



Jesus: God's Unexpected Gift

Key Texts: Isaiah 9:6
Matt. 2:9-12; 2 Cor. 9:10-15



OPEN

Last week, we began this advent series looking at how, even though Jesus' birth was unexpected, his coming was God's plan all along – something we see from Genesis to Revelation.

This week, as we look at the birth of Jesus, we see that he is also God's unexpected gift to each one of us. In the OT, in Isaiah 9:6, it says, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." Perhaps the most well-known verse in all of the Bible, John 3:16 states it again: "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son." When they found Jesus, Matthew 2 says the wise men from the east bowed and gave Mary and Joseph gifts in worship to the birth of the messiah. In this one gift of Jesus, we receive all the rest of God's gifts – forgiveness, eternal life, the Holy Spirit's presence, and every good thing God intends for us.

In 2 Corinthians 9:10-15, the apostle Paul says the gift of Jesus should lead us to give generously to others in need, which will overflow in "many expressions of thanks to God." At Christmas, we give gifts as a reminder of Jesus being God's greatest gift to us that Paul says is "incredible." How about you? Like the magi, how much is giving part of your worship in response to God's "incredible gift" to us in Jesus?

REFLECT

- In Matthew 2, it says an unexpected thing happened, magi – wise men from the East – came to Jesus. In what manner did they come for Jesus? What commitment or cost would it have been for them? What do their 'gifts' for Jesus communicate?
- In 2 Corinthians 9:11-12, for what purpose does God increase our earthly fortunes? What 2 things in v. 12 will result from God-focused generosity in our lives?

DISCUSS

- In thinking about the theme of gift-giving, what has been one of the most memorable, meaningful, or impactful gifts you have received from someone? Share with the group...
- As a group, discuss some of the traits that make for a good gift. For instance, perhaps practicality or surprise?
- In Jesus, God has given us the gift of himself. In 2 Cor. 9:15, Paul calls the gift of Jesus and the Gospel 'incredible' – meaning beyond words. What are some of the incredible ways that God has given of himself to us in Jesus?
- What is it about giving or being generous that makes us more like God, in your opinion?
- How universal is the practice of gift giving in your opinion...and perhaps why?
- In 2 Cor. 9:13, Paul equates giving to others in need as an expression of 'obedience' of faith, causing our faith to be 'proven' genuine...why such a strong link between being generous to those in need and genuine faith?
- A book often read by couples, The 5 Love Languages by Gary Chapman, talks about the love language of gifts: "A true gift is not payment for services rendered; rather, it is an expression of love for the individual and is freely given by the donor." Whether you are single or married, how much is receiving gifts a love language for you – a way you feel loved or cared for?
- What are some ways our giving can specifically point back to God's gift of Jesus?

PRAY

- Spend a moment simply thanking God for the 'incredible' gift of Jesus.
- Ask God who to give to who might be in need right now. It may be a financial need, or just needing the gift of your time as an expression of God's love.
- Pray that this Christmas will be a season of being reminded of the goodness of God.