

THE INEXPRESSIBLE GIFT

2 Corinthians 9:15

“This Christmas Meditation was given at the Christmas Eve service at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Cherry Log on December 24, 2011 by Pastor Paul Mims.”

Have you ever received a gift for which you could not thank the giver enough? You were overwhelmed and could not find the words to express your gratitude. That is the heart throb of the Apostle Paul as he thinks about God’s gift to us. It is unspeakable, indescribable in human language what God has given to us. And that gift is what brings us here tonight. We gather to remember, to hear the story afresh, and to revel in the wonder of it all. Let’s look at some of the wonders we celebrate at Christmas.

THE WONDER OF GOD IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

He came from heaven to earth to be with us. That is what “Immanuel” means. He was born as a helpless baby – just like us. He grew through childhood, the teen years, the young adult years, and lived to be thirty three. Although the Christmas story paints the picture of a babe in a manger, we do not worship him as a baby. The enchanting account of him with the elders of the Temple at the age of twelve is fixed in our minds, but we do not worship him as a child. We are filled with images from the New Testament of his life and ministry on earth as a handsome young man, but we do not worship that image of him. The most precious concepts we have of him is on cross and alive on resurrection day. But our worship goes beyond that to see him in his present exalted place back in heaven as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It is from heaven through the presence of his Holy Spirit in our hearts that he is with us, to guide, strengthen, and to bless. Each of us who know him can say with experience, “I have God in my life.”

THE WONDER THAT WE CAN BE FILLED WITH HOPE

Hope is a present assurance that the future is secure. Its foundation cannot rest on the sand, but on the rock. Before we came to Christ, we were people without hope. Our lives were spiritually empty. But now we have a “lively hope.” For hundreds of years, the people of the Old Testament lived with the hope of the coming Messiah.

The Prophet Micah said, “But you, Bethlehem, Ephratah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” (Micah 5:2)

Isaiah prophesied, “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.” (Isaiah 11:2) Also, “Surely, he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes, we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:4-6,12)

We are now on the other side of the prophecies now, and we have hope in his words about our future: "I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also." (John 14:2-3) We can trust his promise, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Mathew 28:20)

THE WONDER THAT OUR FAITH CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN HOW WE LIVE IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES

The coming of Christ to the world has and can continue to make a great difference in our quality of life.

His Spirit bears with our spirit that we are the children of God. We need help with the issues we face in the family, in our national life, and on the world scene. For the family these include:

- Economic Strength - being able to manage money and make ends meet
- Social Support - having connections to others and the ability to access help
- Communication - being able to talk and share ideas with others
- Problem-Solving - being able to work together to solve problems
- Family Cohesion - sharing a sense of unity and common values
- Religious Support - having a quality spiritual life
- Safety - living in a home and community free of violence and/or emotional abuse

Our nation faces five major issues that need the influence of the gospel.

- 5. The national economy and jobs
- 4. Individual financial responsibility
- 3. The decline of moral strength
- 2. The decline of the family
- 1. The decline of religion in our national life

On the International level we face at this Christmas a world that is largely in spiritual darkness and is in great need of the peace we know in Christ. Some of the major issues are:

- The world economy that is interwoven with ours
- The growing threat of atomic weapons in small countries
- The possibility of widespread famine in some countries
- Terrorism that can strike at any time
- Riots and social unrest

The difference Christ makes is inexpressible. He is God's gift to us and that is why we gather in worship at his feet.

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in an obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty, and then for three years he was an itinerant teacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never traveled, except in his infancy, more than two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

While he was still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through a mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth, his seamless robe. When he was dead, he was taken down from the cross and laid in a borrowed grave through the courtesy of a friend.

Twenty wide centuries have come and gone, and today he is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of all human progress. I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever were built, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has this one solitary life. (Unknown Author)

Praise Be To His Name!