

## **The Indescribable Gift**

2 Corinthians 9:15 “ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.” Or as one translation says, “a gift to wonderful for words.”

Imagine getting a Christmas gift that you continued unwrapping every day for the rest of your life, but still never reached the end. This precisely describes God’s Christmas gift to us — the indescribable gift of Jesus! A lifetime is not enough to discover Him fully, but we must keep unwrapping more each day!

I love Christmas; it’s a time of magical sparkle-I am amazed at Christmas lights and crack up at the total unorganized chaos that in the name of decorations.

One wisecracker said, “ Christmas is a time when we exchange a whole lot of gifts we really like-for a load we don’t want.

I guess we have all been in a position when we received that indescribable gift – then been lost for words when we opened it in front of the giver. As someone perceptively said, “Christmas is a season of emotional ties-especially when you have to wear them!”

Here are the 4 steps of gift buying for Pastor Sheryl at Christmas which also reminds me about the gift that God has given us.

**1.) THE PERSONAL GIFT:** First I have to make sure my gift for Sheryl will be personal! A gift card will not do, money will not satisfy. Although that seems to be the GO TO. You would think that after all these years, it would be easier but it is often more difficult especially when you have a budget. In the beginning Christmas was the time to get massively in debt.

\_These days I quit buying her what I want; because time does not change taste! I know what she likes. It is pretty lame and disheartening to receive a present that doesn’t have the magic of a personal touch.

One of the greatest gifts in life that we can receive at Christmas time- is the revelation and realization that God knows each one of us personally , and wants us to know Him personally, too.

Psalm 139 "Lord you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise. You perceive my thoughts. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways."

When you stop to think about it-and its important to do just that-then it's a mind blowing thought: God knows us intimately. He is not a mystical magician, a high power or man in the sky. Instead , he relates to us on our level which stands to reason why he came down from his majesty to a manger.

## **THE TINY HAND OF GOD**

Consider for a moment: Have you ever placed your finger inside the hand of a little baby and felt its grip? If a baby tugs at finger, it also tugs at your heart.

Christmas is the powerful grip of a tiny hand reaching from a bed of straw. It is love, tugging our hearts back to God.

"God, invisible in his own nature, became visable in ours." Beyond our grasp, he chose to come within our grasp.

And this is the intimately personal nature of Christmas; God gave his son for our sake. John 3: 16 For God...

He loved the world so much that he gave us a life-giving gift of such a personal nature that we couldn't begin to dream such a story or such a gift into existence. In fact, the breadth and depth of Gods love is hard to comprehend.

A young father, whose wife had just died, took his daughter on a cruise to begin the recovery process. As they huddled together on the deck of the ship, the little girl asked her father, "Daddy, does God love us as much as mummy did?"

At first, the man didn't know what to say. But he knew he couldn't side step the question. Pointing across the water to the distant horizon, he said, "Gods love reaches farther than you can see in that direction."

The man the looked up to the sky, and said, "Gods love is higher than that sky as well." Finally, he pointed down at the ocean and reflected, "Its deeper that the ocean, too."

After hearing her father speak, the girl responded; "Oh, just think, Daddy. We're right in the middle of all that love."

It sometimes take a child for us to understand the impact of the Fathers indescribable gift.

The Good News is Great News! His gift to us wasn't a one-off, which ended when Jesus died for our sins, however. The bible says Jesus rose from the dead after 3 days, and opened the way for us to live with him forever. When he returned to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to live within anyone who would receive him-and the fullness begins the moment you open the gift.

[Ephesians 2:8](#) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

[John 4:10](#) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

The beauty of the Holy spirit is he draws into intimacy.

Lean to your neighbor and repeat what all kids say on Christmas morning after hearing, "Who is this for?" Im the one! **"That's for me!"**

**2.) THE PRACTICAL GIFT:** When I buy a gift for Sheryl , not only is it personal, but its also PRACTICAL.

Most of us ending up getting at least 1 or 2 gifts that are as useful as a chocolate teapot! Some gifts you want to jump over the moon for and others you want to send back to the moon because only a Martian would wear it.

It reminds me of the woman who once stuck her Christmas wish list to the fridge for her husband to read. She kept it brilliantly simple, asking only for 'something that will make me look slim and beautiful.

When Christmas arrived, she looked forward to opening a package with something gorgeously intimate inside. Instead, she got an exercise bike!

Santa might bring us what we deserve; God, however, delivers something we don't deserve!

In the rush up to Christmas, we do tons of baking, preparing, cleaning, airport runs, buying new clothes. Many will get a new haircut, go on a trip or if you have a child named Destiny, wish for a Disney Cruise! God's gracious gift of grace runs longer than the ever-ready bunny!

His practical gift positions us to walk in His presence..

One tip for Christmas is to want the gift in order to receive it! Consider for a moment, how exciting it is to give a personal present that you've put so much thought into, and how crushing it is if the person opens it only to discard it or worse yet shove it to the side to open another.

One thing I will never do is shove Bobbie-Jos bread in the corner! Unless you're a Kito King, bread is like cotton candy which is a cardinal NO NO but for those of us who have seen the light! LOL bread satisfies and strengthens.

Are we hungry for what God has to offer? Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which literally means, "The House of Bread. Later in his life, he spoke about himself saying, "I am the bread of life" Those who come to me will never go hungry, and those who believe in me will never be thirsty." (JOHN 6:35)

Bread by nature was a practical gift but was about to be a personal gift. When we receive this gift it offers more than nutrition to live another day but it also sustains us for a lifetime basking in God's love, joy, peace, gentleness, patience and blessing.

So, what did he mean when he said, "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE?" This is a phenomenal statement! **First**, by equating Himself with bread, Jesus is saying he is *essential* for life.

**Second**, the life Jesus is referring to is not physical life, but eternal life. Jesus is trying to get the Jews' thinking off of the physical realm and into the spiritual realm. He is contrasting what He brings as their Messiah with the bread He miraculously created the day before. That was physical bread that perishes. He is spiritual bread that brings eternal life.

**Third**, and very important, Jesus is making another claim to deity. This statement is the first of the “[LAM](#)” statements in John’s Gospel. The phrase “I AM” is the covenant name of God (Yahweh, or YHWH), revealed to Moses at the burning bush ([Exodus 3:14](#)). The phrase speaks of self-sufficient existence (or what theologians refer to as “[aseity](#)”), which is an attribute only God possesses. It is also a phrase the Jews who were listening would have automatically understood as a claim to deity.

**Fourth**, notice the words “**come**” and “**believe.**” This is an invitation for those listening to place their faith in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God. This invitation to come is found throughout John’s Gospel. Coming to Jesus involves making a choice to forsake the world and follow Him. Believing in Jesus means placing our faith in Him that He is who He says He is, that He will do what He says He will do, and that He is the only one who can.

**Fifth**, there are the words “hunger and thirst.” Again, it must be understood that Jesus isn’t talking about alleviating physical hunger and thirst. The key is found in another statement Jesus made, back in His Sermon on the Mount. In [Matthew 5:6](#), Jesus says, “**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.**” When Jesus says those who come to Him will never hunger and those who believe in Him will never thirst, He is saying He will satisfy our hunger and thirst to be made righteous in the sight of God.

If there is anything the history of human religion tells us, it is that people seek to earn their way to heaven. This is such a basic human desire because God created us with eternity in mind. The Bible says God has placed [the desire for] eternity in our hearts ([Ecclesiastes 3:11](#)). The Bible also tells us that there is nothing we can do to earn our way to heaven . Our problem is we have a desire we cannot fulfill, no matter what we do. That is where Jesus comes in. He, and He alone, can fulfill that desire in our hearts for righteousness through the Divine Transaction: **That is why the gift is so valuable. That is why the gift is so indescribable. No gift carries the weight of value like this.**

While your past may be stained with regret, with God you are offered a spotless future! A personal, practical gift from God demands an appropriate response.

Gods gift is personal, he gave us his son. Its practical because it helps us sustain us, satisfying and strengthening us.

### **3.) Gods gift is PERMANENT:**

But when I give a gift to Sheryl, I also want, if possible, to give some permanent. Something of lasting value that she will treasure way beyond Christmas Day, something that will not perish. Gifts that go beyond practicality but can be confused as such

- A.) Picture of me
- B.) Pajamas
- C.) Heating Pad
- D.) Crock Pot/Frying Pan
- E.) Snow Shovel

Sometimes we can give our little kids expensive toys, only to find , by the end of the day, they prefer to play with the boxes and make forts. Sometimes the gifts don't even work, or they break the first hour.

**Gods gift to us is permanent!** , non perishable. Remember the immortal words from Johns gospel, “ For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him will never perish but have eternal life.”

Read a story about 3 year Michael that if he chose to disobey him mom that he would have to live with the circumstances! Daddy! He said with a terrified look on his face, “please don't make me live with the circumstances. I want to live with you and mommy”

**John 10:28** I give to them the gift of eternal life and they will never be lost and no one has the power to snatch them out of my hands. **29** My Father, who has given them to me as his gift, is the mightiest of all, and no one has the power to snatch them from my Father's care.

#### **4.) THE PURCHASED GIFT:**

So, Gods gift is personal-he gave us his son. It is practical-it sustains us. Its permanent-not perishable. But when I give a gift to Sheryl, I also like to purchase it before leaving the store. I don't like the down payment plan of salvation. Gods gift to us was purchased by a massive price. It didn't come free, it came at a huge cost and we should never devalue or cheapen the gift by taking it for granted.

1 John 2:2 " He is the sacrifice of our sins. He takes away not only our sins, but the sins of the world.

The warranty on this gift is literally out of this world!

One Christmas a grandmother could not decide what gift to give her 3 grandchildren. She decided to simply put a cheque for \$20.00 in each card with a message 'buy your own gift'

The cards were mailed , then to her surprise the woman found the 3 cheques under some newspaper on the dining room table.

Her 3 grandchildren were very shocked to receive a card each with the Christmas greeting, "BUY YOUR OWN GIFT"

The message at Christmas was sent via CROSS MAIL! PAID IN FULL!

The message of Christ has rescued us from a thrashing sea of sin whose sole purpose is to drown us.

When lifeguards rescue someone who is struggling in the sea, they will swim out to them and tread water for a while attempting to calm them down with a life preserver . They don't grab onto someone who is drowning because they will pull you under with them. When they are done trying to save themselves it is only then that the lifeguard can bring them to safety!

When we receive that gift of salvation for ourselves, knowing that there is nothing else we can do to earn it, we are saved by faith in Jesus the Lifeguard to rescue us -not by thrashing around trying to stay afloat doing good works and volunteering or simply by going to church on Christmas and Easter.

God spent everything he had on us! And the gift is one that we should never want to exchange.

## **FOR BEST RESULTS FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS**

My heart sinks when I open up a Christmas gift only to see 3 little words printed on the top, "SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED" Ask Cody how well I put a BBQ together. If our marriage certificate said, SAR....I don't know... I will never by a bike not already assembled!!

I once read about a man who ordered a tree house for his children. It arrived on time and the hour came for him to assemble it. He laid out all the parts on the floor (like any good Sullivan would do) and began reading the instructions.

He was shocked to discover that while he had instructions for a tree house, the parts were for a boat! The next day he sent an angry letter to the company complaining about the mix up. (something a Sullivan would not do-we would figure it out) Back came the reply:

"We are truly sorry for the error and the inconvenience. However, it might cheer you up to remember that somewhere there is someone out there trying to sail your tree house!"

To put something together you must have, read and apply the right instructions. Thankfully, when it comes to our own lives, God has revealed to us the best way to assemble them. There are times when someone will try and slip in the wrong directions showing you another way that if followed will bear no resemblance to what your trying to out together.

God will never force this gift on anyone! It is up to us all we have to do believe. Isn't that part of the Christmas season? Belief? The word (believe) dictates the action on our part. TO believe means to commit, to rely, or depend on.

I love John 1:12 " to all who believed Him and received him, he gave the right to become children of God."

One Christmas, someone was given vouchers for a big box store. Unfortunately, they were left in the desk for months with an expiry date. Good thing is he redeemed them on time.



Gift Certificates are only of any value if we redeem them. God wants us to redeem the gift. **The only time they expire is when you do!**

### **EXPERIENCE THE LOVE**

An English Literature professor wrote a book on the subject of love. The only problem was he was never in love himself. When he took the manuscript to the proof-reader to have it prepared for publication, she turned out to be a very lovely woman. When their eyes met, something happened to the professor that was not in his book. With love rushing in to fill his heart, he became more joyful in the following 5 minutes than he had been in the previous 50 years when he live alone. Needless to say a new chapter was written.

### **5.) The Placed Gift:**

The gift is looking for a place. REPEAT, I'm the one the gift is looking for. You're the one the gift was bought for.

Acts 10:21 " Peter went downstairs to the men and said, "I believe I'm the one you are looking for. What brings you here?"

Funny Peter had confidence and uncertainty at the same time. I'm the one your looking for, what brings you here? **YOU'RE THE ONE THIS GIFT WAS FOR**

### **CLOSING:**

At Christmas we receive gifts we often don't need or even want, today God offers something of far greater value that we cant do without. All it takes is a little effort to reach out and receive a gift that is personal, practical, permanent and purchased that is yours for life. (literaly)

These famous words were penned by Phillip Brooks in 1867 and became the first verse of the carol "O little town of Bethlehem"

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us , we pray.  
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!"

**It expresses all to clear what we need to do to receive Gods personal, practical, permanent, and purchased gift, who is Christ Jesus.**

Why not pray this prayer based on Philips Brooks words as a way of receiving Gods Indescribable gift?

'O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to me, I pray;  
I turn from sin, please enter in, be born in me today,  
I've heard the Christmas message, the great glad tidings tell;  
Christ come to me, abide with me, O Lord Emmanuel.