Freely You Have Received, Freely Give

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Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0:00] It's wonderful to celebrate together as a church. Please open your Bibles to 1 Samuel. If you don't have a Bible, please raise your hand. We'd love to give you a copy of the Bible that you can have, and you can use it while you're here.

We're starting a new series in the book of 1 Samuel. 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book, but it got split into two around the 2nd century BC when the Hebrew book was being translated into Greek just because Greek takes up a lot more space than Hebrew in writing, and so they had to divide it up because it wouldn't fit in the scroll.
But since then, this division of 1 and 2 Samuel has become quite standard in both Jewish and Christian circles. Jewish tradition recorded in the Talmud attributes most of 1 Samuel to Samuel himself.
That's Samuel's the author, chapters 1 to 24. And the rest of 1 and 2 Samuel is attributed to Gad, Prophet Gad, and Prophet Nathan. This is quite plausible because Samuel's death is recorded in chapter 25, so I think it's fair to assume that Samuel didn't write that one and what follows after that.
And it tells us in 1 Chronicles 29-29 that the acts of King of David, from first to last, are written in three sources. Chronicles of Samuel the seer, Chronicles of Nathan the prophet, and the Chronicles of Gad the seer.
[1:25] So I think that pretty much tells us that they are the authors of 1 and 2 Samuel, which would date this book to around 9th century B.C., shortly after the time of the Judges and the book of Ruth, which we just went through together as a church.

So please turn with me to 1 Samuel chapter 1, and I'm going to read the whole chapter. But before I do, let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word.
Heavenly Father, you teach us in this passage that all that we have comes from you, and we give to you only all that we have received from you.
And Lord, I confess this morning that I have nothing to offer except that which you have given to me. You love your church.
You love this church. So please, Father, give abundantly of your grace, your truth.
[2:44] They might be built up in Christ as the body of Christ. We might be, we might stand in wonder on you before your grace and generosity and favor that is completely undeserved.

Meet with us in the reading and preaching of your word. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen. Please stand, if you are able, to honor the Lord as we read from his word in 1 Samuel chapter 1.
There was a certain man of Ramathim Zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuth, and Ephrathite.
He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. Now, this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord.
On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah, his wife, and to all her sons and daughters, but to Hannah, he gave a double portion because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb.
[4:24] And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her because the Lord had closed her womb. So it went on year by year.

As often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore, Hannah wept and would not eat. And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, Hannah, why do you weep?
And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons? After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose.

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Now Eli, the priest, was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. And she vowed a vow and said, O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life and no razor shall touch his head.
As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was speaking in her heart. Only her lips moved and her voice was not heard.
[5:48] Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. And Eli said to her, How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you. But Hannah answered, No, my Lord.

I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman.
For all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation. Then Eli answered, Go in peace and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him.
And she said, Let your servant find favor in your eyes. Then the woman went her way and ate and her face was no longer sad. They rose early in the morning and worshipped before the Lord.
Then they went back to their house at Ramah and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife and the Lord remembered her. And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son and she called his name Samuel for she said, I have asked for him from the Lord.
[6:59] The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. But Hannah did not go up for she said to her husband, As soon as the child is weaned I will bring him so that he may appear in the presence of the Lord and dwell there forever.

Elkanah her husband said to her, Do what seems best to you. Wait until you have weaned him. Only may the Lord establish his word. So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him.
And when she had weaned him she took him up with her along with a three-year-old bull and ephah of flower and a skin of wine and she brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. And the child was young.
Then they slaughtered the bull and they brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh my Lord, as you live, my Lord, I am the woman who is standing here in your presence praying to the Lord.
For this child I prayed and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore, I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord and he worshiped the Lord there.
[8:11] This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. 1 Samuel, like the book of Ruth that we just went through, begins with the story of a humble and otherwise unremarkable family.

But once again, on this humble story of this family, that that serves as the hinge upon which God's redemption plan turns. Much like the humble families that we encounter in the Gospels, the families of Elizabeth and Zechariah and Joseph and Mary, from which we get John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, this family is a significant family in the history of God's people in the Old Testament.
In fact, the Gospel of Luke deliberately patterns the birth narrative of John the Baptist and Jesus in Luke chapter 1 after the narrative of birth of Samuel in 1 Samuel chapters 1 and 2.
Mary's song of praise to God after the announcement of the birth of Jesus in Luke chapter 2 is modeled after Hannah's prayer of praise in chapter 2 after Samuel's birth.
And the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of King Jesus, mirrors the birth of Samuel, the forerunner of King David. Both John the Baptist and Samuel have a priestly Levitical lineage, heritage.
[9:37] We know that from Luke 1-5 and we know that Samuel's father Elkanah is also a Levi from 1 Chronicles 6 16-30. John the Baptist's parents and Samuel's parents are both described as godly, righteous, devoted worshipers of God.

He says in verse 3, now this man, Elkanah, used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh. This is before the construction of the Solomonic temple. So this is where the tabernacle was stored. This is where people will go to worship God in Shiloh before the temple was constructed later on. Both Elizabeth and Hannah struggle with barrenness and both of them receive as an answer to their prayers from God a son.

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In the same way that John the Baptist will pave the way for King Jesus, it's Samuel the seer who now paves the way for King David. That's the bird's eye view of the redemptive arc of this story. But let's get down, drill down to the details. In this passage, I'll just tell you guys what the main point is up front if you have that. The main point of this passage is that we ought to give back to the Lord what he has freely given to us.
[10:47] We're going to first talk about how Hannah receives from the Lord and then in the second half how Hannah gives back to the Lord what she has received. Alkanah and Hannah I mentioned to you was a godly couple.

Alkanah was a devoted worshiper of God. However, he wasn't perfect. Verse 2 tells us that he had two wives. God's intention from the beginning as we see in Genesis 2.24 was that one man and one woman would marry and become one flesh.
And it was out of that one flesh union children were supposed to come. And Old Testament narratives give us many other hints throughout that having more than one wife is not a good thing. We see that in the fact that the first polygamist in the Bible is Lamech who also happens to be the second murderer in the Bible. We see it in the constant bickering between Jacob's two wives Leah and Rachel and it causes Jacob much bitterness their conflict.
We see it in 1 Kings 11.3 when it records that Solomon's many wives that he had many wives hundreds of wives in fact and that they turned him away from God turned his heart away from God.
[12:02] Jesus expressly says in Matthew 19 that taking more than one wife even if it's remarriage after divorce taking a second wife in that way is tantamount to adultery and that the divorce laws in the Old Testament were given not because God's fine with that and that's the biblical ideal but it was given as a concession to the hardness of the human heart that those divorce laws in the Old Testament existed to lessen and contain human evil but it was never God's original good design.

Polygamy in the Old Testament seems to fall in the same category. It was never the divine ideal but the Old Testament contains regulations about polygamy because it's seeking to lessen and contain human evil but with the death resurrection and ascent of Jesus Christ and the subsequent descent of the Holy Spirit we have entered into a new era of spirit-filled empowered obedience that all these saints did not have access to and we are called to a higher standard that Jesus calls us to.
But Elkona lived before that and he had two wives and the rivalry between the two will be a source of pain and suffering for him as well as it was for Jacob.
Verse 2 continues the name of the one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah and Peninnah had children but Hannah had no children.
Their predicaments are captured by their names their Hebrew names Peninnah means fruitful fertile. Verse 4 tells us that Peninnah had sons and daughters both sons and daughters are plural.
[13:44] So she had at least four kids minimum right and that's and back then especially for someone whose name means fertile and fruitful it would not have been uncommon for her to have even more.

In fact later on in verse later in verse 8 when Elkona says to Hannah am I not more to you than ten sons who knows maybe Peninnah had ten children and the name Hannah on the other hand means grace or favor.
Hannah is the favored wife. Hannah was Elkona's first wife that's why she's named first introduced first in verse 2 it says in verses 45 that while Elkona gave Peninnah his wife and all of Peninnah's children portions of the sacrifice that they made to the Lord to eat one portion each he gave a double portion to Hannah he says because he loved her though the Lord had closed her womb considering that Hannah was clearly Elkona's favorite wife it's likely that Elkona took his second wife Peninnah not because he got bored with Hannah and fell in love with Peninnah but because he needed a way to have children because Hannah could not have children Hannah's barrenness may be may very well be the reason why Elkona took his second wife the same way Leah and Rachel when they realized that they are no longer barren children will give their maidservants to their husband as concubines so that they could have more children through them and so the scene is set for quite a lot of family drama right it begins in verses six to seven and her rival
Peninnah used to provoke Hannah grievously to irritate her because the Lord had closed her womb so it went on year by year as often as she went up to the house of the Lord she used to provoke her therefore Hannah wept and would not eat this was obviously a constant thing they whenever they were going up to worship the Lord and sacrifice Peninnah would use that family vacation time to provoke Hannah the Hebrew word used to describe Peninnah's provocations of Hannah is the

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same word that is used almost exclusively to describe God thundering from heaven it's the same word that's used to describe the seas roaring in the middle of a tempest so Peninnah's provocations are causing within Hannah a tempest of grief and anger Hannah is so provoked and disturbed it's just whirlwind of grief within her like the skies during a thunderstorm or seas during a typhoon Hannah is a godly and self controlled woman and this tempest doesn't erupt into sin out of her fury but you can see how she might have been feeling in the way Rachel responds to Leah and Jacob in Genesis 30 envious of her rival wife Leah her sister and rival wife Leah who keeps having children for her husband Jacob Rachel who is barren says to her husband Jacob give me children or I shall die that's how desperate she was throughout the Old Testament motherhood is seen as the crowning joy and achievement of a woman's life and for this reason infertility was viewed frequently as a sign of divine disfavor and childless married woman were viewed with contempt it's not hard to imagine how Penina would have provoked Hannah in this situation you
[17:43] Hannah daily steal my husband's affections and love from me and guess what God's punishing you that's why you're childless God's repaying you who's hot now stuff yourself go on ahead with the double portion that Alkanah gave you stuff yourself go on ahead but I will have the last laugh in the end you don't have any children who's going to take care of Alkanah when you're old who's going to take care of you when you're old I will be remembered as Alkanah's wife by future generations and you will be forgotten because you have neither son nor daughter didn't God command Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply what are you what kind of a woman are you you can't even fulfill your

God given purpose what kind of a helper and a wife to Elkanah are you you're a disgrace to women everywhere imagine what that would do to Hannah's heart the sorrow the grief the dark clouds that she lives under this difficulty in conceiving is a result of the fall in Genesis 3 16 God says to Eve as a result of her sin I will surely multiply your pain in child bearing in pain you shall bring forth children most people think that that curse applies only to birth pains to labor pains but that's not the case the first Hebrew word translated as child bearing is a word that means pregnancy for example in Hosea 13 16 2 Kings 8 12 refers to pregnant women it's describing the pain and difficulty in conceiving the first half of
Genesis 3 16 the King James version translates it this way unto the woman he said I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception in sorrow thou shall bring forth children this this is the reality of the fallen created world Romans 8 describes this that this whole creation has been subjected to futility woven into the fabric of all fruitfulness we see in this life is futility barrenness the whole creation is growing together in the pains of childbirth until now and it's only when Christ returns that creation will be redeemed completely and set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God I don't think it's a coincidence that Steve mentioned in his sermon last week about his family struggles with infertility early on in their marriage and I am now preaching on this passage this week
I believe that God intends this word specifically for people in our church who are struggling with various forms of infertility whether that's miscarriages!
or an inability to conceive! Before my wife Hannah and I had our first daughter Ine we had three miscarriages!
[21:13] in three years and the hardest part of that for me wasn't even the loss itself I hadn't had that much time to bond with the babies it was just really hard to watch my wife go through it each time the excitement the anticipation and then the disappointment yet another dilation and curatage removing the tissues from the incomplete miscarriage eventually we became so wary and cautious that it was hard to even get excited after a pregnancy and perhaps the hardest part for me was how Satan used these events to slander God and accuse me God doesn't really love you God doesn't have an interest in blessing you he's paying you back for your past sins maybe some of you guys are in the middle of that kind of bitterness now verse 10 says that

Hannah was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly deeply distressed literally means bitter of soul it's that same word bitter that we saw in Ruth 1 20 to 21 to describe Naomi when Naomi said do not call me Naomi call me Mara for the almighty has dealt very bitterly with me I went away full and the Lord has brought me back empty Naomi said it is exceedingly bitter for me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me Hannah is experiencing a similar bitterness of soul what good is a double portion of food when because of your sorrow and grief you can't eat at all Hannah knows very well this pain but she also knows that the only person that can

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help her is God himself it is in the place of God to give the fruit of the womb children are a heritage from the
Lord the narrator told us in no uncertain terms in verse six that the Lord had closed Hannah's womb! What do you do when the Lord himself seems to be against you?
What do you do? Look at what Hannah does. Hannah does not turn away in disillusionment and apostasy. Her suffering does not draw Hannah away from God.
No, it makes Hannah press in closer toward God. Look at verse 11. O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant but will give to your servant a son then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life and no razor shall touch his head.
[24:10] She's making something that's similar to a Nazarite vow on behalf of her son Samuel that he would be fully given to the Lord. And look at what Hannah calls God in this verse.

He calls him the Lord of hosts, Yahweh of armies. 1 Samuel is the first book in the Bible where that title is used of God, the Lord of the armies, Yahweh of armies.
And Hannah is the first character in the Bible to address him directly by that title. And it's a powerful title that focuses especially on God's power to deliver us from our enemies.
The Lord of the armies. It's used climactically in 1 Samuel 1745 during David's fight with Goliath when David says, you Goliath come to me with the sword and with the spear and with the javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts.
Yahweh of armies. The God of the armies of Israel whom you have defied. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress.
[25:15] In Psalm 46 7. Hannah is clinging to the Lord as the one who must fight for her. In this rivalry against Peninnah, in this fight against sorrow and grief and loss, she cannot win.

She knows she cannot win. So she clings to God and say, you are the Lord of hosts. You are the Yahweh of the armies and you must fight for me. And that's the content of her prayer to God.
Is that how you turn to God in the midst of your suffering and sorrow, in the midst of your loss, in the midst of times when you feel that God has turned against you, do you still turn to him? That's exactly what God calls us to do.
As Job did when he was being afflicted, he said to God, though you slay me, yet I will hope in you.
Why does it seem that so often people will turn to everything else before they finally turn to God in desperate prayer?
prayer? They'd rather try to do everything in their power first and pray to God only when that's not enough, or so they think.
[26:28] Instead, we should follow Hannah's example. It should be our first impulse to depend on God in prayer since we can't do anything apart from him anyway. And this unfortunate situation now, it fits a literary trope that's common in the Old Testament of a wife who is unable to bear children.

God gives a special child to who then plays an important role in salvation history, whether that's Manoah's wife, barren wife, who gives birth to Samson, the judge, or of course, Isaac, born of Abram and Sarah, old and barren.
Sarah, menopausal. And so here too, it fits the type and it anticipates the birth of Samuel. Hannah prays in verse 11 that the Lord of hosts would remember her and not forget her.
When you think about your own theology of God and God's sovereignty and God's omniscience and God's omnipresence, it feels like a silly request. God, remember me.
God doesn't forget anything. God, why are you praying that God remember you, not to forget you? It's a manner of speech. God doesn't forget.
[27:43] He never forgets us. However, it's a manner of speech that conveys the way we relate to God from our own limited perspective. Because even when God doesn't forget us, sometimes we could surely feel like he has forgotten us.

So we relate to him that when we call upon him and we put God to remember and say, God, remember us. The word remember in the Pentateuch is most often used to speak of God remembering his covenant with his people.
The Lord says to Noah in Genesis 9, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. It says in Genesis 19, when God brings judgment down on Sodom and Gomorrah, that he remembered Abraham and on account of Abraham spares Lot.

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When the Israelites were groaning under the slavery in Egypt, Exodus 2.24, it says that God heard their groaning and remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.
In Leviticus 26, the Lord says that even when his people sin against him, he will not spurn them or destroy them utterly or break his covenant with them for, he says, I am the Lord their God.
[28:51] I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations that I might be their God, I am the Lord.

So then in crying out to God to remember her, Hannah is calling upon God to remember his covenant with his people and more specifically with her. God, I belong to you.
I put my trust in you. God, you have promised to your people, to Abraham, my forefather, that he be fruitful and multiply, that his children, his descendants will be as numerous as the stars of the sky.
And so he's called, she's calling upon God, putting God to remembrance of his promises. And then it says in verse 19 that Alkanah knew Hannah, his wife, and the Lord remembered her.
And in due time, Hannah conceives and bears a son and gives him the name Samuel, which means heard of God. because he says, I have asked for him from the Lord.
[30:02] And then Hannah in verse 21 to 28, it goes on to fulfill her vows. And she says in verses 27 to 28, for this child I prayed and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him.

Therefore, I have lent him to the Lord as long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord. This happens right after Samuel's weaned, probably around the age of three. And so you might be thinking, oh wow, that's a really harsh thing for a mom to do.
Drop her child off. I know some of you guys got dropped off here by your parents in the U.S. from somewhere else. So you might know the story. But Samuel is being given to the Lord to grow up in the dwelling place of God as someone whose whole life is given to the service of the Lord.
Lord. And that, I imagine that was really hard for Hannah. I don't think she was like, well, good riddance. I moved out of my house for college when I was 18.
And since then, I've really seen my parents only like once or twice a year. which is sad.
[31:20] But God's called me to ministry here. And so that's a sacrifice that my parents have made. And I'm 40 years old now.

And whenever I go to visit my parents and I turn around to leave and it's our last day and we're about to drive off to the airport, my mom still cries every single year.
that's, that's the mom's heart. That's Hannah's heart. Yet she must leave him because she's made a vow to the Lord that he would belong to him.
And, and so she fulfills that vow. And, and she's able to do this because she understands something very important.
in first Samuel one verse 17, verse 20, verse, verse 27, verse 28, the same key word occurs again and again.
[32:28] And that's the word ask request, petition, ask of the Lord. It's because Hannah asked of the Lord that the Lord gave to her.

That same word it's, it's, it's, it's in the, in Hebrew, it's, it's sounds like Saul's name, Shaw, Saul. And so later there's a word play in, in first Samuel chapters eight and 12 and that where people of God ask God for a king, even though they're not supposed to ask for him.
And so that's, that's why they get a man whose name means ask Shaw or Saul. And so there's this play, this word play going on. And this kind of prefigures that that's something that the people of God should not have asked for because the Lord God is their king and they should not have asked for a human king like the rest of nations.
But here, this is something that the Lord God wanted Hannah to ask for. She asked of the Lord and therefore the Lord gave to him. And that, that in verse 28, when Hannah says, therefore I have lent him to the Lord, as long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord.
That's a different use of the exact same Hebrew word for ask. It's like turned around. I asked the Lord gave and now I lend back.
[33:47] I give back to the Lord using the exact same Hebrew word. That's getting at the idea of, of stewardship. Hannah understands the reality that her son is not her own.

Samuel belongs to God first and foremost. In fact, apart from God, she will not have him at all. Right? Isn't that the case with everything with us?
I think it's so easy for us to imagine that we, we have things we can offer to God of our own. But in reality, every good gift, every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the father of

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the heavenly lights, as James 1.17 says.
You might think that your hard-earned money belongs to you. But who gave you your industry, your ability, your learning and training, your parents who raised you, the environment in which you grew up, that provided, that created and crafted the character that you have?
Everything came from God in the end. What gifts and talents do you have that you can, that you can serve God with? Didn't that also come from God? I think of the sermon that I, that I get to preach week, weekend and week out.
[35:11] God, what do I have to offer? Nothing. Everything I have came from him. My voice, my mind, my books, the people who have mentored me, everything I have came from him.

Start with nothing. We start with nothing. We come naked from our mother's wombs and everything we give back to God, it's all from him. Isn't that why he says in 1 Chronicles 29, 14, when David is, is gathering up the material for the construction of the temple, he says to God, who am I and what is my people that we should, we should be able thus to offer willingly for all things come from you and of your own have we given you.
Isn't that why Jesus says in Matthew 10 verse say, you received without paying, give without pay. Everything we have has come to God. What is this? What are the things in your life that you imagine belongs to you?
That's God's. This is mine. Maybe your time outside of Sunday mornings. Do you think of that as belonging to you? Every single second has been given to you by God.
Do you think of your children as belonging to you? Well, I mean, they are my children after all, right? They wouldn't exist apart from me. They were born naked with nothing.
[36:42] Everything they have, I've given to them. No, you wouldn't have your children apart from God. And this is the case even more so when it comes to our salvation.

Everything we have, we live and breathe. We live and breathe and have our being because of God who sustains us. It says in Acts 17. And the same principle applies to our salvation. As it says in Ephesians 2, we were dead in our trespasses and sins.
We were following the course of this world, the power of the prince, of the power of the air. Following the passions of our flesh, living like all those who by nature are children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
That's what we were. We were all, we were all rebelling against God. We were all sinning against Him. We had nothing to bring to Him. In my youthful arrogance, when I first came to the Lord, I thought, oh man, God, you're saving me and you're going to use me because, you know, I have so many goods to offer to you.
I can bring my sincerity. I can bring my gifts. I can serve you. I can do great things for you. And then God had to remind me, Sean, from the beginning to the end, you've only come this far because of my grace.
[38:04] And nothing you can offer me. There's nothing you can offer me that I haven't already given to you. What we bring to the relationship with God, you might think of your righteous deeds and the good things that you can do to serve Him.

Apart from your faith in Christ, all those things are filthy rags. It's only by your faith in Christ Jesus that those things are sanctified and consecrated to Him in a manner that is pleasing to Him.
Apart from Christ, apart from faith in Christ, even every good thing that we can do is shot through with pride and self-righteousness. Oh, you think maybe, oh, well, my faith, at least my faith is my own.
I chose to believe in God. That's from me. That's something I give to Him. No, Philippians 129 says, it has been granted to you for the sake of Christ that you should believe in Him.
Even your faith in God was granted to you. It's the Spirit of God that illuminated your heart and enlightened your heart so that you can understand. It's the Lord God Himself who drew you because unless He draws you to the Father, you cannot come to Him as John 6, 44 says.
[39:09] The only thing we have contributed to our relationship with God, only thing that we have brought to the table is the sin from which we must be saved.

We come to God empty-handed with nothing in my hands I bring, only to the cross I cling. That's the way in which we come to God and that's the only way in which God saves and that's why Jesus dies as the atoning sacrifice for our sins on the cross.

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He bears all the blame. He bears all the penalty. He pays all the price because we have nothing with which to pay the price that must be paid. So then, when we give to God, when we serve Him, we give of what we receive freely from Him, we turn back to Him and we are absorbed into all that He is doing, all of His grace.
19th century hymn writer George Matheson turned blind when he was 17 and to add insult to injury, his then-fiancé dumped him, saying that she can't go on through life with a blind man.
But despite this heartbreak, he went on with his studies and eventually became a pastor, a pastor in Scotland. And reflecting on that past pain, that past heartbreak, on the night of his sister's wedding, Matheson penned what has become a beloved hymn entitled, Oh Love That Will Not Let Me Go.
[40:49] That love let him go, but the love of God did not let him go. And it speaks of our acknowledgement and surrender that everything belongs to God.

And it goes like this, and I'll close with this. Oh love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in Thee. I give Thee back the life I owe that in Thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.
Oh life that follows all my way, I yield my flickering torch to Thee. My heart restores its borrowed ray that in Thy sunshine's blaze its day may brighter, fairer be.
Let's pray. Heavenly Father, all the light we have, Lord, we acknowledge is borrowed ray from You. All the life we have, we acknowledge is borrowed light from You. borrowed life from You. All the grace we have received, Lord, all the favor we have received from You has been completely unmerited.
[42:15] It was merited by Your Son, Jesus Christ. His life, death, and resurrection. And so Lord, because of that, You deserve all the glory. Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to Your name be the glory.

Would You help us, please, to acknowledge this in every aspect of our lives, to surrender every aspect of our lives to You, to give back freely to You what we have freely received from You.
Help us to do this, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.

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