

The Gift That Keeps on Giving – Part 3

The Christian Life Part 8

Acts 2:37-41; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 12-20-20

Christmas Celebration

What are we celebrating at Christmas? Joy to the World in the Gift of God's Son!

Christmas is about an *Indescribable* Gift! – 2 Corinthians 9:15

- ▶ Of the *incarnate* Son! (*Jesus Christ* – v. 38)
- ▶ For *inexcusable* sins! (*for the forgiveness of your sins* – v. 38)
- ▶ For *impossible* situations! (*the gift of the Holy Spirit* – v. 38)
- ▶ For *inconsolable* souls! (*the promise* – v. 39)
- ▶ Through *inscrutable* sovereignty!

Answer for Our Future: For Inconsolable Souls

God's Gift gives us the answer for our future. Inconsolable = so sad or disappointed that it is impossible for anyone to make you feel better (Cambridge dictionary).

³⁹ For *the promise* is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “*Be saved from this perverse generation!*” (39-40)

- *promise = a law term referring to a commitment (covenant) to give or to do something
- *be saved = deliverance from danger; passive command – ‘go to the One who can save you’
- *perverse = curved, crooked, twisted
- *generation = the people living in the same period of time (often 30-40 years)
- *be saved from = implies that you are being saving *to* something else

Christmas Longings

The Christmas story is about longing. *How do we see ‘longing’ in the Christmas Story? We see a longing for the fulfillment of God's ‘promise’ (v. 39)! – Matthew 2:2, 4-6; Luke 1:31-33, 67-75; Luke 2:25-38*

Christmas Disappointments

Christmas is about the disappointment of life in a fallen world which fuels the longing. We see the need for rescue from a ‘perverse generation’! (v. 40)

Hopelessness (that things will get better) robs us of our joy.

Christmas Fulfillment

Christmas is about what God has done to satisfy our longings.

We see this in the ‘gift of the Holy Spirit’ (vv. 39-40) Who is a ‘down payment’ on better things to come!

Promise and Spirit and Kingdom – Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33; Ephesians 1:13-14; Acts 13:23, 33; 26:6-8; Romans 4:13; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 2 Timothy 1:1; Titus 1:2; 2 Peter 3:13; 1 John 2:25; Psalm 77:8; Matthew 9:35

Views of Heavenly Life after Death

- Heaven as ‘Manipulation of the Masses’ (Marx)
- Heaven as ‘Material Pleasure and Prosperity’ (Materialists, Atheists)
- Heaven as ‘Release from suffering or desire to Oneness’ (Hinduism, Buddhism, Native Indians, Wiccans)
- Heaven as ‘Reunion with Loved Ones and Ancestors’ (Confucians, Nominal Christians in the South)
- Heaven as ‘Self-Realization’ (Jainism, Scientology, New Age, Mormonism)
- Heaven as ‘Heightened Earthly, Sensual Pleasures’ (Islam, the ‘man on the street’)
- Heaven as ‘Paradise in the Presence of God’ (Christianity, Judaism)

Christmas Response

Receiving Jesus, Receiving Joy

- Christmas is about giving and receiving.
- God gave His Son. (John 3:16)
- We can receive God’s gift of His Son, Jesus, or not. (John 1:11-12)
- To receive Jesus, we must see our sin and turn to God for mercy and trust Jesus as our Lord and Savior.
- The Gift of God’s Son is a Gift with gifts. (2 Corinthians 9:15)

What do we rejoice in as we remember the Gift of God’s Son?

- We are forgiven.
- We have a Helper.
- We look forward to heaven on earth.

The Gift that Keeps on Giving

- Jesus is the Gift of God who opens the door to forgiveness. (1 John 5:9-13)
- Forgiveness opens the door to the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- The gift of the Holy Spirit opens the door to the kingdom of God.
- The kingdom of God opens the door to full and lasting joy in the presence of God.
- This is what ‘joy to the world’ means! (Luke 2:10-11)