

The Gift of Jesus

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[0 : 00] You know, Christmas morning is a special time of the year when we come together and we celebrate our Lord and our Savior, Jesus Christ. And especially on this Sunday morning when we've come together on the day that we choose to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior.

On this day again, we gather with family, with friends, to reflect on the greatest gift ever given. And that's Jesus Christ.

Through his death, his life, and his death on the cross, he's given us hope for eternal life in heaven. And as I'm sure that many of you have opened gifts already this morning.

Some of you may, as you're visiting around a family, have other opportunities to open gifts this morning. Let each one that you open be a reminder of the gift that you and I have been given in the person of Jesus Christ.

God sent his son to the earth because he loved you and me so much that he wanted to make sure that we had a relationship with him.

[1 : 13] And that's one of the things, you know, that's talked a lot about Christmas, about love and peace and relationship and family. And the time that we spend together many families, bake cookies, many families just spend time together doing whatever traditions that their family has.

And that's a special time, I know. But imagine God who loved you and me so much and created us to have a relationship with him. Imagine the heart of God knowing that he could not have a relationship with us for eternity.

And so he made a way possible. He sacrificed. He sent his son, Jesus Christ, to live on this earth and to walk the lonely road to Calvary and to die in our place for our sin.

And for his everlasting joy that he would be able to spend with us. So the gift of Jesus is the greatest gift that's ever been given. It's filled with love.

It's filled with mercy. And it's filled with grace as well. And it brings us hope for a joyous life on this earth but also for an eternity with God in heaven.

[2 : 29] As we look at the meaning of the term gift, you know, a gift is something that's given freely and it's given with love. You know, when you shop for that special gift for that person in your life and you know that it's going to mean something to them.

But it also means something to you as you give it. Now, we know there are all different types of love languages. Some are more into gift giving and receiving than others.

But, you know, it's something special to give a gift to someone whose love language is gifts. And just to see them light up. And also those who give.

There's a special meaning to gifts. You know, it's often associated. Gifts are associated with special events. With Christmas, holidays, birthdays, and other things.

It's graduation. And what a gift conveys is it's a message of appreciation. It's a message of love as well. And as we think about it, as we reflect on this Christmas season, the greatest gift that's ever been given.

[3 : 41] On that night, Jesus was born. When that time when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. An angel announced to shepherds on the hillside that a Savior had been born and would save the world from their sin.

Luke chapter 2 verses 11 to 14 say, For there is born to you in this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord, as the angel said.

And this will be a sign to you. You will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth.

Peace, good will toward men. From then on, Jesus became that symbol. Jesus became the greatest gift that has ever been given to mankind.

The gift of eternal life and the gift of salvation. As we think about the meaning of the gift of Jesus Christ this morning, there's so much meaning in the gift that God gave to us in Jesus.

[5 : 02] Is there not? I mean, we could open that gift. Continue opening that gift and continue discovering the meaning of that gift of Jesus until Jesus comes back.

There's just so much meaning in God giving his son to pay a substitutionary death on the cross for us. Poor, rotten sinners who were God's enemies.

But God demonstrated his love toward us. In that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. But the most important meaning of that gift, when God gave Jesus to planet earth and to mankind, it provides salvation to all who believe by accepting Jesus into our lives, by trusting in his finished work on the cross, we can look forward to freedom.

Freedom from sin. Freedom from that penalty of sin. Freedom from eventually one day the presence of sin. And to be able to spend time with him in heaven.

Freedom from darkness. Being brought into light. Freedom from sin. Being provided righteousness. Freedom from death and being provided with a new life.

[6 : 23] For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is what? Eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. In him, in Jesus Christ, we have something greater than material gifts or worldly possessions.

We have eternal life. We have eternal life. And we have access to God himself in heaven. John 3, 16, verse that probably every Sunday school child has memorized.

And probably even as an adult, you remember to this day. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

You know, the gift of Jesus brings us so much more than hope and joy that we talk about during the Christmas season. You know, people talk about the decorations and the tinsel and the hope and the joy that we have at Christmas.

But it provides us grace. And it provides us mercy. Do you realize that God in his mercy doesn't give us what we truly deserve?

[7 : 42] And in his grace, he gives to us what we could never work up, that we could never, never provide for ourselves.

And by accepting this gift, by receiving this free gift of Jesus Christ, we receive eternal life in heaven.

But also what we do is we receive a new sense of purpose and a new life here on earth. We're able to experience freedom from fear. We're able to experience freedom from guilt and shame as we bask in the knowledge that Jesus loves us unconditionally.

You know, as you and I go through the world, you know, people, some people like you. Some people may not like you. Some people may love you. And most of the time, people love us in spite of ourselves, right?

But God loves every human being unconditionally. Think about that for a moment. Reflect on that. God loves you no matter what.

[8 : 50] There are times in our lives, there are things that we might do. There are things that we might say. There are periods of time where we just may not be all that lovable. But God always loves you and me unconditionally.

So, salvation to all who believe, the greatest gift. And then secondly, the gift of a brand new life. There are many people today. You might be sitting here today.

There may be people in our neighborhood, in your neighborhood, that look on their own life and say, You know, there are things that I've done that I'm ashamed of. There are things that I've done that I don't know, God, if he could ever forgive me.

But we have the wonderful opportunity to share with them that God loves us. And no matter how bad we think we are, we're no worse than the person who might be thinking that they're the best. Because the best 15 minutes of life that we've ever lived is still not good enough to get to heaven. All of our righteousnesses, the Bible says, are as filthy rags.

[10 : 03] The wages of sin is death. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And so, no matter what our past, when we trust Christ as our Savior, he gives us a brand new life.

Not only does Jesus offer eternal life in heaven, but he offers us new life here on this earth. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17 and 18 tell us, Therefore, if anyone, boy or girl, man or woman, if anyone is in Christ, he or she is a new creation.

All things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. The old you was born in sin. Born with that sin nature.

Born separated from God. Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. When we trust Jesus as our Savior comes into our life. He forgives our sin.

He has redeemed us on the cross of Calvary. He provides to us his righteousness. It's applied to our account.

[11 : 15] And he gives us the Holy Spirit to help us to live a life that honors and a life that pleases him. And Jesus continues to provide power to live a new life.

2 Corinthians 5, verse 18, Now all things are of God who has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

We can have that message of the gospel that we can share with others and say, God loves you. God wants to be reconciled with you. And you can have this brand new life today.

And as Jesus promises to not only give us a new life, but be with us through his Holy Spirit as we live that life. Probably one of my favorite verses.

Galatians chapter 2, verse 20. Where Paul said, I have been crucified with Christ. He says, It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.

[12 : 18] And the life which I now live in the flesh. I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Jesus Christ gave himself for us. And through him, we're given a hope for a future beyond our expectations. Jeremiah 29, 11 says, For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord. Thoughts of peace and not of evil. To give you a future and a hope. And as we allow this, the time to reflect upon this in our lives this morning.

My prayer is that through his love, his grace, his mercy, that he would empower you to live that life that truly honors and pleases him.

But it's only as the Holy Spirit is able to, as we surrender to his lordship and allow him to control our lives. And as we go through life of struggles, as we go through life with fear, as we go through life with whatever difficulty that that you and I may be going through.

[13 : 36] That through God's love and mercy and his grace, he would empower you to take every moment of every day and realize he loves you so much.

He's going to work out everything for his good purpose and for his will. You know that everything that comes into our life that God allows, he is able to miraculously work together to make him look the best.

Doesn't he do that? He takes what we might think is a catastrophe. And he weaves the tapestry of our lives.

On this earth, what we may see is all the loose threads of that tapestry. But above, God sees the beauty and God sees the majesty of his creation.

And he's able to work it all out for his good. So as we reflect on the joy and peace provided by Jesus at this time of year, let us be grateful for what Jesus has done in our lives.

[14 : 50] As we reflect on the joy and the peace that God gives to us by accepting us into his presence and by inviting others.

Let's take this year and invite others into the same relationship that you are enjoying in Jesus Christ. Let's take the gospel with us where we go.

Let's let us open our hearts. And first of all, if you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord, as your Savior, trust him this morning.

He is the greatest gift given. And he is the greatest gift that you will ever receive. Ever received. Just simply trust what he did on the cross as being the full payment for your sin.

And as you do so, as you enjoy that new life in Christ, share with others what Jesus has done for you. And that he can do the same for them.

[15 : 51] And as our benediction this morning, arise, shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

Let us pray. Our blessed heavenly father, we are so, so thankful for the gift of your son, Jesus. Father, we thank you that you love us so much.

You were willing to sacrifice for us. And Lord, we pray that you might use this Christmas offering for your honor, for your glory.

Or as we say, happy birthday, Jesus. Or one who has no beginning and has no end. But Lord, had an earthly human birth date.

Lord, that we celebrate. And we thank you so, so very much. Lord, we thank you for what you're going to do through this offering. And I pray, Lord, that you would bless each giver.

[17:01] Father, we thank you for what you are going to provide. And Father, we pray for a blessed rest of this day and the rest of the week as families gather together.

And spend time enjoying each other's presence. Father, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.