

Jesus Christ is our Gift from God

If I told you that I have the greatest gift in the world to give to you, how would you react? Would you jump around and scream for 30 minutes? I have personally witnessed that. What do you suppose the gift was? A new car? A house? Expensive jewelry? The lottery? Actually, it wasn't anything close to that. It was a cardboard box from a package containing a 6 Horse Power snow blower. The recipients? 5 children between the age of 3 to 8.

This reminded me of an episode from a cartoon called Rugrats. For those that never watched it, the show is about the adventures of toddlers. This episode detailed them discovering that there was hidden treasure in their house. A nickel. Part of the episode had them digging in the sandbox, and from the sandbox they found: a \$100 dollar bill, a gold watch, and a diamond ring. They looked at what they dug up, said "it's not a nickel", threw it aside, and kept looking.

Of course no one here will get excited over a cardboard box or a nickel, but in our search for fulfillment, what exactly are we looking for? Is it health? Wealth? Fame? Are these really what fulfill us? Or are they merely cardboard boxes and nickels, and are we throwing aside the \$100 dollar bills, the gold watches, and the diamond rings?

Have any of you here though of seeking something more? How about eternal life? How about power and wisdom of God? How about everlasting joy? You might think I'm insane, or that it isn't possible, but it is very possible. All these are gained in a single act of accepting a free gift. And this gift is Jesus Christ, a gift of God.

Let me quote two passages for you:

John 3:16-17

For God so loved the world that he **gave** his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the **gift of God** is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

You heard that right. Gift of God. Eternal life. This is what God intended for us. It isn't for us to go through pain or suffering or sorrow or even death, but to enjoy life, eternally. Unfortunately, in a fallen world, we do experience all these things. Who of you here have not gone through pain, or suffering, or sorrow? Who here thinks they won't ever face the harsh reality of death? These are facts of life, but in Jesus Christ death and suffering is not the inevitable end of all things. Eternal life is a promise of God. It is part of the gift of God.

What about this "power and wisdom of God"?

1 Corinthians 1:23-31

But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

This is the nature of what it means to be a Christian. To have access to the power and wisdom of God. This is part of the gift of God.

We have a passage here describing everlasting joy:

Isaiah 51:11

The ransomed of the LORD will return.

They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.

Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Everlasting joy. No more sorrows and sighing. This is part of the gift of God.

Now that I've described this incredible gift, a gift that gives eternal life, power and wisdom of God, and everlasting joy, how would you go about receiving it? You won't find it in the mail, or catalog, or eBay. This gift is received by having faith in Jesus Christ as our savior. This is what Christians would call "being saved". These bible passages sums it up quite well:

Ephesians 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.

Acts 16:30-31a

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

The bible has presented us with this great gift. For those that are already Christians, spend some time today to remind yourselves what a great gift we have received. For those that are not, do you see this as the real treasure? Something worth pursuing?

Are you spending your life chasing after the cardboard boxes and nickels? Where are the real treasures? The only real treasure is Jesus Christ, because he gives gifts that are eternal, indestructible, and perfectly good. Your act of receiving this incredible gift is to believe.