



Title: God's Internal Gifts
Theme: Benefits of Receiving God's Gift, Christ
Series: Grasping the Truths of Christmas

“But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.” (Luke 2:10-11, 14)

Have you ever received a gift inside a gift?

Have you ever received a gift inside a gift? I once read of a lady who received a pair of gloves for Christmas. The fingers of the gloves were stuffed with \$20.00 bills. One man received a Russian doll that is Yeltsin on the outside, open that and on the inside is Berniv, open that and on the inside is Stalin, open that and on the inside is a little tiny Lenin. (Rick Warren, Christmas Message)

I would propose to that when Christians receive the Gift of God, Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, there are gifts that are put on the inside of them that manifest themselves in a way that is beneficial to spiritual health and to the building of the kingdom of God.

Listen as I read Luke 2:10-11, 14, “But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.” (Luke 2:10-11, 14)

Just what are gifts that are the results of having the Gift, Jesus Christ indwelling Christians and what benefit is that to the Body of Christ?

There is an abundant life

Receiving Jesus is the greatest Gift anyone can receive, for the receiver of God's Gift there is an abundant life promised. “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.” (John 1:12-13)

The description of a Christian is a person who believes in Jesus and has received Christ into his life and heart. This repentant sinner has received Christ as being a gift from God. He must receive the Word of God as final authority, receive God's offer of kindness and begin to take on the Lord's image and His impressions of love as the governing principle of his affections and actions. (Matthew Henry) This repentant sinner believes in the teachings of Jesus Christ and is open to allowing the Holy Spirit to enable him to live out the Word of God. (The Pulpit Commentary)

To the born again Christian, Jesus says, "...I have come that [you] might have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10) The New American Standard Bible says, "...I came that [you] might have life, and might have it abundantly." (John 10:10 NAS)

This passage of Scripture holds a key truth that the Holy Spirit wants you to grasp today. You can have life in Christ that is beyond existing. Jesus gives meaning to life to those whom He indwells because He gives full satisfaction and perfect guidance. I have always appreciated what Elder Don Malcolm has said often, "Because of Jesus, I have found a reason for living."

"Life," (zoe) meaning a blessed life, life that satisfies, being indwelt by God but not necessarily favored by circumstances. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary) Jesus had on many occasions faced difficult circumstances and so have many of His most faithful servants, the apostle Paul, just to name one. This word for "life" is an active verb affecting every part of the child of God's eternal existence. Jesus' life offered freely is:

One: His life is energy, the force and the power of being. Your Christian life has a powerful influence on someone. Jesus has worked so powerfully through certain Christians that many ministries receive prayer and financial support from people they never see face to face on a regular basis, because someone in that ministry has helped, encouraged and fed the soul of someone.

When I was serving on the board of TFC, many times a special love offering would come in from someone who had once been touched by a Teens for Christ staff member some years ago back. They would often write expressing thanks and the love offering sent would often be just the right amount for a specific need. Because Christians receive God's gift, Jesus Christ, they experience the blessing of sharing the life-giving force of Christ to others in need.

Christians who grasp the truths of Christmas know the truth of their very existence and they say like the apostle Paul, "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life." (2 Corinthians 2:14-16)

Two: His life is opposite of perishing. This gift of deliverance from condemnation and death is the guarantee of being part of the resurrection of the children of God. This new resurrected body will not see deterioration and decay, nor be touched by corruption. (John 3:16; 5:24,29; 10:28) Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself. And He has given Him authority to judge because He is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.” (John 5:24-29)

Three: His life brings satisfaction and security. Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” (John 6:35) Jesus is the support of spiritual life and His teachings give guidance in every part of life for those who have the courage and heart to seek the truths that He teaches. The blessing of having accepted God’s free gift leads to enjoying that ever-flowing never-exhausted communication with the Lord, which can only be interrupted by self-will. It is a life that overflows in trust, obedience and in love with Christ.

Jesus is the divine bounty in all that God has for His children and Jesus using the word “comes” shows that those wanting eternal blessings must be willing to allow God to work in their lives. (Barnes Notes; Matthew Henry; The Pulpit Commentary)

There is one thing that can stop the work of God and that is the stubborn heart that does not want to release control. The defiance of the human heart is the most dangerous enemy out there to the human soul. The life promised in Christ is right there for the taking or the refusing.

When a person takes on the life of Christ, the human heart finds what it was created for and this person moves from just existing into a life of spiritual excitement, adventure and peace. However, it must be sought with a repentant heart surrendered to the will of God.

In his best selling book called, “Into Thin Air,” the author (Jon Krakauer) relates the hazards that plagued some climbers as they attempted to reach the summit of Mount Everest. Andy Harris, one of the expedition leaders stayed at the peak too long and on his descent, he became in dire need of oxygen.

Harris radioed the base and told them about his predicament. He mentioned that he had come across a supply of oxygen canisters left by other climbers but they

were empty. Climbers ahead of him on the same descent overheard the radio transmission and told Mr. Harris that they had just passed those canisters on their way down and he was not seeing properly because of his lack of oxygen, the canisters were not empty but full. They pleaded with him on the radio to make use of them but it was to no avail, Harris was starved for oxygen and he continued to argue that the canisters were empty. His lack of oxygen had ravaged his capacity to recognize what was right in front of him and his lack of faith in what he was told led to his death. (Brian Bill in Bread of Life, sermoncentral.com)

What oxygen is to the body, the Bread of life, Jesus Christ, is to the soul. When a baby is born he must grasp for continued life through breathing air which unseen, everyone knows is there. Through what is created everybody knows there is God who is unseen and His plan has been made known to mankind through creation.

Romans 1:19-20 says, “since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.” (Romans 1:19-20)

Everything about God and Christ and revelation of the Holy Spirit has and is being made known by all that the Lord does. It is only man’s love for self-pleasure, the world and his longing to listen to the lies of the devil that prevents him from having eternal life. Sinful man must first be resolved to seek God for forgiveness, invite Christ in and surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit and eternal life is assured to the repentant.

Andy Harris needed life giving oxygen, sinners need to receive Christ. Unbelief kept Mr. Harris from believing what he was told. The flesh, the world, and the Devil keep sinners from understanding the life giving truths of God’s Word. Is the sin of self, the world and the deception of Satan choking the breath of God, the Holy Spirit of Christ from entering into you? Thus, causing you to refuse truth that lies right before you. Are you allowing Christ’s life to live through you? Does your life proclaim the “Gift” of God saying, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20) The child of God who understands and submits to this truth walks secure in the promise of Jesus.

He said, “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:33)

Jesus makes it clear that His disciples are to replace the pursuit of earthly things for the pursuit of greater significance. To seek His kingdom is to have a heart desire to enter into, submit to, and participate in spreading the news of the saving

grace of God. It must be remembered that the Lord's kingdom is established through Christ, submission to His Father, His victory over sin and death and through the on-going work of the Holy Spirit to cause man to think of eternal things. (The Expositors Bible Commentary)

Seeking His righteousness is to become interested in His favor resting upon you through prayerful reading and studying of the Word of God, through surrendering to the Holy Spirit as He cleanses you through the washing of the Word of God. (Ephesians 5:26) This involves becoming illuminated by the Holy Spirit so one can apply the truths of God's Word. (Barnes Notes; Thru the Bible; Psalm 119:9,11)

A life satisfied with the righteousness of God will have all necessary things provided for him. (Barnes Notes; The Pulpit Commentary) The child of God who has God's Gift, Jesus Christ, has the One who clothes the lilies of the field. He feeds the birds of the air and Christians are far more important to Him than flowers and birds. He will provide clothes, drink, and food for those who are living according to His will and have a desire for His purposes to be achieved in and through their lives. (Matthew 6:25-34)

Recently I read a message (by Pastor Melvin Maughmer) that shared some valuable information about army maneuvers. When they were out in battle or patrolling in enemy areas there was a key position that was essential to a company of soldiers. It is called the "Point Position" and it was highly esteemed and respected because the person who held it had the responsibility of all the other soldiers upon his shoulders.

What the point man did was to lead the company through hostile territory. He would go first ensuring that the way was clear, that there were no land mines or any danger before the soldiers were allowed to move onward. What would happen sometimes by him being first was if the enemy was out there somewhere, the enemy would notice him first and they more than likely would shoot him. What this did was give the rest of the company the knowledge that the enemy was out there and they could take the appropriate action to save the lives of the other soldiers.

When a sinner accepts God's gift, Jesus Christ becomes his point man. The Lord leads the Christian through hostile territory of the devil. He points out all that would destroy physical and spiritual life, the snares that lead to bondage and entanglement. He provides safe shelter, the food and water sufficient for the upcoming battles. This soldier of Christ goes into life's battles saying, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4)

Christians also have the gift of "hope"

The man or woman who accepts God's free gift and receives Christ lives a full, abundant life that is satisfying and exciting. Christians also have the gift of "hope."

In Ephesians 1:18 the apostle Paul prays a prayer that is birthed forth by the Holy Spirit and is the heart of Christ and from God. Every Christian parent and grandparent needs to be regularly praying this prayer, petitioning the God of mercy to give this revelation to all who has ever proclaimed to be a Christian. "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the Hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints." (Ephesians 1:17-18)

This "hope" (*elpis*) is placed deep within the heart of those who have experienced salvation through Christ. This brings an awareness of eternal life and all the blessedness that comes in knowing Jesus Christ.

Dr. Jim Berg does an outstanding job in giving us insight on what this hope is in comparison to how the word hope is often used today. It must be noted that "hope" in the Bible is used much differently as it used today. It must be pointed out that the way hope is often used today is not wrong.

Hope as it is used today is usually an expression of a strong desire that seems in all likelihood of being fulfilled. For example: Hundreds of people have a hope that they will be able to get a loan on their house and in about 40 years through hard work and faithfulness get the home paid off. For those who stay faithful and stay on the plan, that is usually what happens. However, you never know what may come up, illness, tragedy in the family, a great depression in our economy or as many have found out this year, a natural disaster could completely destroy your home and cause you to refinance.

However, "hope" as it is used in the Bible is not the expression of a strong desire with a measure mixed with uncertainty of what could happen. This hope finds its foundation upon the written Word of God and this is an expectation that what is promised will be completed. For example: When the apostle Paul speaks of "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ," (Titus 2:13) he is speaking about an event that is going to take place.

One truth that shores up the hope found in born-again Christians is the sealing of the Holy Spirit. Notice what the apostle Paul teaches in Ephesians 1:13-14 regarding the Holy Spirit just before his prayer for illumination in Ephesians 1:17-18. "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel

of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession..." (Ephesians 1:13-14)

The seal of the Holy Spirit is His presence within the believer. His presence is the authorized signature of God that He will complete the work He has started in you. He will provide, protect and equip those who are faithful.

The child of God who receives God's gift has an unshakeable hope when the Holy Spirit has opened his spiritual eyes to the fact that Jesus Christ Himself takes up residence in such a sinful dwelling as his heart through the Spirit of Christ. (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16)

My son Caleb cleans stalls for one of the finest horse barns in Norton County. He cleans stalls 6 days a week and he does a great job at it. His brothers, Caleb and I can tell you, no matter how much you clean a stall, there is always that stench of filth. Sometimes it make your eyes water. If you just walk in the barn that smell gets in your hair and clothes, thus you have a bad odor. Sin jumps on us just as easy.

We are sinners saved by grace and we sin daily through thought or deed. Yet, our Lord, in humility is content to indwell the children of God by the Holy Spirit to sanctify them and mold them into His image, to empower them for service unto Him, the brethren, and to mankind in general. Just as He was willing to be born in a stinky stable and walk on this sin-trodden earth nearly 2000 years ago so man may have hope in God, He is willing to live within Christians.

Peter writes this about God's elect, those who have received God's gift, "Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God." (1 Peter 1:21)

Once a child of God has received the Gift, Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of Christ, Biblical hope is birthed from God's Word.

When Satan, the father of lies, speaks to the mind of a Christian, bringing up his past sins, the Holy Spirit brings to mind what the Bible says about forgiveness. The Holy Spirit moved the beloved John to write this sure hope, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) Ezekiel writes about the sinner who turns to God and gives this sure hope, "None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered against him." (Ezekiel 18:22)

The man who accepts God's free gift, Jesus Christ, is a man who has a fresh clean start with God and His love endures forever.

When the flesh, the world view and the devil tells a child of God that he is worthless and has no value in this life, The Son of God, through the Holy Spirit brings to mind Psalm 139:13-14, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;" (Psalm 139:13-14) He reminds them that they have Holy Spirit gifts for ministering to others. (1 Corinthians 12:7)

For those who obey the call of making disciples He gives these promises, "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Those who possess God's Gift will be moved like the shepherds were on that first Christmas of whom the Bible says, "they spread word concerning all what had been told them about this child." (Luke 2:17) To those who proclaim the birth of Christ and the gospel message there is the sure hope that, "...[their] labor in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58) And if they do "not become weary... at the proper time [they] will reap a harvest if [they] do not give up." (Galatians 6:9)

These are hopes that come with a "yes and Amen." There are many more hopes found in the Word of God for those who have received Christ and the Holy Spirit will enlighten all who will take the time to prayerfully read and study the Word of God.

Benefits in receiving God's free Gift, Jesus Christ, are for the taking or the rejecting. When Christ is received in the heart as Savior and Lord, Christians find out that there are many gifts that are placed inside them and their lives become satisfied, exciting and useful to the building of the kingdom of God.

Christians receive life with the Gift of Christ, in this world and in eternity. They have a sure hope placed within them that the Christ they have received will never leave them nor forsake them. His faithfulness to us is as sure as His faithfulness to His Father's will for Him. You can trust a Lord who was obedient even unto death, for the sake of purchasing a bride, His church.

Have you "Grasped the Truths of Christmas? Have you received God's Gift and are you expressing His life and a sure hope in God and Christ?

Let us Pray!

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