

# The Best Gifts

by Bill McLeod

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of love as the greatest gift and the foundation of all spiritual gifts, and encourages listeners to choose to love others and seek to be filled with the love of God.*

**Duration:** 46:17

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 5:5, Ephesians 3:13, Philippians 4:13

**Topics:** "Gifts"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by describing a line of people waiting to come to Canada in search of a better life. He emphasizes the importance of contentment and kindness, urging listeners to help those in need. The speaker shares a personal story about finding a \$20 bill and how obeying God's prompting led to a powerful spiritual experience. He concludes by highlighting the significance of love, stating that even if one possesses great gifts and knowledge, without love, it is meaningless.

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## Transcript

I would like to read from Ephesians 3, beginning at verse 13. Wherefore, I desire that you faint not of my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now, unto Him that is able to do exceeding, abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, unto Him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation with which you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

Galatians 5.13 says, By love serve one another. I connect that with 1 John 3, where we read this, that God gave Himself for us. Hereby we perceive the love of God because, because what? Because He gave Himself for us, and we are to give ourselves for the brethren.

By love serve one another. Alright. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, we have a list of nine gifts of the Spirit.

People say eight. Well, yeah, eight, but then later on in the same chapter, it talks about the gift of interpreting. So there's nine.

And then we have nine references to love in the next chapter, chapter 13. And there, I don't know why they put a chapter division in there. They belong together.

Verse 31, chapter 12. Earnestly, the best gifts. Now some people say all the gifts are good.

There's no such thing as best gifts. Well, don't argue with God. He said, covet earnestly the best gifts.

So some people want to have a gift. They'll give them some notoriety, be on a platform and do stuff. They don't like to be behind the curtains doing things that nobody hears about.

Now here in this list here, he's talking about pretty well, not all, but pretty well all the gifts. However, in Ephesians 4, he's talking strictly about preaching and teaching gifts. Nothing about miracles or these other things.

He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. But here he says, as we know in the last verse, And yet, I show unto you a far better way. What is the far better way? Or the more excellent way? What is it? You know, the chapter 13, 1 Corinthians.

Even people who don't believe the Bible, they all agree it's one of the greatest chapters ever written. Nothing like it in literature elsewhere. So though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, I am not a lover.

What have I become? I've become just a clanging gong or a clashing cymbal. Just, well, just a big noise. That's all.

No matter how I speak and how people are influenced or affected. If I don't have the love of God, And we mentioned, I think, in one of the sessions, in the Minor Prophets. He talks about, I guess, you know, kneeling at the bed prayer.

He called it out. I think it's in Jeremiah, it says, Remember a preacher's daughter and she was just annoying. She finally confessed that.

Nobody said anything. That I was in a church in Detroit. And she was always saying things as they are.

So, clanging gong, clashing cymbal, no. Though I have the gift of prophecy, Doing things, not. For a long time, I was in a church.

And there was standing one on each end of the platform. My song really was not. Things happen and I take credit for them.

God hates us, the Bible kills us when we get into that kind of stuff. Though I've used all my goods to feed the poor. Hey, that's a big deal, right? Half my money to poor people.

Isn't that great? No, you're wasting your money, brother, sister. That's what it said. Though I give my body to be burned.

You know, in the days when people were being burned. I remember reading of cases where the fuck. You don't get them that way.

If you're persecuted in one city, you're supposed to stay alive as long as you can. I don't have. It never seeks its own.

It's always seeking other people's welfare. Doing what they can do to help others. Help others financially, otherwise.

You know, many times we, The day I was leaving, I was putting on my jacket. And it was more than I'd actually given. You see, like Laterno said.

God shoveled in, I shoveled out. He had the bigger shovel. And that's how it is.

If you have pity on the poor, Don't you think God knows what it is? You'll get more than you get. So we give. It's a joy to give.

But to do it without thinking. Seeks not her own. By love? Serve.

On none. You ever hear Wilberforce? In England? He was the man who lived for 28 years as a politician. To get slavery abolished in the British Empire.

And finally it happened. See, for years, he'd get enough guys. And so, but finally, Now he was an ugly person.

You know why? He always flitted around. Any time there was nothing, He was so full of the spirit of God. Woodfield, He had a tremendous gift of elegance.

And if it was known, He used to speak, Out in the open air somewhere. Everything closed. Schools closed.

Stores closed. People came out of the fields. And they'd be just, He could be heard in a mile.

He said, His unparalleled, His complete, Many times when he was, Waiting to be, To do this, Let no man glory and man fall. He died. And this young man said, He said, In the middle of the night, Cried to God for souls.

Lyman, Cried to God for mercy on the sins. By love, Sir, Andrew Murray, Was known, There's a book about him by Cho, A Chinese woman. And I copied out, The prayer he once prayed.

I'll read it to you. Make me empty, And fill me full, Full to overflow, So then the weary world may see and drink, Full of your love to me, Full of love to you, Full of love to other people, Filled with loving kindness to everybody. This is his prayer.

He was used the way he was used because, He was filled with the love of God. That flowed through him and served him. Moody, He had the biggest Sunday school in Chicago at the time.

And two elderly ladies, Wesley and Methodist, Showed up in his meeting. Sunday school. Or was it in the church? I'm not sure.

Anyway, they showed up. And he noted that when he was preaching, They were praying. They weren't listening.

This bugged him, you know. So finally he asked them, Why are you praying when you should be listening to the sun? Others said, You don't have the power. Don't you know I've got the biggest Sunday school in Chicago? And they got through to him.

This went on for six months. And one day, Walking down the street in Chicago, It happened. He was so filled with the love of God, The spirit of God, He could take the whole world.

He ran to a friend's house. He asked, Could I have a room for maybe a day or two? He was absolutely overwhelmed. I asked God, We'd have never heard of Guadalupe in England.

I knew Bradshaw. They heard, They knew Moody was coming on a box. When it was finished, One of the things he said was this, If you want to play around and have fun, Do it at 4 o'clock, But not with my God.

They gave him an invitation, And a thousand atheists came forward to get saved. It was their only time. Charles Finney, He was a lawyer, Close to 30 years of age.

He attended a super Calvinistic church. And he used to argue with the pastor. He said, You people are praying in your prayer meetings.

He attended the prayer meetings, Although he wasn't a Christian. And he said, You're praying. And he engaged the pastor with a lot of... But one day, He came under conviction.

He walked out with... He got out to run as easy as he could. He said, The heavens were... And then apparently, A wind blew some of the... He said, As he got up, He went back to his office. He received this mighty... Baptism of the Spirit.

He said, I fell... Listen carefully. And went on for hours. Got into bed.

The next day, Every person he talked to was converted. Not long after that, He had married, you know. And he left his wife.

He gets to this village. And the pastor recognized him. He never got home for six weeks.

He just knew everything was okay. A half a million people found Christ with their souls. Who else could walk into a... How did that happen? He goes in there.

And then people couldn't work. And they stopped working. Gigantic... Wings of love.

Did you ever hear of J.B. Earle? We'd have never heard of J.B. Earle, But for something that happened. He was an evangelist. He preached in Canada a few times, Way back in those days.

And, uh... He was getting known for his evangelism. People would walk the aisles, But nobody... He just about gave up on it. And finally... You know, I often... Yes, gospel.

By love. You know, When Paul prayed about this in the Feast, He didn't say rooted and grounded. But he said rooted and grounded in love.

And something a Christian should... Do you remember why he said that? Then in the spring, Call in your neighbor, And you invite them to these meetings. You have an opportunity. One time we found a \$20 bill.

So we left them our phone number In case somebody came back. And we pitched. So he phoned us.

And he goes, I managed to work Because I changed my back wheels. And so, I come along, And here's a guy, And so, He didn't want me to do this. He had kind of wasted a lot of time.

You don't have to... Hooked on, I had a chain. And, First thing that happened was, Let all your things be done with love. Love is the... In these ways.

He had a saying, Praising God... Spurgeon had it. Praising God with all my might. In the sea, Self is drowned, And I am free.

So walk in love. Walking in... The Bible speaks in Romans 15, God has not given you A spirit of fear, And of a sound mind. We have that.

That's the spirit, Who lives within us. You know, It takes a lot more energy, To keep the spirit down, Than to let it go. Sometimes we're... We're saying, No, no, no.

And we're putting the spirit down. And I say again, It takes more energy to do that. The eyes of the Lord Run to and fro, And fro, And fro.

I was telling somebody the other day, And I had a little room, In the house, Where the pastor, And my wife, And I said, Come in a day, And he came in a kid, About maybe eight. Jeff God, And he traveled with me, And I never met a young person, So loving and kind. And I remember the first time, I had him speak, You can do it.

You know what, We're so self-centered, That all these things, We have to do. And many of them, We have to do. And many of them, We don't have to do.

We're just doing them. Putting them down. By love.

Beloved, Let us love one another, For love is of God. One that loves, Is born of God, And knows God. He that loves not, Knows not God, For God is love.

The Lord make you to increase, In love, Paul. Bound in love, Towards all men, Even as we do towards you. Bounding in love.

This I want to say, The Holy Spirit, One, Fills our hearts, With the love of God. Remember, He's given us, A spirit of love, For this Holy Spirit, The love of the Spirit, Remember Romans 15, 30, The love of the Spirit, He's given us, He's wanting to love people, Through us. You know what a lot of us are like? We're sitting in a big tin can, At the side of a highway, Watching a parade.

It's one of those things, It's got a thing in it, And you can see out, But nobody can see in. And so you're sitting in this can, It's air conditioned, And people bring food, At the right times, And you watch the parade. And after 50 years, They haven't witnessed to anybody.

They haven't won anybody, To Christ. I don't think there's a Christian, In this room, That couldn't win, Someone else to Christ, If we tried. When you're looking at me people, You're looking at a person, At one time, I was so shy.

In school, It was just a mental torture, A teacher might ask me, To say something. It was horrible. When I walk down the street, Listen this is true, I'm walking down the street, I see somebody coming, I cross the street.

And that night I was working, In a popwood camp, And God came and told me, He wanted me to preach. I remember, I heard, He drew the bow and I, I said, God this is a joke, There's no way, You know I can't do it. He nailed me to the wall, With a verse, Okay God, But I knew nobody, Would ever ask me.

And I made it, For 20 minutes. You know, I don't find any of these, Carnal arguments with God, Denying the word of God. When he said, I can do all things, Through Christ, Did Paul mean, Just himself? God is waiting, Your love in the spirit, The love of God, Is shed abroad, In our hearts, By the Holy Spirit, Who is given unto us.

That verse, In John 17, I have declared, Christ said, And will declare, That the love, Wherewith you have loved me, May be in them, And I in them. So he was praying, At the twelve, I'm sure even James, There are 75, I hear people complaining, They're only making it, How well off we are here. I remember saying, In a meeting one time, I think, Fifteen wide, Well that's a line of people, Waiting to come to Canada, You know when he was in his 70's, Forest fire, And his death, What is standing in the way?

Why am I not, Filled with the love of God? What's in the way?

It needs to be crucified, Leave it to Christ, He isn't going to turn you, Upside down, And break up your, I've done this more than once, Right after that, I was, They had a little thing, We called it, On the train, The Lord led me to give, A bottle of coke, In the can, Listen, Teenage kids were sitting, At the dinner table, You know, There's effects, When we obey God, There's always a blessing, When we disobey, It's not a blessing, So whatever it is, I know a guy, And you know he, He had a thing going, So when he'd be speaking, His mouth wouldn't open, And he'd have to kick his leg, Two or three times like this, Before he could speak again, He became a very well known evangelist, Let a lot of people know, He didn't worry about that, People thought he was kind of stupid, He wasn't stupid,

He did what he could, You've never heard of Kali Olson, He's an American evangelist, I think he's dead now, I knew him years ago, He told us what happened, The first day in college, He said, He got in late, And he only had the last seat, And this gentleman over here, He said, I want you to get up, And just tell us your name, What you believe about politics, And God, That's all, No preaching, You know, So the first guy gets up, And he says, Gives his name, And he said, I don't believe in God, I never, I don't believe in, He gave it a big deal, You know, And he was a big, Fine looking guy, And this scared everybody, In the room, You know, There's about 40 kids there, He said, And every kid, When he'd get up, Said the same thing, Well I don't go to church anymore, My parents used to make me,

Go to Sunday school, He got to his feet, And said, I'm a pack, Or the, He said, I thought to myself, Now he said, I want to make a little contract, Once a month, I'm going to, And he said, Awesome, Revival, Yes, It comes from God, But we have a part in it as well, Some of you heard of that church, They had three prayer meetings a day, For two years, For revival, They wanted revival so bad, That that's what they did, Three prayer meetings every day, For two years, Church supported it, Revival came, So there's a part we have to play, On a closing minute, He was a, He was related to John Edwards, And he had a very successful, So a bunch of pastors, They were all waiting for the flask, They were waiting for God to do something, So he told them, He said, Listen, You guys are hoping, That

someday God will do something, Right, And we believe God for you, You don't do any of those things, So don't criticize God or me, He did not know of a church, My mom left, My dad had, My dad was no cook, Your mother's coming back, But you don't, She came home, She told us years later, The minute I got inside the house, Prayed and said, God, Save my four boys, Well, My oldest brother's in his twenties, And

nothing had happened, She prayed for 14 years, Because he, He was, You know, When people are under conviction, The two guys he was working with, They came to see us one day, Oh, Would you look at that, So dear dad, Mom, They never did get together, Oh God, Dear God, Send us, Rain, Of pouring of your love, Oh Father, Empty us of self, Sin, And fill us, With your love, So that we can love

in all directions, And love rightly, And esteem others better than ourselves, As you told us, Thank you, Thank you, Thank you for remembering us, Enduring the cross, Despising the shame, Joy, Thank you for this overwhelming demonstration,

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