



Christmas 2016

Heaven-Sent Gift

The Gift that keeps on giving!

Luke 2:1-20

Message #3 of 3 – S719

Sermon given on December 24, 2016



Sunday Morning Service – Christmas Day

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Gift that keeps on giving!

Luke 2:1-20

Opening Comments

- Merry Christmas – it is nice to have you here at this special Christmas Morning Service
- I am guessing that most of you have opened your gifts, either last night, or this morning
- Most people find some amount of enjoyment getting gifts, some enjoy it a lot
- We get gifts that are things that we want and sometimes what we need
- Sometimes then gifts we get last only a short time
- We got a pie from someone in the church – it's gone
- If you were to get me an It's a Grind gift card, it would last for a week or two
- My favorite kind of gift is something that is useful and lasting
- Something that I can enjoy for a long time
- This morning I would like to share with you the Christmas account
- And we will see that this gift of God's love given to the whole world is more than just useful and lasting – it is the perfect gift
- Let's pray now and then get into our text
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Gift that keeps on giving!**
- Please turn in your Bible to **Luke 2**
- First we will look at the account of the birth of Jesus
- Then we will look at three ways the gift of His birth keeps on giving
- That it keeps on helping us, and blessing us
- **Luke 2:1-5**
- Nazareth is about 70 miles from Bethlehem
- I am guessing that would have very hard for a woman who was close to giving birth

- Even though Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, Jesus couldn't be born there
- You see, more than 700 years earlier God had said that the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior of the world would be born in Bethlehem **Micah 5:2**

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.

- This was just one of hundreds of prophecies that Jesus fulfilled during His lifetime
- And so to fulfill this prophesy, God moved the pagan emperor Augustus to conduct a census, requiring everyone to return to their ancestral home
- **Luke 2:6-7**
- By the time they make it to Bethlehem, there is no room for them
- So the Savior of the world is born in our equivalent of a barn
- This is a big deal – God's plan established before the foundation of the earth has been working toward this moment
- When God would send the greatest gift in the universe down to mankind
- So momentous was this event that heaven couldn't be restrained from bursting forth in praise to God
- **Luke 2:8-10**
- 'bring...good tidings' = bring good news = 1 Greek word – we get English word evangelism – bringing of the good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ
- 'of great joy' – we sing 'Joy to the World' – Jesus' birth is a reason for great joy **Psalm 32:1**

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

- Jesus' birth meant that there was going to be a way for people to have their sins forgiven = communion fellowship with God in heaven who loves us and the promise of eternal life with Him in heaven
- And this joy is not just for some people, not just for Americans, not just for people at Calvary Chapel
- The angel said it was 'to all people'
- The only prerequisite is to believe **John 3:16**

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

- ‘whoever believes’ can have forgiveness of all their sins, and the hope of eternal life in the perfection of heaven
- The angel continues
- **Luke 2:11-20**
- There is something special about the fact that the announcement of the birth of Christ came first to shepherds
- They are in the area of Bethlehem, the birthplace of King David, who was a shepherd before he was a king
- And some thirty years later Jesus would identify Himself as the Good Shepherd
- It is one of my favorite descriptions of Jesus
- A shepherd was responsible for every aspect of the life of the sheep
- And as my Good Shepherd, I can entrust every aspect of my life to Him
- And not just me, but anyone who believes can have that same trust
- Jesus Christ was given to the world as an expression of God’s love for all of humanity
- He is not like some gifts, where you accept them, receive momentary or temporary enjoyment or usefulness, and then it is used up, discarded, or replaced
- The gift of Jesus Christ is a gift that keeps on giving
- I will like to draw your attention to three ways this is true from our text this morning
- First – **Salvation**
- **Luke 2:11**
- Jesus was born to be our Savior – He saves us from sin and from the eternal consequences of our sin
- When Jesus died on the cross, He destroyed to power of sin in the world
- No longer do we have to yield to the temptations to sin
- Unfortunately, we do still sin after we are saved
- Jesus’ salvation is not a one-time salvation – it is a day-by-day, moment-by-moment salvation

- Through Him I have forgiveness of sins **1 John 1:9**

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- His salvation and the forgiveness it brings frees me from the guilt of my sins
- And the grace of His forgiveness is endless, I can come anytime I need to

- Second – **Peace**

- **Luke 2:14a**

- Not only do we have forgiveness, but we are also promised peace, and not just any peace **John 14:27**

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

- It is the very peace of God, that peace that is one of the elements of God's character – God is at peace
- Through Jesus we can have God's peace in our hearts, because we are at peace with God
- And that peace makes it possible for us to be at peace in this world and with others in this world

- Third, and last – **Goodwill**

- **Luke 2:14**

- The Bible declares that God loves the whole world
- That is why He gave the Heaven-Sent Gift of His Son Jesus
- It is through Jesus that God wants to manifest His love
- And when we accept the gift of His love by accepting Jesus as our Savior, God is free to pour out His good upon our lives **Ephesians 2:4-7**

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

- When Jesus was born on that winter night, He brought a gift that gives and gives and gives
- Jesus saved us from our sins, and then continues to saves us from our sin every day

- Jesus made peace between us and God the Father, and then He helps to be at peace and to live at peace in this chaotic and troubled world
- God the Father sent Jesus as act of goodwill to the world, and by believing in Him, God continues to pour out His goodwill upon us
- As we prepare to close this service – invite David up
- Salvation, peace, and the goodwill of God are just a few of the ways that the Heaven-Sent Gift of God’s love in the person of Jesus keeps on giving
- But to experience those good things, we must receive the gift of God in Christ Jesus
- The Bible says that this is a simple thing to do – Believe in Jesus!
- Believe that He is what the Bible says that He is
- That He is God, that He was born to the virgin Mary
- That He lived a perfect life as an example for us to follow as best as we can
- That He died on the cross for the sins of the world, that He died for your sins
- And that on the third day He rose for the grave, never to die again, as evidence of our own future resurrection from the dead
- That He went back to heaven and is preparing a place for us to be with Him forever
- As David quietly plays, I would you to think about that
- God is offering salvation and eternal life to you right now
- Will you accept it
- If you already have accepted the Gift, pray and ask God to move in the hearts of those who haven’t
- David will play for a minute or two, and then I will pray
- Amen – Merry Christmas