

God's Gift To The World -- 2 Corinthians 9:15

It is that season of the year when our thoughts turn to **gift giving**, for Christmas is distinctively the season for the giving & receiving gifts. **How are you doing with your Christmas shopping?** I am glad to report that I have mine all done for this year! Of course, **I must confess** that my Christmas gift buying is limited! My responsibility is to be sure that I have bought a gift for Jeannette. **She does all the rest!**

A little boy wrote a thank you note to his maiden aunt for the Christmas gift of a **pincushion**: **"Just what I wanted, but not very much."**

The giving of gifts at Christmas is a beautiful idea! It is based, of course, on the fact that Christmas celebrates God's "unspeakable" gift to us. The Apostle Paul reminds us of this in the words of **2 Corinthians 9:15**, when he writes of this amazing & wonderful gift, saying: **"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."** Christmas is a time for each of us to reflect upon **that supreme Divine Gift to all mankind! What is that gift?** It is the gift of God's only Son, Jesus Christ!

700 years before Jesus was born in the flesh, the Prophet Isaiah declared: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is **given**: & his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (9:6). The best known Bible verse in the world declares: "For God so loved the world, that he **gave** his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). In John 3:16 we have the greatest Giver -- God; ... the greatest Gift -- his only begotten Son; ... the greatest reason for giving -- God so loved; ... & the greatest result of giving -- should not perish, but have everlasting life.

When Jesus was talking to the woman at the well, He said to her, "If you only knew **the gift** God has for you, & who I am, you would ask me, & I would give you living water" (John 4:10). Romans 6:23 says "The wages of sin is death; but **the gift** of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 8:32 tells us, "God did not spare even his own Son, but **gave him up for us all.**" It is therefore no wonder that Paul wrote: **"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."**

Adjectives & adverbs are often abused: People will say things like "I am terribly pleased;" or "awfully happy;" "horribly beautiful" We say something is "marvelous" when in reality it is only rather "nice." But when Paul uses the word **unspeakable**, in our text, he picked this adjective with care. For "**unspeakable**" is the only adjective which fits; it means that **this gift**, of which we speak, is **too wonderful for words!**

I can well imagine Paul pausing & pondering, before he selected this adjective. Paul, who was seldom lost for words, thought to himself, "there is no word adequate enough to describe it; it is too wonderful for words; it is inexpressible; indescribable; beyond words; it is an **unspeakable gift.**" This indescribable gift is such no person can **conceive**, much less **declare**, how great a gift it truly is! But let me share several thoughts with you this morning, about **this greatest Gift ever given**: --

1. This Unspeakable Gift is an Unparalleled Gift!

No gift in the world compares with God's gift of salvation through His only begotten Son! Jesus spoke to this issue when He declared: "What would it profit a man, if he were to gain the whole world, but lose his own soul in the process? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?"

(Matthew 16:26).

All the gifts given since the beginning of time, & all that will be given until the return of Christ, do not begin to compare with God's gift to you & I, the gift of "his only begotten Son." **To have this Gift is to have eternal life!** The Bible says, "Whoever has God's Son has life, whoever does not have his Son does not have life" (1 John 5:12).

If it were possible for one person to own everything there is in the world, the fact remains that when he dies, **he leaves it all!** Someone asked the question concerning a wealthy man who had died by asking: "**How much did he leave?**" The answer was **Everything!** On the other hand, you may not own one single item of this world's goods; yet if you have Jesus Christ in your heart when you die, you have gained everything worth having, for you have everlasting life in Heaven where there is no sickness, no pain, no sorrow, no death, no sighing, & no separation! **God's Gift is unparalleled!** To have Jesus Christ is to have every-thing worth having in this life, & the life to come!

There was a restaurant which became famous for its good food. One day a very wealthy man heard about it, so he went there to eat. When he entered the restaurant, he asked for a private room, but none was available. He called the owner; he bought the restaurant at the cost of \$250,000, then had all the people leave & asked the waiter to serve his meal. When he had finished, he gave the restaurant to the waiter, who eventually started a chain of restaurant under the same name.

Upon reading that story, my immediate thought was, **Wow, what a gift for a waiter to receive, the complete restaurant!** But that gift, my dear friends, does not even begin to compare with God's **Unparalleled Gift**, the Gift of God's one & only Son! The Song writer puts it this way: "*Was ev'r a gift like the Savior given? -- No, not one! no, not one!*"

2. This Unspeakable Gift is an Unlimited Gift!

By that I mean, it is for **everyone!** I do not agree with those who think salvation is only for an elected few. The Bible says: "God so loved **the world** ... that **whosoever** believes." Any grade school child will tell you **the world** means every person, & **whosoever** means even you!

The Bible is filled with verses that tell us that Jesus Christ died for **all** mankind; that He was the sinner's Substitute; & that He atoned for the sins of the **whole world!** In Isaiah 53:6, we read: "We **all** like sheep have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way; & the Lord has laid on him the iniquity (the sins) of us **all.**" There are two '**alls**' in that verse: the **First** has to do with the universal fact of sin, "We **all** like sheep have gone astray." All have sinned & come short of the glory of God! But the **Second** "all" in that verse is that "the Lord has laid on him the iniquity (sins) of us **all.**" If the **1st all** includes everyone who has ever lived, or ever will live, then the **2nd all** includes the same crowd!

No one will ever look out of Hell, up to Heaven, & say: "Dear God, I wanted to be saved, but **You** didn't give Your Son for **me.**" No, the death of Jesus Christ on the cross was **sufficient** for **all**, but it is only **efficient** to those who believe! You may die without the Savior; you may miss Heaven; but it won't be because you **could not** be saved, for salvation is for **everyone! It is an unlimited gift!**

At this Christmas season, **there are some gifts that are available only to the very wealthy!** It is highly unlikely, that anyone will give me a brand new 2015 Cadillac for Christmas this year! Now don't misunderstand me. If you are prone to make such a gift, I will accept it! My favorite color is red!

I am just saying that not everyone can afford such a gift! It is likely, however, that some where in the world, someone will receive a beautiful, luxury automobile for Christmas this year! But diamond rings, beautiful homes, & many other luxury items are not available to all, to everyone!

But **God's Gift is unlimited!** It is available to the heathen in the most remote part of the world, who has never heard the Gospel! It is also available to the alcoholic, the drug addict, the murderer, the immoral! It is available to the uneducated; the wealthy & the poor! **Jesus is just as willing to save the down-in-outer as He is the up-in-outer!**

Salvation was available to the woman at the well, who had been married five times, & was currently living with a man who was not her husband. It was available at the pool of Bethesda, to the man who had been lame for 38 years! And it is available to **you** today, whatever your situation! There is one Gift that **all** of us can receive this Christmas, that is the Gift of God, the gift of His only Son to all who will believe! It is available to everyone, **it is an unlimited gift!**

3. This Unspeakable Gift is an Unmerited Gift!

It has been said that everything we have, we received one of three ways: we earned it, or someone gave it to us, or we stole it! But my friends, there is no way you or I can earn salvation! Nothing anyone can do can earn salvation! The Bible says: "It is by grace you have been saved through faith, & this not from yourself; it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8).

I feel sorry for the poor mis-guided soul who is trying to earn his/her salvation, either by a good life, or by good works! *"I would not work my soul to save, for this my Lord hath done; But I would work like any slave, for love of His dear Son!"*

Often at a funeral we will hear the preacher say: "So-&-so has gone on to his **reward.**" That may sound good, but my dear friends, **heaven is not a reward; heaven is a gift!** You are not saved by **trying**, but by **trusting!** You are not saved by **doing**, but by resting in what has already been **done!** You don't spell salvation "D-O" -- you spell it "D-O-N-E." **Religion** is man reaching up to God, but **salvation** is God reaching down to man!

In this matter of salvation & heaven, all you need is **Jesus!** He said: "I am **the way, the truth, & the life;** no one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Many religions teach that Jesus Christ is necessary, but they add other stipulations, such as being baptized, keeping the Ten Commandments, keeping the Golden Rule, on & on & on. The Bible not only teaches that Jesus Christ is **necessary**, but it also teaches that He is **enough!**

To add anything to salvation, other than the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross, is to say that His death was **not sufficient payment** for our sins!

*My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood & righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand,*

All other ground is sinking sand.

4. This Unspeakable Gift is an Unclaimed Gift -- by so many!

Preachers often use different expressions to state the same thought: "Trust Christ as Savior." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." "Claim Christ as your Savior!" They all mean the same thing! But the sad, sad fact is that so many, many people have never yet **claimed** this unparalleled, unlimited, unmerited Gift that is the Gift of God's Son!

There may even be some here this morning who have not yet trusted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord & Savior! But the Bible says, "As many as receive Him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

Think how you would feel, if you made great sacrifice to give a present to a loved one, then when Christmas morning came, the loved one never opened the package! Christmas Day came & went, but the loved one never opened the gift! Of course you would be sad; your heart would be crushed.

I wonder how the loving heart of God must feel when so many, many thousands of people, go year after year, & never accept, never claim, the Gift God provided 2000 years ago at Calvary! **A gift may either be received, or refused!** I urge you, dear friend, to trust Christ as your Savior today! Before you open a single Christmas gift this year, make sure you receive the greatest Gift of all, the Lord Jesus Christ!

I have been thinking about **how very personal** this wonderful & amazing Gift is! It is **tailor made** for you, & for you, & for you! You can receive & claim a Gift that was personally provided **for you**, as you place your faith & trust in God's one & only Son, Jesus Christ! Won't you today claim this unclaimed Gift! Everlasting life & an eternal home in heaven are yours for trusting & believing in Jesus Christ, God's Gift to you personally! **Don't let it go unclaimed!**

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