

12/22/19

**“My Christmas Gift To Jesus”**

Micah 6: 1 – 8; Hebrews 13: 1 – 16; Matthew 25: 31 - 46; **Matthew 2: 1 – 12 (Sermon)**

People all over the world celebrate December 25<sup>th</sup>. But Christians celebrate Jesus’ birthday at Christmas. We celebrate Christmas because God gave us the gift of His Son Jesus on that first Christmas. Jesus is the only reason for the Christmas season. The practice of giving gifts at Christmas was started to remind us that God gave us the gift of His son on that first Christmas. God’s gift of Jesus was incredible because Jesus was a personal gift, a practical gift, a permanent gift, and Jesus was the perfect gift.

Most people would not think of going to someone’s birthday party and bringing a gift for everybody except the guest of honor. Yet most people give Christmas gifts to family and friends but fail to give Jesus a birthday gift. We have Christmas parties and Christmas dinners but we often fail to include Jesus in our festivities. So the questions for each of us this morning is *what Christmas present do you plan to give Jesus this year? What present can you give to Jesus who spoke and created the world?*

In our lesson from Hebrews we see two presents that Jesus wants from each person. .” Jesus wants everybody to give Him the sacrifice of praise and the sacrifice of sharing with others. **“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.** The sacrifice of praise is the fruit of our lips that confess His name. The gifts of praise and sharing with other people are the kinds of gifts that God said would please Him. These gifts are not expensive but they do require thought and our time. So this Christmas why don’t we give Jesus the gift of your praise? The way a person can praise Jesus the most is by obeying all of His commandments. Jesus said; **“If you love me you will obey what I command.”** (John 14:15) Jesus also said; **“Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not do what I say?”** (Luke 6:46) Genuine praise is living the way Jesus taught us to live. If we do not obey Jesus’ commands our praise is empty. If we do not live like Jesus taught our praise is only lip service.

In Micah 6: 6 – 8 we read that the three gifts that God wants from us are to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him each day. This speaks of the way we interact with other people. This year instead of buying a gift for your friends why not give everyone a gift that lasts. This coming year freely forgive those who insult you and those who make your life miserable. This coming year show kindness to all the people you come in contact with. This coming year give gifts of patience, give the gift of understanding, and give the gift of encouragement. Remember Jesus said; **“whatever you have done for the least of these my brothers you have done it unto me.”** (Matthew 25:40) These are the kinds of gifts that are highly prized by those who receive them and these are the gifts that will bring joy to them. You see Jesus freely gave us love, forgiveness, peace, joy, so that we could freely give these same gifts to those people around us. (Matthew 10: 8). You see just as God’s gift of Jesus to us was a personal, practical, permanent, and the perfect gift our gift of love, forgiveness, peace, and joy to the people we come in contact with is personal, practical, permanent, and the perfect gift. Each of us can give the gift of love, forgiveness, peace, and joy if we are filled with The Holy Spirit.

In our lesson from Matthew we read that the Magi brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We all know that gold is very expensive. The last time I checked the market, gold was \$ 1,239.00 an ounce. The gift of gold given to Jesus symbolized Jesus' role as The King of Kings. Frankincense was also an expensive gift since it was imported from Arabia. Frankincense was used as perfume and as a medicine. Frankincense was also used as an ingredient of holy anointing oil. (Exodus 34) Frankincense was burned with other substances during the meat offerings (Leviticus 4:15) and it was placed on the Table of Showbread in the Tabernacle (Leviticus 7). The gift of frankincense given to Jesus by the Magi symbolized Jesus' role as High Priest. Myrrh was also expensive since it was imported from Arabia. Myrrh was another ingredient of holy anointing oil (Exodus 30:22-33) and was one of the spices used in preparing a body for burial (John 19:39). The gift of myrrh given to Jesus by the Magi symbolized Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross. Which of the Magi's gifts do you think pleased Jesus the most? Was it their presents of gold, their present of frankincense, their gift of myrrh, or was it the gift of their presence with Him? After all, Jesus is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. Jesus spoke and the world was created and all the gold in it as well as all of the trees and plants that the frankincense and myrrh were extracted from. So Jesus had no need for any more gold, frankincense, or myrrh. When we stop and think about it, the gift of the Magi's sacrifice and time to be with Jesus' had to be what pleased Jesus the most.

The Magi's quest to find Jesus came at a great personal sacrifice. Their journey took a lot of faith because the Magi didn't know where they were going. The Magi simply followed a star to find a king that they did not know. The Bible simply states that the Magi came from the East. The two most regarded views are that the Magi came from either modern day Iraq or Iran. In either case the journey was probably over 1,000 miles because of the winding mountainous roads. The trip would have taken a considerable amount of time and cost the Magi a lot of money. Since they came from the East the Magi probably were not Jewish. But the Magi had a burning desire to find, to see, to know, and to worship a Jewish baby born King Of The Jews. The Magi wanted to know Jesus on a personal basis. So the first question for each of us today is: *Are we willing to sacrifice by investing our time and our money seeking Jesus?* I am not talking just getting to know **about** Jesus, but I am talking about getting to know Jesus on a personal basis.

Verse 2 tells us the Magi wanted to know more about this new king so they were not embarrassed to ask to ask King Herod "***where is the one who has been born king of the Jews***". So the next question for each of us is: *Are you investing the time and effort in studying your Bible each day in order to learn more about Jesus?* You see if you were really serious about enquiring about your savior and Lord you would sacrifice a little more on Sunday mornings by attending the Bible discussion group at 9:45 on Sunday mornings.

**In your bulletin there was an insert entitled *What Christmas gift will you give to Jesus this year?***

Please note that we are all encouraged to give a special gift of our time and / or our talent to Jesus. You are not asked to give money but to give yourself and your time. **Please take a few minutes right now and list the gifts that you will give to Jesus in 2020. There is a box on**

**the Communion Table. After the next hymn you will have an opportunity to come up and put your completed your Christmas Gift List in the box on the communion table..**

You see, Christmas is about Jesus coming to be a part of our daily life. And when we make Jesus a part of our everyday life, we will experience the love, the forgiveness, the peace, the joy, and the hope that Jesus Christ offers each of us each and everyday of our life. As we celebrate Jesus' birth this Christmas we all need to ask ourselves: *"Am I just celebrating December 25 or am I celebrating the birth of Jesus my Lord?"*

You see it is only when we have Jesus in our hearts and continually think about Jesus and what He has done for us that we can experience the love, the peace, the hope, and the joy that God desires for each of us.

God's word to us today reminds us how much God loves us and reminds us of all that God has done for us so we could be with Him both now and through out eternity. The choice is up to each one of us to respond to God's love by renewing our commitment for Jesus to be a real part of our life each and every day and our commitment to serve The Lord in all that we do and say.

**AMEN**