

8. True and Better Gift

Christmas Eve (15 minutes)

[4] 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, [5] to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. [6] And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. [7] And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

[8] And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. [9] And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. [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." [13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, [14] "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

[15] When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." [16] And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. [17] And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. [18] And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. [19] But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. [20] And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (Luke 2:4-20 ESV)

1. Introduction - story from being a little kid and looking forward to that one gift...
 - a. c.f. A Christmas Story → daydreaming about the gift
 - b. The world has a lot of views on "what Christmas is all about"
 - i. Family, food, more stuff
 - c. For many, they might even know that Christmas is about Jesus, but what does that really mean?
 - i. We tend to get lost in the season → the routine; all that we don't have;
 - d. Honestly, we miss the point of it all
2. *And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:17)*
 - a. When the Bible talks about the world, it refers to this broken, messed up place
 - i. Literally, it uses that word to describe the kingdom of Satan
 - b. The Good News is that the kingdom of Satan is passing away
 - i. The bad news is that most of our desires are still connected to it

c. We crave things that are passing away.

- i. Toys break. Clothes wear out. Food goes rotten. Money gets spent.
- ii. We crave all those temporary things instead of that which doesn't fade
- d. But we don't have to crave gifts that will fade, we can crave a better gift
 - i. The Bible even tells us how - do the will of God...
 - ii. But what IS the will of God?

3. *[16] "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. [17] For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. [18] Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (John 3:16-18)*

a. Before I can tell you what the will of God is, I need you to realize a few things.

b. God loves you - even in your mess.

- i. The "world" spoken of in 3:16 is that same world that is passing away.
- ii. God shows unbelievable love to rebels, fools, and God-haters by sending his only Son, Jesus, to rescue them.

c. God wants to clean up your mess.

- i. He came to clean it up, to forgive you, to love you
- ii. All you have to do is his will...

d. The will of God is that you believe in him.

- i. Belief in God means to stop believing in X and start believing in him
- ii. To put your eggs in that basket entirely
- iii. To trust in Jesus for _____
- iv. There is no other way to eternal life.
- v. There is no greater form of love.
- vi. There is no greater gift than eternal life. Why?

e. Eternal life is about knowing and enjoying God and his Son

- i. It is sharing a relationship with the Godhead
- ii. Even forgiveness, 'no condemnation', is just a means to an end

4. Conclusion

- a. This Christmas, I could tell you to count your blessings, to tell you about all the gifts that you take for granted → from living in this country vs. Syria to more
 - i. We don't see it as we just stare at all that we don't have
- b. God gives us lots of things, but there is a greater gift. Himself.
 - i. That is what Christmas is all about - emmanuel, God with us

c. The greatest gift is not the gift itself, but the giver.

d. It's not about the presents, but his presence.

e. No matter what you get or don't get tomorrow under that tree, **a relationship with God, purchased through his blood on the cross, is the true and better gift.**

- i. All else will fade away. One thing remains - his love.