

The Best Things In Life Are Free

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Preacher: Dave Warren

[0:00] Enter into His gates of thanksgiving, Enter into His courts with praise, Enter into His gates of thanksgiving, Enter into His courts with praise.

Be thankful unto Him, O bless the name of the Lord.

Bless His name. Enter into His gates of thanksgiving, Enter into His courts with praise.

Enter into His gates of thanksgiving, Enter into His courts with praise.

For the Lord our God is good, His mercy is everlasting, And His truth is direct to all, For generations.

[2:01] Enter into His courts with praise. Enter into His gates of thanksgiving, Enter into His courts with praise.

Enter into His gates of thanksgiving, Enter into His courts with praise.

Lord with praise. Lord with praise. Lord with praise.

Amen.

rather have jesus than silver or gold i'd rather be his than have riches untold i'd rather have jesus than houses or lands i'd rather be led by his nail pierced hand than to be the king of a vast domain and be held in sin's dread sway i'd rather have jesus than anything this world affords today i'd rather have jesus than man's applause i'd rather be faithful to his dear cause i'd rather have jesus than worldwide fame i'd rather be true to his holy name than to be the king of a vast domain and be held in sin's dread sway i'd rather have jesus than anything this world affords today i'd rather have jesus than anything this world affords today thank you nancy so privilege to have brother dave warm back with us

[5:43] Professor Bible in Cedarville. Hello, Dave. Hooray!

All right, all right. Oh, well. Please open, David Warren.

I didn't realize it was Christmas yet. Tell you what, I'd better put this on while I'm thinking about it.

Keep you in suspense a little longer here. Hang on.

There we are. Thank you for this. I appreciate it. This on.

Yeah. Nervous. Somebody help me. Come here. Who's going to help me? Come here, Larry. Come on.

[6:56] You bought it. You're going to put it on. I don't know whether I can do it.

I don't know if I can. My wife usually does this for me. Get it straight now.

Oh, you got it. Kidding. Uh-oh. Oh, no. This is not the normal Sunday morning introduction to the sandwich. That's good. That'll do.

Okay. Very good. Now I'm ready. I had wondered what I was going to do and say this morning. As I reflected on the event of yesterday, I thought how biblical, really, that is.

Very appropriate scripture here. Let's see. I had it all nailed down before this gift came my way. I've got to find it. Here we go. And David lamented with this lamentation.

[8:10] The beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places. How are the mighty fallen? Tell it not in gas.

Publish it not in the streets of Columbus. Lest the daughters of the Buckeyes rejoice. Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

So it is an appropriate thing. The scriptures do fit, whatever the particular situation. That would be called taking it out of context and also the Warrenian perverse version.

But at any rate, it's good to be back with you in Columbus. Thank you very much. It's almost kind of funny. I've been chasing Charles Reed around the state now for a number of Sundays.

I was in Marion last Sunday and took care of him up that way. And he's kind of been chasing me.

We've been chasing each other around the state about the last month or so.

[9:15] So I'm glad to be back with you for today. Regardless of how you feel about Ohio State and the University of Michigan football game, I think you will agree with me that most of us are concerned about the high cost of living.

That does seem to be a national concern and a very personal concern for each one of us. As a matter of fact, just at the breakfast table this morning, we had a package of donuts, just powdered sugar-covered donuts.

And I looked at the price on the package, and it was 69 cents for the dozen. It was a special sale. And I made a remark to my wife. I said, hey, that is a good price. You know, I'm thinking 99 cents or \$1.29, or just a little old regular donut.

Probably has a bigger hole than normal, too. And she reminded me that just a few years ago, we could get for 69 cents a dozen cream-filled donuts.

You know, and I said, don't remind me. It's okay. We'll just enjoy these that we do have. The high cost of living is a very real thing, isn't it?

[10:28] I will date myself when I tell you this, but that's okay. I can remember the day in our country when we had gasoline wars. We have them now.

They're just going the other direction. That's all. But I can remember one night driving home from work in Dallas, Texas, going by the Shell gas station, and they had a gas war going on, Shell regular, for \$21.9.

Not a dollar, \$21.9. \$21.9. And even a poor seminary student wheeled in there and whipped out his card and said, we've got to have that gasoline for \$21.9.

That's really something. I can also remember the day when you could go into a grocery store and get one of these old packages, you know, of Hostess cream-filled cupcakes.

Ooh, those are good. For a dime. And that day is long gone. And I can also remember, even before that, as a child, when Gene Autry and his horse, Champion, used to chew healthful, refreshing, delicious, double mint chewing gum for a nickel.

[11:44] A nickel. I think you'll agree with me that we'll never bring those days back and that we are living in a very inflationary time.

But it's in a time like that that we remember that there are lots of good things in life that money cannot buy. It matters not how much money or how little money you have.

There are certain things that money cannot buy. I was thinking of this Friday night. I was laying in a tent.

We had taken our Awana pioneers on a camp out in a borrowed tent, perhaps better called a borrowed sieve.

As we lay there, just shortly after midnight, perhaps one in the morning, literally there was a hole in the roof of that tent that big on one end of it. And so being a wise professor, I said, I'll go to the other end, which I did.

[12:54] Dutifully laid out my nylon sleeping bag and went soundly asleep, only to wake up in perhaps an hour with the feel and the sound of rain hitting me in the chest.

Boom, boom, boom, boom. I was wet, cold, and weary. And I got myself up with the sleeping bag still kind of wrapped around me, picked up what I could, and tried to find myself my way through the dark of that tent.

I felt like Christopher Columbus looking for dry ground somewhere out there. As I stepped on wet canvas and warm bodies, I finally found a spot and laid down convulsing in laughter.

What is a nice guy like me doing in a mess like this? And then I thought of you, and I thought of this service, and I thought, now here is something that money cannot buy.

A good night's sleep. Sleep. can hardly be bought with money. There are some other things that money cannot buy.

[14:05] You tell me. What are some other things that no amount of money can buy for you? Come on. I heard salvation over here. Health is another.

I heard love, I think. The sharing of love. Friendship. Peace of mind.

The conception of children. I guess that's why we have this little motto, and I'm preaching on that motto this morning. The best things in life are free.

Now I'm tampering with the motto. I'm going to change it from plural to singular and make it simply this. The best thing in life is free.

And I don't have to convince you that the very best thing in life is salvation.

[15:14] To be saved. To be born again. To know that your sins are gone. That you are a child of God. That your future is secure. That is what salvation is all about.

And that salvation is a free gift. Now I want to be sure that we all understand what I'm talking about. There is the tendency to assume too much on the part of the preacher. So that when I talk about this matter of salvation, salvation, I want you to know that that term means deliverance.

To be delivered is to be saved. To be delivered from sin. To be delivered from the clutches of Satan.

To be delivered from the judgment of hell is to be saved. That is salvation. salvation. Only, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ can provide that deliverance, that rescue, that snatchiness away from those spiritual realities.

[16:37] And that salvation, that deliverance that we enjoy in Christ is a free gift. one of the deacons in my former congregation mentioned to me almost casually one day that one of the hardest things for people to come to understand and to accept is the freeness of salvation.

people think that's too simple. That's too easy. There certainly has to be something more to it than the fact that it is a gift to be received.

And before we are too hard on people like that or people who have a question like that, let me remind you something. As a general principle, we do teach our kids that if something is really worthwhile in life, you're going to have to work to get it.

It's going to cost you some money, it's going to cost you some effort. If it's really worth it, it's going to take work. Do you not teach your children that?

I'm sure you do or will. You drive down the road, I drive down the road coming here to Columbus on Sunday mornings, and I see a house here, a yard over there, and you say, boy, what a beautiful house.

[18:20] And the yard is beautifully manicured, and the bushes are cut, and the trees are just so. And I think in my mind, how do you get a house like that? How do you have a yard like that?

And to ask the question is almost to answer it. You get it by working for it. A lot of hard work to have a beautiful home and keep it up, isn't it? Or, you see a young person go off to college, and you are there at the day of their graduation after four years, and you see them walk across the stage, you know, with that black gown, you know, and the thing hanging down the back, and they flip that tassel and get that sheepskin, and you say in your mind, boy, I'd like to have something like that, I wonder what they did to get it.

Just ask them. Blood, sweat, and tears. And we on the faculty make sure it's that way. Work.

Or you see a family come in the door of your church and say, boy, there is a Christian family. There is a family that's got it all together. And incidentally, we'll be talking about the family the next three Sundays, the Lord willing.

Might slip that in right there. But you see that family come in and you say, boy, I'd like to have a family like that. How do you get a good, solid Christian family? You work at it.

[19:49] So that it is true that as a general principle, if you're going to receive anything in this life that is of worth or value, you're going to have to work to get it.

But I preached to you this morning the one happy exception to that general principle, salvation.

The best thing in life, worth having, and it is a freebie. Now, I really do not want you to take my word for it because my word doesn't count.

but I do invite you to take God's word for it. Let's go on a little scripture chase for a few moments.

We're going to run through some very, I hope, familiar verses.

Romans chapter four and verse five is the first one. As we run through these verses, I assure you that I have not dragged them out of their context.

[20:58] text, I have not twisted them to mean something they do not actually say in their primary interpretation, but they are very clear, straightforward verses.

Romans chapter four and verse five. Speaking of salvation, Paul says to us this, verse five and verse five and to him that believeeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

righteousness. Please note the words, it is to him that worketh not that righteousness is accounted. If you will link that verse with chapter six and verse twenty three, another familiar passage, I'm quite certain. Romans six, twenty three.

for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[22:11] Please notice the sharp contrast between the terms wages on the one hand and gift on the other. The wages of sin, that which I earn, that for which I work, that in which I expend my effort, the wages that I get back for sin is death.

But the gift of God, a gift of something for which you do not work. I don't try to be a good boy all year so my wife will give me a birthday present.

And my children don't try to be good children so that all year long, so that on Christmas we will somehow think they have earned the right to receive a Christmas gift under that tree.

A gift is something you receive undeservedly because of the graciousness and the generosity of the giver. The gift of God is eternal life.

What a gift. That will beat any Christmas present you get in December. Couple that verse with Ephesians 2, 8, and 9.

[23:23] Ephesians 2. I have a notion that these verses are so familiar to you that you can quote this one.

So let's try it. I'll not check up on you now. The first word is for. Let's see how far we can get. For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. Not of works. Grace, faith, both of which are given to us, not of works, lest any of us walk around strutting, thinking, look at all I've done, I'm really worthy of this salvation.

No boasting. Let's take my favorite, okay? Titus 3, verse 5. We're working our way toward the back of the New Testament, perhaps you noticed.

Titus 3, 5. Again, Paul, and he says this, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us.

[25:00] Not even by righteous deeds, religious deeds, good things, oh, I paid my taxes and I helped my neighbor change her flat tire, and I do this other thing, and I was baptized, and I was catechized, and a few other things, all of those are good things, they were nice things, they were socially acceptable things, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but in accord with his mercy, he saved us.

I like that little song that says, I goes to church, and I gives my money, and I does the best I can, and then somebody comes up and says, you must be born again, not by works of righteousness. Well, you say, that's the New Testament. Let's look at one in the Old. Isaiah 55, verse 1.

Isaiah 55, verse 1. This is the end of our scripture chase, and this is our text for the morning.

The Old Testament says precisely the same thing as does the New. I read for you Isaiah 55, 1.

[26:33] Whole every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat.

Yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. That verse does not seem to make any sense at first.

How can you come and buy something when you have no money? But that is precisely what Isaiah commands, is it not?

The reason you can come and get it without cost is because it is free. And so I have entitled this verse in my Bible free food.

Free food. Will you look with me a little more closely at this verse? I want to just tear it apart before you and kind of dangle the various parts in front of our attentions.

[27:46] When I look at this verse, frankly, the first thing I notice are the comes. Notice this. Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. He that has no money, come ye buy and eat.

Ye come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Somebody comes. Come, come, come. That's a word of invitation, isn't it?

When you come to my house at Cedarville and you ring the doorbell or you knock at the door, somebody's going to come to that door sooner or later, open it and say, as you would say, come on in.

That's a word of invitation. Come on, you're welcome here. God through Isaiah and through the pages of the New Testament, as it were, opens his loving arms to lost humanity and he says to us, come on, I'm waiting, I'm anxious, I've got the table all set, as we'll see in a few moments.

A word of invitation. Come on. Now, sometimes at our house, when the meal is all ready and it's on the table, my wife will say to me, call the children, and I will dutifully go to the hallway and yell down that hallway something you're never supposed to do or say, come and get it before we throw it out.

[29:15] Now, that has nothing to do with the quality of my wife's cooking. It's just a way of saying, dinner's ready, let's eat. God says to you and to me, come and get it.

And he says it three times for emphasis. Come on. Why wait? Why delay? Why straight arm the Holy Spirit?

Why say later? Until I'm hungry or ready or some other such foolish excuse. I do not normally eat until they first begin to sense, hey, I am hungry.

I'm getting weak, my stomach is starting to growl, etc. I'm hungry. In the same way, people will not come to the food of salvation until first they say, you know, I'm hungry.

as long as you think, I can make it on my own, I really don't need any help, I am self-sufficient, you will never be saved.

[30:25] You will never be saved. It's not until you come to that point of which the Savior spoke, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

they are the ones who will be filled. My beloved friends, the greatest need in America is for lost people to recognize I'm lost.

I'm a sinner. I have a terrible need for righteousness. Or, as Isaiah puts it here, you've got to be thirsty.

You've got to have a driving desire for this salvation. Would you like to be saved?

Can you say in your heart of hearts, boy, I really am a sinner. I've done a lot of things, and I really, I have a tremendous need. need. If that's how you feel, you are a perfect candidate for salvation.

[31:43] Everyone who's thirsty. He mentions another condition, similar but different, later on in the verse.

ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money. He's a person who not only senses a tremendous need, but a person who says, I'm broke.

I don't have two nickels to rub together. I have no way of meeting that need. In other words, here is a person who feels his or her hopelessness.

Not only do I have a great need, but I am hopeless to meet it. I am totally unworthy. I'm not good enough for this thing.

Spiritually bankrupt. Like our song says, nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling.

[33:04] That's the kind of people who can come, the kind of people who say I'm a sinner, and beyond that, I deserve hell.

I have nothing to offer to God but my need. That's quite a condition. I hope I am speaking to someone here this morning who says in the honesty and the depth of your heart, boy, I need to be saved, and I'm not worthy to be saved.

God if that's how you feel, you're a perfect candidate for salvation. I also notice in this verse the cost.

Isaiah is very clear. Notice the cost that he lists for us. Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. He that hath no money, come ye buy and eat, yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Without money and without price. A symbolic way again of saying it's free. free food.

[34:30] He calls it wine, he calls it water, he calls it milk, we'll talk about those in a moment, and he says it's free.

Now you have some imagination, I know you do. Pretend with me for a moment that we were going shopping here in Columbus to the local Kroger store.

You have Kroger stores here, I presume. You go in there with that proverbial envelope filled with all the coupons and the list written on the back.

And you go up and down the various aisles and you got your basket thinking maybe I ought to have two baskets, et cetera. And you're going like crazy and the thing is going up, you know. And you finally come to that zero hour, the checkout place.

and you whip in that thing and you're kind of calculating in your mind how much all of this is going to cost and holding on to your wallet with one hand. And as you go through and she says hello and she starts checking it and ringing the thing up and the ticket comes out and then goes down, you know, all of that.

[35:43] Finally they get it all done and it's in the bags and so on and she says to you, take it and go. It's free.

Now that takes some imagination. And some of you are wondering where that Kroger store is. I know you are.

But my beloved friends, that is precisely what Isaiah is saying. He says, come on, and the only thing you have to be in order to come is to sense that you have a need and you can't meet that need in any way.

It's here. It is available. Come and get it. The best thing in life, salvation, is free.

Now we better explain that symbolism for just a few moments because it is in the verse. I referred to it a moment ago. Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and then wine, and then milk.

[36 : 52] Why does he call it by these various terms? Water. Obviously, water, because water is that which quenches your thirst, does it not?

Water totally assuages that burning feeling and that sense the need for liquid. It is water. Now, I know that the real thing is supposed to do that.

And the one that beats the others cold, and the one you drink at ten and two and four, those are supposed to do that. But they know that if you drink one and you go to one another, etc., and it really is not going to quench your thirst.

If you really want to quench thirst, what you do is you do what we did. You want to go on a honeymoon, you take a little collapsible cup, and that's what we did. Got to those smoky mountains down there in Tennessee.

We stopped along the road and here's this beautiful mountain stream, and we just reached down and drank that beautiful, fresh, pure mountain water.

[37 : 58] There's nothing that quenches thirst like water. water. Similarly, when you get saved, not only are you delivered from sin and hell, as I referred to earlier, but along with that deliverance comes a deep satisfaction.

Your spiritual thirst is quenched once and for all by Christ. as he said to the woman at the well, you come to this well, you'll thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst again.

Very emphatically stated, no way will you thirst again. And she says, hey, I'll take some of that water. I offer to you a salvation that brings along with it a deep, inner satisfaction.

The quenching of your spiritual needs. The Lord Jesus satisfies us. I've never met a Christian in his or her right mind who did not believe that Jesus had met all of their needs.

Wine? wine? Why would he call it wine? Wine in the scriptures is a symbol of many things, but among them it is a symbol of joy.

[39 : 40] A deep sense of joy. When a person gets saved and is delivered from sin and delivered from hell and they know it in their heart, I cannot describe to you the tremendous joy that comes into our heart.

I'm reminded of my second daughter who when she was quite a little bit younger and got the news that we were going somewhere that she wanted to go like to grandma's house or something, she would get so filled with joy and excitement.

She just couldn't say it and so she'd just stand there and she'd go, ooh, just jumping joy we would call it. It's kind of like what Peter said, though we've never seen him, yet we rejoice with a joy that is unspeakable.

You cannot express it, but it's very real. Milk? Why in the world would he refer to this as milk?

Again, this is symbolic language, and milk in the scriptures does speak of wealth, spiritual wealth.

Even the Sunday school kids know that because when the children of Israel were called to leave Egypt and go out to Canaan, that land of Canaan was described as a land that flowed with milk and honey.

[41 : 19] In the literalness of my mind as a kid, I used to envision the land of Canaan with puddles of milk, here and there, and I think, who want to step in puddles of milk? Who? I didn't understand that was symbolic.

The land flowed with milk, that is, it was rich. There was wealth there. I'm not talking about material wealth now, but my beloved friend, when you come to Christ, you inherit the wealth of heaven.

It is at your disposal. The New Testament calls it the riches of his grace and the riches of glory.

They're ours.

You see, I proclaim to you in the name of Christ this morning a salvation that is a free gift. It not only delivers you from sin and from Satan and from hell, but it brings along with it a deep sense of

satisfaction and joy and spiritual well-being.

It's the best thing in life, and it's free. I would not tell you the whole story, though, if I didn't remind you of one thing.

[42 : 45] Though salvation is a free gift to you and to me, it was not free to God.

In order to provide this salvation for us, God the Father paid the price by giving his Son. And his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, paid the price by giving his life.

And it's so easy for us to sit here on a 1982 Sunday morning and not feel something of the price, of the cost. I realize I was here in October and mentioned the high cost of Calvary.

And I'll certainly not repeat that sermon, I promise. But you will remember that there was a tremendous physical cost. The battering and the brutalities with which he was treated.

There was indeed an emotional cost to that experience, being abandoned by all, being hated. As I was noting just in my devotions this morning, the one whom the builders set aside, the builders rejected, they said, oh, he isn't worth anything.

[44 : 11] He's the one that turned around and became the head of the corner. What an emotional price tag of Calvary. The social cost I alluded to before, dying in shame as a common criminal.

And the spiritual cost of being separated from his father. My God, why hast thou forsaken me?

And the whole matter of becoming sin wrapped up in a body? I guess that's why I like that song. It reminds me in a vivid way the high cost of Calvary.

Man of sorrows. What a name. For the Son of God who came ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah. What a Savior. Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned he stood, sealed my pardon with his blood.

[45 : 25] Hallelujah. What a Savior. Jesus paid it all. All to him I owe.

Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it. White as snow. Can you not see him hanging on that cross before your eyes?

With a mocking crowd around him, with his disciples removed at a distance, fearful for their own lives, the sun darkened.

And can you not hear him cry out in triumph and in victory? It is finished! Beloved friends, when he shouted out those words, he was saying, the meal is ready.

The table is set. Come and get it. And that is the invitation to you this morning.

[46 : 36] Oh, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. He that hath no money, come ye buy, eat.

And it is of great interest to me that the New Testament closes on the same note. We'll not turn to it. But it says something like this.

The Spirit and the Bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is of thirst, come.

And let him take the water of life freely. Because it really is true. The best thing in life is freedom.

Father, you have told us that your thoughts are not our thoughts. And that your ways are far beyond us.

[47 : 52] Had it been up to us to come up with a plan and a way of salvation, we would have made it so difficult, we would have had so many steps and requirements that nobody would have made it.

that we're glad that Jesus paid it all. And that as hopeless sinners, we can but come and receive and be saved.

Move upon hearts today that we might have the joy of seeing some do that very thing even right now. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Hymn number 562 will be our hymn of invitation. 562. As you find this hymn, you will say, oh yes, we know that.

It's a very familiar hymn. And that is true. But that's not the reason I've selected it. I've selected it because it reminds us that this is the only way we can come just as we are in our sin, with our need, with our lostness.

[49 : 19] And the only reason we do come is because he bid us to come. We sing this verse just as I am and we invite you publicly to step out and say, yes, I need it, I want it, and I'm coming to Christ for that salvation of which you spoke this morning.

Let's stand, please, as we sing. Singing together on the first verse, I'll meet you right down, friends. We'll show you from the word of God how you can know you are genuinely a child of God.