

God's Gift to the World

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[0 : 00] Well, presents are always a big part of Christmas, aren't they? Hands up if you don't like getting gifts. Can I have yours?

At nine o'clock we had no one and I was very disappointed. But yeah, presents are a big part of Christmas. Even when we look at the Christmas tree and see all the nice decorations, it's not very long before our eyes go to what's beneath the tree.

And actually, there's quite a few presents there. I might have a look, see if there's anything for me. To Andrew, love mum. Oh, that's so nice.

She sent it all the way from Sydney. Let's go. I might have a look, see what it looks. I hope it's something really good. It's... I'm this? Red? Does she think I'm Santana?

325 from Kmart. Well, that didn't work so well. Let's see if there's another gift over here. Oh, here we go. To the 1030 Congregation Love HTD.

[1 : 10] So, we need some help to open this. So, can you guys open that? Let's see what that is. Quick, rip, rip. Chocolate. Chocolate. Oh, chocolates.

Oh, that's not too bad. Although, one box between... That's all right. I'll have a few more boxes for you after the service.

But, of course, there is a nice big present over there, which I'm sure the kids have noticed. It's got a nice big bow on it, so we can't not look at this one. And it says, To the world love God.

Now, to the world, that means everyone here. So, I wonder if... Well, we won't get everyone here to open it, but why don't we get one, two, three, four, five kids in the front row.

Come on, open it quick. Tear it apart. I'm going to stand over here. Okay. Oh, sorry, Leo.

[2 : 09] All right, you guys take a seat now. You can take a seat. It looks a bit empty, except for a piece of paper. Oh, okay.

First impression is a bit disappointing. Anyway, well, I'm going to throw the piece of paper on the screen so you can see what it says. It says, And so, I guess that means that God's gift to us, to the world, is His Son.

In fact, that second line kind of says that, doesn't it? He gave. And that's the language of gifts, isn't it? But what makes His Son a better gift than undies or chocolates?

Or what I really wanted, which was an iPhone. That's what I really wanted, but anyway. Well, I think the answer's in the verse on the screen. I think that, for starters, Jesus is a very precious gift.

Do you notice what it says? He gave His one and only Son. I don't know who or what is most precious to you, but to my daughter, the most precious person in the world is her dog, Toby.

[3 : 28] Now, you might think that doesn't count because it's a dog and not a person, but for her, he is a person. Loves him to death. In fact, Toby is more precious to her than even her parents.

And even her favourite teddy, so that when Toby bit the nose of her favourite teddy, he was forgiven instantly. Still loved by my daughter.

And so while I would happily give the dog away to anyone, anyone, anyone, have you? She would give Him away to no one because He is most precious to her.

I wonder, again, who is most precious to you? Well, to God, it's His one and only Son. And so to give Him for us means it's a very, very precious gift, Jesus is, isn't He?

But more than that, He is also a very, very loving gift. And that's what the verse started by saying, for God so loved. And that kind of makes sense, doesn't it?

[4 : 33] Because if you're going to give what's most precious to you, to someone else, then you have to love that person quite a lot to give them to them, wouldn't you?

So that kind of makes sense already. But notice whom God loves in the verse. It says the world. And when you look at the people in the world, it helps us to realise that this is an even more loving

gift than we first thought.

Because people in the world are not always that nice. I mean, just last week, I just looked up the news. A news website picked two headlines. These were the two headlines. CTT captures woman leaving service station, which was a shell service station dumping a dead baby in the bathroom. Doesn't that make you feel sick? Torture to death, a mass grave uncovered in Syria, as the recent government has just bailed, 100,000. When I read these headlines, it does make me feel sick in the stomach.

And yet, God still gave what was most precious to him for people even like this. I mean, that is incredibly loving, isn't it? But the horror of those things is actually nothing compared to how people, including us, have treated God himself.

[5 : 57] To ignore the God of the universe, to treat God as though he doesn't exist, should actually make us feel sick in the stomach too. It's highly offensive.

We just don't think so. And yet, God still gave what was most precious to him for people like us. It's an incredibly loving gift, Jesus.

You see, Jesus is a precious gift. He's a loving gift. And he's also a saving gift. The next verse at the bottom there said, For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world.

Jesus is a saving gift. Now, I don't know about you, but when I was little, if I did something wrong at home, I would get in trouble.

Does that happen to you kids? No, because you never do anything wrong. That's right. And sometimes my punishment was to miss out on dessert or be sent to my room.

[7 : 02] Sometimes the wooden spoon, can't do that today. So I would get a punishment for ignoring my parents. And it's the same in life and the same with God. If we ignore God and mistreat God, then there is a consequence.

It's not missing out on dessert or getting the wooden spoon. It's missing out on life eternal. Which again, kind of makes sense, because if God is the one who gives life and we ignore him, then naturally it's going to mean no life for us.

But God loves us and doesn't want us to miss out. That's why he gave his precious son, sent in the world at Christmas time, to save us from that punishment so that we can have life eternal instead.

How? Well, as you know, Jesus didn't stay a baby. That's why there was no baby in the box. He grew up and died for us on the cross. And that's what the gift actually turns into, right?

Oh, it all comes together. See kids, maths, shapes, geometry is very valuable. And at the cross, Jesus took the punishment for our sins so that we don't have to, so that we can have life eternal instead.

[8 : 32] If so, if we, the middle of the verse, believe in him. If we don't believe in him, then we'll have to face the consequences ourselves, which is to spend an eternity perishing.

But if we do believe in him, that says you shall not perish, but have eternal life instead. And so the question, well, the first question for us this morning is, do we believe?

Do we believe, have faith, trust in Jesus? It's worth it to not perish and have eternal life. I mean, I know which I would choose. What about you?

If you're here this morning and you're thinking about these things, you've been invited along by a friend and you're not sure, but want to find out more, then please speak to the person who invited you or talk to me after the service.

I'd love to answer any questions you have. It really is worth believing in Jesus. And for us who do believe, then this Christmas, we are to again give thanks and rejoice.

[9 : 38] I mean, that's what you do. If someone gives you a present, kids, someone gives you a present, you say, thank you. Thank you. Yeah. And so how much more so to God? And in fact, if it's a great present, you rejoice as well.

Sometimes you have to kind of fake it a bit, like with the undies. Oh, thanks, mums. Just what I wanted. But if it's a really genuinely good gift, there is rejoicing. Let's see if we can have another gift.

Mind me, get a better one to illustrate. Try this one. Here we go. What have we got here? Oh, it is an iPhone.

I know what you're thinking. It's just the box. But no, it's not the box. It's a brand new iPhone. Oh, that's fantastic. You rejoice, don't you? Oh, hang on. Oh, it's my wife's work phone. For work

purposes only.

Oh, okay. But you get the idea, don't you? If it's a really good gift, there is rejoicing as well. Well, Jesus is the best gift.

[10 : 42] He is the most precious, the most loving, the most saving. And so how can we not, again this Christmas, give thanks and rejoice? Why don't we pray and give thanks now, and then we'll rejoice with our next carol, Joy to the World.

Let's pray. Our gracious Father, we thank you that you so loved us. You gave what was most precious to you for us, your Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross so that we might be forgiven and given life eternal.

Help us to believe in Him. And for us who do, help us to again give you thanks and rejoice because of Him and this great gift that He is to us.

We ask this in His name. Amen.