of the Lord. As you can tell, we have a lot of people away today. Pastor Gail is in the USA, sends her greetings of course. Louca and Artemis are off on a trip, Anton and Henneke are off on a trip. I'm not sure about Sarah, is she gone now? I couldn't remember if she's gone this weekend or not. We have others that are away for other reasons. Sean and Beatrice are still at the hospital with their baby. Be sure that we keep them in our prayers, the baby seems to be gaining strength, but still needs a little time. We're praying that they'll be able to come home today or tomorrow. Leonardo and his family are still travelling. Idi-Jane is off to Mykonos. I can't remember everybody, but everybody is spread around. So, we just pray and bless them wherever they are, and here in this house we're going to spend some time worshipping the Lord.

5. He is our strength and our shield. The One who is always faithful toward us. Amen. You can be seated. We've already mentioned, but we have a lot of people travelling today. But I want to make sure that you all hear that you have a greeting from pastor Gail. She's gone to the US to take care of some business she has to do, and hopefully, this next re-write on her book. It's likely that she is on a computer, watching. But remember to keep her in your prayer. And all of the others too, I forgot to mention Billy and Eva-Lena earlier, Cecilia. Cielo is out today. That's a lot of people.

6. As you can see, it's me and my faithful friend, Victor. Whoever were able to go to see Victor perform downtown on Friday night. I'll say on his behalf, thank you for being there. I thought he did a great job, and we are going to encourage that energy, not only for a career, but also for what he's doing here right now. On Wednesday we got to talking with pastor Gail about another person that I want to give a special thanks to. And that's my other very faithful friend Lars. So, when we're stripped down to the very bare minimum this morning, he was in, doing his job. So, thank you Lars.

7. Well, we're going to have a little testimony this morning. One of the things that we are going to try to keep on track, is at least one Sunday per month to highlight one of the ministries that takes place, going out from this church. For a church of our size, we have quite a lot of people going out to constant ministry during the week. And one of those, is another of our faithful friends, who consistently comes in and out of Greece, on the basis that she can, and we're happy to have Korina back with us today.

Korina Skale – Testimony

1. I'm Korina from the US for those who don't know me. I've been coming in and out of Greece for ten years this year. And when I first started to come, they had me try out different kind of ministries. And I still do the same thing today. I actually work with a bunch of different ministries.

For the rest of the testimony please watch the video.

Pastor Brian – Main Message (At 37:27 in video)

1. Turn with me to the book of James 1:16-18, “Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.”

2. I’m very interested in how James begins this section, this sentence, ‘Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters’. What is it that he sees that they are being deceived about? It seems that they’re not recognizing where good things come from. So, he says, ‘Don’t be deceived, every good gift, every perfect gift, comes from above. It comes from the Father of lights.’

3. In other words, from the One who created all those lights out there, these gifts come from Him. With whom there is no variation or shadow. He doesn’t change, like the shifting shadows. Light creates shadows, doesn’t it? And when we move our shadow moves. As the sun moves in the sky, shadows shift. Things change.

4. But James says, ‘Look beyond that light to its source. He doesn’t have any shifting shadows.’ He chose to give us birth through the Word of truth. The Father of lights chose to introduce you to truth, that we should be the first-fruits of His creation.

5. So, we start here. The enemy of your soul, is a liar. In fact, that’s one of the biggest definitions or designations of satan in the Bible, ‘He is the father of lies.’ And in this world, the influence of satan, is trying to deceive you. How? That influence tells you that satisfaction in life is man made. That influence tells you that the security you create for yourself, you do it. It is man made. That influence tells us, that all that success is made by our own hands. And there are portions of truth in all of that.

6. To be deceived, doesn’t mean to be completely fooled. The definition of deception, is to have a little bit of untruth, to take you away from the truth. Most of us grew up in places where we were told that if you work hard, you can do anything. And there was some good truth in teaching me as a young man, just work hard and you can do it, you can do anything.

7. But one day, I discovered that’s a lie. I can work as hard as I can and I will never jump as high as Michael Jordan. Sometime ago, Stavros was a weight lifter. I could probably spend every day in the gym, getting stronger, and never lift as much weight as Stavros.

8. There are limitations on what I can make for myself. And if I’m trying to be the source of my satisfaction, I’m happy because I’m making these things happen. If I’m trying to secure myself in my life, I can probably do a lot to help that. But my security will never be in me. Success is not man-made. It can be man assisted, but it is not man-made.

9. These things are not self-made. But the influence of the world will tell you. Your satisfaction, your security, your success, it will be self-made, bought or stolen. And that’s the truth of the father of lies. But James, shouted out to us through all of these centuries, ‘Don’t be deceived my brothers and sisters.’

10. Now, we’re in the middle of a series called, ‘Gifted.’ And we went through a bunch of examples in the Old Testament, where God gifted people for certain things. Now, we’re moving into the New Testament, and in churches like ours and the ones that I grew up in, we

talk about being gifted in ways like, preaching or prophecy, being a teacher or an administrator, praying and seeing people healed, miracles.

11. These are gifts of the Holy Spirit, that are given to us. But the first gift, the starting point the most important point, was that God gave us salvation in Christ, and in Him was light, and He is the light of the world.

12. That God became, 'the Word,' and invested Himself in us; this is the first gift. Here James says, "He chose to give us birth through the word of truth" (James 1:18). The greatest gift you will ever experience, is that Jesus, 'Saved' you. And from that point, we begin to recognize that every good thing, every breath, every blessing, every song that we can ever sing, these flow from the throne of God.

13. He's the Father of Lights, the creator of suns and stars, who never changes. Whose truth is not shifting through time. Everything changes, governments crumble, economies fall, people fail you, if you've ever failed anybody, do not raise your hand. It's the easiest way to get involved; don't raise your hand. I've been failed, you've been failed, life has disappointed me sometimes, situations didn't work out, relationships had trouble. Life changed in uncomfortable ways, but the Scriptures say that, 'God does not even cast a shadow that moves.'

14. We're moving into springtime. It's a good season. I like it when the weather starts warming up, even maybe before it gets too hot. I love seasons, except for winter. But nothing about God is seasonal. Maybe there are seasonal ways that He works in your life, but nothing about the character of God changes within seasons.

15. I like this line. I would take credit for it, but I think I borrowed it from somewhere. It said, 'God's mercy is not moody.' God's mercy is consistent. The Scripture says that, 'He is ever lasting.' His love is not a debate. And He gives us the gift of Himself. The Scripture says, 'This didn't happen by accident. He chose to give us this birth through the Word.'

16. When you received Him, He spoke the Word, and you were born again, and not just to exist. But I love this part, "He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created." (James 1:18). What does it mean for us to be first-fruits? And do you know what the first-fruit was and is? It was the first portion of any crops, or of any animals, or of anything received; it was set aside, first and it was given to whatever person was above you or that you treasured.

17. This was not just a concept in the Bible, it was a practice. If I had an owner above me, it was expected that my first-fruits were brought to that owner. Kings received first-fruits. This is the example of what happened with Cain and Abel, in the first days. They brought to God the first-fruits, except one didn't do it properly. It created a mess in the world.

18. The first-fruits was that concept of the first and best and both of those were important. The first and the best was given. This is the concept of our proper giving to God, to bring Him the first and the best. But here in this Scripture, James says, 'We were made the first-fruits. That created you and gave you new birth and began to gift you with every good and perfect gift.' So that Jesus could take you and present you to the Father, and say, 'Here's the first and the best.'

19. What kind of value does that place on your life? If you were born again of the Spirit of God, to become the first and the best, that Jesus could present to the Father. The Bible tells us that in the end all things are going to be reconciled to God. New heaven, new earth, new everything. But the first and best of all that restoration are the people that Jesus brought to the Father.

20. So, what's important about that other than to just make us feel good? And I hope that it does make you feel good to know how treasured you are by your Creator. But that first gift of salvation, I said at the start that it is the beginning of the gifts, because when we understand who we are in the eyes of the Father, who we are in the economy of the Kingdom, who we are in the family of God, who we are as a new people and nation, when we begin to understand that, then we begin to treasure the other gifts.

21. And then we want to begin to use them, because we recognize that every good and perfect gift; and what do those words mean? Good means, 'Beneficial,' so, He gives you everything that is beneficial to you. Perfect means, 'Completely Mature, completed'. Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights. To defeat everything that is from the father of lies, so that you can live in the truth, so that you can live in the good and the perfect. Doesn't that sound good? Amen.

22. Please stand with me. I want us to consider something this morning. The way we want to do our prayer time when we finish. I want us to take a moment of meditation. I want you to ask the Holy Spirit to put this revelation in your heart, not just that He is giving you good and perfect things, but that you have presented me to the Father as first-fruits.

23. Because Holy Spirit we can hear these words, but unless You give them life, they won't matter a thing. But Holy Spirit, You can cause each one here today to see and understand, how much You treasure us and how much You want to give to us. How much You want to be our satisfaction in ourselves. How much You will lead us into real and true success. Speak Holy Spirit.

24. And then if you would be willing with me this morning, I would like you to pray this prayer. Two parts. I was going to have the prayer team come, but I think we should stay where we are. Would you be willing to pray?

25. Lord, reveal Your gifts to me and in me. Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, to see who You are in me and through me. And the second part of this prayer. Lord, encourage me and empower me to use these gifts. Lord, bring Your revelation to us. Holy Spirit, we don't have to ask You to come, You are here, but speak to Your people, give revelation, and then Lord, give encouragement, give empowerment Lord, motivate us in our lives, and be our motivation. You are our strength, in You is our deliverance, in You is our protection, You are our shield. You provide every portion of everything that we need.

26. Lars, would you put up, 'I will bless the Lord forever.'