

The indescribable gift of God

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! 2Co 9:15.

by Bruce Hamilton

In his letter to the church in Rome, Paul wrote, 'Now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Rom 6:22-23. In saying that the gift of God is eternal life, Paul was making a complete and comprehensive statement. The gift of God is more than just the promise of eternal life. The gift of God is the Holy Spirit.

If you take Paul's statement, 'the gift of God is eternal life', at face value, you may think that because you trust in God's word and believe in Jesus, you can simply receive eternal life as a free gift. In other words, you may think that as long as you are assured of God's mercy and forgiveness, you can simply receive eternal life as a free gift. Christ's suffering and death on the cross was not just so that you can be forgiven and reconciled through a work done

on your behalf. It was so that God could give you the gift of eternal life through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was not sent until after Jesus was glorified as the Son of God following His death, burial and resurrection. Joh 7:39. It cost God everything through Christ to give you the Holy Spirit. Nothing is greater than this. You cannot receive eternal life without the Holy Spirit.

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It is not enough to just know the message of the promise of sonship; namely, that God's purpose is for you to have eternal life as a son of God. The apostle Peter taught about the need for the Holy Spirit in his sermon on the day of Pentecost. He said, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.' Act 2:38-39. The promise is yours when you are baptised into Christ and have received the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well, He referred to the Spirit as 'living water', a 'fountain of water springing up into everlasting life'. Joh 4:10,13. He said, further, to the Pharisees and the crowd on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, that rivers of living water will flow out of the heart of the one who believes in Him. Joh 7:38. What a marvellous image – to have 'rivers of living water' flowing out of your heart! By the Spirit you have eternal life; the power to live as a son of God. Until you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you are powerless to live as a son of God.

After Christ's resurrection, He commanded His disciples to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the Promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit. Act 1:4. He told them that they would receive power when they had been baptised in and filled with the Holy Spirit. Act 1:8. Likewise, you must also be baptised and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of your inheritance. Eph 1:13-14.

God establishes you in Christ along with others in a fellowship, and He seals you and gives you the Spirit in your heart as a guarantee. 2Co 1:21-22. When you have the Holy Spirit, He gives you the capacity to live as a son of God. The gift that God gives you is the Holy Spirit, and it is through Him that you are able to receive eternal life. It is through His power that you can live as the unique son of God that you are predestined to be. 1Co 7:7. The Holy Spirit enables you to live and walk as a son of God. Without the Holy Spirit, you do not have eternal life because, without the Spirit, you cannot live as a son of God. The enabling power of the Holy Spirit cannot be bought, or earned through your good works. Act 18:14-23. The apostle Paul said that it is 'by

grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast'. Eph 2:8-9.

When you have the Holy Spirit and follow His lead, then you are a son of God. Rom 8:14. Remember also that the Holy Spirit is only made available to you when you are in Christ.

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Christ Jesus our Lord lived on earth as a man in the weakness of human flesh. Heb 2:17-18. He lived by the power of the Spirit of God. He pioneered the path of your life. The Spirit now leads you on this path and strengthens and equips you for righteousness. Righteousness is simply you willing to do and doing the will of God by the power of His Spirit.

Eternal life is yours only when you have the Holy Spirit, who is the gift of God. He has come to lead you and give you power to live. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! 2Co 9:15. ■

