

THE PERFECT GIFT

Luke 2:10

INTRODUCTION

Christmas is a time for giving gifts. I like gifts, I gladly admit it. It's always fun to receive them. But buying gifts can be time-consuming and wearying. Some people, when they go out shopping for a Christmas gift, are seeking the perfect gift. That can too often be an elusive quest that results in frustration. Maybe that is why some gifts are anything but good gifts.

This Christmas season, we have been looking at God's message he sent via an angel to some shepherds on a hill outside of Bethlehem. God wanted them to know that he was sending to them, and to all the world a gift. The angel said to the shepherds:

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Luke 2:10 ^{ESV}

This good news was the news about Jesus being born. He was a gift from God to all the world.

This morning I want us to consider that Jesus is a gift for all people. In fact, he's the greatest gift you could ever receive—at Christmas, or at any other time.

Main Point: Jesus is the greatest gift for you and for all people.

I. JESUS IS A GIFT

What makes a gift, a gift? It's free. You don't have to pay for it. A gift is not a gift if you have to do anything for it.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is a gift from God to us.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 ^{NIV}

Jesus, and all that he accomplished, is wrapped up in this gift called eternal life. Eternal life is a quality of life that describes not only our relationship with God, but all the spiritual blessings we currently have as a result of being in God's family. And it is eternal life—it will be ours for all eternity.

The reason Jesus must be a gift is because no one could work for what he did, or pay money to buy it, or live the perfect life necessary to meet God's standards. But we didn't have to because God did it all for us. It was his gift to us. Paul says it this way:

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. Ephesians 2:8-9 ^{NLT}

Salvation—being saved from our sins and becoming a child of God—is nothing we could ever take any credit for. Jesus was the only person who did it all, for us, as a gift.

In fact, Paul calls Jesus an indescribable gift.

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! 2 Corinthians 9:15^{NV}

Paul was a brilliant theologian, trained under Gamaliel, the top rabbi in Jerusalem in his day. Paul was trying to express how magnificent this gift was but couldn't come up with a word that showed this supreme value of Jesus being the gift of God. So he had to make up a word, *indescribable*, to emphasize the magnitude of this gift. This word is not used anywhere else in the Bible. A variant of it is used by one Greek writer that is translated as “wonder beyond description.”

That's what Jesus is, a wonder beyond description.

II. JESUS IS A GIFT FOR ALL PEOPLE

Gifts that people want are usually age-specific and not ones that can be randomly given to anyone. If Sam, my 6-year-old grandson wanted to give me a special gift, in his eyes, it might be a Lego set of Harry Potter. He would be excited, but me, not so. In a similar way, when I assume Sam would want a great, top selling leadership book for Christmas, I would get this kind of reaction.

Can you suggest a gift that would be appropriate for anyone? Well, maybe homemade chocolate chip cookies would work. And, money might be for most, but I'm not sure a child would know what to do with money. But other than food and money, I can't come up with anything, except one thing: the gift of Jesus.

Jesus is a gift for all people.

For those of you who have taken Class 101, you might remember that I begin with sharing a picture of my church in San Jose and all the nationalities we had. I enjoy being with people of different nationalities.

We don't have that diversity here at Trinity yet, but I hope we will because we have 49 different languages spoken in the Nashua schools. That reflects at least 49 nations that people have come from, represented here in just the Nashua area. And Jesus is a gift for all of them.

I love this picture of heaven that John sees in:

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice:

*“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.” Revelation 7:9-10^{NIV}*

Jesus crosses ethnic lines: he is for all people—Americans, Brazilians, Kenyan's, Iraqi's—everyone.

The Apostle, Peter, had to be convinced that God loves everyone and doesn't show any partiality. It took a vision of God to convince Peter that God loved the Gentiles as much as the Jews. After going to the house of the Roman centurion, Cornelius, and hearing how an angel of God appeared to Cornelius, it says that:

Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism. Acts 10:34^{NIV}

God does not show favoritism because God loves all people.

Why is Jesus a gift for all people?

- **Because all have sinned**

One factor that all the human race has in common is the fact that we all have sinned. The apostle, Paul, summarized the human condition in:

What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. ...There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:9, 22-23^{NIV}

It doesn't matter what country you are from, what language you speak, we have all sinned, and are under the power of sin. Everyone falls short of God's standard of perfection and everyone needs this gift.

Jesus is also a gift for all people:

- **Because Jesus died for all people**

John says this about Jesus:

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:2^{NIV}

Because sin is universal, God wanted to offer a solution that is universal. And that is what Jesus is. He is the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. The words, *atoning sacrifice*, means a sacrifice that completely deals with our sins so that we can come into a relationship with God. We are forgiven by God and are now reconciled and friends with God. Jesus is this kind of perfect sacrifice.

III. JESUS IS A GIFT FOR ALL PEOPLE TO BE RECEIVED

If we are going to make this gift of God our own, we need to do three things.

First, we need to acknowledge that we have sinned and are in need of God's forgiveness.

- Acknowledge we have sinned and need God's forgiveness

And this requires humility and for some people it may be hard for them to admit.

E.g. Let's say you noticed that I have been gaining some weight, so you decide to give me a couple of gifts: the book, *The Daniel Plan: 40 Days to a Healthier Life*, along with a gym membership for a year. And maybe you thought that I could use some humility, so you gave me the book, *Humilitas: A Lost Key to Life, Love, and Leadership*.

Now, I would graciously receive your gifts, but obviously the gifts would come with an implied message! And I would need humility to be truly thankful for them.

I need humility if I am going to acknowledge that I need to be saved from my sins.

The second and third steps are seen in what John writes in the first chapter of his biography about Jesus and those who believed in him:

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1:12 ^{NIV}

The second step in the process is to:

- Believe in Jesus

to those who believed in his name,

We need to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. He is our Savior. We need to believe that God has done everything for us through Jesus in forgiving our sins.

Then, thirdly, if we are going to make God's forgiveness real in our lives, we need to receive God's gift.

- Receive God's gift

to all who did receive him

If you came up to me and gave me a check for \$1000, you wouldn't have to urge me to receive it! I would take it immediately!

But a gift is only a gift when a person receives it. This is the point of what John said in:

While Jesus died for all people, it is only those who receive this gift who will experience the forgiveness of God.

That brings us back to the main point:

Main Point: Jesus is the greatest gift for you and for all people.

And when we consider what our next steps should be, it's pretty easy to see what they are:

Next Steps:

1. Receive God's greatest gift

What do you do with a gift? You receive it. And that is really the point. For you, if you have not received Jesus as a gift, I encourage you to do so.

2. Enjoy all that comes with God's greatest gift

For those of us who already have, enjoy the gift. Enjoy your relationship with Jesus. Enjoy this indescribable gift of Jesus.