



THE GIFTS OF Christmas

SERMON NOTES—PASTOR THOMAS A. KEYS

The Gift Of Love: Jesus, God's Gift of Love

Scriptures: *John 3:16; Romans 8:38—39; I John 4:9—11*

INTRODUCTION

What would Christmas be without the songs and carols? Songs like “Let It Snow”, “I’ll Be Home for Christmas”, “Winter Wonderland” and “All I Want for Christmas Is You” have a theme. Like Valentine’s Day, Christmas is also known as the season of love and romance. While all this love is the air, I want to challenge us all not to miss the true story of love this season.

This is the love story that has been written for all of us. The story of true, faithful, unending, sacrificial love. God’s love in sending Jesus is the one love that changes everything.

SERMON POINTS

Advent is a season for rediscovering the coming of our Savior—and for gaining even greater understanding of how wide and long and high and deep His love is for us. Love has been God’s story from the beginning.

From the moment of creation, God’s love was part of the fabric of our world. God’s love was with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden both before and after sin entered the world. God showed His love by saving Noah and his family from the flood and giving them a new start. And at just the right time God sent the Gift of His Son to live among us—to be born in a stable, die on the cross, and rise again from the grave. So, what do we do with this gift of love? That’s what I want to share with you on this 4th Sunday of Advent so you can get the most out of the Gift of Love in Jesus Christ! .

I. Accept The Gift of His Love (John 3:16)

- ♦ **Invaluable Gift of His Love** - God has given us a His gift that is motivated by His Love. Beloved, God does just love the world, He doesn’t just love you, but He so loves you. In other words, God is so passionate in His love for you that it motivated Him to give His very best. A person may give our lives to save others but we would never sacrifice our child. But God so loved you and me that He gave His only Son - while we were still sinning!

- ♦ **Individual Gift Of His Love** - now Jesus further proclaim that this invaluable gift of Salvation through the Son of God - while it is offered universally (the world, whosoever) - It needs to be accepted, received individually. You must receive the Gift of Jesus individually by faith. Nobody can believe for you. Knowing that Jesus died for the world is history - but when you know that Jesus loves, died for you - That’s salvation!

- ♦ **Indispensable Gift of His Love** - At Christmas, many of us are going to receive a lot of things that we would like to have - but very few things that we really need. But the Gift Jesus provides the one thing that everybody needs - the one thing that is truly indispensable - eternal life through the Person and work of Christ that conquers death and gives you life and life forever more. You can make it to heaven without ribbons, tags, without presents, boxes or bags ... but you will never make it without Jesus - He’s yours for the accepting.

“This Christmas, have you personally accepted the Gift of Salvation in Christ?”

II. Experience The Gift Of His Love (Romans 8:38–39)

- ♦ **Experience The Surety Of His Love** - Paul states unequivocally that I am persuaded convinced of the Love God has for me in Christ. Beloved when you are convinced, when you’ve had the Experience that lets you know how much God loves you - you will (despite your imperfections love yourself) it won’t matter who doesn’t. That’s why you need to read the Word, Pray and be in worship at a church where the Love of Christ is... “Solid As A Rock!”
- ♦ **Experience The Supremacy Of His Love** - Paul goes on the list a myriad of things the Love of Christ is greater than. Often, when trouble comes, the devil tries to get us to believe that it is because God is angry with us or that He no longer loves us. But, the truth is that there is not trouble natural or spiritual that can ever separate you from the Love of God. The love of God doesn’t keep from all trouble in this world, but the Love of God keeps the trouble from overtaking you. We need to realize that no matter what trial or hardship comes our way, it can never change the fact that we are forever loved by God.

- ♦ **Experience the Solidity Of His Love** - Paul says that nothing can separate us from the Love of God even when the devil and world try to huff, and puff and blow our house down – because it is standing on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ. I need to let somebody know that Jesus loves you and there not a thing the devil, other people or even you can do about it. And if you've accepted His love – you have and will experience His love in amazing ways

How have you experienced the Love of God in your everyday life?

III. Share The Gift of His Love (1 John 4:9–11)

- ♦ **Share from Enlightenment of His Love** – We can never truly love unless we know or have our eyes and heart opened to the truth of God amazing love in the sending of His Son Jesus Christ into the World to save us. Any other love that is not based on the Agape/Selfless love of Christ – will ultimately prove to be selfish and temporary. In other words only when we truly are tuned in and All-In on the Knowledge of God's love for us and for the World in Christ will we be able to allow His love to overflow in the lives of those around us (Husbands, Wives, Parent, Children, Church Members...)
- ♦ **Share from Example Of His Love** – John goes on to give us an example of the Gift of God's love. God demonstrated His love – not by waiting for us to love Him 1st – but by giving us what we needed even while we were His enemies. Jesus said in Matt 5:43 – 48, love your enemies, bless those who persecute you for even the sinful people in the world love those who love them. And since God made a Sacrifice of His very best as the utmost example of His love – We who have accepted and experienced His Love ought to follow His example – and give of ourselves just as Jesus gave Himself for us.
- ♦ **Share With An Expression Of His Love** - How we share the Love of Christ with others is the evidence of whether we've truly received the Love of Christ in our own lives. In fact, John says in I John 4:20, How can you love the God you haven't seen and hate your brother whom you see every day. Jesus Himself expounds on this in John 13:35. When he says that people will know that you are my disciples by your love for one another. The Love Christ is so wonderful, so powerful. So hopeful, so peaceful and so joyful – that once you receive it experience it – you can help but share it – and in the sharing – you will receive even greater Joy!

A MAN was out with his wife and they got caught in a terrible hailstorm. This was a massive hailstorm. The hail was as large as baseballs.

The man realized that if he didn't do something, his wife would be severely hurt. He quickly draped himself over his wife, covering her with his own body so that instead of the storm hitting his wife, it hit him. Weakened by the onslaught, the man finally collapsed over his wife, only able to shield her from the danger. The remnants of sores, cuts, and abrasions would forever be reminders to him of the day he saved his wife. On the local newscast, the man's wife was asked how she felt about their experience

She said, "Every time I look at that scar, on his head, on his neck, and on his ear, I love him more. Every time I see the scar, I love him more, because he sacrificed himself, for me."

When you and I get to heaven, Jesus will be the only person in eternity with scars. He will have holes in His hands, holes in His feet, and a hole in His side. He will be your eternal reminder that the only reason you are there is because He stood in between the wrath of God and judgment headed your way. He covered you with His love and allowed none of the hail to damage you. He was disfigured for you. This is the love of Christ.

Let's revel in God's love and be known to others by His love flowing out of us. May this be a season of accepting, experiencing, and sharing God's gift of love in a new or deeper way.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How has knowing God's Love for you in Jesus Christ made a difference in your life?

What would happen in our churches, our families, our communities, our nation if we loved, served and gave to one another as Jesus did for us?

Who in your life needs to see the Gift of Jesus' Love from you today? Think of different ways to reach out to them and share God's Love.