

Preparing the Gift

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Date: 25 December 2016

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[0 : 00] Or thirdly, and more briefly, let's look at our opening of God's gift. We'll look at something of God's preparation of his gift, and then God's delivery of his gift in the birth and ministry of Jesus.

And then thirdly, our opening of the gift, if you turn to chapter 2 and verse 11 especially. Going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him.

Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. The gospel, in its proclamation or preaching, is really doing two things.

It's giving us information, but also making an appeal to us to receive what God has provided for us in Jesus Christ.

Our Christmas presents are nicely wrapped, then they're delivered, and thirdly, they're opened.

That's the final stage of making the gift that's delivered to me, my gift.

[1 : 06] It does not become a gift in the full sense until I've received it, until I've opened it, until I've made it my own property, my own possession. And so it is with Christ as well.

We don't have salvation just by looking at Jesus. We don't have salvation just by acknowledging that God sent his Son into the world. We have salvation by coming to receive him gladly, by coming to do what Zacchaeus did in Luke chapter 12, when he came down from the tree as Jesus had stopped there and called him to come down.

He came down and received Jesus gladly. That's what you do when you receive your Christmas presents. You receive them gladly. Once you've opened them, you've made them your own.

They then become your personal property. You have ownership of them. And so it is with God's gift of salvation as well. Just imagine if somebody really that loves you very dearly had given you a gift.

Or let's turn it around the other way. Somebody that you loved dearly and you had given them a gift for Christmas. Nicely wrapped. You'd really spent a lot of money on it, as much as you could afford, and delivered it.

[2 : 23] And it's left in a corner. It's left unopened. It's left just to be looked at, but never actually unwrapped.

How would you feel? It would be something of an insult to you, wouldn't it? Having gone to all that effort and all that expense, in showing your regard, your love for the person to whom you gave the gift, and then there it is.

It's not even opened. Now you apply that to salvation. You don't leave the gift of God in a corner just to look at now and again, just to hear about now and again.

You go to it. You pick it up. You take it to yourself. You open it. You make it yours. You unwrap it.

You say, this is really what exactly fits my needs as a sinner.

How much more of an insult it is to God if we leave his gift unopened this Christmas.

[3 : 34] If we say, yes, I admire it. The wrapping is beautiful. I wonder at the way in which he delivered it. I accept all of that.

I believe it's true. But then you leave it unopened. That's an insult, isn't it, to God? The quality of his gift.

The love with which he provided it. The care with which he delivered it. And yet there are for so many. There are so many who say, well, I know all of that, but I'm not going to open it.

Not now. I'll leave it for the moment. Some people might even say, well, I'm scared to open it. I'm scared of the consequences. I'm afraid of what it might lead to.

I know what's in it because God has told me. But I'm not sure really whether to open it or make it my own or not.

[4 : 40] Well, how do we accept it? How do we unwrap it? How do we open it? How do we receive it? There are so many ways in which the Bible answers that question. I've only time to just look at

this verse very briefly in closing.

Going into the house, they saw the child. They fell down and worshipped him. Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. In other words, you receive God's gift when you fall down before it and you accept Jesus as your king.

As the king of your life. Of course, not just as king. But king is what it's there. As the king. They opened up their treasures. They gave him the best that they had.

Because he was worthy of the best that they had. These two things. They fell down and worshipped him.

It doesn't just say they worshipped him. Falling down means paying homage to him. Falling down in obedience to him. And there is no other way really adequately to give thanks to God.

[5 : 48] To say to God, thanks Lord for your great gift of a saviour in Jesus Christ. The only way to do that is to open it and to say, as you fall down before him in obedience, to say, thank you Lord for this great gift.

And then you give him yourself. You give him the best that you have. Of your time, of your talents. You open up your treasures. You give them to him.

Because he himself is your greatest treasure. So God, preparing his gift. He's done that.

God's delivery of his gift. He's done that too. Our opening and receiving of God's gift.

Have we done that today? Is Christmas for you and for me about my Jesus?

[6 : 56] Let's pray. Lord our God, we thank you for the quality of that gift of salvation, which we don't deserve, which you took it upon yourself to provide for us in your everlasting love and wisdom, in your mercy toward us, in your concern that we be saved from our sins.

Forbid it, Lord, we pray, that any of us should leave that gift made in such a way that is not personal to ourselves. Forbid that we should receive, Lord, this gift only into our sight or hearing, not into our actual possession.

We pray, Lord, that you would grant each of us today to come with gladness. And if we have already accepted and received and opened your gift of redemption and salvation, Lord, help us again to do it again today with gladness, with repeated thanksgiving.

We pray for any, O Lord, today who may not yet have come to take up this gift and open it for themselves.

Lord, we pray today that you would enable them, that you would give them to see how particular it is to themselves, how you have designed it with sinners in mind, that we should, O Lord, have such a gift from you.

[8 : 26] Grant, we pray, these mercies to us now, hear us and accept our worship and cleanse us from all our sin. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, our final singing at this time is in Psalm number 118.

Psalm 118, verses 19 to 26, and that's on page 156. Psalm 118, page 156.

We're going to sing verses, given the presenter 19 to 29, I think we'll just sing verses 23 to 29. The Lord himself has done all this such as a marvel in our sight.

This is the day the Lord has made. In it let us take great delight. And of course that day means the day of salvation, the day of salvation in Jesus Christ, the Savior who is mentioned as having, here having come in God's name, the one who has come, who we deem blessed.

So verses 23 to 29, to God's praise. The Lord himself has done all this.

[9 : 44] It is a marvel in our sight. This is the day the Lord has made.

In it let us take great delight. Save us, O Lord, we humbly pray.

O Lord, we pray, grant us success. Be blessed to come to God's great name.

You from the Lord's house we will bless. You from the Lord's house we will bless.

The Lord is God and he has made His glorious light upon us all.

[10 : 45] Let us approach the altar storms And celebrate the festival.

You are my God and I'll give you thanks. You are my God and I'll give you praise.

O that the Lord for me is good His steadfast love endures always His steadfast love endures always I'll go to the main door after the benediction.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the communion of the Holy Spirit Be with you now and always. Amen.