

“God’s Indescribable Gift”

December 25, 2016

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

I. Introduction

Once again let me wish everyone a “Merry Christmas.” I suspect that by now most of you have had the opportunity to open your presents—some of you last night and the rest of you this morning before church. I can still remember when I was growing up how we waited for the time to open presents. Early on Christmas morning my brother and my sister and I would start our incessant question, “*Can we get up yet?*” I think we usually started our haranguing around 3 am and continued until our parents finally relented—usually around 6 am. So by this time on a Christmas morning, we would have all our presents opened and perhaps some already broken.

The Scripture reading this morning is about giving gifts. When pastors want to encourage their people to give more generously, they often use these particular verses, but that’s not why we are here in 2 Corinthians. This morning as we think about Christmas gifts, it seemed appropriate to look at the verse about God’s gift to us—**verse 15: “Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!”**

For the last month or so, many of us have been concerned about choosing just the right Christmas gifts to give to the special people in our lives. As you think back over all the gifts that you have received, have you ever received an indescribable gift? Have you ever received a gift that was beyond description? What kind of gift would it have to be to be called “*indescribable*”? Would it be a gift that you open and say, “*This is beautiful. It’s something that I’ve wanted all my life! What is it?*” Or maybe it would be a gift that carries a lot of emotional feelings with it. It was given to you by someone very special and it was a complete surprise when you opened it. Because of the memories that it brings, you will always treasure it. Would that make it an “*indescribable gift*”? Or maybe it

would be a gift that you cared so little about that you wouldn't even bother to find words to try to describe it. What is an "*indescribable gift*"?

During the Sundays of Advent, we have tried to describe the wonderfulness of God's gift of Jesus Christ to us. Some of the greatest music ever composed was written about God's indescribable gift. There's Handel's "Messiah," "Joy to the World," "Silent Night, Holy Night" just to name a few. Poets, painters, sculptors have used the tools of their trade to pay tribute to Jesus, the gift of God's love. Paul said, "**Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.**" There are at least four reasons that Paul called Jesus "*indescribable*."

II. Four reasons Jesus is called indescribable

A. Because of His nature

The first reason that Paul calls Jesus "*indescribable*" is because of His nature. What words does one use to describe Jesus? **Turn to Matthew 1:20-23.** How does one describe a baby born of a virgin? How does one describe "**Immanuel—God with us**"? How does one describe God in flesh, walking—living on earth and reaching out to those that are in need of healing, both spiritually and physically?

How can we describe something that is spirit when all that we have ever known is physical or material? How does one describe an omniscient God--God who has all knowledge when all we have is limited knowledge? How does one describe an omnipotent God—God who is all powerful? How does one describe the eternal? How do you describe the indescribable?

Paul says that we can't. Words just aren't adequate. Through the years men have tried to describe Jesus. In AD 325 the Council of Nicaea—a gathering of all the religious minds of the day—tried. Some of you may remember their description but for those who don't know it, here is their description from the Nicene Creed: "*The one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father*

[the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.”

Did you understand all that? Neither do I and I doubt any else does either. This is learned man’s attempt to describe the indescribable. Even when we bring together the greatest minds and use the most immense vocabularies, we cannot adequately describe the nature of Jesus. He was and is one of a kind—God incarnate—fully God and fully man—this is indescribable.

B. Because of His Purpose in Coming to Earth

A second reason Paul called Jesus indescribable is because of His purpose in coming to earth. What did the angel say to the shepherds? *“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord”* (Luke 2:11 KJV). In Matthew 20:28 Jesus said, *“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* In 1 Timothy 1:15 Paul wrote, *“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”*

When we celebrate Christmas, we celebrate the fact that Jesus came into our world to save us. God saw that mankind needed saving. He saw our sins against Him and against mankind. When God looked at our world, He knew that our greatest need wasn’t for more wealth or better schools or a better welfare system or universal peace. Our greatest need was for a Savior. There will never be peace on earth until men have been lifted out of their sins, their hearts changed, and their way of thinking transformed. This can only happen when the Savior comes into their lives. Our greatest need is to be saved from the eternal punishment of hell.

How can we describe that? How can we put into words what God accomplished when He sent His only begotten Son into the world? God’s gift—Jesus Christ—is indescribable because of His nature, because of His purpose in coming to earth, and, thirdly, because of the grace by which Jesus was given.

C. Because of the Grace by which Jesus was Given

To whom do you give Christmas gifts? Basically, you give them to people who have some kind of claim on you. You give a gift to your husband or wife because of that relationship. You give gifts to your children because they are your children. You give gifts to your grandchildren because they are your grandchildren. We buy gifts for family members because they are family.

If you give a gift to someone who is not family, it's probably because they bought you a gift last year and you didn't. So you owe them a gift this year and the story goes on. This time of year people give gifts to feed the hungry or clothe those who need clothes or take care of the homeless, they give because deep down inside they feel that they have a debt to humanity. There is a feeling of obligation for them.

This is what makes God's gift so special--indescribable, He doesn't owe us anything. In fact, as sinners we were at constant rebellion against Him and His will for our lives. **Romans 8:7** says, **"The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so."** Turn to **Romans 5:6-8**. Even though we were enemies of God--sinners, Christ died for us. God gave this gift, not because He felt obligated to give a gift, but because His love—His grace—is so overwhelming.

The word *"grace"* itself means to give something that is NOT deserved. This gift from God is a gift of grace; it's not deserved by any stretch of the imagination. As we think about the manger at Bethlehem, as we think about the Baby Jesus, we must realize that He is a gift of grace. We don't deserve Him or His gift. There are no words to adequately describe God's grace towards us in Jesus.

D. Because of His Effect on Believers

Speaking of gifts: When you received the gifts that were purchased for you by loved ones, was your life changed? When you opened any of your gifts this Christmas, did any of them change your life? Did they make you different? Or will you be the same as you have always been?

Now consider God's indescribable gift. The Bible teaches that when you accept Jesus, the indescribable gift of God, you will never be the same again because of how He affects your life. This is the 4th reason that Jesus is called the "indescribable gift" because of His effect on those who accept God's gift—His effect on believers. Here are just some of the effects of this gift:

1. Believers are forgiven of their sins. The first effect of Jesus coming into a person's life and their obedience to Him is that believers are forgiven of their sins. God forgets them; [Isaiah 43:25](#) says the He will not remember them. [Psalm 103:12](#) says: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." [1 John 1:9](#) says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

2. Believers are adopted into God's family. A 2nd effect of Jesus becoming a person's Lord and Savior is that believers are adopted into His family. [Galatians 4:7](#) says, "So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir." In [Romans 8:17](#) Paul writes that believers are "heirs of God and coheirs with Christ." Christians are brothers and sisters in God's family because we have accepted His indescribable gift. Everything that belongs to Jesus belongs to us.

3. Believers receive the Holy Spirit. Third, when a person accepts Jesus, believers receive the gift of His Holy Spirit who lives in them. [1 John 4:13](#) says, "We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit." Turn to [John 14:26-27](#). The Holy Spirit will guide you, counsel you, protect you and give you strength—something you didn't have before you accepted this indescribable gift.

4. Believers have God's peace. The 4th effect of God's gift is His peace which we just read about in [John 14:27](#). Christians have God's peace—the peace that no one can really understand

(Philippians 4:7). This peace allows one to cope with everyday situations as well as those times of extreme trouble or difficulty.

5. Believers have a heavenly mansion. Finally, because of God's indescribable gift, Jesus said in John 14:1-3 that every believer has a mansion in heaven waiting for them. This heavenly home will last for all eternity—and that's indescribable, too. These are just a few of the effects or changes that occur when one receives God's "*indescribable gift.*"

III. Conclusion

There is no way we or anyone else can describe God's gift to us—Jesus Christ. Better theologians—better linguists than you or I have tried and failed. The Apostle Paul considered Jesus and all He has done and then he wrote in Ephesians 3:14, "**For this reason I kneel before the Father.**" This is what we need to do this Christmas Day and every day—we need to fall on our knees and thank God for His indescribable Gift. And then, tell someone else about this indescribable Gift.

When God looked down at the troubled, violent, sinful world some 2000 years ago, He saw people looking for peace, looking for the meaning of true life. He wanted to communicate with them and tell them of His love. But if He came in person as the Almighty Jehovah God, He would have scared everyone just as He had done back in Moses' time. If He had spoken from the sky, people would hear the thunder of His voice and probably would have missed His words of love. He decided to send a baby. Babies don't frighten people. Babies are tender, soft, helpless. This way would show God's love in an understandable way to mankind.

So "**when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons**" (Galatians 4:4). This is indescribable! But the good news is that you don't have to be able to describe Him to accept Him. You just have to make Him your Lord and Savior and allow His Holy Spirit to fill you and change you.

This Christmas Day take some time to get away from all the hustle and bustle and take time to thank God for His indescribable gift to you. And then, tell someone else about your indescribable gift. “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.” (John 3:16-17).