

Christmas 2015

"The Greatest Gift Ever Given"

John 3:16

Introduction: Today as we gather together here we come to celebrate one of the greatest events in all of history. It is the birth of Jesus Christ. Now the reason His birth is one of the greatest events in all of the world's history is because the Baby who was born that night in Bethlehem was the Son of God. He was sent here by the Father in order to be the Savior of the world.

Now by the time Friday rolls around there will be a lot of gifts that will be given. Some will be too big and others too small. Some will not last beyond the day they are given and some will last for years. Some will be a delight and others will be re-gifted next year at this very time.

I took some time and I searched out some elaborate gifts are available for Christmas this year.

✓ **Virgin Galactic Space Trip**

Price: \$200,000 - Two years from now there will be a journey deep into space. They started with 500 seats and 450 have already sold. There are 50 sets left.

✓ **Zafirro Razor**

Price: \$100,000 - Promises the closest shave you will ever get.

✓ **High Heels By Christopher Michael Shellis**

Price: \$218,407 - Made from solid gold with 2,200 cut diamonds to trim them out.

✓ **Dream Folly Tent**

Price: \$75,000 - This is a tent for "glamping". What is glamping? It is glamorous camping.

✓ **Amour, Amour Dog Collar**

Price: \$3.2 million - This dog collar is made from crocodile leather and has imbedded in it 1,600 diamonds.

These are just a few of the gifts which people will buy for Christmas. But these gifts pale in comparison to the Greatest Gift that was ever given. Let me show you a verse that will allow us to see the Greatest Gift that was ever given.

John 3:16

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The Greatest Gift was given 2000 years ago when God gave His only begotten Son to be the Savior of the world.

Today I want to share with you why Jesus is the Greatest Gift that was ever given and I want to show you the benefits of receiving God's Gift. Jesus is the Greatest Gift ever given because:

1. Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Now in order to understand this point we need to look at:

A. Man's Greatest Need

You may be able to think of many needs in the world in which we live in but there is one that rises far above all others.

I want to read you a poem that will explain man's greatest need very well.

God sent us a Savior

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.

This says it all! Man's greatest need is forgiveness of sin. Our greatest need is not world peace or the cure for cancer, though all of this would be great. It is not a need for someone to fix our economy but that too would be nice.

Our greatest need is that someone would pay our sin debt.

You see we could have world peace, we could have the cure for cancer, and someone could rise up and fix our economy but all of this would mean nothing if when we die we would go to hell. Let me show you some verses.

Romans 3:23

²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

We have all sinned and there are absolutely no exceptions!

Romans 3:10

There is none righteous, no, not one:

Not only are we all sinners but God requires that all sin must be paid for before we die.

Romans 6:23a

²³ For the wages of sin is death;

Every one of our sins **MUST** be paid for before we die. The sin debt must be paid. But there is more. It is impossible for us to pay the sin debt.

Isaiah 64:6

⁶ But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

God tells us that our good works are good for nothing when it comes to paying for our sin.

So our greatest need is the forgiveness of sin. Nothing else matters.

Now watch what Jesus did for us.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

⁴ And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves. He paid our entire sin debt.

So, He is the Greatest Gift because His finished work on the cross was the full payment for our sins.

2. Jesus is the Captain of our salvation.

Hebrews 2:9-10

⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

¹⁰ For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Here we see that the writer of Hebrews refers to Jesus as the Captain of our salvation. The meaning behind this is absolutely amazing.

The word "Captain" here is the word "archegos". Let me show you the meaning of the word then I will bring it into our lives where we can understand what it means to us.

"one that takes the lead in any thing and thus affords an example, a predecessor in a matter, pioneer..."

Jesus is the pioneer of our salvation. He is the One Who took the lead. But how does that benefit you and me?

Illustration:

Back in Jesus day almost every ship that sailed the seas had a man on the ship who was called the "archegos". He was a man who was a strong swimmer and when the ship encountered a storm and could not make it through they would sail the ship toward the closest shoreline. They could only get so close because the ship would bottom out or get into the rocks and get beat to pieces.

As they sailed toward the shore the "archegos" would stand on the front of the ship with a rope tied around his waist and the other end attached to the ship. When they got as close to the shore as they could, the "archegos" would dive in and he would swim through the stormy waters and he would secure the rope to something solid on the shore then all of those on the ship would exit the ship and make their way along the rope safely to shore. He was the "pioneer" because he was the first to go through the stormy waters and provide a way for others to make their way safely through.

Application:

Now listen to the application: 2000 years ago Jesus, "our Archegos" dove into the stormy waters of death. For 3 days He made His way through and on the 3rd day He resurrected out of the stormy waters of death.

Now He has made a way for those who know Him as their Savior to also enter into death and have nothing to fear. Death is not the end but it is part of a better plan of God for you and me.

What is the better plan of God for His children?

God's plan is that we will enter into the stormy waters of death and then when He returns we will be resurrected. But we will not have the same bodies.

Listen to this: Man does all he can to extend his life and if he could he would do something that would cause him to live forever. But that would be tragic because these bodies are sinful and decaying. God has a better plan: His plan is that we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and then we will one day die and then we will be resurrected and when we are we will have a GLORIFIED BODY.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-16

¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Now when this resurrection takes place we will be given new bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:51-55

⁵¹ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵ O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Our new glorified bodies will be sinless and free of defects.

So as the Captain of our salvation Jesus has given to us victory over death and the grave. Death is not to be feared it is the entrance into our eternal life. He is the Greatest Gift ever given.

Let me give you one more.

3. Jesus gives us eternal security.

There are many people who believe that once you accept Christ as your Savior that you have to live a certain way or you will lose your salvation. That is completely inaccurate!

Hebrews 10:11-14

¹¹ And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

¹² But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

¹³ From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

¹⁴ For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

To be perfected FOREVER means that we are kept saved not by our works but by the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

He is the Greatest Gift because He provides eternal life.

Conclusion:

Have you received the Greatest Gift of all?

John 1:11-12

¹¹ He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

¹² But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Romans 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.