

Have You Forgotten the Most Important Gift?

I. The Holidays

- A. A cheerful time, a time of giving, a time of shopping to give to those we love.
 - 1. Christmas is good for the economy
 - 2. Merchants love it.
 - 3. People will spend much money
- B. Many despise it. They want to take Christ out of Christmas. They speak of happy holidays rather than acknowledge the real reason for Christmas is God's gift to mankind in Christ. So the world says to be fair to all religions. None are any better than any other
 - 1. Hanukkah
 - 2. Ramadan
 - 3. Kwanza
- C. This has been the desire of Satan from the very beginning. To get us all to ignore the God of our salvation. To ignore our need for a savior to please him. To pretend he does not exist and that he is of no importance in the affairs of mankind.
- D. Unfortunately, it appears that Satan is succeeding in his attempt in today's world. But this was prophesied in the Bible long ago. Men would turn away from God and not listen to sound reasoning.
 - 1. This too, is spoken of in the Bible. Governments will come against God himself.
(NKJV) Ps 2:1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." 7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.
- E. We as Christians should know better, unfortunately even many of us have gotten caught up in what the world promotes. This too, was foretold
(NKJV) Mt 24:24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.
 - 1. We tend to listen to what men say rather than what God says.
 - 2. We were warned
(NKJV) Col 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.
 - 3. Unaware of the real truth about Christmas, many are challenged with the concerns of what to purchase for others, even going into debt trying to purchase things for others. Thinking this is what Christmas is about. Gift giving.

4. It is a time of giving, but we have been deceived, the giving should not be about a focus of giving to one another. We have been given a prime directive by God himself and it says:

(NKJV) Dt 6:5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

(NKJV) Mt 22:37 Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'
38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

5. What is the first priority to be in our lives?
- Can't you see what this means in regards to giving.
 - There's nothing wrong with giving to each other but our first priority should be in what we are giving to our Lord.

F. Again, the result of what satan and the world causes us to do is to ignore our God. Our God who has saved us, who has given us the very breath of life. We ignore him. We put our focus on ourselves and what we should do for one another.

- This is what men did in the 11th chapter of Genesis. They planned to build a tower for themselves. When the heavens were declaring his glory they would make a tower for their glory.
 - We are forever making things about ourselves.
 - Trying to say that we are not in need of a Savior.
 - we refused to be ruled by him.
 - we want to do things our own way, therefore we come up with ways and manufacture systems and order to exclude him from our reality.

G. Since the prime directive is to Love the Lord then we should be focused on what we can do for him above we do for one another!

(NKJV) Ps 116:12 What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me?

- This is not to say we should not celebrate Christmas with giftgiving to one another, but we should recognize the responsibility to give to God also.
- Most people do not see Christmas in this way.
- Christmas is about what God gave to us, not about what we give to each other.

H. At Christmas we should consider what he has done for us!

(NKJV) Jn 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

- Then, we ought to be thinking of what we can do for him!
 - And then because he wants us to love one another which should be balanced in our responsibilities to one another.
- Instead, almost all of us have been focused only on what we are going to do for ourselves or somebody else.
 - We should be recognizing God first!

- b. In fact what have you done for him this year?
- I. You really owe him your life. Paul says this.
(NKJV) Ro 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.
 - 1. Our first priority should be what we're going to do for God. And what we do for him we should do with our whole heart.
- J. Is this not what Christ did? He gave himself to the work of the Lord. Is he not our example? His focus was on pleasing God and in pleasing God he served mankind.
(NKJV) Ro 4:25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

(NKJV) Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,
- K. He died so that we could live. So that we might have a choice of life or death. Before this, we only had the expectation of death and facing a Holy and just God who would have to judge us guilty for the treason we have committed and send us to eternal damnation for the treason.
 - 1. Treason is still committed by the best of us even now this day even with us knowing the truth!
 - 2. We may know the truth of his word and still some will go on and on and ignore him and the tremendous sacrifice he made for us. Many of us will do this *because the rest of the world does so and encourages us to follow them.*
 - a. We will one day learn, every knee will bow and every tongue confess what they have tried so hard not to recognize, that Jesus is Lord, and Lord of Lords.
 - (1) the Lords, meaning those of us, who have proven faithful to him to the end, even in the face of the nay sayers and the sinners of this corrupt and perverse world.
- L. Stop letting the world dictate how you are going to think and act. If they can do that then they can also dictate how you will live, the world will set standards well below what God intends for your life.
 - 1. Rather live your life for the Lord so that he can reward your faithfulness to him according to his loving kindness to those that love him. Remember:
(NKJV) Dt 5:8 'You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 9 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 10 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

- II. Who does the Bible say we should focus our giving to?
- (NKJV) Ps 116:12 What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me?**
- A. After all the Lord has done for you. He has saved you time and time again. And you have enjoyed the cup of that salvation, therefore take the time and call upon the name of the Lord. Acknowledge him in all the things that you. He is worthy of your praise. He is worthy of honor.
1. Notice also he says I will fulfill what is promised to the Lord. And I will do it openly!
 2. Whatever you do for the Lord you don't do it ashamed.
 - a. You're not be ashamed to proclaim his name!

(NKJV) Ps 116:13 I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the LORD. 14 I will pay my vows to the LORD Now in the presence of all His people.
- B. Again, this Christmas, I encourage you as Paul has spoken:
- (NKJV) Ro 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**
1. Think of what God has done for you. That he would even consider to do anything for you is an incredible thing.
 2. The God of the universe will focus on your daily affairs.
 3. In view of this "what is man that thou art mindful of him", you should be willing to give your all to him.
- C. Give of yourself! What does Paul spell out for us? Our **bodies** stand for all our members and, by extension, our entire lives. Look at this, our **Total** commitment is our **reasonable service**. We are to be totally committed in the service to our Lord.

OUR BODIES

1. It is our **reasonable service** in this sense: if the Son of God has died for us, then the least we can do is live for Him. "If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him."
 2. Unlike the Jews of Jesus day, we do not come to God with the bodies of slain animals to offer a sacrifice but with the **spiritual sacrifice of yielded lives committed to him.**
 - a. Then we can be confident that he will show himself strong for us
 3. Give him the best of you mind, your heart and your soul!
- D. We should also offer to Him what Paul said was reasonable to offer

OUR SERVICE

- (NKJV) Ro 15:16 that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.**
1. You have been given gifts that you are to use in his service. He has given them to you for his glory not for your benefit!
- (NKJV) Ps 100:2 Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing.**

2. Many of us have a God that serves us with no thought that we are to serve him.
3. Have known many people who come to church to get something from God but never give consideration of what they can do for him.
 - a. Don't be one of those people!

E. The next thing we should offer God is

OUR PRAISE

(NKJV) Ps 100:4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

(NKJV) Heb 13:15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

OUR POSSESSIONS

(NKJV) Pr 3:9 Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase;

(NKJV) Heb 13:16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

(NKJV) Ps 116:14 I will pay my vows to the LORD Now in the presence of all His people.

(NKJV) Ps 96:8 Give to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come into His courts.

OUR BODIES

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- F. The world does not want you to recognize God openly in the works you do.
 1. Pray quietly
 2. Worship quietly
 3. Call on his name privately
- G. Listen: God has already call and ordained you to a work of service that will give him glory. He wants you to use what he has given you internally, externally, so you can rejoice eternally.

GOD WANTS YOU TO USE WHAT HE HAS GIVEN YOU INTERNALLY, EXTERNALLY SO YOU CAN REJOICE ETERNALLY!

1. He wants you to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit he has given to you to give back to him fruit that will last.

2. This can only happen when you give - when you present your body, which is your reasonable service - to him.
3. This Christmas what are you giving to him?

OUR BODIES
OUR SERVICE

OUR PRAISE
OUR POSSESSIONS

- H. Think of it: You are planning to give to others this week....but what are you giving to Jesus?
 1. What have you been giving?
 - a. Have you been inconsiderate of his sacrifice?
 - (1) Ignoring communion and showing disdain and disrespect for his death?
 2. What have you been giving? Have you been giving your best? Or something less?
(NKJV) Mal 1:8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts.
 3. Here is what he says when you do...
(NKJV) Mal 1:9 "But now entreat God's favor, That He may be gracious to us. While this is being done by your hands, Will He accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts.
- I. Have you been giving excuses? Have you been ignoring God?
 1. The economy is the reason you don't bring at least a tithe to the Lord? Why don't you test him at his word.
 - a. Those who honor him he will honor?
(NKJV) Pr 3:9 Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.
 - (1) Unfortunately he has said if you will not honor him he will not honor you.
 - b. Perhaps the economy has been hard on you because of you. You have worked hard, and you do not get ahead because you have not given to him first
(NKJV) Hag 1:9 "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. "Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.
 - (1) You can turn it around if you do right think about it....
(NKJV) Hag 1:5 Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! 6 "You have sown much,

**and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough;
You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe
yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns
wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes.”**

- c. No time - Don't you realize he is the one that has even given you this time to sit here. He could take the next breath from you....can't you at least be faithful twice a week?
 - (1) Sunday and Wednesday? Is that too much to ask?
 - (2) He said you are to give him one whole day... not a part of one? Remember the Sabbath day!
 - (a) A day is 24 hrs isn't it?
 - i) Since when does 2 hours on Sunday equal a day?
 - (3) Some of us don't even give him this day with undivided attention....we are focused on thing here and not him!

WHAT ARE YOU OFFERING HIM THIS CHRISTMAS?!

CHRISTMAS IS NOT ABOUT US! NOT ABOUT OUR GIFT GIVING TO ONE ANOTHER!

! HE IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON! DON'T FORGET TO GIVE TO HIM!

(NKJV) Ps 116:12 What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me?

(NKJV) Ro 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

- J. What are you to render? Your body! How?
 - 1. Holy,
 - 2. Doing the things that are pleasing to God not to self or man!
 - a. Stop trying to please man, please God!
 - b. Why study and struggle on what to give to man when man can do nothing for you.
 - 3. Consider what you are to give to God for his mercy shown you!
 - a. When he should have dealt you punishment for your sins, he gave you love and forgiveness instead.
 - b. You have escaped time and time again....What shall you render I say?
 - (1) Give yourself to him!
 - (2) Serve him by giving him
- K. Let us make a commitment this day to recognize our responsibility to give to the Lord this Christmas.
 - 1. To give to the Lord that which is pleasing in his sight.
 - 2. While for others we plan to give gifts this Christmas, let us remember to give to the Lord the one thing that is important to give to him.
 - a. Let us give to him our lives!

L. Let us make a commitment to give to him, to present to him all the best of us! He gave all that he had to us. He is God and he died for us. He died so that we might live.

M. This Christmas, what will you give?

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