

Gospel Gifts

“Celebrating the Christ of Christmas”

-Part 6-

Introduction

This morning, we open our sixth Gospel gift as we gear up to celebrate the Christ of Christmas – our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So far, we have opened the Gospel gifts of spiritual adoption, justification, reconciliation, propitiation, and forgiveness.

God the Father, driven by His love, grace, and mercy, sent His only Son into our fallen world to adopt spiritual orphans, declare innocent and righteous those who were guilty and unrighteous, reconcile hostile and alienated enemies, transform children of wrath into favored children of His kingdom, and forgive and cleanse us of all our sin and unrighteousness.

Who exactly are Christians? We are adopted sons and daughters of the heavenly Father. We are innocent saints clothed in God’s righteousness. We are reconciled friends of the great I AM. We are favored children who have been spared the holy wrath of God. We are eternally forgiven members of God’s royal priesthood of believers.

Without the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, we all would still be orphaned, guilty, hostile children of God’s wrath; children living cursed and unforgiven lives of sin and hopelessness.

Praise God for Christmas!

Exploring the SCRIPTURE

Our sixth and final Gospel-gift comes to us from the pen of the prophet Isaiah. In Isaiah 9:2-7, God declares... **[Read Scripture]**

Our sixth Gospel gift is covenant faithfulness. Christmas is not just the realization of God’s prophetic promise given thru Isaiah some 700 years before the birth of Christ.

Christmas is the realization of God's covenant faithfulness to Abraham thousands of years prior to the birth of Jesus. In Genesis 17:1-7, God made an amazing covenant with Abraham. God promised Abraham that if he walked with Him, He would make Abraham the **"father of a multitude of nations."**

God's promise to Abraham was not just for Israel – it was for Gentiles too. This was a Gospel promise. God would save not only Israelites; God would save Gentiles from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

The Virgin Birth is the realization of the Abrahamic covenant – God's covenant to redeem a holy priesthood of believers out of all nations.

Christmas is the gift of God's covenant faithfulness!

Making the CONNECTION

In Isaiah 9, the prophet Isaiah tells us that Jesus came in human form to bring us four additional gifts – counsel, victory, fatherhood, and peace.

Now, when God says, *"to us a Son is given..."* do you know what He is saying to you?

God is literally saying, "I'm devoted to you."

That's right! **The word given in Hebrew literally means "unwavering devotion."**

What is the Good News of Christmas? God is devoted to His adopted, justified, reconciled, favored, and forgiven children.

Isn't that encouraging?

The holy God who created the heavens and the earth is devoted to your wellbeing. The transcendent God – everlasting, supreme, and holy – is also imminent and cares deeply about what's going on in your life. God is passionate for you and desires to be intimately involved in your life.

Maybe you're wondering, "How so? How is God devoted to me?"

Well, thru Isaiah, God tells you how He's devoted to you.

Wonderful Counselor

First of all, God is devoted to you as a **Wonderful Counselor**. It would not be a stretch for me to say that every single one of us needs counsel in some form or fashion.

- Maybe your marriage is crumbling before your eyes and you need counsel?
- Maybe your teenager is rebelling against your authority and you need counsel?
- Maybe your aging parent is suffering from cancer or Alzheimer's and you need counsel?
- Maybe your business is losing money and you need counsel?
- Maybe your personal finances are in disarray you need counsel?
- Maybe you've been offered a new career opportunity and you need counsel?
- Maybe you're a high school senior trying to choose a school and you need counsel?

The list could go on and on and on, couldn't it?

The point is this – the Good News of Christmas is that Jesus Christ became flesh because He longs to know you, be known by you, and serve you as a Wonderful Counselor.

Jesus took on the form of flesh, lived a sinless life, died a sacrificial death, resurrected, and ascended to heaven so that He could indwell you with the Holy Spirit – the Counselor. (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7-11)

How many of us would turn away a counselor who could guarantee us perfect counsel every time we sought it? Not a single one of us. Well, that's exactly what God is – a perfect Counselor who never fails.

There is no counselor or advisor who is better equipped to guide your life than the Spirit of Jesus Christ and the Word of God He inspired.

Mighty God

Second, God is devoted to you as a **Mighty God**.

The combination of these two names literally means "Heroic God." Is there any doubt our world is in desperate need of heroes? True heroes!

How many of you need a hero right now? How many of you need someone who will fight for you, defend you, protect you, and even die for you if they have to?

Guess what? If you, thru faith in Jesus, belong to God, you have a Heroic Savior on your side.

In the truest sense, a hero is someone who is courageous, brave, and selfless. A hero is someone who places himself in harms ways in order to defend another person. A hero is someone who sacrifices his life for the life of another.

Contrary to popular belief, professional athletes aren't heroes. Tim Tebow isn't a hero. Nor is Aaron Rodgers, Albert Puhols, or Chris Paul. Role Models? Possibly! Heroes? No. Athletes are simply gifted men and women who get paid extraordinary amounts of money to entertain the masses by playing a game.

Today's politicians aren't heroes.

Steve Jobs, the now dead founder of Apple, Inc. and a business icon, isn't a hero. Nor is Warren Buffet, Jack Welch, or Bill Gates.

None of these men and women are courageously sacrificing their lives for the lives others.

Marines, infantrymen, tank commanders, and fighter pilots are heroes. These men and women are putting their lives on the line every day for the safety and freedom of our country.

The firemen who ran up more than a hundred flights of stairs to rescue stranded people in the burning World Trade Center are heroes.

Jesus Christ is the Ultimate Hero.

Jesus didn't carry a machine gun, grenades, or heat seeking missiles into battle. No, Jesus carried a Roman cross.

Jesus didn't arrive on the battlefield in an Abrams Tank or F-16 fighter jet. No, He arrived in a lowly manger and entered Jerusalem on a donkey.

Jesus didn't become a hero by fighting valiantly against His enemies. Jesus became a hero by remaining silent before His enemies and laying his life down as a sacrifice for our sins.

Why did Jesus become flesh?

Jesus became flesh so that He could be with you as the Mighty God who fights for you, defends you, and represents you as you step on the spiritual battlefield each and every day.

Jesus became flesh to win the battle of sin on your behalf!

Everlasting Father

Third, God is devoted to you as an **Everlasting Father**.

With every passing generation, fatherhood is becoming more and more scarce. Never before has there been more children without a faithful father to love, nurture, provide, guide, and discipline them. This is one of the great tragedies of American society today – fatherless children.

In many cases, this means there is no father in the home. But, in other cases, there is a father present but not involved. Immorality, laziness, narcissism, busyness, and greed – these are all things that have contributed to children growing up without a fatherly influence on their lives.

This is a tragedy!

The Good News of Christmas is that Jesus became flesh to be with you as an Everlasting Father.

God is the Father who never abandons. The Father who never cheats. The Father who never neglects. The Father who's never too busy. The Father who never disciplines out of anger. The Father who never prefers personal hobbies rather than time with His kids. The Father who's more interested in being with His children than being successful in his career.

You get the point!

God knew that fatherless children would be one of the greatest scandals of the fall. So, what did God do? He sent His Son Jesus to become flesh so that we could have an Everlasting Father.

Everlasting is an attribute used often to describe God's character. The Psalmist describes God's fatherly love as everlasting.

“But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him...” (Psalm 103:17)

God's kingdom and dominion (His rule) are everlasting.

"Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations." (Psalm 145:13)

And, in Psalm 68:3-5, God says...

"But the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy! Sing to God, sing praises to His name; lift up a song to Him who rides through the deserts; exult before Him! Father to the fatherless and protector of widows is God in His holy habitation."

What is the Good News of Christmas? Jesus Christ became flesh to be with you as an Everlasting Father who you can always count on.

God's fatherly love for you will never waver or run out. His kingdom of glory and riches will never be conquered or fall. His light in the midst of this world's darkness will never grow dim and burn out.

Prince of Peace

Fourth, and finally, God is devoted to you as a **Prince of Peace**.

We live in a world of turmoil, don't we?

Wars are being fought across the globe. Countless relationships are broken. Divorce courts are full. Politicians are constantly attacking each other. Stress and anxiety permeate the economy and business world.

Let's be honest, we have to look really hard to find even a sliver of peace in the world we live in.

Why did Jesus become flesh? Jesus became flesh to be with you as a constant source of peace in a world permeated with turmoil, stress, and anxiety.

Did you know that you don't have to live an anxious and stressful life? That's right! You don't have to go through life dragging the burdensome weight of stress and anxiety.

Many of you are dragging around the heavy burden of stress and anxiety. A broken marriage. A struggling business. A rebellious child. Diminished wages. Lost retirement. The anxiety and stress associated with this life can crush us, if we

take our eyes off Jesus Christ. Many of you are learning this the hard way right now.

Jesus became flesh to bring you peace and to be your Peace.

Listen carefully to Ephesians 2:11-17.

“Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.”

There was a wall of hostility separating us from God – sin. This wall of sin meant that there was enmity, strife, and war between God and man. Sin is the endless and violent attack on God’s holy character.

Jesus came to break down this wall of hostility – this wall of sin – by living a sinless life and therefore offering His life as an atoning sacrifice. Jesus’ perfect righteousness and sacrificial death broke down the dividing wall of hostility and brought peace to anyone and everyone who would surrender their lives to Him as Savior and Lord.

In Philippians 4:4-7, the Apostle Paul writes...

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Paul reminds us that Jesus, Emmanuel, is at hand. Jesus is with us. Therefore, no matter what trials, storms, temptations, or sufferings you might be dealing with right now, Jesus is with you and He wants to fill your mind, heart, and soul with peace – the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Closing Comments

Next Sunday morning, we all will gather around the Christmas tree and share gifts with each other. As we do so, let me encourage you to keep the manger of Bethlehem in the center of your gaze.

Why?

Because lying in Bethlehem's manger is your Savior Jesus Christ who became flesh to be with you as a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

Why?

Because lying in Bethlehem's manger is your Savior Jesus Christ who came to: (1) adopt you when you were an orphan, (2) justify you and clothe you in the righteousness of God when you were guilty and unrighteous, (3) reconcile you when you were alienated and eternally separated from God, (4) drink the cup of God's wrath toward your sin so that you could be declared a favored child of God rather than a child of wrath, (5) forgive you and cleanse you of all your sins – past, present, and future.

Why?

Because lying in Bethlehem's manger is your Adopter, Justifier, Reconciler, Satisfier, Forgiver, and Promise Keeper.

Lying in Bethlehem's manger is your Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord!

I hope we all will rejoice in the glorious gift of Jesus Christ this Christmas. Amen!