

What Did You Get For Christmas? *John 3:10-17*

Topic: Giving

Aim: To show that God has given to us, by His grace three great gifts.

1. When I was a child, "What did you get for Christmas?" was always the question of the day among my buddies the day after Christmas. All of us were a little pre-occupied with the gifts we received.
2. Yet as we mature we come to understand more the value and power of giving.
3. I am reminder of the following story:

A college friend of mine named Paul received a new automobile from his brother as a pre-Christmas present. On Christmas Eve, when Paul came out of his office, a street urchin was walking around the shiny new car, admiring it. "Is this your car, mister?" he asked. Paul nodded. "My brother gave it to me for Christmas."

The boy looked astounded. "You mean your brother gave it to you, and it didn't cost you nothing? Boy, I wish--" He hesitated, and Paul knew what he was going to wish. He was going to wish he had a brother like that. But what the lad said jarred Paul all the way down to his heels, "I wish," the boy went on, "that I could be a brother like that."

Paul looked at the boy in astonishment, then impulsively asked, "Would you like to ride in my automobile?" "Oh, yes! I'd love that!" After a short ride the urchin turned, and with his eyes aglow said, "Mister, would you mind driving in front of my house?" Paul smiled a little. He thought he knew what the lad wanted. He wanted to show his neighbors that he could ride in a big automobile. But Paul was wrong again. "Will you stop right where those two steps are?" the boy asked.

He ran up the steps. Then, in a little while, Paul heard him coming back, but he was not coming fast. He was carrying his little polio-crippled brother. He sat him down on the bottom step, then sort of squeezed up against him and pointed to the car. "There she is, Buddy, just like I told you upstairs. His brother gave it to him for Christmas, and it didn't cost him a cent. And someday I'm gonna give you one just like it. Then you can see for yourself all the pretty things in the Christmas windows that I've been trying to tell you about."

Paul got out and lifted the little lad to the front seat of his car. The shining-eyed older brother climbed in beside him and the three of them began a memorable holiday ride. That Christmas Eve Paul learned what Jesus meant when He said, "There is more happiness in giving." C. Roy Angell

4. I want this morning to think of three great gifts we have received from God and ask all of us to think about what we are doing with those gifts?

I. The gift of Jesus, His son, John 3:10-17.

A. Remember that Jesus came to this world to suffer and die as an act of Divine love toward the world.

1. Note the words, "that He gave..."
2. Jesus came not of compulsion, but by free will motivated by love.
3. John 10:11-18. Jesus was not forced to go to the cross. He went willingly.
4. Compare: Galatians 1:3-5.

B. Can we even begin to comprehend the magnitude of that great gift?

1. Along with that gift came something else.
2. John 1:12-13. Did you catch it?
3. "To them He gave the right to become children of God..."
4. We often hear that our political rights are not free. But our spiritual rights as a child of God came at a great cost as well, a cost we could never pay. Song: *He Paid A Debt*, # 859

II. The church which His death purchased.

A. Have you ever made a purchase and later learned there was more to your purchase than you thought?

B. But look at what Jesus' death purchased for us, the church, but more.

1. Matthew 16:17-19. Compare Acts 20:28.
2. That purchase price also redeemed (bought back) us from our sins, Romans 3:21-26, Colossians 1:9-14, 1 Peter 1:17-21.
3. Again, such a cost we could never pay.

III. The Bible, His revealed will, that tells us all about it!

A. Were it not for the Bible, what would we know of God's will for us?

1. What would we know of the gift of His son?
2. What would we know of His church?
3. What would we know of salvation His sacrifice provides?

B. We hold in our hands the marvel of the ages.

1. It is the very mind of God! To know that He has blessed us with such a gift, boggles the mind.
2. I am grateful He gave us the gift of self revelation. We treasure such from others. What of God

IV. Now the question.

A. What are we doing with those gifts?

1. I remember one occasion when we gave Joey a gift and how disappointed we were when he played with the box more than the gift itself.
2. Are we just playing with the box or are we using these to full advantage?

B. But more importantly are we sharing them with others or hoarding them to ourselves?

1. Shortly after World War II came to a close, Europe began picking up the pieces. Much of the Old Country had been ravaged by war and was in ruins. Perhaps the saddest sight of all was that of little orphaned children starving in the streets of those war-torn cities. Early one chilly morning an American soldier was making his way back to the barracks in London. As he turned the corner in his jeep, he spotted a little lad with his nose pressed to the window of a pastry shop. Inside the cook was kneading dough for a fresh batch of doughnuts. The hungry boy stared in silence, watching every move. The soldier pulled his jeep to the curb, stopped, got out, and walked quietly over to where the little fellow was standing. Through the steamed-up window he could see the mouth-watering morsels as they were being pulled from the oven, piping hot. The boy salivated and released a slight groan as he watched the cook place them onto the glass-enclosed counter ever so carefully. The soldier's heart went out to the nameless orphan as he stood beside him. "Son, would you like some of those?" The boy was startled. "Oh, yeah--I would!" The American stepped inside and bought a dozen, put them in a bag, and walked back to where the lad was standing in the foggy cold of the London morning. He smiled, held out the bag, and said simply: "Here you are." As he turned to walk away, he felt a tug on his coat. He looked back and heard the child ask quietly: "Mister, are you God?" We are never more like God than when we give. --James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), p. 304.

1. It truly is more blessed to give than to receive.

2. I am glad God has blessed us with these three wonderful gifts. Lets be challenged to share them with others in the coming days.

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