



Unboxing the Unli-Gifts Of Christmas

Dec 18 2022



WORSHIP

Today
Your Love
Prepare the Way of the
Lord

WELCOME

Take time to read
Luke 2:1-21 then
discuss how you
understand the passage
and what verses stand
out in your reading
and/or the message
delivered last Sunday.

WORD

Luke 2:10-11

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.

What gift would you like to receive this Christmas? Good health of your loved ones? A promotion? A trip to Israel for the whole family? Reunion with a loved one?

We all have gifts that we desire. But the best gifts are not based on what we want but on what we truly need: Like the spiritual blessings of the Word of God. These are the "unli-gifts" that last forever.

For instance, we can receive the blessing of peace from the knowledge that the Word of God will always come true.

1. God will do what He has promised no matter how impossible the circumstances.

Case in point: the prophet Micah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit proclaimed that the Messiah will come from Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). How could this be considering that Joseph, and Mary, who was in the final trimester of her pregnancy, were living in Nazareth? Besides, the angel did not tell them to go to Bethlehem.

Seems impossible, right?

Until a seemingly random decree was declared by the first Roman emperor Caesar Augustus (also known as Gaius Octavius or Octavian) at just the right moment. As we read in Luke 2:1-7:

"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

Thanksgiving

Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

Country and World

Repentance and salvation
Peace in Ukraine and healing for those infected by the virus

Church

CCF members would honour God & love God and make disciples.
Core, pastors and leaders.
Ministries and church worldwide

Personal Concerns

Share your problems and concerns with your group and pray for one another.



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This royal decree compelled Joseph and Mary to head towards Bethlehem.

This is just one of the many examples proving that God's Word is true and will always come true. And this gives famous Christians, like Dr. Charles Stanley, the confidence to say, "If God's Word is true, then you can relax."

So even though we are living in an era of global pandemics, geo-political tensions, energy crises, food shortages, retrenchments, recessions, higher rent prices – we know we can still relax in the presence of Jesus who has assured us: Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (Matthew 6:26)

Peace, after all, is not the absence of chaos, problems and uncertainties in this imperfect world. Rather it is the presence of God. Jesus Himself is the source of our peace.

Another "unli-gift" we can receive is the blessing of our true worth in Christ.

2. We are so valuable to God.

Luke 2:10-11 tells us that we are the very reason why Jesus came to earth. He came for us to save us:

"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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.'"

Sadly, the inability to see one's true worth in Jesus Christ is what has led countless people to despair and driven them to suicide. In fact, it has been discovered that among the early warning signs of suicide are negative self-talk that devalues one's self, i.e. "My family will be better off without me", "My life is meaningless anyway" and most tellingly, "If you don't love me, I'll kill myself".

That last statement is a sign that one has based one's self-worth entirely in the eyes of another person instead of in the eyes of our loving God. And we ourselves are not exempt from these thoughts; whenever we base part of our happiness on the number of social media likes that we get, we need to remember that this way of thinking will inevitably lead to basing our self-worth on how others see us.

Even the richest, most famous, most successful people are not exempt from these thoughts. We've heard story after story of celebrities who seem to have it all and





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yet still fall prey to suicide because they have based their sense of self on their looks, their accomplishments, their position, their status or their power – temporal things that are easy to lose.

Our true sense of importance should be based on knowing that God the Father loved us so much that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16) This He did while we were yet His enemies, while we were yet sinners, while we were yet condemned to an eternity in hell if we continued to refuse to repent and refuse to accept the free gift of salvation that Jesus Christ offers.

As Romans 5:6-8 puts it: “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Remember how priceless your soul is because of how much God has to repay (His very life when He lived as a man on earth!) to redeem you from your sins. (1 Corinthians 6:20, Ephesians 1:7-8). Remember you are valuable because of what you can become in Christ (Ephesians 1:11-12).

Lastly, one of the best “unli-gifts” we can receive from God is when He chooses not to give us what we want but to give us what we truly need, which is to save us from our sins.

3. God knows exactly our greatest need.

Luke 2:12 narrates:

And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

Ever wondered how it was a sign for the shepherds? According to Bible scholars, these are no ordinary shepherds but Levitical ones who are assigned to care for lambs that will be sacrificed in the temple. Levitical shepherds make sure that sacrificial lambs are perfect and without blemish. In order to protect the lambs from the slightest scratch or injury, the shepherds wrap them in swaddling cloths and place them in a manger. Thus, these Levitical shepherds understood the significance of the sign – that this seemingly helpless infant will one day be the sacrificial Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Jesus is the answer to the question: What is man’s greatest need? We need to be





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saved from our sins. And that is something that only our Lord Jesus Christ can do and has already done once and for all time. Knowing this gives us our greatest gratitude which leads to our greatest joy.

What about you? Do you realize that you, also, have sinned? When you die and face the absolutely holy, absolutely sinless, perfectly righteous God, you will then realize that

you deserve eternal condemnation for your sins. Because only a corrupt Judge will let you off the hook without punishing you. But here's the good news: Jesus already took upon Himself all the punishment that you deserve for all your sins by dying on the cross. And all you need to do is to accept His free gift of salvation. After all, God who loves you also longs to forgive you and to reconcile with you which is why He did everything in His power to save you from your sins.

By accepting Jesus Himself as your personal Lord and Saviour you are receiving God's greatest gift for you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you recognize some of the unlimited gifts that comes along with the arrival of Jesus Christ in the world or in your life?
2. Is there anything that you worry today or that you fear in the future? Can you share how do you think you can experience peace through the coming/presence of Jesus Christ in your life?
3. How is the arrival of Jesus Christ a great joy to you?

