

Revealed - The Gift

Christmas is this Saturday! I hope you guys are all ready. Some of you (probably guys) will be in the store on Christmas Eve looking for that perfect gift for someone.

There's always this decision you have to make...do I get them something they want or something they need?

But whatever you give them, this free gift, you just hope they appreciate it once it's revealed!

In our Christmas series "Revealed" last week we looked at The Plan which the angel Gabriel revealed to Mary. It was God's plan to come, born of a virgin to save His people. And today we look at The Gift.

Think of all the gifts you have received in your lifetime...and which was the greatest. The greatest may not have even cost the most or come from the person closest to you. It's probably just the gift that made the greatest impact on your life at that time...so the memory is great.

When I was young I used to like to guess my gifts. I liked to feel them and shake them. I just wanted to know. But as I got older, I don't like to guess ahead of time because I like the reveal.

So when you put together a great, memorable gift, and a great reveal or unwrapping. My favorite memory is when I was a child, I wanted the Jordan vs Bird Nintendo game. And as I opened all my gifts, I only had one left and it wasn't shaped like a nintendo game. As I began to unwrap it, part of the box was revealed...it was a toaster. I was like 9 years old! But once I had the box, I began to realize that it was very light and my parents were smiling. I opened the box and it was Jordan vs Bird.

A great gift. A great reveal.

And as much as I loved that gift and reveal, it doesn't compare to the gift that God reveals to us through this Christmas story in the scriptures!

If you're not familiar with the story of the wise men, these men were astrologers, they gave counsel to kings. And they see this star in the sky, it's something new, it's the sign of a savior, they follow it to King Herod. They ask him where this new king is. But they are in the wrong place. Herod tells them to go find this child and then let him know where the child is at so he can worship Him too.

And this is where we pick it up...

Matthew 2:10-11 (NKJV)

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

As God revealed His gift to the world, He shows us this amazing piece of the puzzle here with these wise men.

Think about wise men. I know some wise men, some that are sitting right here in this room. I also know some wise guys...you know what I mean? But God uses these wise men. Why?

These men were not Jews. They were wise according to the world. And I believe that God used these men as a prophetic picture of worldly people that would one day find Jesus!

Proverbs 9:10 (NKJV)

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

This is really the path to true religion that leads to salvation.

*“The fear of the Lord is the **beginning** of wisdom.”*

What is the fear of the Lord? It is really two parts: one part is a reverence of God’s majesty or greatness. The other part is the uneasiness and dread of His wrath toward sin.

The Proverb says these are the beginning of wisdom. These are the things that make you think about God. They lead you to seek him.

This is the wise men. They see the star and begin to pursue the path. Why?

“The knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

When you arrive at the destination of knowing who Jesus is...that is understanding...this understanding is a spiritual knowing, and awareness of God’s gift to mankind.

And this is where they wise men find themselves as they come to the house where Jesus is.

Matthew 2:11 (NKJV)

And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

They see the young Child...He was about 2 years old at this point in time. And what do these wise men do? They fell down and worshiped Him.

I don't know if you realize the significance of what these wise men did. They fell down before Jesus. So they willingly move themselves from a high position to a low position. From the pride of being "**the wise men**" to the humility of encountering the Savior.

They worshiped Him and they gave Him gifts. And these gifts reveal God's gift because they show us a prophetic picture of Jesus. They tell us about this Child.

Gold was a gift presented to kings. By giving gold to the family, they were declaring that this Child is the King.

Frankincense was a sweet-smelling incense that was burned in the temple as a fragrant worship offering to God. They would burn incense before the altar representing the praises and prayers that would rise up unto the Lord. They laid frankincense before the Child as they bowed in worship because they believed this Child was divine. He was God — in the flesh.

Myrrh was a burial spice used in embalming dead bodies as it's sweet smell helped hold back the smell of rot and decay. I bet you have never seen myrrh brought to a baby shower. Myrrh was not only a burial spice but also was believed to have some medicinal purposes. As they lay the myrrh at his feet in worship, their gift proclaimed that this baby did not come to live but ultimately came to die and give his life for many. Jesus would be the Healer, the Great Physician and the Wonderful Savior.

I love how the gifts of the wisemen point to the beauty of Jesus. From infancy, the gifts speak and declare that Jesus is King, He is God, and He will save.

These gifts point to the fact that Jesus is actually the gift. The very first Christmas gift was Jesus. God gave the first gift when His Son came to the earth to pursue a sinful and separated humanity, reveal the nature of God through His life, and to die on the cross for the sins of the world.

John 3:16 (NKJV)

For God so loved the world that He **gave** His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

HE GAVE.

Church, God gave His Son. It's not just that He sent Him.

Don't picture it like He gave Him to the world without a specific recipient in mind.

He gave Jesus to you! And you! And you! And me!

Jesus is the gift. Not what He can do. But just He, Himself is the gift.

The Christian faith all starts with a gift from God to us in the person of Jesus Christ. He was and still is the Perfect Gift. God knew exactly what we needed.

“If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer. But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior”

~ Charles Sell, Professor and Author

The very definition of gift is spelled out in the person of Jesus Christ.

To show favor toward someone - God's goodness

Honor an occasion - The moment you believe, angels will rejoice in heaven

Make a gesture of assistance - He is always with you, and always will be

Something given voluntarily without payment in return -

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

God gives you even the faith to believe. And the grace is that Jesus paid what you could not...the price for your sin.

The greatest gift wasn't placed under a tree...He was nailed to a tree.

But I like to think of Jesus as the gift that keeps on giving because He's not on that tree anymore. He rose from the grave and defeated the devil! He sent His Spirit to dwell in us, and lead and guide us. And there is a day that's already written in history...when He is coming back for His church!

Jesus is King, He is God, and He will save.

Christmas time is the time of year to refocus our hearts on the gracious gift that God has given to us, and it is through our celebration that we demonstrate our joy for that gift.

Jesus truly is the greatest gift!