

I'm a terrible gift giver – but I'm a great gift receiver

- Germans give gifts on Christmas eve... they can't wait!
- Giving expresses love: God so loved that He gave...
- We get excited to open presents, but there is also that reality that the excitement fades: The batteries run out, we set it aside, we stop thinking about it....
- A funny thing about being human: We genuinely love getting gifts, but the excitement wears off, and we inevitably wonder what's next?
- Not because you are bad or ungrateful. It's because **your heart is bigger than any box under the tree.**

You have been made in a way that your heart longs for more!

GOD:

- As I was reflecting on the Gifts at Christmas, I thought of the **shepherds**.
- Imagine the Shepherds for a minute. Have you taken some time this Christmas to be thankful that you're not a Shepherd?
- Sheep may be cute, but they are so noisy. Also a boring job. The exact same every day. Sheep, grass, sheep, grass, sheep grass.
- To be fair, a lot of jobs today are boring and repetitive like that too.
- Suddenly ANGELS appear!!
- They didn't bring presents, but a gift of **Good news of great joy!**

LUKE Chapter 2:8-20

10 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. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

Shepherds didn't want toys and gifts. What they really longed for was rescue and hope. **Roman rule** had heavy taxes and oppression.

- Isreal was waiting **hundreds of years**.
- **THIS CAN'T BE IT. >> THEY LONGED FOR MORE**

16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

- They might have wondered, 'how can a baby be the answer to the "More" we are looking for?'
- But they knew a messiah would come. But this was even far more than the messiah they expected > and they had no idea.
- **This wasn't just a baby.** This was the God who made the stars, shrinking himself down to fit into our world.

YOU:

- Remember how we said the excitement for toys wears off? That's because toys are temporary, but **your heart was made for forever**.
- Ecclesiastes 3:11 says God put 'eternity in our hearts.' In the context, the author is saying that the world provides a lot of joy and things for us to do, but our hearts long for things beyond this earth.

- That means you have a heart the size of the ocean, but the world only has buckets of water. You can't fill an ocean with a bucket.
- **This is why Christmas is the happiest news ever.** We don't have to squeeze satisfaction out of our presents or our jobs anymore.
- God knew we were hungry for something real. We long for more than just a fun day off, or a party, or a good day of work. So, He didn't send a thing; He sent Himself.

Pastor Serge shared last week that **“God Can’t give bigger than himself”**

- You cannot fill an eternal hole with temporary things. So Christmas is the Eternal One coming to us."
- He’s the best gift!

WE:

- So tomorrow morning, **enjoy your presents! Eat the turkey! Laugh with your family!** As Ecclesiastes says: eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of your labor, for these are gifts from God. They are beautiful!
- AND while we enjoy these things, remember they are just little sparks of joy! Jesus is the Fire!
- We are going to sing some more songs together and reflect on this tremendous gift of God coming to earth.
- Our last song, silent night we will light our candles together.
- The candle is amazing because when you share its light to someone else, you don't lose your own flame. The light grows. That is what Jesus is like. He is the 'More' that never runs out."
- It reminds us that the 'More' we have been looking for isn't a what, it's a Who.

- The world is full of **vapor**—things that fade. But the Light of the World has come, and He does not fade.
- As we sing our songs, ponder that the longing for more that we have in our hearts, has an answer.
- The Christ child is here, and He is enough
- Give your heart to him

Let's pray.

Thank you for the gifts of love, joy, laughter, good food, presents, and family.

We are grateful, but not unaware that we still long for more.

You made us to long for more than earthly things so that we would long for you.

And you delivered with the best gift ever. Yourself.

You lived, died, and rose again so that we could be forgiven and experience a restored relationship with you Jesus.

If there are some here who have never placed their trust in you and not really considered this great gift, would you speak to their hearts tonight Holy Spirit, and may you reveal yourself to them right now.

Help us all to continue to be grateful and reflect on the greatest gift this Christmas.

In Jesus' name, Amen

Benediction

Covie:

"Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end." (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

That eternity we long for is not a concept; it is a person. The child in the manger is the Ancient of Days...

Serge:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given... And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

Our prayer for you is that as you leave here tonight, you would embrace the joy of this season. Enjoy the good food, laughter with family, and the warmth of home. Receive them as precious gifts from a Father who loves you.

But if, in the quiet moments, you sense that familiar ache for something more, let it draw you to the One who made you.

Celebrate the holiday but also encounter the Savior. Whether you have known Him for years or are wondering about Him for the first time tonight, may you find your rest in Jesus. He is the only one who can fill the eternity in your heart and satisfy you completely.

Justin:

Thank you all for joining us this evening.

If you would like to **explore more** about the true reason we celebrate Christmas or take the **next steps** in your faith journey, we have some free **resources** on the table in the foyer for you to help yourself to.

Also we have some **light refreshments** in the foyer if you have some time to stay and fellowship And the team will be **singing** a couple more songs for anyone who would like to stay and enjoy those.

And if you **have to run**, we understand and **we at SVBC wish you all a very merry Christ Centred Christmas.**

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