

The Perfect Gift for Everyone

Lesson 03 of the series, "The Gift"

I. Jesus is the perfect gift for everyone.

"That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. 'Don't be afraid!' he said. 'I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.' Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.'"

Luke 2:8-14 (NLT)

a. Jesus is the perfect gift for people who are lost.

"Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with such scum?' When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do.' Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.'" Matthew 9:10-13 (NLT)

"For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost." Luke 19:10 (NLT)

Note: We are ALL lost sinners who need a savior. "This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'--and I am the worst of them all." 1 Timothy 1:15 (NLT)

b. Jesus is the perfect gift for people who are least.

"The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD's favor has come." Luke 4:18-19 (NLT)

Note: God likes doing extraordinary things through ordinary shepherds. "He chose his servant David, calling him from the sheep pens." Psalm 78:70 (NLT) "One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro... He led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush." Exodus 3:1-2 (NLT)

c. Jesus is the perfect gift for people who are lonely.

"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us." Matthew 1:23 (NIV) (see also Isaiah 7:14)

"And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20 (NLT)

Note: Jesus understands what we are going through. "This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin." Hebrews 4:15 (NLT)

II. God's gift is too good to keep to ourselves.

"When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, 'Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them." Luke 2:15-20 (NLT)

"It happened that four lepers were sitting just outside the city gate. They said to one another, 'What are we doing sitting here at death's door? If we enter the famine-struck city we'll die; if we stay here we'll die. So let's take our chances in the camp of Aram and throw ourselves on their mercy. If they receive us we'll live, if they kill us we'll die. We've got nothing to lose.' So after the sun went down they got up and went to the camp of Aram. When they got to the edge of the camp, surprise! Not a man in the camp! The Lord had made the army of Aram hear the sound of horses and a mighty army on the march. They told one another, 'The king of Israel hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt to attack us!' Panicked, they ran for their lives through the darkness, abandoning tents, horses, donkeys—the whole camp just as it was—running for dear life. These four

lepers entered the camp and went into a tent. First they ate and drank. Then they grabbed silver, gold, and clothing, and went off and hid it. They came back, entered another tent, and looted it, again hiding their plunder. Finally they said to one another, 'We shouldn't be doing this! This is a day of good news and we're making it into a private party! If we wait around until morning we'll get caught and punished. Come on! Let's go tell the news to the king's palace!'" 2 Kings 7:3-9 (MSG)

- a. We must share the Good News about Christ with people who are lost.

"By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News." Ephesians 3:7 (NLT)

"So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ." Colossians 1:28 (NLT)

- b. We must share God's kindness with people who are least.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.' Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!' Matthew 25:34-40 (NLT)

"The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." Galatians 5:6 (NIV)

- c. We must share God's love with people who are lonely.

"Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other... When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality... Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep." Romans 12:10,13,15 (NLT)

"God places the lonely in families..." Psalm 68:6 (NLT)

Connect Group Questions

1. What is the most popular gift you have ever tried to buy for someone else? (i.e. Cabbage Patch Kids, iPod, Tickle Me Elmo, etc.) What made these gifts “must have” items and hard to find?
2. Read Luke 2:8-20. Why do you think God chose to announce Jesus’ birth to shepherds rather than priests, celebrities or powerful political rulers?
3. Read Matthew 9:10-13 & Ephesians 3:7. Brainstorm as a group about ways to have “Good News” conversations with our friends and neighbors this Christmas? Why are Christians often reluctant to talk about their faith? How do we overcome this?
4. Read Matthew 25:34-40 & Hebrews 10:24. How do we become more aware of the needs of people around us? How do we motivate each other to “love and good deeds”?
5. Read 2 Kings 7:1-9. Why do you think the lepers felt like it was wrong to keep good news to themselves?
6. Read Romans 12: 10-15. How can we show genuine affection for lonely or hurting people this Christmas? Spend some time as a group praying for people you know who have lost a loved one or suffered through an illness or injury this past year.
7. Discuss the following quotations:

“Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere. Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.” Author unknown

“Snuggle in God's arms. When you are hurting, when you feel lonely, left out. Let Him cradle you, comfort you, reassure you of His all-sufficient power and love.” Kay Arthur

"Non-Christians seem to think that the Incarnation implies some particular merit or excellence in humanity. But of course it implies just the reverse: a particular demerit and depravity. No creature that deserved Redemption would need to be redeemed. They that are whole need not the physician. Christ died for men precisely because men are not worth dying for; to make them worth it." C.S. Lewis

“...when he brought his firstborn Son into the world, God said, ‘Let all of God’s angels worship him.’” Hebrews 1:6 (NLT)