



Glyfada Christian Center



04/05/2025

Preacher Brian van Deventer; Stavros Antoniadis

Series God's gifts

Service Sunday Service

Passages Psalms 16:5-11; Psalm 118:24-26; Romans 6:15-20,22,23;

To be Slaves

Pastor Brian – Prayer

1. Good morning to all. Let's have some life in the room, so Good Morning to all. Good morning to all of you who are here and to all those out there on the internet. Good morning to all of those who are still away. Please stand, so that we may read the word of the Lord. Let's get into the habit of having our Bibles with us.

2. We'll be reading from Psalms 16:5-11, "Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely, I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one

see decay. You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

3. I'll tell you a little story of why I thought of that Scripture this morning. Have you ever woken yourself up from sleep, like falling out of the bed, or jerking or something strange? Well, that's how I woke up this morning. And it's that sensation of, 'Wow, what's just happened?' And I just thought of this Scripture, even in the night, even in the bed, Lord, You keep me secure, and I thought of that song that we sang. It comes from that Scripture that says, "At Your right hand there are pleasures forever more." We have pleasures with us all the time. Because the Lord is with us. And how wonderful is that? People in the world will talk about, 'Ah, well your faith is a crutch. I've come to good terms with that. Thank God, I have that crutch. I don't want to live life without it. I don't want to struggle insecure; because I don't happen to know the One who loves me so much.

4. So, this morning, I want us to concentrate on that love of God. Not just to feel good, but it's what makes us secure. It's a song we used to sing; I don't know if many of you in the room would know it anymore. I'm pulling out some oldies these last couple of weeks. This one goes, 'I love to love You...'

Leto – Announcements

1. Good morning. It's a beautiful day today, is it not? It is the day the Lord has made for you and for me. (Psalm 118:24-26). So that we can be joyful and grateful to Him. That's why turn to somebody, say good morning to them, welcome them and tell them how beautiful they are. Good morning, Victor you look very nice today.

2. Praise the name of the Lord. I'm sure that pastor Brian, in a little while will give you more greetings from pastor Gail. But I give you her love and her greetings, that she's think about us a lot and that her mind and spirit is here with us. And if you get a chance, write her a message and say that you love her too. Because I know that we share our love between us.

3. As every Wednesday, so this Wednesday, until the end of May approximately, we will have our Bible Study and Prayer. We'll begin at 19:00 – 19:30 prayer, 19:30 – 20:00 Bible Study. Following this announcement, last Sunday we handed out a questionnaire, trying to do our best for Bible study and prayer,

4. That's why, if some of you have not received this questionnaire, please raise your hand so that I can give you one later, because I would like you to fill it in today and give it to me before you leave today. Thank you. Don't forget that on Sundays we gather together here to praise the Lord. In between, on Friday, the young men led by Michael Whitt, meet here between 17:00 – 19:00, approximately. If you have teenager children, particularly boys, please see Michael, when we go upstairs for coffee.

5. And for something nice, if you're 60 years old and above, and feel so young, and you would like to come here for coffee or tea at church in the morning, 28th May, Wednesday, 10:30 – 12:30, please come and invite a friend or even friends, we have invitations at the back, please take one as you leave.

6. I believe that these are our announcements for the time being. You all know that the church is a living organism and there is always something happening, and sometimes with

pastors Gail and Brian, I say every day there's something new. And so, we wait for these new things from God, Amen. We always expect something new. And now, we will worship our God, in another way, with our tithes and our offerings.

7. And I will give you a small example. When I go visiting somewhere, I always try to take something with me, or I'll phone and ask, 'If you need me to bring anything.' I believe all of us Greeks do this, since it is part of our culture, when we go visiting, we always take something with us. And today, we have come to visit the house of our Father. He has laid a table full of blessings before us and we want to contribute towards these blessings. So, today, please give your tithes and offerings, as a blessing in your Father's house. Like bringing something very special to put before His table. Because God loves those who lovingly and joyfully give.

8. So, please prepare your tithes and offerings. Don't do it a way, saying, 'Oh, what will I give, oh one Euro, five Euros, five thousand Euros.' Don't think about it, just joyfully give with love today. Amen. Brother Felix would you pray for the offering today. Thank you. And as we take up the offering, the children can prepare to go upstairs. Let's pray for our children also, even though they went upstairs before we prayed. May the Lord bless them.

Pastor Brian – Main Message

1. I hadn't thought of that song in a very long time. But it always has a kind of strangely soothing effect on me. 'Lord, I love you, my soul sings, in Your presence but carried on Your wings.' I like pictures and that's a nice picture for me.

2. Turn if you would, with me, to Romans 6. We're still and will be for a long time in our 'Gifted' series. But before we get too deep in our discussion of our own gifts, those gifts that God has placed in us, we're continuing to lay the foundation for that. Last week, we talked about the greatest gift, which is the gift of salvation. Without that, we have nowhere to go. But with that we have everywhere to go.

3. We are going to kind of continue a little bit down that road again today. I want us to look at Romans 6:15-20,22,23. I'm going to continue to remind us including myself, that we want to be looking in our own Bibles, so, today, I decided not to put the Scripture on the screen. So, I hope you have your Bible with you. Or if you don't, grab one that's around you, or ask your neighbor if they will be kind enough to share with you. My topic today is, it's going to sound a little bit strange, but I've titled it 'Gifted to be slaves.' How weird does that sound? And yet, let's listen to the apostle Paul, "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey —whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. (Now listen to this turn of phrase) When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness... But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

(And now for this passage that we all know). For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

4. Some interesting phrases in there. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. I think I understand this best, by looking at my teenage years, when I spent several years rejecting anything Godly, and chasing everything I wanted to. I was free from the control of righteousness. I didn't think that there was anything to hold me back, from anything I wanted to do. And we lie to ourselves, if we pretend that there is not a freedom in that.

5. How many of you like to do what you like to do? It feels good, it brings pleasure. I like to do what I like to do! And in the realm of sin and holiness, I had freedom from the control of righteousness. So, it felt good. Now, it led me down some paths of some real problems. I got into some real trouble. Not pretend trouble, but real trouble. But I was free to go there. I was free to do what I wanted to do.

6. Then one day when I was in college, even though I had made a commitment to the Lord, many years before, the Lord came to me in one chapel service, and confronted me in such a way, and the thing I remember most about it, was this thought. If I'm going to make this decision, if I'm going to serve the Lord, this will be the last time I ever decide again. It will either be, or it won't. But if I make this decision, I'm never going back. And that was a confrontation. Because, to tell you the truth, it was not in my heart, at the time, to want to go there. I was still enjoying being free from the control of righteousness. I was still loving to do what I was loving to do.

7. But even in my situation, my spirit knew this. If I make this choice, then I am no longer allowed to be free from that control. But I will have to submit myself to it. Because of knowing who He is and knowing what He requires, and knowing what the apostle Paul said here, that when I became free from sin, which by the way is a good thing. Our human bodies don't understand this. But to be free from sin is a good thing, because it leads to eternal life, whereas sin itself, leads to death.

8. Now listen to the two words Paul uses, 'For the wages of sin, is death.' In other words, you went to work and you earned it. Ever think of sin that way? You went to work and earned death. I was earning death. In fact, I was working overtime. I was getting extra wages. And the wages of that sin, was to be death. But the gift of God, not the wages of God, not that I earned it, but the gift of God is eternal life.

9. So, you can spend your time and energy earning death, or you can just submit and receive the gift of life. And sometimes that gift, oh should I say it? Sometimes this gift in doesn't feel like a gift in this world. Because this person, still wants to earn the wages of death. I still want to do things in the natural, that do not lead to life. But when that urge comes, when those thoughts push me, when my past haunts me, when the devil brings all that nonsense to my mind, I remember I have been gifted with eternal life.

10. From today, I am alive forever. Some of us are going to close our eyes and go to sleep. I've always been so thankful, we've had so few funerals to deal with in this church, over 30 plus years. I hate funerals. I don't like any kind of formalities. I don't like graduations, I don't like weddings, but I especially hate funerals.

11. I rejoice when I know people are in Christ and they've moved to a much better place. But when it's people you love, sorrow is not for the people who left, it's for those who remain behind. I hate losing people that I love. And probably for the last year, I don't even know where it comes from, but I've had such a sense of mortality. Probably has something to do with the passing of my relatives, mom and dad are getting aged. I know it's coming. And it seems like it's been a period of time where every week on Facebook, I get another notice of somebody I know, who graduated, gone on. And I don't know if you're like me, I don't even think of it in terms of my own life.

12. I say I'm not afraid of death, until I get there and then we'll talk. It's easy to say, but I truly believe in my heart, what's coming for me next. I would prefer that Jesus would come back and take me away, but I don't think about my own death, I think about the people I love, and how hard it will be, when that time comes. I hate death. I hate suffering more than I hate death. But this is the thing, that's exactly what most of us have been earning most of our lives. And not just for one time but for eternity.

13. I'm going to go to sleep, if Jesus doesn't come back, and I'm going to wake up in eternity. I might want to race you there. I don't just believe it, I know it inside of me, and it makes me so thankful that I don't have to worry about getting paid for what I earned. I'm so far off my notes, I don't even know where to go.

14. Paul talks in this passage about grace. Now, remember that the theme here is the gift we have been given. In this context, it is the gift of eternal life, that starts now. The assurances that go with that. The peace that comes with that. That's the thing that touches me so much about the song that we sang, earlier. Lord, I love You, my soul sings. In Your presence carried on Your wings. For me that image is being carried into the heavens with the Lord. It's what makes me feel so much when I say, 'I love You so much; Jesus, I love You so much.' I don't cry tears of sorrow; I cry tears of absolute joy. Because I have not earned what I have been given and I will not get what I have earned. That's a good trade, guys.

15. We sing another song, 'We turn these ashes in for beauty,' and I love this line, 'I wear forgiveness like a gown.' Do you guys have favorite things to wear at home? I promise you, the first thing I do every time I get home, is go change into my house clothes. That's why I hate it, if you call me and ask me to go back out. I'm telling you once I'm home, I'm home. But I have certain things that are my house clothes. You can probably ask my Walt delivery man exactly what that is. He sees me in my house clothes all the time. Oh, the comfort of putting that on. I don't care what it smells like, I don't care how much dog hair is on it. Those pants, that shirt and my slippers, ah, it's heavenly. That's my image when I think of that song, 'I wear forgiveness like a gown.' It's just so comfortable; it just feels so good.

16. But there's war inside of me. That says, 'Well you know you're forgiven; you know you have grace; you know you are not going to earn the wages. So, what? What's holding you back. Do what you want to do.' Jesus said, 'It is finished.' All of my past sins; all of my present sins; all of my future sins are wrapped up in the work Jesus already did. So, then, why not just live as I want to live? As though I'm free from the control of righteousness. Because it is freedom. But it is freedom to destroy. To destroy myself; to destroy those people that I bring into those situations; to bring death into the world.

17. So, Paul says, 'Should we continue sinning, because grace abounds in us? God, forbid!' Now that's not asking God to stop the action; that's getting our attention to say, 'Don't do it, to Him. Don't do it to yourself. Don't do it to the people around you. Don't be a vessel to bring death into the world. Don't be a vessel to bring death into your family. Don't be a vessel to bring death into your workplace. Don't be a vessel to bring death into your own body and into your own life.'

18. For that reason, Paul says, 'God, forbid that this would happen.' Why? Because we wear the gift – forgiveness is all over us. Grace is all over us. Mercy is all over us. The goodness of God drapes all over us. God, forbid that we would take up death instead.

19. That's another song we sing. It's one of those mornings for me. It's what happens when I get up and put Youtube on with all the worship songs. We sing the song that says, 'All my life, You have been faithful. All my life You have kept so, so good. With every breath that I make. I will sing of the goodness of God.' He is so good, that He would not pay us what we have earned. That's so incredibly ridiculous. We all want to get paid what we have earned.

20. Just imagine George sold someone a really bad house. And he knew it. It's garbage. He'd still want what he earned. He would never do that; I'm picking on you. We all want what we've earned. But not in this case. The wages of sin, we can't ignore, the slavery that we have chosen. What a harsh word. That Paul would say, 'That you have become slaves to Christ.' Thankfully we've known that He is the most beneficial slaveowner in history.

21. And I'm going to end with this. Like you, probably, I thank God every day, for the length of His grace. I've no issues, accepting that He is forgiving. Because if I had those issues, I would live in fear constantly. But I am confident in who He is. I'm confident in what He told me. Not in what I'm telling myself to convince my mind.

22. He has loved me; He has forgiven me; and He did it again today, and He'll do it some more today, and He'll do it again tomorrow and we'll keep walking out life. But not because I live in patterns and slavery to sin, I still live in this stupid flesh bag, and it creates problems. And those things, Mary, I do that I don't want to do. And those things that I want to do, sometimes I don't do them.

23. That's why Paul said, 'Oh wretched man that I am.' The apostle Paul said, 'I'm a mess. But I know whom I have believed in, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep everything I have committed to Him up until that very last day. Thank God. But does that mean I should go on sinning? That grace would have to cover me over and over and over again. God, forbid!'

24. That's the Lord saying, 'Hey, you can't do it on your own, but some accountability for yourself. And oh, by the way, I have given you everything you need to do it. Just ask. Just call out.' Just turn to Him. It's another song, an old song, and I'm finishing. It says, 'Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth, will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.' One more time, 'Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth, will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.'

25. We are gifted to be slaves. Please stand with me. It's wonderful. I have a whole set of notes for another week that I didn't use.

26. Lord, You are good. And Your mercy endures forever. And You inhabit Your people. Lord, You are in our midst, and You are within us, and when we walk out of this place, You will go with us. Lord, I pray that we will be challenged today, not with the fear of misbehaving, that's no, not with the fear of misbehaving. Lord us send us in the gift of the knowledge that we already have forgiveness in You, and because of that, we want to serve You. We declare today, Lord, that we are not our own, but that we are Yours. Now and forever, we are Yours. In Jesus' name. Amen.

27. Love each other on the way out.'