

# GBC Connection

Complete this sentence: “And this is eternal life, that they may  
” Any guesses? The answer is below. But first, a story!...

On an exceptionally warm spring day, in a small chapel auditorium filled to capacity with family and friends, I stood shaking like leaf and uttered these words to my beautiful bride: “Today, I give you, me.” And Leanne replied in kind. On May 10, 2003 Leanne and I exchanged our wedding vows which concluded on this very point: that the greatest gift we had to offer each other was ourselves.

Imagine how unsettling our vows may have been if their climax went something like this: “Today, at last, I am doing away with loneliness,” or “Today I give you a sexual partner,” or “Today, I give you my friendship,” or “Today, I give you a partner for parenting,” or “Today, I give you the fulfillment of a long-dreamed for wedding day.” While, there are many benefits that come with marriage which are good and pleasant, really all such things fall short of the great prize of matrimony – the gift of the bride and groom to each other. Good wedding vows ought to reflect the real prize of the marriage – that being the gain of the *person* with whom you are joined. The bride is the great prize for the groom, and he the true gift to her.

The same can be said of the gospel – the ultimate blessing of the gospel is not salvation from judgment or hell, nor is it belonging to the community of believers, or assurance of heaven – no, truly the great prize of the gospel is God Himself.

In recent weeks we have seen that because of our sin we are enemies of God and stand condemned, under His wrath which is to come with finality and forever on the judgment day (John 3:18, 36). Even still, God has done a great thing in Jesus, sending Him to die in our place, and offers us to us the gift of salvation. On the cross, Jesus endured the wrath of God in our place and in so doing he is our *propitiation* – He has satisfied God’s anger against us (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 4:10) – and our *redeemer*, paying the ransom price to free us from our plight. (Romans 3:21-26) And we receive all of this by faith – “believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31) This believing is trusting in Christ, knowing that His death and resurrection from the dead is all the work needed to make things right between myself and God. When we trust in Him, God justifies us – he forgives us for our sins, and counts us righteous in His sight. (Rom. 1:17, 3:21-24) This is the gospel – oh, what good news!

What must not be overlooked is the gospel’s greatest good: we get God. The Apostle Peter writes, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might *bring us to God*.” (1 Peter 3:18 ESV) See also the great longing and joy expressed in these verses: Job

19:25-27; Psalm 26:8; 27:4, 8; 84:10; Phil. 3:8-10; 2 Cor. 4:4-6. John Piper, who has written a whole book on this subject, describes it well this way:

...all the saving events and all the saving blessings of the gospel are means of getting obstacles out of the way so that we might know and enjoy God most fully. Propitiation, redemption, forgiveness, imputation [of righteousness], sanctification, liberation, healing, heaven – none of these is good news except for one reason: they bring us to God for our everlasting enjoyment of Him.<sup>1</sup>

So, can you fill in the blank yet? Jesus said, “And this is eternal life, that they may *know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*” (John 17:3 ESV) This is what it’s all about: *knowing* our God – knowing *Him*.

## Making the Connection

Believe me when I say that I find it a wonderful comfort to know that there is a forever home for me with God and that because of Jesus I need not fear death, or judgment, or an eternity in hell. Through faith – and faith alone – in Christ, I am saved. This is huge!

But far too often we stop there, don’t we. We tend to forget that, in Christ, our greatest gain is God. Just as I would diminish the significance of my wedding by fixating on all that Leanne gives me in our marriage as opposed to cherishing her, so also we really miss the greatness of what we have if we lose sight of the best part of the gospel – God Himself.

It is a wearying life if our walk consists of knowing much about God and His benefits, but never *knowing* Him. It is tiring because it falls short of God’s will for us and His design, and we don’t enjoy the great prize.

## Taking Action

In 2010 this is my aim: with open Bible and a watchful eye to all that He has made, and anticipation of seeing Him at work in and around me, I ask of Him this one thing: “Oh God, that I would know you!” That is how I am taking action on this. What about you?

If you share this longing, then consider today setting out plan that will work for you to read the New Testament, or the entire Bible this year and to do so with a singular purpose: to see God and know Him. If you believe that the best part of the Gospel is knowing God, then let that faith produce in you a renewed pursuit of Him.

If you have been taking in information and knowing facts, but have not been seeking and enjoying Him, then 1) ask God to show Himself to you, 2) draw you near into great intimacy with Him through His Word, and 3) let your heart be amazed and captivated by Him. If we don’t know Him, then the great goal of the gospel waits to be experienced!

- Ross Kearney

**Suggested Reading: Make a plan daily Bible reading in 2010...and get started!**

---

<sup>1</sup> John Piper, *God is the Gospel: Meditations on God’s Love as the Gift of Himself* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005) 47.