

## The Unwanted Gift

James 1:16-18

### Preface

The holiday season is upon us. Thanksgiving is just a couple of weeks away and Christmas decorations are already going up.

Plans are being made. Parties are being scheduled and shopping lists are getting assembled.

We go to great lengths to celebrate Christmas but we barely acknowledge Christ in the season. We have reindeers, Santas, Christmas trees, lights and all sorts of decorations. But the celebration is really about God's gift to mankind; Jesus Christ.

The ultimate gift comes from God; it is our Savior Jesus Christ. Yet year after year, the world elevates everything but Christ during the Christmas season.

This year Christmas is on Sunday. We shall see what really matters to people. Will you attend church on Christmas Day or will Christmas be more about toys, Santa, etc?

You might say it is about family. What better way to build your family than to be in the house of God on Christmas day.

### Scripture Text

<sup>16</sup> Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. <sup>17</sup> Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. <sup>18</sup> He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. James 1:16-18 NIV

### Introduction

Have you ever "re-gifted"? You know what I mean. Have you taken a gift that was given to you and wrapped it up to give to someone else?

People often do this when they receive a gift they do not want. If you think about it, you have two choices, throw it away or pass it along to someone else. Who knows, they might have a use for it.

We live in a day when Jesus Christ is the unwanted gift. People want Christmas and religion but not Christ and His teachings.

### Content

#### 1. Some people are too busy to receive the gift.

People today are too busy to receive the gift of Jesus Christ. They often reason and rightfully so, that receiving Christ will change their life and their lifestyle.

Illus: Perhaps the hardest thing to deal with as a pastor is talking with people who are struggling but will not turn to the only good answer to their problems. People will say they need help in their marriage or finances but they will not come to Christ and receive the one gift that will make a difference.

Too busy is an awfully foolish excuse. You mean people are too busy to experience the most important thing in your life?

I hear people say all the time that they are just too busy. The most ridiculous excuse I hear is "Sunday is our only day to sleep late" or "spend time as a family".

It is true. You can't know Christ and not have your life changed. Experiencing Christ means being influenced by God's love and that changes a person.

Knowing Christ will change your lifestyle, your priorities and your schedule.

Consequently, many people are just too busy to know Christ.

## 2. Some people are too smart to receive the gift.

People today are too smart to receive the gift of Jesus Christ. We live in a day when we think we are so intelligent as a society.

We have computers and all sorts of hand-held electronic devices. And yet, we cannot solve the real problems that have faced us for centuries.

My entire lifetime we have been fighting the same wars; war on drugs, hunger, poverty, energy crisis, violence, recessions, decline in the family, Middle East unrest, and the list goes on and on.

The reality is we are not nearly as smart as we think we are. We have a lot of things and gadgets but the world doesn't really have the answers to life's big challenges. Why we can't see that is bewildering to me.

Yet people find the gospel of Jesus Christ to be too simple to be the real solution to peace.

Paul speaks of this in 1 Corinthians 1:18, <sup>18</sup>*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*"

## 3. Some people are too good for the gift.

In order for grace to work, there must be recognition of sin. The problem today is too many people think they are too good for the gift of Christ because they will not acknowledge sin in their life.

Illus: I receive a lot of spam email much of which I find offensive. This week I received an email about the Genie Bra. Now I know I am a big guy but I don't think I am in need of a Genie Bra. The ad did say it "provides a custom lift and conforms to any shape." Regardless, the email was not applicable to me.

For some people, the gospel seems just as irrelevant. They reason that they are a pretty good person and not in need of repentance or salvation.

This simply is not so. The Bible tells us *"all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."*

People today compare their life to the lives of others and conclude they are in good shape. Our generation has experienced some pretty sorry leaders that have contributed to this thought.

But we must look at our lives in relationship to God's word. When we do, we become challenged with the need for forgiveness.

<sup>23</sup>*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 NIV*

## 4. Some people do not understand the gift.

Still others simply do not understand the gift of God. We live in a time when people have been inundated with various religions and deviations of religions.

It saddens me deeply when I hear how some portray Christianity on the television in order to rake in money.

Frankly, it even bothers me how some preachers and writers seek to profit financially by their books, preaching and other materials.

The gospel is the "Good News" and it should be spread freely and eagerly to all.

Some people simply do not know what to believe. Many are confused about what it means to receive Jesus Christ and to be saved.

The Bible is clear that Christ died for our sins. All we have to do is confess our sins to God, believe upon Jesus Christ as our Savior and give our heart to him.

This is where the church is so important. It is our mission to reach out to those who are struggling and tell of what Christ has done in our lives. We must help others understand the joy of receiving the gift of Christ by telling our story.

## Conclusion

But for those who do receive the gift from God, so much is given.

*Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink; you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." John 1:10 NIV*

To the lost, God's gift is salvation.

To the weary, God's gift is rest.

To the ungodly, God's gift is righteousness.

To the unwise, God's gift is wisdom.

To the troubled, God's gift is peace.

To all who receive there is forgiveness of sin, eternal life, newness of life and abundant life in Christ.

Paul writes, <sup>15</sup>*Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*  
*2 Corinthians 9:15 NIV*