The Greatest Gift

(A Christmas Message)



Every year just prior to December 25, a lot of gift purchasing goes on around the world. Christmas for many wholesalers and retailers means big business. Christmas time is a multi-billion dollar occasion. No wonder the world so readily acknowledges a day that is supposed to relate somehow to Jesus Christ.

At Christmas time so many...

Spend money they do not have
On some people they don't even like
To buy gifts they may never use!

However, on that first Christmas whether or not it was December 25th, God the Father gave the greatest gift this world would ever receive. He gave the gift of His Son.

God gave...

Out of His abundant Riches, His greatest Gift
To people He does love
A gift that will benefit the one who receives it, both now and forever!

The Bible proclaims: "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Anything God gives is good. He is the giver of life and all good things. But God's greatest gift is the gift of the Messiah (Christ). Allow me to tell you why this gift is so great:

What makes God's gift of the Messiah the greatest gift ever given?

1. *The greatest gift was* promised hundreds of years before given

In the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures, God foretold…

<u>Who</u> this Messiah really was:
"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6) No wonder the angels praised & worshipped Jesus at His birth! (Luke 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:6)

<u>When</u> Messiah (Christ) the Prince would be born.
He would be in the world <u>483 years</u> after the decree of Artaxerxes (King of the Medo-Persian Empire) to rebuild the walls and city of Jerusalem (Daniel 9:25).

<u>How</u> Messiah would be born
"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a <u>virgin</u> shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (God with us)." (Isaiah 7:14)

<u>Where</u> Messiah would be born
"But thou, <u>Bethlehem</u> Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:2)

2. ***The greatest gift was given*** **to the most unworthy**

Sinners need a savior! This is God's view of people's condition:
"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes…For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:10-18; 23)

It is amazing that God would give something of such <u>infinite</u> value to such <u>unworthy</u> humanity.

3. ***The greatest gift was given*** **to meet the greatest need**

If humanity's greatest need was education, God would have sent an educator or scientist; If our greatest need was social reform, God would have sent us a good politician; If our greatest need was money, God would have sent a benevolent banker; but since our greatest need is forgiveness, God sent us a loving and merciful savior! You see, my friend, sin separates us from having a relationship with God. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." (Isaiah 59:2) And sin brings about the death of its victim. "For the wages (payment) of sin is death (includes physical, spiritual and eternal death) (Romans 6:23a).
"But the fearful (those afraid to confess Christ), and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers (sexually immoral), and sorcerers (drugs and witchcraft), and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

4. ***The greatest gift was given*** **at the greatest price**

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9)
The greatest act of humility in history was for the Messiah - Jesus to leave Heaven's glory and come into this sin-cursed earth, to live a humble life and die a humble death as a substitute payment for your sins and mine.
Jesus, the Messiah came to die for sinners. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:5-6) The Bible teaches us that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures:" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

5. *The greatest gift was given at* no cost to the receiver (it is free)

Not many things in life are free! But God's gift of everlasting life is offered freely to you.
"…the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)
"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)
Jesus said "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." (Revelation 21:6)

6. *The greatest gift was given to* last an eternity

Most of the gifts we receive in life are perishable or last just a short time. God's gift however, lasts a lifetime and will benefit us for eternity. God's gift is everlasting life! (John 3:16) This is a gift that never grows old and cannot ever be lost. The Lord Jesus promised this regarding those who belong to Him: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." (John 10:27-30). If you put your trust in Jesus Christ, you will be safe in His hand forever!

7. *The greatest gift* can be yours today

God proclaims "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). "…Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7 & 15). "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)

* When you ask to be saved, two things are absolutely necessary: "Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21)
a) REPENTANCE is to have a change of mind about sin, to change your mind from thinking your sin is not so bad and to realize that your sin is a horrible offense to a holy God. You must be willing to honestly admit your sinful condition. And you must turn from anything that is keeping you from coming to Christ. In Luke 13:3 Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
b) FAITH means to trust (depend upon) Jesus Christ alone to save you from sin and Hell and take you to Heaven. God's gift of eternal life will be given to you the very moment you are willing to believe on His Son – Jesus (John 3:36; 1 John 5:12).

If you will admit your sinful condition to God and realize your desperate need for His forgiveness, you can be saved today!

- Do you admit that you are a sinner deserving of God's Judgment?
- Do you believe the Gospel, that Christ died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sin?
- Do you believe that He arose from the dead and can now give you eternal life as a free gift?

If so, simply ask Jesus Christ to save you right now! Your eternity depends on what you do with God's offer. Gifts must be paid for, offered to someone, and then received. God's gift was paid for by His Son's death and shed blood. His gift is now offered to you freely. You must receive that gift today! Receive Him now! (John 1:12). The Lord Jesus is the "pearl of great price" and the greatest gift you will ever have!

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable (indescribable) gift." (2 Corinthians 9:15)

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