

SRMBC Family Bible Study
All I Want For Christmas
Opening the Gifts of God's Grace
November – December 2019
Reverend Thomas A. Keys, Pastor

Introduction

In the best spirit of Christmas, we give and receive Christmas gifts, remembering the greatest Christmas gift of all: God's gift of the Christ Child, God's gift to us of a Savior! As we give and receive Christmas gifts, it is incredibly important to remember that the best Christmas gifts are wrapped in heaven. Unfortunately, sometimes we concentrate so much on the gifts we want to give to each other and receive from each other (nice as that practice is) that we miss the special gifts Christmas has for us.

This goal of this study, All I Want for Christmas: Opening the Gifts of God's Grace is to discover the gifts that Christmas has for us, and how we can experience those gifts through the miracle of God's presence in Jesus Christ.

Date	Lesson Topic	Scripture
11/20/2019	The Gift of Good News	Matthew 1:18 – 25
11/27/2019	Thanksgiving Break	No Study
12/4/2019	The Gift of a New Understanding	Luke 1:39 – 56
12/11/2019	The Gift of a Strong Foundation	Joshua 24:14 – 15
12/18/2019	The Gift of a New Style of Living	Matthew 23: 23 – 26

Christmas has some amazing gifts for us. But the truth is that we need the miracle of God's grace to see them, feel them, hear them, wrap our arms around them, and celebrate them. In thinking of this recently, I began to think through this very personal question: What are the gifts I would really like to receive from Christmas this year? And that is what this study is all about: our thoughts and reflections about the amazing, life-changing gifts Christmas has for us that are wrapped up in the Birth of our Saviour.

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Lesson 1: The Gift of Good News

Matthew 1:18-25

We get so caught up in the hectic excitement and busyness of the season that we close our minds to the real truth of Christmas. We concentrate so much on the gifts we want to give each other and receive from each other that we miss the special gifts Christmas has for us.

This gift of good news truly is a gift that keeps on giving, because it inspires our faith, grounds our hope, and leads us to love. Through the good news of Jesus, Christmas gives us the gifts of faith, and hope, and love. I'm sure you will think of others as well.

Group Discussion.

Describe something you once strongly desired (for example, a car, TV, stereo or special relationship). When you got it, did it fulfill your expectations? Explain why or why not.



Javier Martinez (Robert Amaya) is an immigrant struggling to provide for his family after being laid off when a construction company went over budget. While job-hunting, he walks down an alley asking God what He wants him to do.

Questions

- How do you think the loss of the job opportunity initially affect Javier?
- How does God the loss of the opportunity lead to a blessing for Javier and Adam?
- In what ways did this experience affect Javier and his family?
- Can you think of ways we can express the Good News of Christmas despite the problem we face?

"The young woman is pregnant and is about to give birth to a son, and she will name him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). The Gospel of Matthew tells us that this word from Isaiah is fulfilled in the birth of Jesus: The virgin Mary is the "young woman," and Jesus is the son called Emmanuel, which means "God with us"

Read Matthew 1:18-25

1. How did Joseph react when he first heard the news of Mary's pregnancy?

- He Was Disappointed – Seeing the Mary that He loved being moved by God to Something out of this world that did not (from his perspective)
- He Was Disillusioned – Not knowing how He would fit into the Plan of God and the life of Mary so he sought a way to release Mary from marriage obligation in a way that would be the best for her.
- He Was Determined – With the limited information, He still had a desire to do what was best for Mary and the Will of God - even though it would cost him the woman he loved and the marriage he desired.

2. How hard do you think it was for him eventually to receive this message as “good news”?

- It took a “move of God” to show Joseph to see this confusing situation as Good News.
- Once he received it, he did not question or doubt the instruction.
- He obeyed immediately (as soon as he awakened) and took his wife unto himself.
- He was able to patiently wait – putting his desires on hold because of seeing God's bigger picture.

3. In a dream, Joseph receives a visit from an angel (vv. 16-24). What comfort would the angel's message have brought to Joseph?

The Angels Message	Joseph's Comfort
“Joseph, son of David,	<u>Comfort</u> – God knows Joseph/You (by name) and our situation.
do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife,	<u>Courage</u> – Don't be afraid of this situation – Mary still yours.
for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.	<u>Calling</u> - You will still be together but for a higher purpose. What is going on although uncomfortable and unusual is a “God Thing”
And she will bring forth a Son	<u>Confirmation</u> – What God started He will finish what He started, and He knows the end from the beginning (The Child will be Born and will be a Son).
and you shall call His name Jesus	<u>Consecration</u> – Joseph is set apart to watch over the One who has a special Name (Jesus – Jehovah is Savior).
for He will save His people from their sins.”	<u>Commission</u> – The purpose for this whole situation is to bring God's Plan of Salvation to Israel and the entire world.

4. Names of children were especially significant in the ancient culture of the day. What is the importance of the Name (Jesus) that Joseph was instructed by the Angel to give to this Child?
- It is a Prophesied Name – His Name Shall be called Jesus – Set apart even before the foundation of the World – and shown in Types and Shadows throughout the OT.
 - It is a Purposeful Name - Jesus Name means Jehovah is Salvation He will save His people and every People.
 - It is a Powerful Name – It is the Only Name that saves from sin's power, sin's penalty and ultimately the presence of sin.
5. What is the significance of the Name "Immanuel" as it relates to the Birth and Work of Jesus?
- Immanuel (also rendered Emmanuel) a masculine Hebrew name meaning "God with us" or "God is with us."
 - Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 7:14) because He was literally "God with us"
 - Jesus is Immanuel. He is not a partial revelation of God with us; Jesus is God with us in all His fullness: "
 - Immanuel is our Savior (1 Timothy 1:15). God sent His Son to live among us and die for us on the cross.
 - Our Immanuel will be with us forever (Matt. 28:20, Heb.13:5). Nothing can ever separate us from God and His love for us in Christ (Romans 8:35–39).
6. Describe a time in your life when you have felt especially close to God, as if God were very near to you. How does the memory of that moment inspire faith or hope for you?

At the Hampton Minster's Conference – During the 1st night of Praise and Worship – they sang "*I really Love the Lord!*" (A song I had been singing over the past year at church). It lets me know that no matter what I am going through or wherever I am – God knows me and sees me.

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. (Joshua 1:5)

EI – Ro'iy: God sees me (Gen. 16:13)

7. Where do you see faith, hope, and love in the account of Mary's pregnancy and Jesus' birth in Matthew 1:18-25? What is the relationship between these three virtues in that story?

Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife.• Did as the angel of the Lord commanded took to him his wife.• and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son
Hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• she was found with child of the Holy Spirit• for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.• Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,
Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• not wanting to make her a public example.• was minded to put her away secretly.• His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

8. At the beginning of this season of Advent, what reasons do you see for hope in your life or in our world? How do these circumstances point to the presence of God with us?

My Life:

- I see God moving in my Life, my church – an real opportunity for growth
- Learning more about the Word – my understanding is getting deeper
- I have gotten older and have a better sense of destiny (Finishing Strong)

The World

- The world is ripe for the Gospel – especially during this Christmas season.
- Although things are getting worse it is a sign that Jesus' return is even closer
- The Mission to reach the lost is more important than ever. God will provide the resources to get it done.

Pray that God will shape in you a spirit that's open to the Good News of the hope found in the Birth of Christ.

Advent Prayer

God, you are with us. May this word from you give us reassurance and hope for the presence and the future. Give us eyes to see you and ears to hear you. And give us hearts to receive the good news of Emmanuel. Grant us faith, hope, and love that are grounded in your presence. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.