

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

MOTIVATIONAL LESSONS

“What Are the Greatest Things in Life?”

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

What are the greatest things in life that the child of God possesses? What are some of the greatest qualities, greatest blessings, and greatest privileges that we have in the here and now? Today we want to examine the great things that we have in this life. As we think about the “great things” about Christianity, we need to recognize that the greatest privilege in this life is to be called “sons of God.” There is no greater privilege in all the world than the fact that we can call God our Father. Galatians 3:26-27 teaches us that we are all sons of God “by faith in Christ Jesus.” What a joy and a blessing it is to be a child of God! Think about what John said in 1 John 3:1 as it relates to being sons of God. “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.” The fact that we can look up to Heaven and pray, “Our Father Who art in Heaven,” ought to bring each of us great joy (Mt. 6:9). In order to be heirs of all the promises and blessings that God has promised His children, we must be a part of God’s family. Romans 8:16-17, combined with Galatians 4:4-7, teaches us that in order to receive the blessings of God we must be His children. To receive the privileges that heirs receive, we must be right with the Father. The greatest privilege in life is to be called “a son of God.”

The greatest joy in life is the joy of salvation. The fact that we can have our sins washed away, and that we can rejoice in the relationship we have with God, ought to bring each of us great joy. I want to take your minds back to the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. Philip is told to go and overtake the chariot in which the Ethiopian is riding. He does that, and gets up into the chariot to begin teaching this man the Gospel. They come to a body of water, and the Ethiopian asks, “What hinders me from being baptized?” (Acts 8:36). Philip responded by saying, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The Ethiopian eunuch then confessed Jesus as the Son of God. He and Philip get down out of the chariot, and Philip baptizes him. The Bible then tells us in Acts 8:39, “Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.” One of the greatest joys that a person will ever have is knowing that his or her past sins have been washed away. That person no longer has to bear the guilt of those sins. Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ.” To know that we stand cleansed, and that we no longer can be condemned for our old sins, is a very important blessing in this life. The text of 2 Timothy 1:10-11 teaches us that there is salvation in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:3 says that “all spiritual blessings” are found “in Christ.” Thus Paul could say in Philippians 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” The joy that we have is the joy of salvation. Knowing that Jesus died for us, that He gave His life as a sacrifice, that we have obeyed God’s will, and that we are right with the Father, ought to bring each of us great joy in this life.

The greatest fellowship in this life is with Christ and Christians. There is no greater fellowship in all the world, and no greater bond than the bond that we have with Christ and with His followers. Listen to how the New Testament church works. In Acts 2:42 the Bible says, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Here they were—continuing in fellowship because they had been brought together by the bond of Jesus and by the blood that He sacrificed. The text of 1 Corinthians 15:33 teaches us that "evil companions corrupt good morals." But fellow Christians who are striving to do God's will help us to live the Christian life. Christians are taught to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but we **are** to have fellowship with God and His children. We are not to get involved with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. All of that is not "of the Father." But we are to have fellowship with righteousness, with good things, and with those things that we as Christians ought to follow. Think about the words of 1 John 1:7 as they deal with our fellowship with other Christians and with Christ. John said, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." What is the blessing we have? As we strive to follow the teachings of Christ, and as we strive to live the Christian life, we have fellowship with one another and with God through the blood of His Son. So, the greatest fellowship in this life is with Christ. We are able to call Him our Sacrifice and our Brother. And we are able to fellowship other Christians in this world.

The greatest work or vocation in this life is to work for God and to serve Him. There is no greater love, no greater privilege, and no greater duty in all the world than to be blessed and have the privilege to work as a Christian. Ephesians 4:1-2 teaches us that we must work **now**, and that we must be diligent workers in the kingdom at this time. Matthew 22:37, along with Matthew 6:33, teaches us that we must seek first the kingdom and be diligent workers for the cause of Christ. I am reminded of the words of Paul as he thought about working in the kingdom. In 1 Corinthians 15:58, Paul said, "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain." The work that we do now for God is the only thing that is really going to matter after this life is over. Let's say that you have a big business and that you are very successful. But if you do not factor God into the equation, what have you done for yourself on the other side of this life? How have you helped yourself? Revelation 14:13 says, "'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'" I know that the greatest vocation in this life is to work for God and His cause because that is why Jesus came to this Earth. Mark 10:45 says, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Jesus did not come for **us** to serve **Him**. Rather, He came to be a servant and to give His life for us. Christians often sing the song that says, "I will work. I will pray. I will labor every day." Do we really think of that as a great blessing and as the greatest work in all the world? Do we really appreciate the fact that we can be a part of the kingdom of Christ, that we can be an active citizen, and that it is a joy and privilege to work in God's kingdom? If so, then we need to stay busy and active as we work in the kingdom of Christ.

The greatest knowledge in this life is to know God and His Son Jesus Christ. What a great joy it is to know that we can have a relationship with God and His Son. I think of the words of John 17:3 as they relate to eternal life. Jesus said, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God." Eternal life is having a relationship with God, and knowing Him intimately. Do you remember the words of Jesus as He thought about the importance of knowledge? Jesus said in John 8:32, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." How important is knowledge? How important is truth? We need to know the truth so that we can be **free from sin** and so that we can be **right with God**. John 14:6

teaches us a very important lesson about knowing the right way. Jesus said, "I am **the** way, **the** truth, and **the** life. No man comes to the Father except by Me." Knowing God involves approving of Christ's teaching and living our lives by it each and every day. What a great blessing it is to know God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Another great privilege and blessing that Christians have is the victory over this life, over the world, over self, and over sin. The text of 1 Corinthians 9:27 teaches us that we can have a victory over this life as we discipline our bodies in this life and in all the troubles that we have. Revelation 3:5 teaches us that our names have been written in the Book of Life, and that **can** overcome and go over and live with Jesus in the next life. The text of 1 John 5:4 teaches us that the faith we have is the victory over this life. John wrote, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." What is our victory? It is our faith in Jesus and our ability to overcome sin, self, and Satan. To be found victorious in the last day should bring us great joy. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:57, "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Today we ought to rejoice in the great victory that we as Christians have. We do not have to live a life that is dedicated to sin and Satan. We do not have to live a life that is selfish in its desires and passions. We can have victory in this life through Jesus and the plan of salvation that He has given us.

The greatest gift in this life is to give oneself to God and to others. People may give us gifts in this life. Many of those may even be monetary in nature. But the greatest gift is not the gift of money or possessions. The greatest gift is to give our lives to God and to helping others. Some encouraging words are spoken about the Macedonian Christians in 2 Corinthians 8:5. These were people who first gave themselves to the Lord. Before they put anything into the collection plate, they gave themselves to the Lord. As a result, they became an epistle that was read by all men. In Acts 20:35, we find the only other words of Jesus that are not recorded in the Gospel accounts or the Book of Revelation. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Jesus knew what it was to give, because He gave His whole life as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Thus, the greatest gift in this life is to give oneself to the cause of Christ for others. In Luke 6:38, Jesus said, "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." The standard of giving is set forth for us in the New Testament. We need to be people who are good givers. How can we give to God? We give to God by making sure that we follow His teachings. We can give back to God by being obedient to His will. Jesus asked this question in Luke 6:46, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" We cannot give ourselves to God, yet **not** obey His Word. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." Hebrews 5:8-9 says that Christ is the author of eternal salvation "to all those who obey Him." Jesus is "able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). We give ourselves to God by first being submissive and obedient to His will. We give ourselves to God by living the Christian life every day, and by waking up every day to realize that our lives are a sacrifice that must be lived for Jesus Christ. This is how we give ourselves to God. Think of Romans 12:1 where Paul said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." We are to be a living sacrifice. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." Our bodies belong to God, which is why Paul said in Galatians 2:20, "I have been

crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” We must give our lives to God each and every day. We give our lives to God as we live the Christian life, and as we tell others about Jesus Christ. We have been commissioned to go and tell the message of Heaven. In Matthew 28:19-20, and in Mark 16:15, Jesus said that we are to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. It is our responsibility to preach the message of salvation to those around us. This is how we give ourselves to others. We must be willing to tell them the message of hope, and we must be willing to help them in their time of need. Thus, the greatest gift in this life is to give oneself to God and to others.

The greatest loss in this life is the loss of one’s soul. There is no great loss in all the world than the loss of our soul. The most important possession that we have is not our homes, our cars, or our bank accounts. The most important possession in this life is our souls. Luke 12 presents a sad scene. A man had amassed a great amount of wealth because he had had a great crop year. He therefore got to thinking to himself that he would tear down his old barns and build bigger barns. Then he said, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry” (vs. 19). But God said to that man, “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?” (vs. 20). The principle is this: if we lay up for ourselves things on this Earth, and if we provide all the necessities, yet we forget to take care of our souls, then we will have left out the most important thing of all. Think about the rhetorical question of Jesus in Mark 8:36-37. Jesus asked, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Let’s say that you finally amass all the possession of which you have ever dreamed. Let’s say that you have all the money that you could ever imagine. But on the Day of Judgment, if you lose your soul, what will all that wealth mean then? It would be very insignificant because you lost your soul. So, whatever it takes, we must make sure that we do not lose our souls. If a person needs to obey God’s will and become a Christian, then he or she needs to take care of that. If a person is already a Christian but is not living properly, then that person needs to do whatever it takes to get his or her life right with God. Being lost is such a horrible thing. Stop and think for just a moment about what Hell will be like. Jesus said in Mark 9:44-48 that Hell is a place “where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.” Hell is described in the Book of Revelation as “a lake of fire and brimstone.” Matthew 8 describes it as a place of great weeping, gnashing of teeth, horrible torment, and eternal condemnation. Thus, we must make sure that our lives are right with God and that we do not lose our immortal soul (which was given to us by God).

Perhaps the greatest thing in this life is the great salvation that we have been given. The worst thing that a person could ever do is to neglect the salvation that has been provided through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The writer of the Book of Hebrews said in Hebrews 2:3, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” The people of old who did not do God’s will did not escape. They were stoned outside the camp. The writer of Hebrews alludes to that, and then asks, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” We cannot escape if we neglect the salvation that has been given to us through Jesus Christ—salvation from sin and from Satan. Too many people do neglect the opportunities that they have. I think of people in the Bible who planned to take advantage of wonderful opportunities that were afforded to them, or who neglected the privilege of becoming children of God. Paul said of Demas in 2 Timothy 4:10, “Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.” Paul said of Hymenaeus and Alexander that they “suffered shipwreck concerning the faith” (1 Tim. 1:19-20). I think of people like Felix in Acts 24. Paul reasoned with him about “righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come.”

But Felix said, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you" (vs. 25). There is a man who badly neglected salvation. I think of King Agrippa, who said, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian" (Acts 26:28). We are not ever told if Agrippa became a Christian or not. But we do know that he neglected that opportunity. We must not neglect our salvation. Rather, we must make sure that we take advantage of the time that we have in the here and now. This is such an important principle because we do not know how long we are going to live. We have not been promised that we are going to live forever. In fact, we have been told that life is very brief and short. James asked, "What is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (Jas. 4:14). Job described it in Job 7:25-26, and in Job 9, as a weaver's shuttle or as a man who is running a race. His point was that life is swift, and passes quickly. Thus, today we must take advantage of the things that we have in the here and now.

The greatest question in this life is the question found in Acts 16:30, which is the greatest question that anyone could ever ask or answer. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" As we think about great things in life, there is nothing greater than asking and answering the question of salvation from the Scriptures. Today, we are not asking what you think about salvation or what we think about salvation. The only way to answer this question correctly is to come to the Bible to see what God has to say on the matter. Man cannot figure out his own way of salvation. Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 10:23, "O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps." We cannot get ourselves to Heaven. Rather, we must make sure that we follow God's will. Proverbs 16:25 says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." So what must a person do to be saved? What must one know and obey in order to become a child of God?

A person must know that he or she is lost in sin. It is our sin that separates us from God (Is. 59:1-2). We must know that all of us sin and fall short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23). We must realize that Jesus and the church that God established represent the only way that a person can be saved. Jesus said this in John 14:6—"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except by Me." Thus, one must accept Christ's teachings and obey His will. What, then, must a person do to become a Christian like those of whom we read in the New Testament? What did people do then, and what must we do today to be saved? The biblical plan of salvation is not difficult. It is a very simple plan that we can follow. And when we do follow it, we can know that we are right with God. A person has to hear the Word of God to be saved. In James 1:21, we are told, "Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." Romans 1:16 teaches us that the Gospel is God's power unto salvation. We must listen to the words of God. Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." We know that faith is essential, because Hebrews 11:6 that without faith it is impossible to please God for "he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." We must have faith. We build faith by hearing the Word of God. So, it is essential that we listen to what God has to say on the matter of salvation.

Once we have heard the voice of God from the Scriptures, we then must believe in the message. In Acts 8, Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch are traveling down the road. They come to a body of water. Evidently Philip has been talking to him about baptism and its importance in the plan of salvation. The eunuch asked, "Here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" (vs. 36). Philip then said to him, "If you believe with all your heart, you may" (vs. 37). Thus, a person must not only hear God's Word, but also must believe in Jesus as God's Son.

We also must repent of the things in our lives that are not right. On the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:38, the people were told to repent. Repentance means a changed will that leads to a changed way of life. We turn **from** our sin and **to** God. We put the past behind us, and we no longer live in that lifestyle. Instead, we live for God. Once we have repented of our sins, then we must confess Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God. Romans 10:10 says, "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Then we must be baptized. Jesus said it so plainly when He said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mk. 16:16). Peter said in 1 Peter 3:21, "baptism does now also save us."

Do you have access to the great things of life that we have discussed in this lesson? If you are not a child of God, you can become one today by obeying the Gospel. If you are a child of God, you need to remain true to God's Word and live your life in a way that will give God the glory.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “WHAT ARE THE GREATEST THINGS IN LIFE?”

1. According to the introduction of this lesson, what does Galatians 3:26-27 teach us?
2. What important blessing does the child of God have according to Matthew 6:9?
3. According to Galatians 4:5, why did Christ come to Earth?
4. If we are children of God, what else are we according to Romans 8:17?
5. What is the greatest joy in life?
6. What is the greatest fellowship in life?
7. What is the greatest work in life?
8. What is the greatest knowledge in life?
9. What is the greatest victory in life?
10. What is the greatest loss in life?
11. What is the greatest question in life?
12. What is the overall greatest thing in life?
13. What does Matthew 6:33 teach us to do?
14. What will Christ do for us if we are “not overcome” in this life (Rev. 3:5)?
15. According to 1 Corinthians 15:57, what does faith in Christ offer us?
16. According to 2 Corinthians 8:5, what gift did the Macedonians offer to God first?
17. What does Romans 12:1 tell us that we should present as a gift to God?
18. According to Hebrews 7:25, what does Jesus do before the throne of God for faithful Christians?
19. What point was Jesus making when He asked two rhetorical questions in Mark 8:36-37?
20. According to Hebrews 2:3, what should we not neglect?
21. What mistake did Felix and Agrippa make in Acts 24 and Acts 26?
22. What does James 4:14 teach us about our lives?
23. What steps compose the Gospel plan of salvation?