

The Indescribable Gift
2 Corinthians 9:15
Reading: Matthew 1:18-2:12

Bethany Baptist Church
December 26, 2021 (Christmas message)

...pray...

I'd like to hop *outside* of Matthew and Luke to suggest a *little verse* that I think *says a lot* about Christmas:

- **2 Cor 9:15** – *Thanks be to God for His **indescribable gift!** (2X)*

What **is** God's *indescribable gift*? And in *what way* is it *indescribable*?

- “*Indescribable.*” This Greek word is **ανεκ διηγητος** – a term *so rare* in 1st century literature, it's possible that Paul *coined* it just for this statement!
 - a. You might also translate it: *inexpressible, unspeakable ... **too wonderful for words.***
 - b. *Thanks be to God for His gift that is too wonderful for words!*

We are here to offer our *Christmas worship* this morning, and I assume we know the *identity* of Paul's *inexpressible & unspecified* gift!

*God has given us **His Son**...and thus the **saving work** of His Son.*

I.e., Jesus is the gift that is simply *too wonderful for words!*

This morning, I want us to *unwrap* God's gift of His Son, and consider *why* Jesus is so wonderful:

Three reasons why Jesus is God's *indescribable gift.*

- 1. Jesus is indescribable in His *person.***
- 2. Jesus is indescribable in His *perfections.***
- 3. Jesus was indescribable in His *sufferings.***

Jesus is indescribable in His *person*.

1. Let's begin with a few *Christmas verses* and a *weighty theological truth*.
 - a. Turn with me to **Isaiah 7:14 (read)**. God offers Judah's **King Ahaz** a *victory* over his enemies and an *opportunity* for a confirming sign.
 - i. **Ahaz** doesn't want God's *help* or God's *sign*, but he wants to be *careful!* So he politely *refuses* the sign.
 - ii. God sees through the king's *hypocrisy* (He always does) and sets His own sign: *a virgin will give birth to a son*.
 1. The big fulfillment of God's sign won't be for almost **800** years.
 2. A young woman from Galilee named **Mary** will be *visited* by an angel, *overshadowed* by the Holy Spirit, and soon *give birth* to a Son – **Jesus**.
 3. We traditionally call it the "*virgin birth*," but it was really a *virgin conception*.
 - b. The resulting *theological truth* is really the *key truth* at Christmas: *the Incarnation*.
 - i. **God becomes man!**
 - ii. Jesus is born of the race of **mankind** (through His mother Mary) and born of **God** (through the Holy Spirit).
 - iii. Therefore Jesus is *truly* (completely) *man* and *truly* (completely) *God*.
 - iv. Which means He experienced *human suffering* and *temptation* (because He was man) yet **never sinned** (because He was God).
 - v. As a result Jesus was *perfectly qualified* to be offered as the *morally spotless substitutionary sacrifice* for our sin.

vi. The **OT** sacrifice was qualified to be offered in the place of sinners (*substitute*) if it was *without blemish*.

1. Jesus is **our substitute** – human like us.
2. Jesus is **our sin offering** – spotless as God.

vii. As the angel explained to **Joseph**: “*the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*” (Matt 1:20,21)

2. **Indescribable!** Jesus is *truly man*. He experienced *birth, childhood, fatigue, hunger, pain, suffering, death* – and through it all: **temptation**.

a. But He **never sinned**.

b. The writer of Hebrews is clear: *He was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.*

3. **Indescribable!** Jesus is *truly God*.

a. The eternal *Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

b. Jesus unequivocally claimed: “*I and the Father are one.*” “*If you have seen Me you have seen the Father.*”

God’s gift of His Son is practically *indescribable* but clearly true! God has become man and lived in our midst!

Jesus is indescribable in His *perfections*.

1. Let's consider a *few more* Christmas verses; these come at the end of Luke's Advent account:
 - a. **Luke 2:40** – *The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.*
 - b. **Luke 2:52** (similarly) – *And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*
2. We might say these two texts speak to Jesus' *perfections* - an older theological term that essentially says that in whatever sense Jesus lived as a man (human), He lived ("did") perfectly. I.e. *indescribably!*
3. **Richard Newton**, an 18th century English theologian, wrote of **three** categories of Jesus' *perfections*:
 - a. Our Lord was a perfect *example* (e.g. patience, kindness, honesty, reliability, ... i.e. *character*).
 - b. Our Lord was a perfect *helper*.
 - i. He helps us in His *nearness* – *an ever present help in times of trouble.*
 - ii. He can help us because He is perfectly *able* – *does beyond all we can ask or think.*
 - iii. Jesus can help us because He is always *willing* – *Newton* points out that Jesus is more willing to *hear* than we are to pray!
 1. The author Hebrews assures us that Jesus intercedes for us at the throne of grace (4:16): *Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need."*

- c. **Was He the *perfect helper*!?! Consider the Galilean *fed* the hungry, *healed* the sick, *gave sight* to the blind, caused the lame to *walk*, *cast out* demons, *raised* the dead!**
4. Here are a few more categories of Jesus' *indescribable perfections*...
- a. Our Lord was perfect in His ***teaching***. At the end of the *Sermon on the Mount*, Matthew has this comment:
 - i. Matt 7:29 - *He was teaching them [crowds] as one having authority, and not as their scribes.*
 - b. He was perfect in ***wisdom***. The people of His own village were shocked that the *son of the village carpenter* could teach as Jesus' taught (Lk 4:22): *And all the people were speaking well of Him, and admiring the gracious words which were coming from His lips; and yet they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?"*
 - c. Jesus is perfect in His indescribable ***love***.
 - i. Jesus taught His disciples that He is the ultimate (*perfect, indescribable*) standard of *love* (Jn 13) – "***even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.***"
 - 1. His love is the perfect model for *church*, for *marriage*, for *family*, for *friends*.
 - ii. Then Jesus made it clear what indescribable love looks like (Jn 15) - "***Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.***"
 - iii. And so God's *indescribable gift*, who we first meet as that Babe in Bethlehem's manger, goes from cradle to cross, out of the greatest of loves.

The Bible teaches that all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God. But not Jesus! Our Lord is *indescribably perfect*!

Jesus was indescribable in His *suffering*.

1. Is *Christmas* too soon to think about *Easter*? **No...**!
 - a. **Eight days** following Jesus' birth (Luke 2), a devout and righteous man named **Simeon** is led by the Holy Spirit to find *Joseph, Mary,* and *baby Jesus* in Jerusalem's Temple.
 - b. It was time for the Child to be *circumcised*.
 - c. Simeon took Jesus from His mother's arms and solemnly uttered these words: "*Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed, and a sword will pierce even your own soul ...*"
 - i. Jesus will be a sign to be *opposed*?
 - ii. Mary's soul will thus be *pierced*?
 - iii. What did Simeon's prophecy *foretell*...?
 - d. That the **Son of Mary** would one day *suffer cruelly* at the hands of sinful men, and *die* on Calvary's cross – as the sinless **Son of God**.
2. Do you remember the prophecy of **Isaiah 53**:
 - a. *Surely **our** griefs He Himself bore,
And **our** sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed **Him** stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.*
 - ⁵ *But He was **pierced through** for our transgressions,
He was **crushed** for our iniquities;
The **chastening** for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His **scourging** we are healed.*
 - ⁶ *All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
To fall on Him.*

- b. Did you *hear those words* about Jesus' suffering?
 - i. *Griefs He bore*
 - ii. *Sorrows He carried*
 - iii. *Smitten, afflicted, pierced through*
 - iv. *Crushed, chastened, scourged*
3. ***But why?***
- a. ***Why*** would someone speak this way of Bethlehem's Child?
 - b. ***Why*** would someone bring such *indescribable suffering* on the *righteous Man*, the very Servant of YHWH?
4. Because His ***indescribable suffering*** helps us understand His ***indescribable gift***.
- a. Jesus is God's *indescribable gift* in all these categories (*person, perfections, suffering*) so that in the *gift of Christ* we might receive the *gift of salvation!*
 - b. Our ancient text in **Isaiah 53** goes on to promise that the **Suffering Servant** will...
 - i. *Carry our iniquity.*
 - ii. *Justify the many.*
 - iii. And then ends like this (**v.12**) – *Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors (2X)..*
 - c. Jesus is the *indescribable gift* of God in His *birth and life and death and resurrection.*

5. An aspect of being *indescribable* is being *one and only*! With regards to *salvation*, the **NT** promises that *only* Jesus offers salvation:
- a. John the Baptist proclaimed: “*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*”
 - b. The apostles preached: “*And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among mankind by which we must be saved.*”
 - c. Paul wrote: *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*”
 - d. Jesus Himself clearly claimed:
 - i. “*He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*” ...and...
 - ii. “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*”
 - e. But first, the Angel of the Lord said to Joseph: “[Mary] *will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus [YHWH saves] for He will save His people from their sins.*”

Jesus was *indescribable* in His suffering, and the *one and only* in His gift of salvation.

Jesus is *indescribable*. Jesus is God's *indescribable gift* to the underserving.

1. You **can't** fully comprehend the *person* of Jesus, but you can *have Jesus as your own!*
2. You **can't** reach the *perfections* of Jesus, but you can be *perfectly and completely forgiven*.
3. You **can't love perfectly**, but you can be *perfectly loved*. *God loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*
4. You **can't earn** salvation, but you can *have salvation!* ... Salvation is God's gift! **Eph 2:8-9:** *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is **the gift of God**; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*
5. This Christmas, you **can** have the most *incredible* gift possible: *complete forgiveness* of your sins and *eternal life*.
 - a. *Turn* to Jesus and *believe* that He is God's Son, who *died* to pay for all your sins.
 - b. *Follow* Him as your Lord.
 - c. *Believe on the LORD* and you will be saved.
 - d. *Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*

...pray...