

Dr. Joe Jursa's Sermon

[Too valuable to Keep](#) - 1 Chronicles 11:15-19

Have you ever considered that at some time in life you might be given a gift that was too valuable to keep? I know that seems in some ways crazy. How can someone give me something that will be more that I could receive or to hold.

But the scriptures have just such a story. And while it may be short it holds some valuable insight into gifts and offerings.

¹⁵ Three of the thirty chiefs went down to the rock to David at the cave of Adullam, while the army of Philistines was encamped in the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁶ David was then in the stronghold; and the garrison of the Philistines was then at Bethlehem. ¹⁷ David said longingly, "O that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate!" ¹⁸ Then the Three broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and they brought it to David. But David would not drink of it; he poured it out to the LORD, ¹⁹ and said, "My God forbid that I should do this. Can I drink the blood of these men? For at the risk of their lives they brought it." Therefore he would not drink it. The three warriors did these things.

Hansford was the one who reminded me of this great little story. During the time of the conquests, David was camped with his mighty men in a cave. It had been an exceptionally long hot and hard day of fighting. David remembers his childhood days in Bethlehem and dreams out loud about having a cool drink from the well in his home town. In passing he mentions the fact that he would love a drink from that well again.

Three of his mighty men, wanting always to do that which would please their king and friend decide to grant his wish. The problem is the opposing army is camped in and around the very well David has spoken about. We are not told the full extent of the covert mission behind enemy lines, but my guess is that it would read like Clive Cussler or Tom Clancy adventure novel. If played out by Hollywood it would star Vin Diesel or Arnold Swartnegger or Harrison Ford. There would be shots of heads coming off from mighty swords being swung, blood from stab wounds, the grimy sweat that only looks good on tanned actors and lots of endless action.

We don't know if the three mighty men fought their way into Bethlehem to get the water but I'm pretty certain they did not get in and then out without attracting attention. When I was thinking about this I'll just bet when Jesus was a young boy asking about the town where he was born one of the stories he heard was the retelling of these three men sneaking into village of Bethlehem to get King David a drink of water from his hometown well.

While the feat would be worthy of a Hollywood movie or retelling in an action tale it is not the action of those three heros we are looking at this day.

When the men have returned to the cave where David is he receives the water but did you notice he does not drink the water instead he pours the water out. I just know the faces of all three fell when David poured out the water. But David does not leave the men wondering or us. As he pours out the water he speaks both to the men and to God.

"My God forbid that I should do this. Can I drink the blood of these men? For at the risk of their lives they brought it." At the risk of their lives, that was the real gift these men brought. Certainly there was water and that was the gift the men thought they brought, but David saw more. God had given him men who thought so much of what he was doing that simply by mentioning something in passing would cause them to risk their lives to make it happen.

Has someone every entrusted you with something so valuable that you felt uncomfortable or ill at ease about even handling what they had given you. Linda's aunt for a time cleaned some of the jewels at

the Smithsonian, one being the Hope Diamond. While she never took it out of the Museum, she was always very careful when handling it. It was of enormous value and had come at some amazing price over the years. It was something to be careful about.

When the men brought David the water they had already offered their lives to get it. David recognized their great gift and that sometimes things belong only to God. To allow yourself to hold or poses something that is God's can be a very dangerous thing. David recognized only God has a right to the lives of men, so in honor and recognition of that, David poured out the offering of the men before God.

Now maybe you have never touched or been given the honor of holding the Hope Diamond, but daily you take charge of something far more valuable. Each morning you rise and go about your day in control of yourself. David offered the lives of his men to God because they were too valuable for him to hold. Your life was a gift placed in your hands by God, but understand that your gift to God is to return it.

David knew the gift he had been given and he realized that the only one worthy of such a gift was God. He gave his men, their lives, and their gift back to God.

When I thought about having been given a gift that I was not worthy to have I dreamed of state lottery. I have not bought a lottery ticket, never, in part because I would be afraid to win. Not that I think there is much chance of that, but if God decides to bless my purchase it would not be chance from my perspective. It would be a gift from God and one that would require some serious thought as to how best to use the gift. Winning the lottery for a \$1 ticket would mean that I would have to find a right way to use the windfall not just for your own purposes. Not many people are entrusted with that many resources and it would require that God was honored.

When we bring our offerings to God in part we are recognizing that we have been extra ordinarily gifted by God. As American's God has given into our hands gifts far beyond what most people will ever handle. When many in the world live on \$.50 to \$1, the salaries we make need to be used in such a way that we honor the one who has given us both our ability to earn such salaries and the place where such are paid.

We come to the offering to remember that we are blessed by God. When the world is dying of thirst, when our week has been long and hard, God has entered the enemy camp and given us a precious gift. We come to thank God for entrusting us with so much and to return a portion to God.

From time to time, God may entrust into our hands a gift to valuable to keep. It may be the lives of others, resources beyond our needs or even dreams, it may be simply the right idea at the right time; but if the time comes may we remember this lesson from the life of David. There are gifts that belong to God and we can please God and influence others around us in their relationship with God by using such gifts wisely.