

The Secret To Living a Full Life

Ecclesiastes

It is possible to live a full life and be completely empty. That is the story of countless people in our world. Some of you are going to identify with this story. You might say, “I tried this; I tried that and didn’t really have fulfillment,” because if God is absent in your life, those things are empty. God is the only one who brings perspective and value and purpose and meaning. And when He’s not in the equation, you can have it all and accomplish it all and be as empty as empty can be. Solomon’s story is a wake-up call for some and a reminder to others of the importance of having God at the center of your life.

Ecclesiastes means “the one who calls together the church, the one who calls together the assembly, the ekklesia.” Ecclesiastes is the pastor or the teacher.

“The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem: Meaningless! Meaningless! says the Teacher. Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless. What do people gain from all their labor at which they toil under the sun? Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again. All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing. What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one can say, ‘Look! This is something new?’ It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time. No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow.” Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

Solomon wrote three books of the Bible: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. And those three books are arranged in that order in our Bibles—Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon or Song of Songs—but they are not really in the order in which they were written.

Most Bible scholars believe that Solomon wrote Proverbs early in his life, giving all this wisdom while he was still young, and he wrote Ecclesiastes at the end of his life, and he wrote Song of Songs or Song of Solomon in the middle of his life. When you look at how Ecclesiastes unfolds, you’ll notice that this is basically a guy who’s looking at life in the rearview mirror, and he’s writing with a lot of regret. He’s looking at his life and the conditions of his life. He’s looking at the fruit of his life, and he’s looking at his life experiences—life successes, life challenges, randomness—all these various aspects of life. He’s looking at life in the rearview mirror, and when he writes Ecclesiastes, he’s basically going to say, “I’ve been there, done that, got the T-shirt, and yet I was empty. I lived life to the fullest, and yet I was empty.”

This is the diary of thousands of people—people who have lived life to the fullest, and yet get to some point in their life that they realize, “I’ve done all this, I’ve experienced all this, I’ve accomplished all this—why do I feel so empty?”

Solomon is the king of Israel. He follows the succession from his father King David. Why, of all people, would King Solomon write like this at the end of his life? He is disillusioned with life, jaded and cynical about life. There’s a background story that we can never fully appreciate Ecclesiastes unless we first understand the life of Solomon leading up to why he writes the way he does in this final book of his life.

There are two general ways to interpret the book of Ecclesiastes. Bible scholars are divided about which view is the right lens to look through in understanding and interpreting the book of Ecclesiastes.

The first idea is that Solomon wrote this venting. He is disappointed in the outcome of his life, and he’s disappointed with God in the process. He’s venting about how life has been random, unpredictable, disappointing, and frustrating. Even though he has been very successful and very wealthy, he is frustrated at the way life has made him feel. He is empty and unfulfilled in spite of all his success.

The other viewpoint is that he's not venting; he's warning. He's saying, "Learn from my life and all the mistakes and bad choices I made." It didn't go well for me despite the fact that I have experienced tremendous success, made a lot of money, had a lot of women, and had a lot of things. He is warning because he doesn't want anyone else to go down that path. He wants us to learn from him and his mistakes.

At the very end of chapter 12, he summarizes what he has come to realize. Because of the wonderful conclusion, he comes all the way full circle to come back to God. He expresses all of the other stuff to help us understand so we don't go the path he went down. You have to endure eleven and a half chapters of Solomon sounding like Eeyore in the Hundred Acre Wood. He's brutally honest. Even though he's experienced everything to its fullest, he is completely frustrated by life, and he writes about that frustration. This book really expresses the sentiment of a lot of people. But he came to realize at the end of his life that God was with him, and life is about what you chose to fill up your life with.

"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them.'" Ecclesiastes 12:1

"Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind." Ecclesiastes 12:13

- The Practical Challenge of the Book

Solomon didn't question whether God existed. He was not an atheist. Solomon's question was whether God mattered. That's what a lot of people wonder. They believe life is unpredictable and random things happen. They try to do the best they can and honor God, and yet life unravel and bad things happen. Life has twists and turns and difficulties, challenges, and heartaches, and they wonder, does it even matter that we follow God?

This is a very thought-provoking book, because Solomon lays out the realities of life and how he lived his life and the things that he's experienced. He expresses some of his frustrations about life and God. This book is very practical, because it's going to touch some of us right where we have been wondering similar things.

We ask sometimes, "If God is so good, why has this happened, and why did that happen? I tried to do my best, and still this resulted. If these things are going to happen and life is unpredictable and there are no guarantees in life, why should I follow God, and why should He be a part of the equation of my life?" This is how Solomon expresses himself near the end of his life.

How did Solomon get to that place? What's the backstory to a guy who was one of the most powerful men on earth at the time that he lived—about 900 BC—to the place where he's writing like this? I mean, the opening dialogue is, "Meaningless! Meaningless! Everything is meaningless." There are eight times in the book of Ecclesiastes Solomon uses the word "meaningless" or "empty" or "vanity."

How did Solomon end up in this bad place? He started out really well, but then his life tanked. Here's how he started. In 1 Kings chapter 2, Solomon becomes king of Israel after his father King David dies. Josephus, the 1st-century Jewish historian, said he was 14 years old.

His father, King David had last words for Solomon in 1 Kings 2:1-3,

"When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son. 'I am about to go the way of all the earth,' he said. 'So be strong, act like a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go.'"

Then in 1 Kings chapter 3, God appears to Solomon in a dream,

"At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, 'Ask for whatever you want me to give you.' Solomon answered, Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David.

But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life." 1 Kings 3:5-15

This passage reminds us to be careful what we ask for. There is a story about an older couple that was taking a stroll on the beach together, and they stumbled upon a little bottle. And they pulled the cap off the bottle, and out came a genie. The genie looked at the couple and said, "You each get one wish. Ladies first." The wife said, "My one wish is that I'd get to spend the rest of my life with my hubby on a deserted tropical island, just the two of us." And, poof, in that moment they were both on this beautiful deserted tropical island. And then the genie turns to the husband and says: "All right, now it's your turn." And he says: "Well, seeing as how we're both 60 years of age, and now that we're alone on this tropical island just the two of us, my wish would be that my wife would be 30 years younger." And poof, he instantly became 90 years old. Be careful what you wish for.

Solomon asked for wisdom and discernment. God was so impressed by what he asked, God said, "*Because you did not ask for long life, riches, or the death of your enemies, I will give you the wisdom and discernment you're asking for as well as riches and long life*" 1 Kings 3:13.

Solomon is a blessed man, and he has wisdom beyond his years. But God can give you something, and you squander it. Solomon squandered it. He didn't apply his own wisdom that he received from God. A guy who wrote the book of Proverbs didn't even heed his own advice, and he squandered what God had given to him.

- Solomon's Downfall

In 1 Kings 3 tells us he formed a political alliance with the Pharaoh of Egypt, and to seal the deal, he marries the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt.

"Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the Lord, and the wall around Jerusalem. The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the Lord. Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places." 1 Kings 3:1-3

He didn't trust God to keep peace, and so he had to form this political alliance, and because he marries a woman who was a pagan worshiper—she worshiped the gods of the Egyptians. The Jews had been delivered from the slavery of Egypt. They had forsaken those false gods. He formed different political alliances with all the neighboring nations by marrying the royal daughters of the kings of those neighboring nations. He had 700 wives and 300 maidservants.

Because he married these women who were worshipers of false gods, they brought this false god influence into his home and into the nation. He let them into his heart, and it corrupted the whole nation. The Bible says that Solomon turned his heart away from the Lord and started worshiping the gods of the foreign wives that he brought into his home.

Ecclesiastes teaches us that life apart from God is pretty empty! No matter how much we see, it never satisfies. No matter how much we have, it is never enough. No matter how much we do, it is never fulfilling.

Solomon had the world at his feet . . . but nothing ever satisfied him.

- He was unsurpassed in education and knowledge. Ecclesiastes 1:16

- He was unbridled in his ability and desire to pursue and find pleasure. Ecclesiastes 2:3
- He was in the peak of worldly fame, popularity and prominence. Ecclesiastes 2:4-6
- He possessed uncountable wealth. Ecclesiastes 2:8

1. Solomon's Pursuits Left Him Empty.

Things he chased after:

- Knowledge and Human Philosophy

Solomon maxed out his intellectual capacity to understand the world, only to find that deep knowledge increases grief. Knowledge can never produce peace in our lives.

"I applied my mind to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under the heavens. I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind." Ecclesiastes 1:13-14

Paul tells us in Romans 1:22 that seeking wisdom and knowledge without God leads only to emptiness and foolish ideas. Much of the moral decline in our society can be traced to the academic culture of the 1960's that rejected Christian principles and attacked absolute truth. You may be the smartest kid on the block, but if you leave God out of the equation, you are making a foolish choice.

The Psalmist David, Solomon's father reminds us, *"The fool says in his heart, there is no God."* Psalm 14:1

- Pleasure

"I said to myself, 'Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.' But that also proved to be meaningless." Ecclesiastes 2:1

He attempted to medicate his mind and body with stimulation to lighten his worries and find joy. Indulging in alcohol and feeding the flesh. Pleasure is okay, but it can't cure the emptiness of life. Pleasure lived to the glory of God is worthwhile. The chase for pure pleasure is empty and leads to death.

"But the one who gives themselves to wanton pleasure is dead even while they live." 1 Timothy 5:6

While you wait between the moments of pleasure, you realize that it is just not fulfilling.

The Rolling Stones, Keith Richards and Mick Jagger, wrote the lyrics to one of their most popular songs by the pool at the Clearwater hotel that lamented the endless searching and hopelessness they felt from possessions, popularity and sexual frustration in life.

"I can't get no satisfaction. I can't get no satisfaction. I try and I try and I try, I can't get no, I can't get no satisfaction."
– Rolling Stones

The things that bring us the greatest pleasure have the potential to destroy us the most. Pleasure does not give us the bill up front. The person who lives for pleasure ends up enjoying life the least. Pleasure can never produce satisfaction in our lives.

- Laughter

Through laughter, Solomon sought an escape from the pressures and unhappiness of the day. There is no lasting happiness apart from God.

“I said of laughter, ‘It is madness;’ and of mirth, ‘What does it accomplish?’” Ecclesiastes 2:2

“A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.” Proverbs 17:22

How many high-profile downfalls—like those of Britney Spears, Anna Nicole Smith, and Lindsay Lohan—will it take to convince us that fame and wealth alone cannot buy happiness?

- Alcohol

“I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives.” Ecclesiastes 2:3

- Entertainment and Arts

He surrounded himself with culture, hired top musicians, vocalists and entertainers to provide endless entertainment.

“I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man.” Ecclesiastes 2:8

2. Solomon’s Possessions Never Satisfied.

He had so much silver that 1 Kings chapter 10 says that silver was as prevalent as stones in Israel, and it became worthless. He had flooded the market with so much silver that it became worthless. The Bible talks about how he turns to gold. 1 Kings 10 says. *“All King Solomon’s goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold.”* Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon’s days. The king had a fleet of trading ships at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes, baboons and other wild animals. He’s living the Jungle Book story.

King Solomon was the wealthiest man of his era, boasting an estimated annual income exceeding \$20 million. By comparison, modern billionaires like Elon Musk hold a net worth of over \$800 billion—enough to hand a \$100 bill to every person on Earth. To liquidate and distribute that vast fortune, Musk would need to give away \$45 million every day for the next 50 years. Yet, when adjusted for his time, Solomon’s historical wealth and vast resources far eclipsed even Musk's modern fortune.

He could go anywhere he wanted, buy anything he wanted, and he could do anything he wanted.

Things he chased after:

- Homes

Solomon was a master architect, designer, builder, and entrepreneur. He was very successful. He had all the wealth, wine, and women that you could possibly imagine. He had accomplished everything and accumulated so much. And yet he gets to the end of his life and realizes just how empty he is. He’s built so much; he’s bought so much; he has married so much. He has so much. He looks around at all that he has because he thought that, “If I just accomplished this, accumulate this, do all of this other stuff, I’d be happy; I’d be fulfilled; and life would be good.”

“I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house.” Ecclesiastes 2:4-7

- Wealth and Material Possessions

He accumulated vast amounts of silver, gold, property, and slaves, becoming wealthier than anyone before him. Amassed extreme riches, livestock, treasures, and personal property.

I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man's heart. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure.” Ecclesiastes 2:7-10

- Hard Work and Labor

He threw himself into intense labor and career achievements, taking pride in his massive productivity. Finding satisfaction in the sheer output of his daily work and accomplishments.

“My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 2:10-11

- Solomon's Small Disobedience Cost Him Everything.

“The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, ‘You are not to go back that way again.’ He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.” Deuteronomy 17:16-17

God was saying, “Don't rely on horses. Don't rely on your own strength.”

“Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt. They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.” 1 Kings 10:26-29

He came to the conclusion that pleasure and possessions are never enough to stop your soul from craving. What our souls crave, stuff can never satisfy. You have no control over the timing of life.

“So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish? Yet they will have control over all the fruit of my toil into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. For a person may labor with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labor under the sun? All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless.” Ecclesiastes 2:17-23

U2 lead singer, Bono wrote the lyrics to his 1987 #1 hit from his fascination with Gospel music, which he frequently speaks about. But there is grief in his lyrics.

“I have climbed highest mountains, I have run through the fields, Only to be with you.

I have run, I have crawled, I have scaled these city walls,

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.”

- Bono, U2

If we don't connect with The One who created us and designed our life, this will tear us apart.

Where do we find satisfaction and happiness in our lives?

One of the biggest lies that we tell ourselves today is that more is better. Whatever you have, if you have one, two is better. More is always better, and this reflects the lie that the serpent told Adam and Eve all the way back in Genesis, in the Garden of Eden. In the story when God created Adam and said, “It's not good for you to be alone,” He created

Eve. Adam called her “woman.” They were naked and in love and enjoying the garden, and God said, “You can eat from any tree in the garden except for one. You can't eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” And the serpent came along and said, “Did God really say you can't eat from that one? Because if you eat from the one that He said you can't eat from, if you have what He said you can't have, then you'll be like God.” Essentially, the message from the serpent back then is the same message we hear over and over again today. “What you don't have is what you need to be happy, to be fulfilled, and to be content.”

Every marketing message, everything you see on social media, every time you turn the television on, that's the message: “What you don't have is what you need to be happy, to be fulfilled, and to be content.” Why? Because more is always better. What do you need to be happy? You need more money, you need more toys, you need more shoes, more purses, more watches, more muscles. You need more square footage, you need more travel, you need more likes, you need more followers, you need more hair.

You need more because more is always better. And I would ask you the question, “What if the stuff you have is keeping you from the life that you want?”

Three words will change your life. “I have enough.”

3. God's Promise Of Fulfillment

Psalm 23 tells us, “The Lord is my shepherd and I have all that I need.” The Lord is my shepherd. I have enough. Pray this prayer, “Lord, give me less of what doesn't matter and give me more of what does matter.”

What if you prayed that consistently? What if you really desired that? It'd be very, very counter-cultural, but it would be very, very true to what Jesus teaches in the Gospel.

Jesus tells us, “Don't store up stuff that doesn't last.” For most of us, it is a goal to accumulate. What do we want? We want bigger bank balances. Why? Because most of us put our security in money. We want a new outfit. Why? Different reasons. But many people feel empty on the inside, so they need some external validation to make feel better because they're empty on the inside. Someone may want to remodel their kitchen for the third time in three years. Why? Maybe because their marriage isn't good, and they don't want to face it. What does it mean to have less of what doesn't matter? If you want less of what doesn't matter.

We walk in your closet, there's clothes everywhere, you touch them all and you say, “I've got nothing to wear.” How does that happen? You have so much stuff there that it doesn't fit in your closet. So you put it in your attic and then you put it in your closet. Some of you have so much stuff in your garage and in your closet and you don't have enough room for your stuff, so you rent an additional place to put your stuff. And Jesus says, “Don't accumulate stuff.”

What if the stuff you have is robbing you from the life you want?

For some of us, it's our stuff. Don't let stuff weigh you down.

For some of us, it's our schedule. You are so busy, you don't have time for Jesus. You're here and there, you got more on your to-do list.

Pray, “Lord, give me less of what doesn't matter and give me more of what does matter.”

Ecclesiastes 4:6 says, “*Better one handful with tranquility or with peace Than two handfuls with toil and a chasing after the wind.*”

Most of us aren't content with one handful. We want two handfuls. He's telling us that one handful is better. Why is one handful better? Because you have a free hand. If you have a free hand, you can help someone around you. You

can hug someone, and give to someone, and encourage someone. You can high five, knuckle bump, and give a pat on the back. You can give to God. You can surrender.

If you have two hands that are full, what do you have? You have toil. More is not better. Better is one handful without having to fix stuff all the time. Better is one handful without the debt that's weighing you down. Better is one handful than pursuing things that don't last when your marriage is struggling. Better is one handful and time with your kids, instead of pouring your life into other things. Better is one handful.

We would be really wise to define what does matter.

Some of you would say, my relationship with God matters or my relationship with my spouse matters or my relationship with my children matter. Some of you would say making a difference matters. Some of you would say that my church matters to me and to this world. Some of you would say ministry matters. Showing God's love matters. Some of you would say my sobriety matters. Some of you would say my loved ones knowing Christ matters. If you knew you only had a few days to live, an apple watch wouldn't matter. New countertops wouldn't matter. A new 65-inch flat screen TV will not bring you closer to Jesus.

There is not a single situation that any of you listening to this message right now that this truth does not apply to. *"In any and every situation, I've learned the secret of being content, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do this. I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."* Philippians 4:11-13

Paul says, "Jesus gives me contentment, Jesus gives me strength." Paul would say, "Because I have Jesus, I have enough. When I'm well fed, I have Jesus. But if I'm hungry, I still have Jesus. If I have abundance, I still have Jesus. If I'm in want, I still have Jesus. Because I have Jesus, I have enough."

We may say, "I have Jesus, but I still want more." Why? Because Jesus is in the background of our life. Because our life is so full of everything else, that there's not room for Jesus with all the other stuff. Jesus is in the background right now, and when He is in the background, He's easy to miss. He's easy to ignore. He's easy to forget. But when He's in the front of our life, when we're seeking Him first, when we're pursuing Him, seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, then everything that matters will be added unto you. Not more of what doesn't matter, less of what doesn't matter, and more of what does. When you put Jesus in the forefront of your life, He's not a historical figure, not a Sunday school lesson. He's your closest friend. He is a counselor that guides your very steps. He is the bread of life that nourishes you. He's your confidant, He is your comforter. When you put Him first, something starts to change, and you understand what Paul said, "It doesn't matter what I have or don't have, I have Jesus, therefore I have all that I need." I'm going to try to tell you this and I hope you believe it.

Paul said, *"I've learned the secret of being content. I can do all things through Christ." He's everything. Because I have Jesus, I have enough. If I'm sick, He is my healer. If I'm hurting, He is my comforter. If I'm sad He is my joy. If I sin, He is my savior.*

Our life is too valuable and our calling too great to waste our life on things that don't last. Because I have Jesus, I have enough. Because I have Jesus, I am enough.

For those who spent their whole life looking for something, maybe you thought you'd find it in more money, but you didn't. You thought you'd find it in a better job, but you didn't find it there. You thought you'd find it in a better experience, but you couldn't find it there. You're searching for something that you will not find in this world. You are not of this world. You're created by God, for God to know God. You have an eternal void inside.

In John 7, Jesus was moved because the people had come to worship at the festival in the Temple but they were leaving unchanged and simply going through the motions.

Four verbs in John 7:38-39 make the promise of fulfillment possible: "thirst, come, drink, and flow."

“On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.” John 7:38-40

“Whoever wishes” This speaks to anyone who is willing to come to Jesus. Are you a candidate for this invitation? Are you thirsty? Are you willing to come to Jesus? If so, you can be saved, if you will come!

The word *“freely”* means *“a gift.”* It refers to *“a gift that is given to someone without reason. It speaks of something that is given just because the giver can give it.”*

Salvation is given as a free gift because Jesus has already paid the entire bill. Salvation may be free for us, but God paid a high price to achieve it. When Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood, He forever satisfied God’s demands regarding sin, 1 John 2:2. He paid the price for sin, and now, there is nothing for the lost sinner to do but accept the invitation and come to Jesus. I praise God that salvation is a free gift!

- The Gift Of The Water Is Free.

The only condition is you must meet is: need. *“If anyone thirsts.”*

The action you must take is: drink. *“come to me and drink”*

- Receive the gift!

The human soul has thirst. Jesus is not talking about physical thirst. He is saying is that the soul has something like physical thirst. When you go without water your body gets thirsty. When your soul is without God, it gets thirsty. Your body was made to live on water. Your soul was made to live on God. Jesus’ offer is satisfying. Come to Jesus to drink for your soul’s satisfaction.

“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” John 7:38

“Out of his belly” This represents our inner being. You don’t just get a single drink, but you get a spring of water, a fountain, a well.

Rivers of water will flow because the River-Maker is in you. You will never again have to search for a source of satisfaction for your soul.

“Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” John 7:39

“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” John 14:16-17

What Does The Filling Of The Spirit Accomplish?

- Our Fears Are Taken Away.

“Fear not, O Jacob, my servant.” Isaiah 44:1

When we are drenched with the Spirit, we are drenched with His assurance.

- Our Longings Are Satisfied.

"I will pour water on the thirsty (land)." Isaiah 44:4

The word "land" is not in the original *"I will pour water on him that is thirsty."* When the Holy Spirit is poured out, the soul's thirst for God is quenched. If the Spirit has taken away what is fearful out of our future and put what is soul-satisfying into our future, then He has given to us the full assurance of *hope*.

"By the power of the Holy Spirit we abound in hope." Romans 15:13

- We Will Flourish.

"Will spring up among grass like willows by flowing streams." Isaiah 44:4

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is not supposed to be a one-time experience, but should be continual. In your life right now you might be surrounded by desert, but if your roots are in the stream of the Spirit, you will always flourish.

- We Will Overflow in Love.

"The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire with good things, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." Isaiah 58:11

"God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." Romans 5:5

The promise is that we will be springs, not sponges. The human heart cannot be satisfied until it becomes a spring from which others can drink. It's not an accident that in Psalm 1 the tree planted by streams of water brings forth fruit, and the tree planted by streams of water in Isaiah 44 is a picture of the person who has experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit takes away fear, nourishes hope, fills with joy, overflows in love, and glorifies God.

"Let him take the water of life..."

The phrase *"water of life"* refers to the Gospel message. The Gospel message is a clear, simple message. It is articulated in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. The Gospel message is this: God loved lost sinners so much that He sent His Son Jesus into this world. Jesus went to the cross and died in the place of sinners. He was innocent, but He died for the guilty, 2 Corinthians 5:21. His death on the cross paid the price for sin and forever satisfied God. After He died, He was buried. Three days later Jesus rose again from the dead. Then, He ascended back into Heaven, where He lives today to receive and save all those who receive the message of God.

When this message is preached, the Spirit of God creates a desire within the hearts of lost people to come to Jesus. All those who will come to Jesus and receive the *"water of life"* will be saved. Here is what must happen for the lost sinner to come to Jesus, Romans 10:9,13. If that takes place, salvation will always be the result!

Have you received the gift? Have you drunk deeply of the *"water of life"*? God gave everything He had to save your soul. Have you received His gift for your soul's salvation?

We've all sinned. That's what Adam and Eve did in the garden. They sinned against God. Our sin separates us from God. If we believe the lie that more is always better, pursuing the things of this world, we're going to end up getting lost. You cannot love God and love this world. We have to let go of this world.

We grab onto Jesus. He is the Son of God, perfect in every way. He was without sin, and He died on a cross. God raised Him from the dead so that anyone, and this includes all who call on His name, will have our sins forgiven, and we will be made brand new.

You may have to let go of something in this world to grab ahold of Jesus. Let go of your sin. Step away from your sin. Step away from whatever you're holding onto. Let go of whatever's holding you back. And by faith, say, "Jesus, You are enough." How are you made right with God? Not by your good works.

He came to give you abundant life. Step away from your old life. Surrender to Him. Let go of whatever holds you back and say, "Jesus, I give my life to you."