

Romans 8:32

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[0 : 0 0] What you give reveals much concerning who or what you are. Perhaps to say you are what you give would be going a little too far, but giving is without doubt revealing. It reveals something about the giver. What you give, how you give, these are actions that reveal something about you, about us. And with that in mind, perhaps if I could just give a wee word of advice to husbands and boyfriends at present, that a week Friday, if you rush to the BP station to splash out two pounds 99 and a few carnations, that will reveal a great deal about you. Now, if you don't even know what I'm talking about, your troubles are greater than I imagine. But just bear that in mind. What you give reveals a great deal about you. So, you have been warned. This contention that you show your true colors by what you give is a principle that can be tested with God. We can discover what God is like by considering what He gives. And this is what Paul does in the verse that we want to give attention to this morning. In Romans chapter 8 and in verse 32, we read,

He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also along with Him graciously give us all things? The apostle considers the matter of God as a God who gives. Our God is a giving God. We want to consider what he says about this matter of God as a giving God. And the manner in which we want to consider what he says is as follows. We want to notice, first of all, what God has given in the past. The apostle is employing an argument. He's wanting to come to a conclusion. And his opening, as salvo as it were, in this argument, the foundation upon which he will come to his conclusion, is establishing and recognizing, identifying what God has given in the past.

But then we can also, from that, discover what God's gift reveals in the present. So, what God has given in the past, what God's gift reveals in the present. And then, thirdly, what God's gift guarantees into the future, which in many ways is Paul's principal concern in the argument that he is laying out in this verse. What God's gift in the past. So, in that way, we want to give consideration to this verse before us. First of all, then, what God has given in the past. Paul, as the verse makes clear, is introducing God the Father as the one who gives. It is the Father who has been spoken of here. The reference to the Son, and indeed the giving of the Son makes that very evident. God the Father is the one who has given His Son. He has given this great gift. And we can consider what the Father has given in the past from three perspectives. Three perspectives that all, I hope, together give us a fuller picture of what God has given in the past. And the three perspectives that we want to think about are the gift given to the Father. What is the gift that He has given in the past? But also the cost of giving to the Father. Even in these choice words and very few words, Paul is able to cover a lot of ground. And part of the ground he covers is to touch on the cost to the Father of this gift that He has made. So, the gift given, the cost of giving to the Father, and then thirdly, the nature of giving by the Father. What kind of giving are we talking about in this instance that Paul highlights? So, we're thinking about what God has given in the past, but from these three perspectives. First of all, then, the gift given by the Father. What has the Father given? Well, the verse is very clear. It speaks about how

He gave Him. He gave Him. That is, He gave His own Son. He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. The Father gave His own Son. Now, Paul here chooses his language very carefully. In using the word that is translated in the verse as His own, He gave His own Son, Paul is stressing or highlighting the manner in which Jesus is and ever has been uniquely God's Son. He is using a word that he never employs in speaking of believers as sons and daughters of God, which we are. Paul is drawing a clear and crucial distinction between Christ's sonship and our sonship. We are sons and daughters by adoption. Indeed, this very chapter wonderfully expresses this truth. We haven't read the whole chapter, but if we just glance back to verse 15 of this chapter, we read Paul addressing the believers, and he says, for you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the spirit of sonship, and by Him we cry, Abba, Father. Sonship is something that we receive. It's not something intrinsic to us as men and women, but it is a gift. It is something that we are given, a status that we receive at a point in time. Not so with the eternal Son of God. Christ has ever and uniquely been God's Son.

In the language, the familiar language of John chapter 3 and verse 16, we can describe Him as God's one and only Son, or more literally, God's only begotten Son. He is eternally begotten of the Father. He is of one nature with the Father, equal in power and glory with the Father. In the words of the writer to the Hebrews, as he begins his letter in verse 3 of the first chapter, he describes the Son. He describes Jesus as the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being. And so, when we consider and when we ponder on the gift that the Father has given, we are to be very clear that God gave His own Son, and in giving His own Son, and very particularly in the light of what we have said concerning His own Son,

[7 : 55] He gave Himself. This is what or who the Father gave His own Son. That's the first perspective on the matter of what God has given in the past. What is it that He gave? Well, He gave His own Son. But then, secondly, we can consider the cost of giving to the Father. What did it cost the Father to give in this way to give in this way to give in this way? Now, ordinarily, it's probably a little rude to try and work out the cost of the gift that we receive at Christmas or at a birthday or indeed on any other occasion. But in the matter of the Father's gift to His Son, we are encouraged to ponder on the cost of that gift. And again, Paul is careful to employ language that explicitly points to and highlights the cost to the Father of giving His own Son, and very particularly the language that we have at the very beginning of the verse, He who did not spare His own Son. He did not spare His own Son.

And the language employed here by Paul echoes, I think we can safely say, deliberately echoes the language that we find in the story of Abraham that we've already read this morning, how Abraham was instructed by God to sacrifice his own son Isaac. And the stress on his own son is something we find there in Genesis. And we've read the account, chilling and dramatic in equal measure, as Abraham in a demonstration of profound loyalty to and deep trust in God. Remember what he said to Isaac, the Lord will provide. Deep trust in God, Abraham lays his son on the altar, and then at the crucial, dramatic moment, God stays His hand and graciously provides a substitute. And then what does God say to Abraham? And we've read the passage, because you have done this and have not withheld or have not spared your own Son. Abraham is commended because he did not spare his own Son, or he was willing to not withhold or spare his own Son. But of course, the drama of the account and the outcome of the account is that

Isaac was spared. Isaac was not sacrificed. He did not die. Not so with Jesus. The cost to the Father resides precisely in this barely comprehensible reality that God's Son. Now, we will in a few moments explore a little more closely what the Son was not spared. But for the moment, we can simply say that the cost of the Father's gift was beyond measure to both the Father and to the Son. So, as we think of the gift that God has given in the past, as we identify what the gift is or who the gift is, the cost of giving to the Father, but then thirdly, the nature of this giving by the Father's gift is given in the Father's gift. And here we're referring specifically to this act of giving that Paul is speaking of, the giving of his own Son. And in the verse, we're told that he, the Father, gave him up for us all. Now, to understand the nature of this giving by the Father, we need to understand the significance of the verb that Paul's gift. We need to understand the verb that God has given in the name of the Father.

We need to understand the verb that God has given in the name of the Father, and the verb that Paul employs here.

This verb translated give, there at the beginning of the verse, is not the same verb that he then goes on to use in the second half of the verse. It's understandable the attraction of using the same verb, because then you see the argument more clearly. If he has given this, then surely he will also give this. And so, it's understandable the attraction of using the same word, but in actual fact, the apostle uses a different word at the beginning of the verse, and it's important to capture the meaning of the word he actually uses. The word that he uses, translated that he gave him up, is a word that literally means that he delivered him up. Gave him up captures the idea quite adequately, but the idea is this, that he delivered up his own Son. He delivered up his own Son. This is the sense in which God gave his own Son. He gave or delivered him up. Now, this immediately would beg the question, to what? To what was the Son delivered up? To what was the Son given up by the Father, or to whom? Now, the short answer is not hard to find. He was given up, he was delivered up to death. The Father delivered up his own Son to death.

[13 : 43] Now, before we explore this a little further, we have to be clear on something that is very clear, in what Paul is saying, but highlight just the importance of this, and that is that this is the Father's doing. It is the Father, unconstrained by any external force or party or circumstance, who determines to, and actually does, give up or deliver his own Son to death. The Father does not look on passively at this horrendous turn of events, impotent to stop what is unfolding before him.

No, he is the one, the Father is the one, who gives up his Son. It is the Father who delivers up his Son to death. None other. It is the Father who is the one who does this consciously and deliberately.

Now, under the other overarching scope of death that he was delivered up, the Son was delivered up to death, we can say more in answer to the question, to what did the Father deliver up his own Son?

It is a sense, a very real sense, in which he delivered up his Son to the powers of darkness. We're not going to refer to many other passages this morning, but just one or two at this point might be helpful. In Luke chapter 22 and in verse 53, we have Jesus' own testimony in this regard. When Jesus is arrested, and we pick up the account there in verse 53, every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me, addressing his enemies, the chief priests. But then listen to what Jesus says, but this is your hour. This is your hour when darkness reigns. This is the hour, this is your hour when I am delivered up, I am given up to the powers of darkness. He was given up also in the sense of being made sin for us. Again, if we just notice an occasion where that is explicitly mentioned and explained to us in 2 Corinthians in chapter 5, and in verse 21, we read, concerning Jesus, concerning Jesus, God made him who had no sin to be sin for us. And this is within the compass, if you wish, of this act of the Father of delivering up his Son for us. He delivered him up to be made a sin for us. And necessarily connected with that somber truth is what we also read in

Galatians 3 and verse 13, where we read of how he was given up, even if that language itself is not used, given up to being made a curse for us. Galatians 3 and verse 13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. He was delivered up. He was given up by the Father to death. He was given up to the powers of darkness, given up to being made sin for us, given up to being made a curse for us, given up to abandonment. And so he cried from Calvary's tree, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, my God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Given up, delivered up by the Father to death.

[17:16] But we also need to note what Paul goes on to say in our text. He was given up for us all. He was given up for us all. Paul does not say that God's own Son was given to us. When we think of a gift, we tend to think of it as something that is given to somebody. And that's why I'm saying we need to explore the nature of this giving. But here, Paul doesn't speak of Jesus being given to us. Now, that is true in a very real sense, but here he isn't thinking along those lines. He's saying that Jesus was given up for us. And of course, this goes to the heart of the matter, to the heart of the gospel, God's own Son dying for us and in our place. And both go together, that the Son died for us and in our place. You cannot speak of the Son's death for his people in some vague way of it providing some kind of benefit to us without recognizing that the Son's death was in the place of his people. It is because he died in our place, that it is for us, that it is to our benefit. We deserve to die. Our sin merits the judgment, the righteous anger, and the punishment of God. But God gave his own Son to die in our place.

What God has given in the past. But then, moving on, what God's gift reveals in the present. Now, I say in the present simply because we are in the present, and we need to consider in the present, in the here and now, what God's gift of his own Son tells us about God and what God is like.

And I'm going to limit myself to two big truths about God that this gift that we just noticed that Paul speaks of reveals. Two big truths. And we must begin with, if you wish, the biggest truth, and that is it reveals to us God's love. God's love for us. Again, the familiar language of John chapter 3 and verse 16 captures this truth memorably, for God so loved the world that he gave. He gave his only begotten Son. He gave his one and only Son. The giving of his Son reveals, perhaps above all else, that God is love, that God loves us. In the often quoted words of the nineteenth-century preacher, Octavius Winslow, who delivered up Jesus to die, not Judas for money, not Pilate for fear, not the Jews for envy, but the Father for love. For the Father to give up his own Son, to deliver up his own Son to death for us, is the supreme act of love. It was an act of love without precedent and beyond compare. God himself, and I would need to say, and I trust do say this reverently, will not and could not ever excel or surpass his own act of love in the giving of his own Son.

It's always a dangerous thing to say that God could not do something, but I would venture to say that this is something we can say. He could not surpass himself in this regard, in this supreme act of love, in the giving of his own Son. The Apostle John, in his first letter and in chapter 4 and in verse 10, captures this memorably. This is love. Not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. And so I would say to you this morning, if you are looking for love, if you are hungry for love, if you are thirsting for love, if you are dying for love, then look no further. Herein is love. This is love. You will find no love that even begins to compare to the depth and the quality of this love that the Father reveals in the giving of His Son.

The Father's gift reveals God's love, but the Father's gift also reveals God's justice. Why would the Father reveal His love in such a manner? So, He loves us that much, but why would He choose to demonstrate it in such a way, giving up His own Son? Why would He go to such extremes to make known and to reveal His love? Was there no other way that the Father could have revealed His love than the delivering up of His own Son? There must have been another way. But there was no other way. There was no other way because of God's justice, because of God's righteousness and integrity. God's justice demands that sin be dealt with, that sin receive its just punishment, that the fine be paid. And the only way sinners could be spared and God's justice be satisfied was by the giving up of God's sinless Son to bear upon Himself our sin and receive our punishment. At Calvary, at the cross, the love and the justice of God emite. Calvary declares to the cosmos, God is love. It announces to the universe, to worlds both visible and invisible, God is just. Now, this allows us just to briefly return to the matter of the Father not sparing His Son that I said we would return to, and to understand what that means in a clearer light. The Father not sparing His own Son. The Father could not, would not, and did not spare His own Son all that our sin deserve. The judgment of God, the cup of God's righteous anger, the punishment due for our sin, was all poured upon the Son in all its unrelieved intensity.

[24 : 21] Nothing was spared. The Father did not spare His own Son. And the Father did all this while still loving His own Son as deeply and intensely as He ever and eternally had done.

What God's gift reveals about God in the present, in the here and now, to you and me here this morning. But then thirdly, what God's gift guarantees into the future. Paul assures his readers that God has more to give. Our God is the God who keeps on giving. And in exploring this promise or assurance of what remains to be received, what God will still give us, we need to consider the what and the why of the all things that Paul mentions in the verse. Let's just read the verse again.

He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, that which He has done for us in the past, how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? This is what He has done, and this is the guarantee of what He will continue to do, the guarantee that He will give us all things from the present and into the future. And as I say, to understand this, there are these two elements.

What are the all things that Paul refers to? But perhaps even more importantly, why can Paul be so sure that they will indeed be given, that we will indeed receive that which as yet we have not received? How can he be so sure? How can he guarantee us that it is so? The what and the why. We'll begin with the why. Why can Paul be so sure that we will receive all things even though as yet we have not received them? Well, the reason he's so sure is grounded on two truths. The first one, and the most evident one from the verse, is the love of God for us. This is the immediate and the immediate and most apparent answer to the question why. Paul is arguing from the greater to the lesser. He is arguing that if God loved us so much that He gave us His own Son, the greatest gift of all, how can we doubt that He will not also give us the lesser gifts, the all things that He speaks of and that in a moment we'll try and identify. Our God is a God and He gives graciously. Indeed, the language that Paul uses there in this verse towards the end when he speaks of God graciously giving us all things is a beautiful verb that incorporates the very word grace. He graciously gives. That is what God is like. He has proven Himself as a God who gives. He has given evidence of how much He loves us in the giving of His Son, then how could we possibly even contemplate that He would fail to give us that which we have yet to receive? He's given the greater. He will surely give the lesser. Now, that is the most apparent and evident reason or argument that Paul is employing, but I think we can identify a second argument, if you wish, that guarantees that we will receive that which we have yet to receive, and that is the love of God for His own Son, the love of God the Father for His own Son, and the Father's esteem for the Son's saving work. It is the depth of the Father's love for His own Son and the esteem in which He holds the saving work of His own Son that serves as a further guarantee that what the Son secured for His people by His death will and must be given to His people.

The Father cannot contemplate that His own Son would suffer in the manner that He did only for the fruit of His sufferings to somehow be denied to those He was given up for. If the Father loves His Son as He does, how could He possibly contemplate that the Son would suffer so in order that we receive all things, and then for us not to receive all things? It cannot be. It would be to undervalue. It would be to despise the work of the Son, that that which He secured would be denied those for whom it was secured.

[29 : 09] Jesus died that we might be given all things, and so grounded in the Father's love for His own Son and the Father's esteem for His own Son's work, we can know for a certainty that we will be given all things. For God's people not to be given all things would be to imply that in some measure Jesus died in vain, and that is inconceivable. God's saving work, a work that involves the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit is a complete work. God doesn't do things by halves. If He has given His Son for us, He will also give us all that His Son has secured for us. If the Father did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up to the agony and shame of Calvary, how could He possibly fail to bring to fruition the end? The end contemplated in such sacrifice? Well, He couldn't fail to do such a thing. But there remains the matter of what are the all things. We've been speaking of these all things that are secured for us, that we will receive, but what are they? The language of all things is not to be understood in an absolute or exhaustive sense, but rather all things that pertain, that are connected to our salvation. In the context of this chapter, and we've not been giving much attention to the context of the chapter, but in the context of the chapter, this would be particularly a reference to our perseverance to the end and our unbreakable union to God and His love in Christ. This is Paul's particular concern as he writes, that the believers would be assured that they will persevere to the end, that nothing will separate them from the love of God. And he brings them that assurance in a number of ways, but one of the ways he does so is by highlighting this fact, that consider what God has already given. And if you appreciate what He's already given, you can be sure that He will give all things.

And among these all things is the assurance of your perseverance to the end of your unbreakable union to God and to His love in Christ Jesus. And notice that our enjoyment and receipt of all things is related to and contingent on our union with Christ. What does Paul say? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, along with His Son, along with Christ, graciously give us all things? And when he speaks of us receiving all things along with Him, he's not principally saying, in addition to Christ. He's not saying, well, you've received Christ.

In addition, you'll receive these other things, so that's true, but rather that we will receive all as we are united to Christ. So, the giving by the Father of His own Son for us guarantees that we will, into the future, but beginning in the present, receive all things pertaining to our salvation.

We will finish the journey. We will complete the course. The Father who gave His Son will give you all that is necessary to keep you, to hold you, to guide you, until at last you will see Him as He is, and be made like Him, and be with Him in everlasting glory. He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?

Let us pray.