

# Three Great Gifts

by Raymond Golsworthy

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*The sermon highlights the three great gifts of God: the gift of authority to Christ, the gift of eternal life to God's people, and the gift of the church to Christ.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 118:23, John 3:3, John 15:5, John 17:2, Acts 5:14-31, 1 Corinthians 6:17, Ephesians 1:23, Ephesians 5:32, Philippians 2:8, Colossians 1:18

**Topics:** "Eternal Life", "Church Age"

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## Description

Raymond Golsworthy delves into the profound truths encapsulated in John 17:2, highlighting the essence of true Christianity and the entire history of the present church age within a single verse. The verse emphasizes the three significant gifts: God's gift of authority to Jesus Christ, Christ's gift of eternal life to His redeemed people, and God's gift of the church to His Son, outlining the core of the Christian gospel and God's work throughout the church age.

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## Transcript

"As thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal Life to as many as thou hast given Him." John 17:2

One of the marvels of the Bible is the way in which vast areas of divine truth are sometimes brought together in just a few words, one single verse or even half a verse. The verse quoted above is a beautiful example of this, and we would even go so far as to say that, in these few words, we have a presentation of the very essence of true Christianity and a gathering up of the whole history of the present church age. What a wonderful book God has given us!

What we have just said will be easily seen if we notice that the word 'give' (or its derivatives) occurs three times. The first of these relates to God's gift of all-authority to the Lord Jesus Christ (power over all flesh); the second to Christ's gift of eternal life to His redeemed people; and the third to God's gift of the church to His dear Son. This, we would say, covers the whole of the Christian gospel, and it outlines what God has been doing throughout this present church age. Coming now to the beautiful simplicities of all this, let us consider these three gifts in a little more detail, and accepting the personal challenge to ourselves in each case.

1. The gift of authority to the Lord Jesus Christ

We read in verse 1 "Thou (the Father) hast given Him (the Son) power over all flesh". Here, of course, is God's plan to entrust the final authority over all men into the hands of Christ, effectually realized in what we know as the exaltation of our Lord, and vividly described in such passages as Philippians 2.

"He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ... and that every tongue should confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:8-11).

Praise God the Christian message revolves around a living and a reigning Person, the One who has the final authority in all human affairs. Even at the time of His death this was also true, for we read of Pilate saying to Him, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?" And the answer came back, "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:10-11). Praise God, then, for this wonderful gift from the Father to the Son -- power and authority over all mankind.

We come now to the second of the 'gifts' mentioned in our verse. It is ...

## 2. The gift of Eternal Life to God's people

The passage goes on to speak of this exalted One giving eternal life to those the Father gives to Him. In fact it says that that was the very reason why the Father had given Him the 'authority'. He was exalted to enliven! How we should thank God that Christ was not exalted to be (in the first place) our righteous Judge, but to be our life-giving Saviour! As Peter put it, in his message at Jerusalem, "God exalted Him with His right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour" (Acts 5:31). And what a salvation it is -- not only the forgiveness of our sins, but the imparting to us, criminals that we are, of an entirely new life -- His life -- sent down into us from heaven. Here is the marvel of new birth (John 3:3), and the gift of the Holy Spirit, God joining us immediately to the blessed Saviour Himself -- one organism! Here, we would say, is real Christianity, and the only real Christianity!

Before closing this section, may we ask you, dear reader, have you been 'born again'? Have you repented of your sins and placed your trust in Christ? Are you joined to the Lord as one spirit? (1 Cor. 6:17) Have you experienced this "Great Divine Deposit", and are you learning to live daily by that deposit (see John 6:57). That is God's gracious plan for us all. Praise His Name!

We must now mention the third of these great gifts -- no doubt the greatest of them all.

## 3. The gift of the church to Christ

At the end of the sentence in John 17:2, the Lord speaks of "those whom thou (the Father) hast given Me (the Son)." He refers, of course, to the Church, that new and heavenly "Family" created by the giving and receiving of the Lord's eternal life. When we really put our trust in Christ, we find ourselves part of that Family. The life of our risen Lord has flowed down into us, and, as the Bible puts it, we have been "added to the Lord" (Acts 5:14,11:24). We are, indeed, in union with Him, as branches are in union with a vine (John 15:5) and as a body is in union with its head (Col. 1:18). And it is in Christ and from Christ that we may henceforth derive everything we need. And the greater wonder still is that, as such, we have become part of God's special gift to His Son! We may even say that God has actually found a Bride for Christ, and has brought her to Him (Gen. 2:22).

This, we know, is a great 'mystery' (Eph.5:32) beyond human comprehension, but it is something which is happening every day before our eyes! Sinners are repenting of their sins, putting their trust in Christ, and finding themselves infused by an altogether new life from heaven. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes (Psalm 118:23). Oh how necessary it is to realise that Christianity is not a 'religion', but a life (Acts 5:20) -- Christ's life deposited into the hearts of trusting men and women, and making them the very "fullness of Christ" (Eph.1:23).

Who would have thought that all this truth could somehow be compressed into one brief sentence at the beginning of John 17? But it is there, and to see it, and to respond to it, is to have one's life completely changed. May God work in all our hearts for His glory.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/raymond-golsworthy/three-great-gifts/>

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