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**November 27, 2016**

**“CHRISTMAS: A SEASON FOR GIVING”**

*“Jesus Gave ... ‘Everything He Could’*

**Intro ...** This morning we begin a five part Christmas Series entitled: “*Christmas: A Season For Giving*”.

The first two messages will focus upon ‘What Jesus Gave To Us’ while the final three messages will focus upon ‘What We Can Give To Him’ and, of course, that final message will be given on Christmas Day itself.

My hope is that these messages might help increase our love and appreciation for our Savior who came to earth that First Christmas Day and help provide a direction for our Giving to Him.

So let’s begin by putting our focus upon ‘What Jesus Gave To Us’ in His Coming to Earth. Here’s how **Today’s Key Concept** puts it ...

**TODAY’S KEY CONCEPT:**

Jesus gave us **EVERYTHING** He **COULD** Give.  
He **DEMONSTRATED** what **REAL** giving **LOOKS** like.  
He established a **PATTERN** for us to **FOLLOW**.

**Several** possible thought-provoking statements there:

- \* He gave us everything He could give –  
He held nothing back.
- \* He demonstrated what ‘*real giving*’ looks like –  
In case we were wondering.
- \* He established a pattern for us to follow –  
As the Spirit seeks to make us more and more like Him.

So what did He actually give us?

## **THREE GREAT GIFTS CATCH OUR ATTENTION THIS MORNING ...**

### **1. JESUS GAVE US HIS HEART ... Key Word: COMMITMENT**

***“He looked upon him and loved him.”*** – Mark 10:21

These words were spoken of Jesus when he gazed upon the rich, probably young, man who came to him inquiring about the requirements for eternal life.

Jesus' *'heart went out to him'* – Jesus' heart went out to all who came to him. There was a commitment he felt to all who encountered him.

He was the Son of God who came to earth in expression of the Overwhelming Love that the Father Himself felt for the entire world. His love mirrored His Father's.

No matter who you are, no matter what life circumstance you are in, Jesus' Love is *'yours for the taking'* – Receive His Gift of Love and respond in kind – Give Him Your Heart! Commit yourself to Him!

And as you do, hear Him saying this ...

***“He who loves me will be loved by my Father and I too will love him.”***

(John 14:21)

Once you (we) respond to the Love of Christ – which is God's Love expressed in tangible form – you (we) become part of a spiritual family which has love at the very center of it.

Read the Gospels ... Learn more and more of Jesus until genuine love for him captivates your heart. That love, which the Spirit of God will stir in you, will draw you ever deeper into the family circle.

The Father responds to your response – Jesus Himself sees you as one of His Own and loves you as such.

And in the depths of this family circle, you discover that you are not the only one who has responded to the Love of Christ – there are many others.

And with regard to all of them, Jesus said ...

***“As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”*** – John 13:34

Give your heart to them as well ... Commit yourself to them as your brothers and sisters in Christ ... Feel the bond with them that such love creates.

***Jesus Gave Us His Heart*** – He committed Himself to Us.

**TODAY'S APPLICATION:** Be sure people (your fellow believers and all those that God has brought into your life) know you are **COMMITTED** to them – That they have a portion of your **HEART**.

***Consider with me now ...***

***THE SECOND GREAT GIFT JESUS GAVE TO US ...***

## ***2. JESUS GAVE US HIS LIFE ... Key Word: SACRIFICE***

***“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”*** - John 10:11

In no way did Jesus' death on the cross catch him by surprise. His crucifixion did not reflect a failure of his earthly ministry of communicating the Love of God for a fallen world – His crucifixion culminated that ministry.

Jesus knew the trouble that *‘the sheep’* were in. They were lost in sin and separated from the Love and Mercy of God.

Jesus was pointing out to his disciples that a good shepherd would be willing to lay his very life on the line if protecting and providing for the sheep required it.

He was also pointing out to them that he possessed just such a shepherd's heart. He was willing to sacrifice himself for them.

The very night that Jesus would be betrayed and the whole ugly process would begin, Jesus said this to His Disciples ...

**“Greater love has no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends.”**

(John 15:13)

No shepherd image here ... Jesus was speaking very plainly to them. Real love is willing to sacrifice itself in the interest of the one loved. This sacrifice Jesus was telling them he was prepared to make.

And make it He did ...

The Apostle Paul was privileged by the Holy Spirit to explain to us the reason for that sacrifice ...

**“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”** – 1 Corinthians 15:3

Our sins required a sacrifice and fortunately the only ONE who was qualified to be such a sacrifice had already given us the Gift of His Heart and so ... When the time was right, Jesus added to the list ... the Gift of His Life!

**Jesus gave us His Life** – He sacrificed Himself for us!

**TODAY’S APPLICATION:** Be sure people (your fellow believers and all those that God has brought into your life) know that you will **LAY DOWN YOUR LIFE** for them (if need be).

Jesus gave us His **HEART** (He committed Himself to us) and He gave us His **LIFE** (He sacrificed Himself for us) ...

One gift remains for our consideration this morning ...

### **3. JESUS GAVE US HIS SPIRIT ... Key Word: PROVISION**

Surely we all know by now that ‘Getting us saved’ was not all that Jesus had in mind ... He loved us too much to simply save us from the penalty of our sin and make no provision for us to live new and better lives.

In fact, he announced one day to all who were listening that He (as the Good Shepherd) had come to provide ‘Abundant Life’ for all who would become His. And since He would be ‘Going Away’ and thus would not be able to provide it personally, He would provide ‘Another like Himself’ who would provide it for us in His place.

Here now are some most familiar verses ...

**“I will send him (the companion) to you ...”** – John 16:7

*‘Never alone will you be ... I will provide ONE who will companion you  
and provide for you every step of the way’ ...*

That's what Jesus promised them.

Here what happened when Jesus first appeared to His Disciples after his resurrection from the dead. It was the evening of ‘Resurrection Sunday’.

**“He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’.”** – John 20:22

Indeed, this Spirit would be His ... would come from Him ... would in every way be identical to Him. Here was the foretaste of the marvelous reality that would soon fully captivate them.

Here's what He said to them some 40 days later ... Just before they would see Him ascend into heaven to assume the awesome tasks that awaited Him there ...

**“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you;  
and you shall be my witnesses ...”** - Acts 1:8

The Holy Spirit – the very ‘*Spirit of Christ*’ – would be given to them as the ‘*Provider*’ of everything that they would need to live faithfully and fruitfully for Christ. Jesus provided for their every need by that singular gift!

**TODAY'S APPLICATION:** Be sure that people (your fellow believers and all those that God has brought into your life) know that you will do **EVERYTHING** in your power to **HELP** them!

**Final Thot ...**

This Christmas Season set your **HEART** and **MIND** on the Greatest **GIVER** who ever **WALKED** on this **EARTH**.

**REJOICE** in all that He has **GIVEN** you.

**SEEK** to **WALK** in His **STEPS**.