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**May 18, 2014**

**Title: “The Bible is a Gift from God to You”**

**Series: Getting Back to the Bible**

## **Introduction:**

<sup>1</sup>The Illinois State Treasurer Dan Rutherford has initiated a program called "Cash Dash." Here's how an ad in The Chicago Tribune described the new program:

The State of Illinois has collected more than \$1 billion worth of lost or abandoned wealth that belongs to millions of Illinois residents. It includes everything from forgotten bank accounts to entire estates that have never reached their rightful owners. The "Cash Dash" program aims to give it all back.

The National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators claims, "Keep in mind that Illinois' unclaimed funds, money, cash, and property are gold mines just waiting to be discovered by their rightful owners." Dan Rutherford added, "[This program] is exciting to me because I want to see these valuable assets returned. I also hope everyone [doesn't] miss out on money or valuable assets the state is holding for them."

As far as I know, God doesn't have any unclaimed riches for you to claim today – that is, if we're talking about material riches. But He does have a gift for you today, and this gift is much better than any gift money could buy.

God has gifted you, and me, and the world, with His Word, the Bible, and He wants us to accept it, embrace it, and enjoy every part of it. Today in our series, “Getting Back to the Bible” we want to define God’s Gift to us so that we might better understand it and its purpose for our lives.

## **1. GOD’S GIFT IS GOD-BREATHED**

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<sup>1</sup> Trib Local: Aurora, "Illinois Treasurer Dan Rutherford Completes Successful Cash Dash Event in Aurora" (3-28-12)

The Apostle Paul wrote what is known as the “Pastoral Letters” to his sons in the faith, Timothy and Titus. In those letters he gives practical instructions to these young men that would help them to be the leaders God had designed them to be in His Church. One of the best known passages in these letters is 2 Timothy 3:14-17:

*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. – 2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NIV)*

Rather than the term “God-breathed” some other translations use the phrase “given by inspiration of God” – but “God breathed” is much more literal. The idea of *breathing upon*, or *breathing into the soul*, is that what the word translated here naturally expresses.

Think about it for a moment – God breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life (Gen. 2:7); Jesus breathed on his disciples, and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit," (John 20:22). And here it is revealed that God has breathed this gift of His Word, the “holy Scriptures” into our lives for our use.

It is an amazing thing to know that the Bible you hold in your hands today came from the very breath of God. Or at least it should be. Knowing this, that God has spoken these words for our lives and our benefit should give us pause. Every time we open this book it is as real as if God were standing in front of us, opening His mouth, and sharing His truth with us.

## **2. GOD’S GIFT IS LIFE-CHANGING**

### **Illustration:**

<sup>2</sup>In 1988, a failed effort at attaching two train cars left Polish railway worker Jan Grzebski with massive head injuries. The damage was so extensive that Grzebski slipped into a deep coma, and doctors told his wife, Gertruda, to expect the worst.

Gertruda, however, was undeterred by the doctors' opinions concerning her husband's fate. She dutifully cared for Jan each day he was comatose, carefully

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<sup>2</sup> Associated Press, "Polish man emerges from 19-year coma," [www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com) (5-13-07).

shifting his position in bed every hour and planning meaningful visits by assorted family members.

Nineteen years later, Jan finally woke up.

And what did he notice after having been "asleep" for 19 years? He first noticed a loving wife, a hero.

"I am sure that without the dedication of his wife, the patient would not have reached us in the good shape that he did," said a rehabilitation specialist. "He can now move his feet, feeling has returned to his limbs, and he can hold light objects. If he continues to make such progress, he will soon be able to walk."

Grzebski also noticed an entirely different world. Consider that just one year into his comatose state, Communism fell throughout Europe. Gertruda says, "He was amazed to see the colorful streets, the goods. He says the world is prettier now."

When we open God's gift of His Word, we should say something very similar. The world is a different place when we allow the Bible to speak to us. It is truly life-changing. God tells us, through His Word, that we can be brand new people. There are two particular passages that really bring this truth home:

*But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. -- John 20:31 (ESV)*

*Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. -- 1 Peter 1:23 (ESV)*

Notice that the purpose God had John record these words was so that we might believe in Jesus and experience what it means to have life in his name. And Peter reveals that the born again experience has come to us directly from the "living and abiding word of God."

Again, we must remember, that this book that contains 66 books, is not just printed words on pages – it is God-breathed. It has been given to us as a gift so that we might experience a profound life-change – one that will affect us for all of eternity if we will place our trust in Jesus Christ.

### **3. GOD'S GIFT IS EASILY UNDERSTOOD**

Many people think the Bible is hard to understand, but that is not normally true. While there are some difficult passages, they are few and far between. The Bible was written so that the average man could take it off the shelf and understand it.

Did you know that the New Testament was written in Koine Greek? This was the type of Greek that was spoken in the market place by the common people, not by the most educated. And I believe God did this on purpose to show that He wanted any person of average intelligence to be able to grasp His Word.

God has made a concerted effort throughout history to make Himself understood. He wants to communicate to us and He wants us to understand Him. Consider what is said of Jesus in the following passage:

*Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.* -- **Luke 24:45 (ESV)**

Now I realize this has a particular context, but the point is that Jesus wanted these disciples to understand the Word of God, so He opened their minds to be able to do so. But in most cases, we find that God's Word is simply written in a way that is understandable to us.

*The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.* -- **Psalms 119:130 (ESV)**

*At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children."* -- **Matthew 11:25 (ESV)**

Of course, knowing that God's Word can be so easily understood takes away at least one of our excuses for not spending time in it, doesn't it?

#### **4. GOD'S GIFT IS OUR SOURCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT**

God's gift of the Bible is absolutely filled with hope, joy, and strength for our journey. It is the number one source of encouragement we could ever hope for. It is filled with page after page of inspiring, life-giving, soul-satisfying words. Let's quickly look at a few passages that describe our source of encouragement:

*For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.* -- **Romans 15:4 (ESV)**

*Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts. -- **Jeremiah 15:16 (ESV)***

*How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! -- **Psalm 119:103 (ESV)***

*I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words. -- **Psalm 119:147 (ESV)***

*I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food. -- **Job 23:12 (ESV)***

Do you notice a pattern here? Encouragement – Hope – Joy – Treasure – Food! All of these are descriptions of God’s gift to us, His Word.

I have never run across anyone who read the Bible and said, “I wish I hadn’t done that today, how discouraging.” I’ve never heard anyone say that, and it has never happened to me either. Just the opposite has been true.

It is kind of like exercise. Once you get into a routine you wonder why you haven’t been doing it all of your life. You think to yourself – “I feel better every single day I take the time to exercise. I can breathe better, have more energy, and just have a better outlook on life.”

When you read the Word of God on a regular basis you will say something very similar. “I am more encouraged, have a better attitude, and am experiencing a higher level of joy and contentment than I ever have before.” All of this, just by taking the time to use this gift God has given you, the Holy Scriptures.

### **Conclusion:**

We started off today talking about the “Cash Dash” program in Illinois, where some citizens have hidden riches just waiting for them to be revealed. But what God offers us is so much more valuable and it isn’t something you have to wait for.

Why not dedicate yourself right here, and right now, to begin spending time in God’s Word every day? Throw the excuses out the window, open up your Bible, and begin to delight in what God has revealed.