

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

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[0 : 0 0] Well done, well done. Okay, I'm not going to speak for Christmas gifts. Gordon mentioned it in his prayer there. You'll get many gifts from aunts, from uncles, from mums, dad, from Santa. You'll get many gifts. And as I was thinking of gifts, you can categorize often the gifts that you get. Some gifts you might want, you might need, or whatever, or don't expect. Usually every year, I usually, there are gifts that I expect, usually because I drop so many hints. And I say, well, I expect this, and I drop so many hints. Here is one gift that I expect every year. It's a calendar. I just love calendars. And I usually get one.

This is this year's one. I've just taken it off the wall. And usually I get a Scottish one, especially when I was living in England. I miss the Munroes, the big mountains of Scotland. So here are some in the back here, one for every month. I always get one of these. And this year, actually, I said, I'm not going to go for one of the mountains. I'm going to go for a calendar of the islands of Scotland, because we were in a few islands of Scotland very recently. And I thought, I'll go for one of these. But yesterday, because my daughter's not with us, we exchanged gifts yesterday. And I never got my calendar. I said to them, Amazon, there's the link. That's the calendar I want. Get this. My daughter's dilly-dallyed.

You can't get it anymore. So it's left me a wee bit bitter and twisted, because I never got the thing I need. I wanted a calendar, and I never got it. Another gift that you sometimes get is something that you want, or something that you need. Here is a gift I got last year.

This is just a tool for tightening up nuts and bolts. It's a thing for my bike. It's a torque wrench. This is impressive, isn't it? It's a torque wrench so that I don't over-tighten things on my carbon fiber bike, no less. So I needed this. This was something that I need. So you sometimes get gifts that you expect, or sometimes you get gifts that you need. And maybe you'll be looking forward to it. I need this. I hope I get these socks or whatever. I use this pair of trousers. Or sometimes you get gifts you don't expect, and that can be a pleasant surprise. Maybe a big bar of chocolate, or maybe tickets to a concert somewhere, or something you didn't expect. They can be good gifts as well. I'm sure you'll get something that you didn't expect. It's not always when you get everything you expected. There's no surprise in that. But when you get something you didn't expect, it can be very, very good indeed. Sometimes you get a gift that you really didn't want. Tim Keller, he did a Christmas book, and he mentioned this type of gift. Oh, sorry, this is a gift that my daughters usually give me. Stick that up, Phil. These are gifts my daughters usually get that I don't expect.

These are gifts that I never use. It's a helicopter flight, or it's something else. It's a Formula One racing car in the south of England that you've got to travel all the way down to get to. Gifts that you end up not really being able to use. This was something I used to see in London. This was a restaurant, and it's on a big crane, and they lift it up, and you get your meal so many, a hundred feet in the air, and I think, that just looks crazy.

[3 : 28] Who would want to do that? So sometimes you get gifts like that. Gifts you, you think, do I really need it? Not really bothered. But here are other gifts. Imagine getting that gift for Christmas. Dieting for dummies. Somebody gives you that. I don't think you'd be too pleased at that. Here's another gift. Overcoming anger and irritability. I'm sure folk are thinking, wow, I wish I got my husband that. I'm taking the name of that author, and I'm on the Amazon. I'm getting that tomorrow. We get gifts. We either don't expect need pleasant gifts. It makes a big, big difference. But as we remember Christmas, Jesus is called a gift in the Bible. And sad to say, many people don't really want Him as a gift, or they don't really appreciate how much a good gift that Jesus really is. There's a verse in the Bible that says, thanks be to God for His indescribable gift. Paul is writing to a church who are generous, and he was thanking them for their generous gifts, and it triggers in his mind, God gave us a great gift, an indescribable gift. It's so good, you can't describe it. And he thanks God for that gift. Many people today don't really get excited by Jesus. They either don't really want Him, they don't see Him as a great gift, and they don't really think they need Him. I remember a year or two ago, to illustrate this, I was in London, and I was in a group of ministers, and we were pinging emails to each other at Christmas. We were all going to do something together. And there was a sizable group in this email. So I was pinging them to folk, I didn't know, I was replying. And as I sent an email out, this was the response that I got back from this email. The following address has permanent fatal errors. That's what I got back, and I went, wow, really? It didn't come back by saying, whoopsie, not delivered, or there's an error in this. It came back by those three words. Your email address, or this email address that you've tried to send to, has permanent fatal errors. And I looked at that, and I thought, wow, is it my fault?

Is that their fault? How seriously should I take this? It just seemed very serious, permanent fatal errors in an email address. And I thought, who dreams this stuff up at all? Some geeky software guy with his anorak and his glasses and his big thing. We could just say, there's an error in your email address. No, no, we'll put permanent in there as well. This is a permanent error. Forget that. Fatal.

We'll stick fatal in as well. And they've painted this horrendous picture of an email address. And I thought, that's just bonkers. Who uses such words? So I thought, wow, do I phone this woman? Do I let know? By the way, see that email address? Permanent fatal errors. I'd get the police in. I'd go and see your GP. There are something seriously happening in your life. You're getting permanent fatal errors.

Now, people do not take the death or the coming of Jesus as a gift very seriously. And yet, those three words relate to the gift that we have, Jesus. First of all, errors, very briefly.

The Bible doesn't talk about error so much. It uses a different word. It uses the word sins. Jesus came. You will call his name Jesus. Why? What's good about this gift? Because he will save you from your sins. Errors, you could say. And the Bible tells us all have sinned. We all have errors, every single one of us. And there is no one righteous, no one who does good. So everybody, you boys and girls, mums and dads, we all have errors. We all get things wrong. We don't always do the right thing. So we all have errors. Secondly, these errors are permanent. They are permanent.

[7 : 47] Jesus says, truly I tell you, everyone who sins, not only sins once or twice, you're a slave to sin. If you try to leave this place this morning and say, I'm going to be perfect. I felt like a wee angel. I was dressed like an angel. I must be an angel. I'm going to behave like an angel. You'll get things wrong. We all have errors. We sin against God. We disobey Him. And we can't stop. They are permanent. And finally, they are fatal. They are fatal. The wages of sin is death. They separate us between us and God. They create a barrier, even in this life, between us and God. And ultimately, they will ultimately separate us between us and God. But here is the good news.

The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God, you will receive many gifts. You won't receive a better gift than somebody who's your Savior and somebody who gives you eternal life. The greatest gift is eternal life through Jesus. You will receive many gifts, but no gift is better than the gift of Jesus. He deals with your errors, your permanent errors, your fatal errors. He restores you back to God. I hope you rejoice in Him. I know many of you do.

Many of you are Christians here this morning. You know what the coming of Jesus means. He's a gift that you want. He's a gift that you need. I hope you realize that, every one of us, boys and girls, that we realize how good Jesus is. He's the gift who deals with all our sins, brings us back to God, and gives us eternal life. We're going to close by singing our last song. And I think it's at Heart the Herald Angels Sing. So, you've got one more song to sing. If you can, you can come this evening. We have a carols by candlelight service. It's warm, cozy, cold outside, lovely in here.

And there'll be people doing readings, and there'll be a good carol fest. We'll be singing. Some of us are maybe caroled out, but we're going to be singing more carols tonight. And it would be great to see you if you can come again this evening. If you can't, you can come on Christmas Day. It'd be good to see you as well, 10 o'clock on Christmas Day, for a short service as well, as we thank God for His indescribable gift, the gift of His Son. So, let's stand and we'll sing. Heart the Herald Angels Sing.

I hope you know the time of the evening service this evening. It's at 6 p.m., and you're welcome to join us. It's not a long service, maybe last about an hour or so, but it would be great if you could join us this evening at 6. Let's just close in prayer, shall we?

[10 : 41] Amen. Our loving Heavenly Father, we will receive many gifts. And we thank you, Father, for family and for friends, and the love that they show us by giving us many good and unexpected gifts at times, pleasant gifts. But, Father, nothing can compare to the gift that you have given to the world, your Son. And we thank you, Lord, that He came to save us from our sin. We thank you that He lived, He died on the cross, He rose again. Today, He is seated at your right hand, and one day, He will return. Lord, we pray that we might be found believing and trusting in Him and walking with Him day by day. So, Father, just bless us. We thank you once again for the boys and girls, and the Sunday school teachers, and the musicians, for all the work that they have put in to make today such a good success. We pray, Father, your blessing upon them and upon their wider families.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Thank you, folks.