

Celebrating God's Gifts: God Made Flesh

Luke 2:8-14

INTRODUCTION:

I am thankful for the privilege and opportunity this morning to preach the Gospel. I would like to tell you something about this babe that was born in a manger many years ago, my Savior, Jesus Christ. This is really my whole purpose this morning. That when this message is over, you will have a better understanding of who Christ is and what He has done for you. I pray that you will have a deeper desire to become closer to Him.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Luke 2:8-14 (NASB)

⁸ In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been **born for YOU a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.** ¹² This *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

Prayer

How many gifts have you received during the course of your lifetime? It would be impossible for us to recall all of them.

Now let me ask you this:

- How many gifts have you received that changed your life?
- How many gifts have you received that changed who you are?
- How many gifts have you received that changed the purpose and direction of your life and your eternal destiny.

This morning, we are going to focus on a **gift** that has and can do those things; the **Gift of God's Son!** This is the **one gift** that we should all be celebrating and praising God for **EVERYDAY!**

If God did not give us the gift of His Son, we would all be in serious trouble, not only in the realm of eternity but also in the here and now.

Romans 3:23 (NASB)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

The **5th and 6th chapters of Romans** speak of a couple of patterns of life that we can follow, one leading to death, and one leading to life.

Romans 6:16 (NASB)

16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

If it were not for Jesus we would have no choice to make concerning the path of our life, we would be all heading down the same road no matter what. Our life would be void of meaning and purpose. Think about this, if there is no God or heaven no hell, what purpose would life have? **You live and you die!**

Even worse, what if there is a heaven and hell and you have **NO** POSSIBLE CHANCE TO GO TO HEAVEN?

Praise be to God! Because of Jesus we do not have to face that possibility! God gives us free will, and with that free will if we exercise it in choosing to accept the gift of God's Son, we can see some things in our life change, and change for the better.

Let's begin by looking at some things that the gift of God's Son can change for us.

Romans 6:20-22 (NASB)

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. 22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

BODY:

I. A Change of Lords.

Many people think they are independent, they are their own person, and no one owns them or controls them. That is SO far from the truth. Before we accept the Gift of God's Son, we are ALL slaves to sin! Verse 20 tells us that **WHEN YOU WERE SLAVES** to sin. Remember **Romans 3:23** tells us that we have all **sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**

A person may THINK they are under no master, or lord, but the fact is, we ALL have a lord, it is either Lord Jesus or lord sin. Either Jesus owns you or sin does.

ILLUSTRATION:

Think about this. I do not like the concept of property taxes, here is why. Let us say you found your home and made payments to the bank for 30 years and paid it off. You have the title, but who really owns the home? YOU? BRRRR, WRONG!

What happens if you do not pay your property taxes? Who takes your home and sells it on the court house steps? Now, who really owns your home?

When you live your life outside of God, you think you own yourself, but when life is over, who gets you?

Remember:

Romans 6:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

Slaves cannot serve two masters, and Paul points this out in verse 20 where he reminds us, **20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.**

In other words if you are following lord sin, you have no obligation to Lord Jesus.

The freedom that people experience when they are slaves to sin is the exact opposite of genuine freedom. It is such a distortion of the meaning of liberty that it causes people to be glad that they are not constrained by the very things that would truly set them free.

In verse 22 we see that we do not have to belong to lord sin.

22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

Because of the gift of God's Son and our decision to accept that gift, we are set free from the lord sin! It no longer has mastery over us! Through Jesus we can experience a change in Lords.

Let's take another look at verses 21 and 22.

21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. 22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

We can be thankful for the gift of God's Son because through Him we can also have...

II. A Change of Life.

Verse 21 asks the question concerning the fruit of a life outside of Christ. When it is all said and done, what benefit do you receive from living a life rejecting Jesus?

What benefit are we receiving from the fruits of things we are now ashamed of?

The so-called freedom we had outside of Christ, how is that benefiting our life now?

The acts and habits of impurity and lawlessness, which characterized a life of slavery to sin, are things of which we are now ashamed.

Shame is not the same as the feeling of guilt or the sense of regret with respect to sin. It is more a feeling of inner pain and humiliation and disgrace that causes us to wonder how we could ever have done those things which seem so repulsive and hateful to us now. Such a feeling of shame with reference to our former sins is a necessary aspect of repentance and sanctification. To be without shame is to be under sin's dominion.

Why don't riches, fame, and power make people who possess them happy? Because after a period of time folks start to realize what Solomon did, **it is all vanity**. Life lived for the accumulation of things in the end is empty and void of meaning.

Maybe this will make it easier to understand why Jesus would say the following:

Matthew 6:19-21 (NASB)

¹⁹ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Earthly riches, fame, and power in the end have no eternal value. If these things are still your primary desire, then you are still storing up treasures on earth. When you die, none of these things will be of any value when you face God in judgment. Our strongest desire **MUST** be to determine to change masters and start serving the Lord Jesus instead of lord sin. This will require a major change in your life. We still live in a sinful world, but we do not have the desire to sin.

This is what Paul tells us will happen when we change lords...

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

The life we now live has new purpose and meaning! It has eternal value.

We can be thankful for the gift of God's Son because through Him we can have...

III. A Change in Eternal Life.

Let us look at verse 23 for our final thought.

Romans 6:23 (NASB)

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the **free GIFT of God** is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word FOR explains why one path leads to death and one path leads to life. When we choose to follow lord sin, we get a payment! Yes, we get paid for what we do! We all like a paycheck! But we will not like the wages that we receive when we serve lord sin.

Why? Because the wages of sin is **death!**

This is not just a physical death, it is a spiritual death. A spiritual death that separates us for eternity (**ETERNITY**) from God! Are you willing to trade this short lifetime of riches, prestige, power, sinful desires, and the disobedience of His commands for an eternity separated from God in Heaven?

We had better study God's Word and **ensure that we have been redeemed** by Christ's blood. We had better be **SURE** that we have obeyed Christ's commands. This is our only opportunity to get it right with God!

I ENCOURAGE YOU! SPEND TIME IN GOD'S WORD!

Although our life on earth sometimes seems long, in truth, it is a very short window when compared to eternity. When we die, or when the Lord comes again, this window will be gone forever. There will be NO SECOND CHANCE!

ILLUSTRATION:

The word "wages: was a word that denoted that which was purchased to be eaten such as fish, vegetables, etc. This is how people would pay Romans soldiers for their work, hence a "wage".

If the soldier did his job, then he EARNED his wage.

When we live under the lord or slavery of sin, we **WILL** receive the paycheck that we justly earned and deserve. John tells us what those wages will be.

Revelation 20:14-15 (NASB)

¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

This paycheck is earned. It is what one receives when you have refused to serve Christ. It is a check we would **all earn** were it not for the **gift of God's Son!**

We are told in the last part of verse 23 **but the FREE GIFT of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

There is something interesting about God's gift. You can live a life of service to God, you can present yourself a living and holy sacrifice to God and you will **NEVER** be able to **EARN** the gift of eternal life!

Eternal life is a **free gift** given to those who are in Christ!

Galatians 3:27 (NASB)

²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

In Christ the slavery to sin is broken and we are called to live a different life. The life we live now is about pleasing God. Because of slavery in our American history, the use of the words "slaves for Christ" has bad connotations. But, in the Roman's world during the first century, there were three classes of people (**Freemen, Freed Men, and Slaves**).

- **Freemen** were those who were not slaves,
- **Slaves** had to work for a master.
- A **Freed Man** was one who was once a slave but someone, through an act of mercy, had purchased his freedom.

When someone purchased your freedom. A FREED MAN would almost always attach himself to the one who redeemed them out of gratitude. They would live to serve the one who redeemed them. They did this by CHOICE. The FREED MAN KNEW what it was like to be enslaved and would never want to be in that position AGAIN!

The term we would use for a Christian is the one of a FREED MAN. This is the argument that Paul is making to the readers and to us. Once our slavery to sin is broken and we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, WHY would we EVER **WANT** to go back to being enslaved to SIN?

Our redemption in Christ gives us the gift of eternal life.

WE CHOOSE to live for Jesus as FREED MEN because we SO appreciate what Jesus has done to redeem us from the curse of sin and death!

CONCLUSION:

What path will you choose? The path that leads to an eternity separated from God **OR** the path of eternal life in the presence of God!

Matthew 6:24 (NASB)

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

We are called to live as **freed men** in Christ. We do not live for Him to receive a paycheck, we serve because we love Him and are grateful for what He did for us!

He purchased our freedom from our slavery in sin. He reconciled us back to God and made us righteous before Him. Not by our works, but by the work of Christ on the cross! It is a **FREE GIFT** from God. On the cross, our sin became His sin. He became sin for us. Although He was sinless, He freely and willingly accepted our sin. Now when we stand before the judgment throne of God, our sin has truly become His sin and we are found righteous before God!

We have received many gifts in our lifetime, but NONE can match the **Gift of God's Son!** . This **gift** from God will change our purpose and direction in life. I pray that you have a little deeper sense of the significance of this gift! I pray that you will celebrate this **gift** and praise God for Christ **EVERYDAY!**

God Be with You till We Meet Again

God be with you till we meet again, By His counsels guide uphold you,
 With His sheep securely fold you, God be with you till we meet again.
 Till we meet...Till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
 Till we meet...Till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.